

the worker

FOR A WORKERS' REPUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM



WHOSE PEACE?

THINK OF the most uncontroversial demand you can think of – it must be the demand for peace. After all, who doesn't want peace? But if somebody said they'd prefer peace between workers and bosses to the constant fighting and disputes, any reader of THE WORKER would answer: no question of that, you can't marry the interests of the two.

No more than that can you reconcile the interests of those fighting imperialism (or all of us who need to see imperialism defeated in order to gain some control over our lives) and those who prop it up. There is no peace possible between those forces. The defeat of imperialism is not negotiated over the table. All the enthusiastic talk of peace since just before Christmas encourages the illusion that all the problems can be sorted out as between reasonable men. But those who live off imperialism and who maintain it are by no means reasonable men.

The Provisionals have to take some of the responsibility for causing this kind of confusion with their statements in favour of peace. Totally overwhelmed by the spirit of Christmas, 'An Phoblacht' stated: "... peace can continue and, if we cannot forget, we can forgive and seek to build with our erstwhile enemies, and the people of goodwill of the entire world, a better, fairer, more human order."

Even if the Provisionals think they can forget, the working class, which is the group in society whose exploitation is the central prop of imperialism certainly cannot forget. There is no peace in the class war. There is not even a ceasefire, even though there may be tactical retreats. Our war goes on until the bosses' system has been replaced, not only in Ireland but throughout the world.

Socialists' support for the Provos only goes as far as they help develop the struggle against imperialism. Where they heistate in their dealings with imperialism or where they find themselves on the wrong side (and, incidentally, on the present economic crisis, they are 100 per cent on the wrong side, advocating that workers curb their demands for higher wages), we criticise without reservation.

There is, however, no mass anti-imperialist movement in the North, and the role of the Provisionals, and the impact of their military campaign, has a great deal to do with both the weakness of the mass movement and the weakness of the leadership. So we are not saying that the ceasefire is a bad thing, and the Provisionals ought to go back to what they were before it.

If the ceasefire ends after the first or second extension we will know where the blame lies: with the British government, for failing to make any significant concession to the legitimate demands of the Provisionals, for the release of prisoners and for withdrawal. But because the Provos have been able to "turn on the peace" they will be held by many people to be responsible for any resumption of hostilities.

The fact is that the ceasefire was offered out of a position of weakness. The Provisionals had decided on a lunatic bombing campaign of civilian targets in Britain as a way of getting out of their cul-de-sac in the North, and that had led them straight down another cul-de-sac.

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DON'T PAY THE PRICE FOR THEIR MESS!

THERE ARE now more than 5000 claiming unemployment benefit in the 26 Counties because they are on short-time usually a three-day week. Short-time working hits a couple of new factories every week. It was started recently in EI in Shannon, Eire Precision in Gort, Co. Galway, Chrysler and Semperit in Dublin. And in each case it has been accepted without a fight.

Why should there be a fight? you ask. Nobody loses much on it, with the pay-related benefits. It's true, of course, that if you are a married man with a few children, you may not lose any earnings at all by working three days. But you don't get the pay-related until 12 days after the usual benefit, and it only lasts for 24 weeks. The 800 car workers in Britain's who have been working a three-day week for 10 weeks must be concerned now that their short-time working will go beyond that limit.

Most workers will actually lose a small amount, and will also find themselves spending more. That's bad enough, at a time when inflation has gone well over 20 per cent. But the more important objections to short-time working are elsewhere:

short-time working is a way of making the workers take some responsibility for the economic crisis of the bosses' system;

short-time working is a way for the bosses to "soften up" the workforce for rationalisation and redundancies, and, if either of these things have already been planned, a way of encouraging people to leave voluntarily;

short-time working demoralises and divides workers causing them to

lower their sights and to hold back on claims even when prices are rising at record rates.

We can see all or some of these things happening in any of the cases around. Having put all their workers on a three-day week in November, Wavin Pipes have now sacked 60 workers. Having brought in short-time at their Dublin factory, Chrysler could be in a strong position to introduce the manning changes they wanted a couple of months ago.

PASSIVE

In not opposing short-time working, the union leaders are shouldering responsibility for the economic recession. Their passivity encourages apathy among the rank and file. In most cases, they don't even bother to explain what workers' entitlements are in benefits. They play an active part in depressing workers' expectations. So, with that, and with all the talk of economic disaster, some firms will obviously get out of paying the 10 per cent cost-of-living award under the 1974 Wage Agreement.

If a year ago, managements had attempted to bring in short-time working in some of the places mentioned because, say, there were interruptions in supplies of materials, they would have faced considerable opposition. Now, however, in the atmosphere of doom and gloom there is little opposition.

When British industry operated the three-day week just over a year ago, there was, in fact, a very small

drop in production (just one of the reasons why it hardly affected us here at all). Workers were putting in far greater efforts on the days they did work. They agreed to a flexibility on working practices which in "normal" times, they would not have agreed to. Any gains the management makes in a period of short-time working you can be sure it will try to maintain even with reversion to normal working.

We believe short-time working must be opposed on the grounds that we workers do not accept any responsibility for the crisis; we do not accept any changes in working conditions as a result of it, especially if its clear that they are eventually leading towards greater flexibility, greater productivity and redundancy. It is the job of militants to sound the warnings about this.

That is not to say that we are not in favour of shorter hours. On the contrary, we demand a shorter working week as a means of creating more jobs. It is the duty of militants to push that perspective now, to demand that we get 40 hours' pay for 35 hours' work. Where production is being dropped for reasons of falling sales, or whatever, our demand to hold all the work-force together, is to have the available work shared "ON FULL PAY". That is, throwing it back on the company to ensure at least 100 per cent of previous earnings.

We must resist absolutely any effort to use the present atmosphere to have workers accept that it might be foolish to push wage claims. Now more than ever, we need to say NO to the restraints of National Wage Agreements.

LOCK OUT IN GAELTACHT

BEANNA BEOLA is, or was, a small factory in the Galway Gaeltacht, employing 21 workers, mainly young girls and owned jointly by Gaeltarra Eireann and a local teacher, Tommy Durcan and his wife.

Just after Christmas, the company was beginning to feel the pinch from falling sales. The time had come to cut down the costs. For Durcan, the simplest way seemed to be to scrap the workers' canteen throwing one or two girls out of work, and, of course, depriving the rest of the workers of facilities for meals. A canteen in the factory is a vital necessity but particularly in this case since many of the girls travelled by mini bus each day from Letirmoir, a few miles away.

However, when the vote was taken, 11 voted for keeping their canteen and 8 voted against. Immediately Durcan sent out a letter to every worker:

"Is oth liom a chur in uil duit go mbeidh an monarcán seo ag dúnadh inniu mar go bhfuil se soiléar an bhota inné go bhfuil 11 oibri nach bhfuil sásta leis na tearmaí oibra atá leagtha síos. Níl an comhlucht seo sásta aon iarracht eile a dhéanamh a chur ar fail do dhaoine nach bhfuil suim aca ann." ("I am sorry to have to tell you that this factory will be closing today because it is clear from yesterday's vote that there are 11 workers who are not satisfied with the terms of work laid down. This company is not prepared to make any effort to make work available for people who have no interest in it.")

Over a weekend, ten days before Christmas, Durcan managed to split the workers by inviting the girls who voted against their own canteen, back to work. They went back and the rest remained locked out and dismissed.

Gaeltarra Eireann must be forced to live up to its claim to assist development in the Gaeltacht. There are a lot of skeletons in Gaeltarra's cupboard and in demanding that they take over the factory completely the workers should also demand to see the accounts. They must build up their own organisation so that whenever necessary, they can resist decisions of the state management. But there should be no truck with Durcan – and no compensation paid to someone who treats workers like that and has already had state help to do it.

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THE WORKER

Organ of the Irish Working Class

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1915

BUSINESS AS USUAL

How the Workers are Skinned during War as they were Skinned during Peace

The Paper that tells as much of the Truth as the Censor will permit

ONE PENNY

PEACE, PILGRIMS & PLUNKETTS

"GIVE PEACE a chance" cried the hierarchies of the four Churches, twisting the words of the famous song to suit their own purposes, mid-way through the Provisional IRA Christmas cease-fire. On the previous Sunday 10,000 had marched through Dublin behind a banner for "peace" and "Good-Will". The ground had been prepared by the four churches' "For God's Sake" peace campaign with full-page ads in the papers. But there is Peace and there is Peace.

The "Ban the Bomb" campaigns of the 60's, for example, had to be supported (with some criticisms) because they were directed against the terror-weapons of the ruling classes, as had the agreement which ended the First World War between Germany and Russia and gave the young Soviet Republic a breathing space. But if, in this case, "peace" means that the Provisionals bury their guns and allow the British Army, Government and the Loyalists to do what they like, you can stuff it, Cardinal Conway. Note that while the Provisionals ceased fire, the British police combed Southampton and arrested people who were mere sympathisers with the IRA.

Under the bishop's guidance we are all to "think, pray and talk peace" and "oppose any return of murder and destruction". The bishops would have us believe "murder and destruction" begins and ends with the Provisionals. This Christmas more than ever, they have exposed

their true colours. (One "peace" group People Against Violence, spelt out their Pro-imperialism by saying that the Provisionals "bore the major responsibility for the appalling slaughter in these islands in the last six years" and accused them of carrying out "ghastly" murders, daily.)

Unionist working class, or to divert attention away from cuts in jobs and wages. Holy Year is already being used as a money-spinner. Joe Walsh Tours, is organising special pilgrimages to Rome, each one equipped with its own priest, and many of the travel agents have their fingers in the holy water font. Not surprisingly, Joe Walsh described the Holy Year as an important spiritual event, Shannon Airport is looking forward to a "boom year" from transatlantic flights to Rome. Chartered pilgrimage flights from North America are monopolised by about five airlines.

SECTARIAN

But the peace campaigns are not the only trumpet the clergy are blowing at this time. The decision to turn Blessed Oliver Plunkett into Saint Oliver Plunkett gave the papers yet another opportunity to suffer Catholic Church persecuted by the Protestants and his "promotion" can only serve as a boost for Catholic feelings directed against present-day "Protestant persecution". This booster shot for Oliver Plunkett - kept alive all these years by the "Irish News" - can only promote sectarian division and it flatly contradicts all the "Peace and Reconciliation" talk of the Catholic hierarchy.

Although belief in religion is on the decline - for instance, the number of men entering seminaries throughout the world dropped 30% between 1967 & 1971 - it would seem that it's having a slight renewal at the moment. The 'Jesus Christ Superstar' and 'Joseph' spectacles were carried over to the RTE Christmas night spectacular. The evening before there were 3 hours of religious programmes.

And if all that wasn't enough, there's more - and worse - to come. For 1975 is Holy Year. Twelve years ago the Patrician Year was held and thirty years before that the Marian year. While it is anybody's right to organise religious festivals, the danger is that the 'Holy Year' will be used to strengthen religious ideas that support Cardinal Conway and Dr. Simms against the armed resistance of the anti-

However, the presentation of religion in 'song and dance' form has done nothing to abolish the familiar form of the tyrannical bishop. Below is an ejection notice served by the Bishop of Waterford and other clergy in the diocese on a man whose house stood on Church land. He owned the house (he has since sold it). The threat of eviction came as a result of non-payment of ground rent of £25 a year!

A POSTER for THE WORKER, February 1915. Less than two years after the epic struggle of the 1913 Lockout and little more than a year before James Connolly was to be executed. The Irish working class was still fighting to organise and the six-year-old I.T.G.W.U. was at the centre of the fight.

continued to be published up to two days before the Easter Rising.

One of the invaluable weapons in that fight was a working class newspaper. The authorities recognised that and systematically suppressed workers' papers - or attempted to. THE WORKER was printed by socialist comrades of Connolly's in Glasgow. When the sixth issue was confiscated on its way to Liberty Hall, Connolly decided that the best way to evade censorship would be by printing in the union HQ itself where armed Volunteers of the Citizen Army could discourage suppression.

Of course in those days the authorities had good reason to fear any publications of the I.T.G.W.U. For under the leadership of men like Connolly the Irish Labour movement fought not only to organise trade unions to resist capitalism, but also to organise the working class to fight to destroy capitalism itself.

On one occasion Connolly himself was told that police were raiding a shop at 31 Eden Quay, where the Labour movement had established a Workers' Co-Operative. Connolly ran down and burst into the shop to find a cop holding an armful of papers. Casually drawing his automatic, Connolly gave the arms of the law a choice: "Drop those papers - or I'll drop you." The I.T.G.W.U. paper

FIGHT

Having won the right to organise, the I.T.G.W.U. leaders have long abandoned the aim of organising the fight of the working class.

And that fight, to organise the class struggle to end the degrading and dehumanising system of capitalism, is as crucial now as it was in Connolly's day. And a workers' newspaper is still an invaluable weapon in that fight. It is in that tradition that today's WORKER fights. A paper written by workers for workers, to unite the struggle and spread the socialist ideas which can organise that struggle. It is a workers' paper - your paper - so read, pass it on to your mates, take a few extra and sell them at your workplace - AND write for it. Use THE WORKER to link the fight, make it your weapon.

AN CHUIRT DÚICHE
THE DISTRICT COURT

Solicitor
Court No.

Civil Process in Ejection for Non-Payment of Rent.

District Court Area of Waterford
District No. 22

I, **Port. Rev. Michael Russell, D.D.L.**
Very Rev. Thomas James Cassidy,
Very Rev. Thomas O'Connell, D.D.
Brother Johnley and Rev. Michael
Leahy are the Trustees of
St. John's College,
John's Hill,
in the County of City of
Waterford Plaintiff;

BY THE JUSTICE OF THE DISTRICT COURT.

Whereas the Defendan
had

in the Area and District aforesaid as
tenant to the Plaintiff under **Lease**
at the **yearly** rent of **£25.00**
And Whereas the sum of **£125.00**
of the said Rent being **5** years rent

I.R.S.P.

THE SPLIT in Official Sinn Fein and the formation of the Irish Republican Socialist Party are events which could be of key significance in the development of working-class politics in Ireland.

The I.R.S.P. appears to be already bigger than the Communist Party of Ireland. But it is significant not just because of its size, but also because of its origins and because of its policies (or, sometimes, lack of policies).

There has for a long time been dissatisfaction within the Official Republicans at the leadership's failure to take initiatives in the struggle for socialism and in the national struggle, its refusal to abandon the collapsed civil rights strategy, its refusal to allow internal democracy within the Movement. This has led to expulsions and resignations, and as a result many of those who have joined the I.R.S.P. were not members of Sinn Fein immediately before joining. Nevertheless, what has taken place has been basically a breakaway from Sinn Fein, joined by Bernadette McAliskey.

Its origins can be seen in many of its policies, for example, its call for a Bill of Rights in the North, its blaming the E.F.C. as the main cause of the present economic crisis, the high priority it gives to contesting elections. We would hope that such hangovers from the past may disappear as the new party thinks out

its own decisions. But there are deeper causes for anxiety about the unclear basis on which the Party was founded.

Many of them go back to an underlying tension inside the cause for the split: they want more action on the social issues and more action on the national issues. Bernadette McAliskey said at the press conference launching the Party that they wanted to unite the class struggle (which the Provisionals are ignoring) and the National struggle (which the Officials were ignoring).

But the question is, what strategy can do this? The Socialist Workers' Movement maintains that the strategy must involve building a revolutionary workers' movement centering on the class issues (workers versus capitalists). Only by involving the working class's own organisations can the struggle against repression be built up, leading to the smashing of British imperialist control.

CLASS

But it does not look as if the I.R.S.P. have realised the starting-point of this process: the struggles of workers in their work-places, through the trade unions. If they want to unite the working class, they will have to think out the means of doing so.

On the plus side, the Party rejects the "stages theory" of the Officials: first civil rights, then national independence, then socialism. But Seamus Costello's loss of faith in the stages theory is quite recent. And it is not clear that the I.R.S.P. understand the implications of "democratic centralism" as a method of organising a party. Democratic centralism does not simply mean obedience to a democratically-elected committee; it also means maximum discussion

of policy before adoption and free communication within the party (not just free speech at conferences). The members of the I.R.S.P. will have to watch carefully lest they find arising in their own organisation the authoritarianism they have left behind in Sinn Fein.

The extremely rapid formation of Party branches is understandable as a defence against State repression or counter-offensive by the Officials. Yet it magnifies the problems caused by the lack of clarity on which the Party was formed. Much of the disillusionment with the leadership of the Officials has arisen over the inactivity of the Official I.R.A. since their ceasefire. The I.R.S.P. has naturally not made statements on military matters. But there is no evidence that they see the absolute necessity of subordinating such things to a political policy. The Party will have a difficult task in welding into a cohesive whole the numbers so rapidly assembled.

For the future, the I.R.S.P. have issued a call for a "broad front" against repression, although it is not entirely clear how such a front would be organised. The Socialist Workers' Movement has called repeatedly for a united front against repression North and South, in which working-class and anti-imperialist organisations would unite in action without forfeiting the right to propagate their own policies.

The National Committee of the Socialist Workers' Movement has already welcomed the I.R.S.P.'s call and proposed the opening of discussions towards co-operation between our organisations.

STANDING COMMITTEE
SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Unidare: MORE TRIMMING but 'sparks' hit back

FOLLOWING on the closure of the Pumps Section at Unidare in Finglas reported in the last 'Worker', came the end of production at the Spanform section on 2nd January. This leaves about 10 men idle, who have been offered alternative jobs on the site. The 20 or so men laid off from the Pumps Sections last year were offered jobs within the site - at a loss of earnings and day-work for many - and must choose to take redundancy money and go altogether.

At Spanform we must ensure nobody is forced outside the gate by loss of earnings or conditions. When the Pump Section was closed the crisis was in its early stages and there were more jobs around. Now workers will be reluctant to leave and must demand replacement jobs on the site, with the same money and the same conditions PLUS disturbance money, or else retain their old jobs. No Spanform workers should have to pay for management decisions - especially when this decision appears to be part of a "trimming" operation to increase profits.

Elsewhere at Unidare machines for making bottled gas were to be dismantled and, it seems, sent to the Unidare factory at Portadown. Unidare intends to expand another section at Finglas and probably the machine operators would get jobs there. But the electricians have blacked the machines because production on them would be leaving the site.

The usual end-of-the-year profit round-up in the papers has shown that Unidare made £1,178,000 in 1973. Since then they have done even better, but they still want a productivity deal introduced. In other places, productivity deals have led to a reduced workforce, mainly through "natural wastage" - retirement and people leaving without being replaced. In Unidare where workers come and go very quickly and where there is a lot of older workers, the workforce could be reduced very rapidly. In any case nobody knows what's happening with the productivity deal because, of course, no reports are ever given to the rank and file (except long and boring ones at the end of the year).

A driver, Dominic McGloughlin, was hauled up before the Branch Committee in December for remarks he had made against the Committee. He was well able

for them - being an ex-Committee member himself - and had his answers ready. Frank Gannon, the Unidare head shop steward, has gone on to greater things as the new full-time Assistant Secretary to the No. 14 Branch. He won't be missed.

On the national day of mourning for Erskine Childers, when Unidare gave a (bumper) two hours off "to attend local ceremonies", the shop steward at the SCA factory and another man stayed in reading. The foreman objected and the steward replied that he did not believe in religion and was "broadening his philosophical outlook on life". The foreman brought in the Factory Superintendent who said pay would be stopped for the two hours. The steward was prepared to take action, if, in fact the money was stopped, but it wasn't. (In the last issue of THE WORKER we reported the same Superintendent's "three-day-week" bluff at Transformers).

And at SCA too, the steward has been fighting the management's efforts to introduce fully-detailed time-sheets. The men have always filled in time sheets, but not with as much information as management want.

The company doctor, a local doctor who attends about twice a week, sent a man back to work after an injury to his back although he could hardly walk. The man, who works in the Anodising section, was treated by his own doctor and even the State agreed he was hurt - the weight he had to lift was too heavy - by awarding workmans compensation. At the same factory, a clerk was mysteriously sacked on the first day after Christmas. He was told he was "unsuitable for the job" (after 9 months' service) and he agreed to leave. Within a half-hour he had his comics plus a £100 "no hard feelings" handshake. Why the handshake? Possibly he knew too much about what everybody in the factory knows anyway. Anyway, he was too close to the general workers for management's comfort. They would have stopped only the clerk was emigrating anyway.

It looks like there's a general clamp-down on lates and absenteeism around the site. Disciplinary steps on things they have closed their eyes to - for their own reasons - for so long might bring a reaction that they haven't bargained for.

ARMSTRONG SIT-IN ISOLATED

SINCE EARLY November a small group of workers have been occupying in shifts, Reg Armstrong's Opel car factory in Ringsend, Dublin. Their tenacity and determination are an example to all of us; they have maintained the occupation in the face of big, and increasing odds.

But those odds have been lengthened not only by Reg Armstrong's particularly vicious attitude and the growing crisis in the car trade, but also by the methods which the workers have chosen for their struggle and by the attitude of their union officers.

The warning notes we sounded in the last WORKER have to be sounded again. This occupation is not hurting Reg Armstrong where it matters - in the pocket. He can easily survive the little bit of bad publicity it brings him. His other factories are still turning out televisions and motor bikes. He still has plenty of Opel cars to sell, and the workers' action is not stopping them going to the dealers.

The occupation can go on as long as the men's morale lasts or until they are so isolated nobody will worry too much if they are removed by the police. The two most important bits of support promised from outside by the union involved, the ATGWU have not materialised. There is no blacking of cars coming in "on wheels"; the dockers were sympathetic but have not received an official request for blacking from the ATGWU. There has been only one demonstration by car workers in support of the Armstrong's occupation and we detailed how poorly organised that was in our last issue. The suggestions made by some union officials of a much bigger march against redundancies in the New Year has been dropped, it seems.

As if all that was not enough the Car Workers Action Committee called the Armstrong's workers and the workers from McCairns, which also affected by General Motors plans to cease assembly in Ireland, to a meeting two days before Christmas to discuss a new situation. Their only success was in adding to the confusion and demoralising. Of the 120 workers there at the beginning of the meeting, only 20 remained at the end. The Armstrong's shop steward left the platform in protest at the way in which the meeting had been set up.

The new situation was the recognition by the union that the so-called replacement jobs at General Motors' wiring harness factory in Tallaght were no replacement at all. They had been unable, they said, to get the necessary guarantees from GM. But the Armstrong's worker who asked if there would be any action on the basis of Matt Merrigan's statement that the union would "black" the Tallaght factory if it did not meet their requirements waited in vain for an answer. Indeed, the chairman Mick O'Reilly (now in line for a full-time post in the ATGWU) seems to have spent most of his energies keeping awkward questions quiet. The meeting had barely started when he was making suggestions of closing the list of speakers and agreeing

a time to finish the meeting.

In the face of that kind of "support", the Armstrong's workers really have to take things much more into their own hands. As it is they are doing most of the funds-raising effort. They must not allow their struggle be hampered by respect for the slow-moving procedures. They must insist that the union takes their struggle, and the fight to save jobs in the trade, to all car workers and to all those working in the supply industries. They must carry their fight to all Armstrong's other employees and they should not place any hope in polite talks with Justin Keating but demand that the government step in directly and provide the investment to save their jobs.

Short-time at Chryslers

OVER 180 production workers at Chryslers factory in Santry, Dublin, start working on a three-day week on the 6 January. The short-time working has been introduced for an indefinite period although management have indicated that they will be reviewing the situation month by month.

Over the past few months the management have been "softening up" the workers in preparation for action of this sort. When the workers met in their first general meeting for eight months to consider the proposition for short-time, there was virtually no opposition.

In November, the management presented proposals to the union, the ATGWU for new work standards on 28 cars a day, a reduction of 20 per cent in output, but meaning an increase in work-load for some men of 50 per cent. Their plan was to move 30 workers out of production. But none of this had been implemented when a few weeks later, the management announced they would need to put the workers on three days.

They blamed difficulties in supplies and falling sales. Sales have, indeed, been falling - as they have for every other car firm not only here but in the world.

And that's certainly no reason for workers to accept changes which will bring loss of earnings. The supplies from Chrysler, Linwood, in Scotland, have been beset by problems for a very long time. Many of the cases containing parts are found to be incomplete. The result is that of the 2000 unsold cars on Chrysler's premises, 900 of them are not ready to go out; they have a dashboard, a wing, or some other part missing. The Dublin management appear to have made no representations directly to Linwood to clear this up. Once again: absolutely no reason to make the workers pay the price.

And they are paying a price, and no mistake. In accepting the three-day week, the union representatives did not supply any information on workers' entitlements to unemployment benefit and earnings-related benefit. Even though it looks attractive at first - less work for almost the same pay - it's hard not to spend more money when out of work. And the pay-related benefit only lasts for a limited time. The Chrysler workers must insist that the company make up any loss of earnings anybody suffers.

GALWAY CLOSURE

A FEW DAYS before Christmas the Banvarnit jersey fabric factory in Galway closed down, throwing the 20 workers there out of work. But this Chilean-owned factory, which is one of the few of its kind in Europe, had its order-books full. That should be a source of strength to the workers in the fight to retain their jobs.

The factory, which started up two years ago, got grants of £79,000 for equipment and training, and only a short time ago the state rescue service, Foir Teo, had to step in again with a further £80,000. Now the bosses say they have no more liquid cash to keep going. The workers should not accept that on faith but demand that all accounts and minutes be opened for inspection, to see where all the public funds have gone to.

There has been talk of a new boss being interested in the factory. But the Receiver is looking for buyers to take the factory as a premises, not as a going concern. Any new boss could move in and reduce the work-force - and move out just as easily as Banvarnit did, letting more of the money raised through taxes on workers go down the drain.

The Banvarnit workers should not wait for the outcome of all this but occupy the plant now and use the machinery and stocks as a bargaining counter to ensure they all keep their jobs. They must demand that the state guarantees their jobs with full state finance, that is, nationalisation: Not nationalisation of the CIE type, but one where the workers have established a veto over all management decisions affecting rates and conditions - nationalisation under workers' control.

There has been talk of setting up a co-op but that means the workers

themselves shoulder responsibility for the debts and that they have to compete in the capitalist economy both for sales and for financial backing.

Above all, the possibilities must be discussed by all the workers concerned and all decisions taken at general meetings, which should be held at least once a week. Ni neart go cur le ceile.

.. and state revenge

WORKERS at Westcon, on the Carraroo Industrial Estate fought a hard battle over three months last year against the dismissal of five workers. The ITGWU refused to make the strike official so the workers took the matter into their own hands and their militant methods of occupying the Gaeltarra Eireann offices and picketing to prevent seabs entering the premises won them the battle.

But now the state is looking for revenge. The picketers are being prosecuted. The authorities are aiming to isolate any militancy in the area.

Already there are welcome signs that the Gaeltacht workers have seen the intentions and are preparing to resist. A number of workers' sub-committees of Parish Councils have been set up to act as a forum for workers to discuss their problems. Galway city workers should sit up and take note.

A.J.

CINEMA GUIDE

THE cinema business is changing all the time. At the moment the bosses are making strenuous efforts to cut staffs by half. The means of cutting staff are such that if they get their way you may need instructions on how to enjoy a night at the movies.

1. BRING A TORCH - with only three usherettes to cover two cinemas you'll often have to seat yourself.
2. WEAR AN ANORAK TO THE CINEMA DURING THE WINTER - Since the oil price increases some managements have been reducing heating.
3. MAKE SURE IT'S AN OLD ANORAK they've already cut cleaning staff and plan to cut out cleaners altogether and bring in Contract Cleaners to give the place a quick once over.
4. COME EARLY, PREPARED TO QUEUE - they plan to combine the cashier and sales girls' jobs so you'll have to wait for your ticket while the people ahead of you decide whether they want a Mars Bar or an Aero.

5. If you go on a busy afternoon - WEAR EARPLUGS - with only one usherette to look after about 700 children the cinema sometimes gets noisy. Management's answer is to instruct the projectionists to raise the sound and drown out the kids. This is already happening on occasions. As staff is reduced we can expect it to happen more often.
6. INSURE YOURSELF AGAINST ACCIDENTS - the Corporation By-laws, under which cinemas must be licensed, are openly flouted. Corporation and Fire Inspectors have for some years been making only token inspections. In 11 years working in cinemas I've never met an inspector. A reduced staff cannot ensure the safety of patrons.
7. CHECK BY PHONE THAT THE CINEMA IS OPEN - the bosses plan to reduce projection staff to one per show. If that one stubs his toe half an hour before opening there'll be no show. And worsened working conditions will increase sickness and absenteeism.

The staff-cutting axe is presently being wielded by Gerry Harvey of Odeon, but the other bosses are eagerly awaiting their turns. Odeon have shown that attendance figures have fallen but these figures include their suburban cinemas which they have since closed. Irish Cinemas Ltd., which runs the Savoy twins in Dublin, have the same sob story, yet the company consistently has paid 20% dividends over the past few years and has jumped 12 places in the 'Irish Times' list of Top Companies.

At a time of economic crisis they are aiming to maintain profits by solving the problems brought about by THEIR economic system at the expense of cinema workers jobs and the safety and comfort of cinema goers.

At a union meeting to announce the redundancies the ITGWU officials gave the cinema workers the alternatives of negotiating the staff cuts with each boss in turn or all at once. Never a suggestion that we actually fight the redundancies. It remains to be seen if, when it comes down to deciding who goes on the dole and who stays on, the cinema workers will insist that we unite and fight to save our jobs.

GENE KERRIGAN
(Ambassador Cinema)

SIT-INS CAN BEAT SACKING

ALL THE predictions are that unemployment and redundancies are going to continue to increase well into the New Year. There will be more factory closures, more partial lay-offs and more "voluntary" redundancy.

The importance of the strike by ACEC workers in Waterford, which we report elsewhere in this issue, is that it is one of the few examples of a successful strike against redundancies. There have been a few sit-ins recently, however: in the Danus clothing factory in Limerick, in Reg. Armstrong's motor assembly factory in Dublin and in two factories in the Newry area. In all cases, however, the sit-ins have taken place after the sackings. The Danus workers sat in to demand improved redundancy terms. The Armstrong workers sat in as a protest against their indefinite lay-off. The Keady

workers and Wayne Foods workers sat in to demand their jobs back.

The sit-in and occupation which have both become common tactics in the working class movement in Britain, not only in the fight against redundancy but also in wages battles, is the most effective method of struggle against lay-offs and closures. Why haven't they "caught on" here? Because the ideological battle hasn't yet been won, that is, the trade unions largely accept the bosses' right to hire and fire as they please. They accept, and most of the members with them, that cut-backs have to be made for industry to cope with the crisis. The socialist attitude is that the bosses are responsible for the crisis; it is their system, their crisis, and we are not going to pay for the crisis. That is the attitude militants have to fight for in the trade union movement — and in doing so they will be opposing the trade union leaders' collaboration with the bosses, whether under the banner of nationalism or in the belief that it is still possible to negotiate improvements with the bosses when the worst is over.

There is increasing interest in the idea of sit-ins and occupations, however. At a meeting in Waterford late last

year, called to discuss the setting up of an Action Committee to fight redundancies, there was a lot of discussion about how a sit-in is organised, and what it aims to do. The Trades Council in that town has now taken up the demand for nationalisation under workers' control of industries facing closure. That demand will be most effectively fought for by the sit-in or occupation.

The initiative came from rank and file workers, as did the push for the successful struggle in ACEC. It is from the base that the initiative has to come. The trade union leaders have shown that they are not prepared to give that kind of lead. The sit-in is an aggressive form of action. It challenges not only the bosses' right to sack workers but also to dispose of the property and products which have been accumulated on the backs of the workers' labour. The purpose is to force either the employers or the state to guarantee five days' work or five days' pay.

The sit-ins at Keady Carpets and Wayne Foods ended with the workers opting to set up co-operatives to take over the factories. In Britain, the Labour government has given financial

support to a number of workers' co-operatives, such as the one established to produce a newspaper to replace the defunct 'Scottish Daily Express' and another in the Midlands, to take over the Norton Villiers Triumph motor bike factory. Is this what we mean by "nationalisation under workers' control"?

No: it leaves workers shouldering the responsibility of making "their" factories efficient in order to repay debts and to compete on the capitalist market. This has meant fantastic increases in productivity as are foreseen, for instance, in those cases in Britain, and as has occurred in the Crannac furniture co-op in Navan and the Castle Shoes co-op in Dundalk. As long as the co-op is an individual and isolated answer to an individual problem, the capitalists will tolerate it. It doesn't challenge their basic privileges; it doesn't promote a general struggle against redundancies and the bosses' system.

That is the aim of the militant occupation: not merely to sort out a particular problem, but to broaden the struggle against sackings. Its essence is that it also involves all the workers in the factory concerned. They are not split up into small groups doing picket shifts. They are all together in the

factory; they have the confidence of power because they are using the bosses' property and plant as a bargaining counter.

Over two years ago, when the sit-in was "catching on" in Britain, the rank and file paper, 'The Carworker', gave some sound advice on organising an occupation. Its main points were:

use any advance notice the employers give to the full in order to prepare the action;

stop any work being moved out of the factory;

when the occupation starts, evict the management and supervisor immediately;

put up barricades at the gate and establish a security system;

work out a rota for sitting-in, and hold full meetings daily in the first week to discuss progress;

decide whether to "freeze" insurance cards so that no-one can walk out with their cards and look for another job;

set up committees to look after food, solidarity collections, propaganda, entertainment, and so on;

demand that the unions organise collections to add to strike pay.

And so on: sit-in certainly workers sit are other. It is a struggle is general for the action, asking other workers to fire us; the right to do what property and produce.

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TARIFF CALL NO ANSWER

Right: Shoe workers demonstrate to demand tariffs against foreign imports. Above right: Stockpiled cars reveal extent of industry's crisis.



SO YOU made that bit of effort to buy Irish over Christmas, did you? Maybe it made you feel you had made some kind of useful contribution or done your duty. Because damn the difference it made to the rising unemployment.

When Mickey Mullen tried to put figures on the number of jobs which might be saved through the 'Buy Irish' campaign, he came up with a possible 2000 — exactly the number of jobs which the Confederation of Irish Industry's 'Buy Irish' ads claimed were being lost each week. So all that effort was to get — at the very best — a slight stutter in the rising rush of redundancies? Or maybe quite a different purpose...

Look at the ITGWU publicity about 'Save Irish Jobs — a new approach this Christmas': it asks workers to take responsibilities for the management of the firms they work in, to worry about the company's marketing efforts, sales techniques, and sources of raw material. In a society where production is for profit, that should not be the workers' concern. It is but one short step from that to accepting the management line about falling sales, making cut-backs in employment necessary...

From the nationalism of the 'Buy Irish' campaign it is but one short step — in fact, hardly a step at all — to fully-fledged collaboration between employers, unions and government, the graveyard of free and independent trade unions.

Why do you think Wilson makes his appeals to the "national interest" in Britain? Or Ryan to the "national partnership" in this country?

The 'Buy Irish' campaign shows the consequences clearly enough: it has been backed by the Department of Industry and Commerce the Confederation of Irish Industry and the unions. Of course, the Irish-based companies are interested in boosting their sales here — if nationalist appeals help — so

much the better. In other words, if they can use nationalism to tie workers to their apron strings, then they will.

That is why we are internationalists, and opposed to nationalist-type solutions. Not for any moral reason, or because we don't like the symbols of Irish nationalism (Conor Cruise O'Brien, how are ye?); but because it stands in the way of independent action by the workers for their own goals. Because capitalism itself is international and all the ruling classes of the world are part of the international ruling class which feeds on it.

As we have explained above, socialist demands are aimed at deepening the crisis for the capitalists, and developing the working class's desire and ability to fight quite independently of any influence from bosses and state.

The difference between that approach and the nationalist perspectives being proposed to deal with the current crisis (proposed as much by the union leaders as the bosses) can be seen clearly in the case of the footwear industry. It has been well known for long enough that jobs in this country were threatened, particularly by the advent of free trade conditions. But, instead of organising to resist the threats, the Shoe and Leather

Workers' Union (I.S.L.W.U.) has co-operated in productivity schemes to make the industry competitive.

Now, the same union leaders lead their members on a march through Dublin, calling on consumers to boycott foreign shoes and on the government to bring in embargoes to prevent these imports. The demonstration was fully supported by the bosses in the industry, who paid wages for the day's lost production and travel expenses to get the 5000 workers to Dublin.

The demand for embargoes — for protection against international competition — was also taken up with EEC officials who visited Dublin. There's little they can do, even if they wanted to, but the union officials thought they had been able to make some impression on them. There's just as little the government can do. In one of his very rare true statements, Richie Ryan has said, "We haven't now the freedom to impose import controls and quotas."

But even if they had, it would still be a bad demand, because it puts workers in the position of hoping, passively, for some assistance from the government. It puts them in the position of looking for job protection from employers who have exploited them mercilessly for the 20 or 30 years of high tariffs. Again, it ties the workers to the bosses' apron strings.

The call for protection in the footwear and clothing industries is being backed by much talk of "dumping". There is actually very little evidence of this happening — surplus stocks being got rid of on to the Irish market at low prices. The business of Irish stores buying in clothes from Korea or Hong Kong is a different question. It is not "dumping" by nasty foreign capitalists. And it is certainly not going to be stopped by Mickey Mullen appealing to the store-owners' national consciousness or warning about "strong action", with no followup.

The idea that we should organise for withdrawal from the EEC also encourages the same misleading notions. This idea is, sadly, now being repeated by the Irish Republican Socialist Party. It is a complete diversion from attacking real targets, the bosses' attempt to get us to pay the price of their crisis. This emphasis on the EEC raises illusions among workers that the native bosses are somehow better than foreign bosses.

The situation in the car industry is more complex than in footwear or clothing, although all are affected by the recession throughout the world economy. In the motor industry, there is a direct relation between the number of cars imported fully built up and the number assembled here — that was acknowledged in the EEC negotiations and quotas set up for the different makes, for the proportions allowed in fully built up. These quotas are being got

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Motor industry's world crisis

IRISH car assembly workers played a leading role in opposing entry to the EEC back in 1972. They correctly saw that EEC membership would add to the dangers to their jobs which the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement had already brought. But they are now wrong — and their union officers are wrong — to try to blame all of their present difficulties on the EEC. The slogan "EEC out!", which is shouted on every car workers' march is only a very small part of the answer.

As Paul Gillespie shows on page 7, the EEC itself is in a mess as a result of the overall crisis of capitalism. It is not the cause of that crisis. In the same way, the motor industry throughout the world is in crisis. And the Irish assembly industry — which is very much on the margins of the world wide industry — is being hit as a consequence.

Every week brings new reports of lay-offs or short-time working in the motor industry in some part of the world. In each country where the Socialist Workers Movement has fraternal organisations they are involved in a fight against lay-offs and short-time for car workers. Whatever the particular problems caused by Irish membership of the EEC — particularly the problems caused by increased imports "on wheels" — it is essential that the 500-plus workers in the assembly industry and related industries in this country start to see themselves as part of that fight.

This Spring Volkswagen in Germany will put 86,000 workers on short-time, 100,000 Fiat workers in Italy have already been put on a three-day week and there has been a struggle in some plants (sadly, not helped by the unions) to have the company make up the loss in earnings. In the United States, where car sales in December were 30 per cent down on the previous year, there are almost a quarter of a million car workers laid off — that's almost as many as the total number working in manufacturing industry in Ireland!

Closer to home, the only surviving British-owned firm of any size, British Leyland, is in dire trouble and looks ripe for take-over by another firm, unless the Labour government decides it is politically expedient to bale it out. (Even as this is being written, the news comes through that Aston Martin are going into liquidation).

Naturally, the firms are cutting their investment — Chrysler, for instance, making a 25 per cent cut, which, when you allow for inflation, is actually more than that. In some cases, they have more than three months' stocks on hands — and there's no profits to be got out of adding to that stock-pile. Indeed, their profits have also taken a hammering. (British Leyland and Fiat have made losses recently and Citroën has narrowly avoided bankruptcy).

If the companies can cut back investment in Ireland, or save on costs by sending fully built-up cars to their distributors rather than having them assembled here, then they'll do that — EEC agreement or no EEC agreement. It is this international context which makes nonsense of the policy of seeking replacement jobs for those lost in assembly: the companies are taken on internationally they will not be forced to make the kind of investment necessary.

Is this just the result of the "oil crisis" of a year ago? Or is it, as some papers in this country would have us believe, the Arabs' fault? NO — to both questions. Rising oil prices have contributed to the crisis — just as the latest rise in petrol prices here will add to the problems facing the Irish motor industry. The gigantic leap in profits of the oil companies should be a sufficient reminder that the Arab states are not the ones who have gained most from the increased prices.

The big increases in oil prices have fanned the smouldering crisis of the world economy. But the crisis — a general recession, combined with accelerating inflation — was developing before the oil crisis happened. A recession of that kind hits the sales of what are called "consumer durables" — not just cars, but televisions and fridges as well.

Incomes have not risen at the same pace as the prices of cars. The market is "saturated"; just about every family who, in the present structure of prices and incomes, can afford to have a car, already have one! The car companies attempt to blame some of their sales problems on rising wages, but when you take all the labour of the final process of production along with the labour put into components it comes to less than one fifth of the production costs.

American manufacturers, who have concentrated in the past on big engine cars, are now trying desperately to move over to smaller cars, but it is not improving their situation much, even though since early 1974 sales of small cars in the U.S. have exceeded those of large cars for the first time.

EXPENSIVE

In Ireland, the price problem is made worse by the enormous cut the government takes in tax, making cars here up to one third more expensive than in Britain. And with the promise of further increases in petrol prices to come, the level of car sales cannot be expected to improve much in the near future.

So, wherever we look at the car industry — (with a small exception, Japan) we see the same picture: sales and profits, investment and employment, are all down. And the EEC has damn all to do with it.

There will be some people who will say: if that all adds up to an argument for more cars, forget it — there's too many already. Any bus-driver with ulcers would say: too right. But public transport will be as bad as everything else in the capitalist

system — until it is planned by, and in the interests of, the working class. Indeed, until the whole of industry and transport are controlled by the workers we have to fight to retain all the jobs in the motor industry, regardless of whether the capitalists say they are inefficient or unprofitable.

Workers must at all costs avoid getting involved in rows between different sets of capitalists or in any way undermining the chances of building international solidarity between workers in the motor industry. For instance, we should not get caught up in arguments about investment being needed in one country rather than another. If General Motors choose to invest in Spain, that's their business, but if they try to move work from here, or from Britain to Spain, then it's the business of Irish, British and Spanish workers.

Trying to find national solutions is trying to mislead. The fight has to be developed on the basis of worker solidarity, starting with solidarity between the factories in this country, and going on to take in workers in other countries. Car workers here must seek assurances from brothers in other countries that they will not take work transferred from here — and give an assurance that they will do the same for them.

ATGWU FAILURE

The main car workers' union, the A.T.G.W.U., is an international union. By failing to use its international connections, it fails its own members. But, you will say, that's miles ahead of where car workers are at the moment. If we don't aim in that direction then we don't stand a chance of winning. Because those who have led the car workers up to now have set their face against any attempt to generalise the struggle from one plant to another, much less from one town to another (from Dublin to Wexford, and Cork), or from one country to another, the idea seems remote. In 'The Worker' we have consistently argued for this approach.

Our answers to the bosses must be based on a refusal to accept any responsibility for their crisis, and on our own needs rather than fiddling about with embargoes and tariffs (see the article on page 4). Car workers here must oppose lay-offs and short-time, and seek support for that struggle from car workers elsewhere, in return for the same promise of solidarity. And the central aim of the fight in all countries must be the same: to demand nationalisation under workers' control of the motor industry.

Torture that leaves marks on the mind

The Guinea Pigs. By John McGuffin. Penguin. 45 pence.

FOR FIVE years the population of the six counties have lived under the shadow of British guns, British torture, British repression. In the rest of this country, it's very easy to forget. It's very easy never to know the brutal details of internment, interrogation and continued harassment. If John McGuffin's book serves no other purpose — it should smash some of that complacency.

It was once said that the sun never set on the British Empire and the blood never dried. The British ruling class had used every form of brutality through the length and breadth of its colonies — Kenya, Aden, Cyprus. Pure physical brutality wasn't enough. As a former paratrooper said in our last issue, they needed a method of torture that yielded accurate information that didn't leave any marks — at least not any physical marks.

In the first internment swoop — the 9th August, 1971 — 12 men were specially selected as "guinea pigs". Trained psychological thugs experimented with a new and highly sophisticated torture technique — Sensory Deprivation. These experiments did not just happen, they were not due to over-enthusiastic soldiers or peculiarly sadistic Special Branch men. They were a calculated plan — a determined attempt to drive men into temporary insanity, to push them to the bounds of madness and observe: observe that is, how useful this technique was for the fast gathering of facts necessary to smash the enemy.

Sensory deprivation is the artificial deprivation of the senses. The guinea pigs were hooded, stood against a wall supported only by their fingers, exposed

for hours on end to only one sound, a high-pitched whine. They were refused food. They were not allowed to sleep August 1971 was the first time in the world that experiments like this were done — done on captive men who did not know whether the treatment would ever end. Three victims attempted suicide. One of the guinea pigs smuggled the details of the experiment out of Crumlin Road Jail. The information was made public. There was an outcry.

And the British Government did what it always does on such occasions; it set up a Commission under Sir Edmond Compton. He didn't even talk to the guinea pigs but he concluded that hoods were used to protect the men from IRA vengeance. He decided that there was no cruelty because the interrogators didn't take pleasure in what they were doing.

Even as Compton prepared his white wash, two more guinea pigs were suffering the experiment. . . In all 14 men were subjected to SD. Only months later were they given any medical treatment. Some psychiatrists believe that a few of the men may never recover. Many still suffer acute depression and others have lost the will to live.

It's easy to imagine the jackboot in the groin, the pincers pulling out the finger nails, electric shocks applied to the genitals. Insanity is not so easy to imagine. It's easy to think that only the "weak crack but as a London psychiatrist, Dr. Anthony Storr said: "Nearly everyone can be reduced to a state of helplessness, dependency and even mental illness, if the right techniques are used".

Three guinea pigs have finally been awarded compensation for their suffering. James Auld is one of them. No sooner was the award made than he was interned again.

For James Auld, for the guinea pigs, for the whole population of the 6 Counties who live under the shadow of the British gunman — southern compacency only adds insult to injury. They have suffered too long. The British military must be kicked out of the Six counties. This fight can be fought on the streets and factory floors of the 26 counties too.

SHEILA DUNCAN

Shop stewards fall short

WHEN the trade union leaders let us down, as they have on EVERY issue — redundancies, inflation, equal pay, repression, etc. — facing us, it falls back on the rank and file to organise ourselves and prepare our own defences. The National Shop Stewards and Rank and File Conference, held during December in Dublin, was very important as a coming-together of rank and file militants. It was a Delegate Conference, so the presence of over 80 delegates shows that there is the beginnings of a rank and file movement throughout the country.

There was speech after speech denouncing the National Wage Agreement and the bosses' policies of knocking off workers to pay for their crisis. The trade union officials, their lies, sell-outs and 'Buy Irish' hot air were right in the firing line. Workers from Armstrong's, Mc Cairn's, from Waterford and Dundalk, and the electrical industry referred to their own experiences in facing redundancies and short time. In fact, there should have been much more of this.

The delegates were hearing mostly what they already knew — that wage restraint and redundancies mean misery. But it is one thing to recognise a situation AND ANOTHER THING TO CHANGE IT. What was missing was CLEAR ANSWERS to the problems, a CLEAR ALTERNATIVE to factory closures, the chains of the National Wage Agreement, the propaganda of Michael Mullen and of the 'tighten your belts' brigade. The shortcomings of the Conference rang out like a siren when one delegate asked "Why are we not doing something"? Something PERMANENT should have, and did not, come out of the Conference.

The policies of the National Shop Stewards and Rank and File Committee were not spelt out clearly enough and were not linked to any plan to put these policies into action — to get the campaign going. This is a criticism of the Shop Stewards Committee, and of the political groups present, including ourselves, the Socialist Workers Movement. The policies are there. Against the National Wage Agreement: flat rate increases, no restrictions on the right to strike; a minimum wage; equal pay and so on. Against redundancies, the 'Trade Unionist' itself says we have the power to save jobs, although there were a number of different proposals about how to do it. The tactics have already been decided upon too — organise the activists in EACH INDIVIDUAL UNION. These things were not stressed heavily enough and nothing permanent resulted — except the contacts made between the delegates themselves outside the sessions.

What was not begun on the 10th December must be started now. The battle over the next National Wage Agreement is well on. It was declared by the ITGWU leaders and it must be fought out in the ITGWU and the WUI. The ITGWU people who were at that Conference — and many other ITGWU activists — must be brought together to oppose the Agreement, as a fighting group to produce leaflets, arguments, bulletins, to counter BLOW FOR BLOW the pro-Agreement campaign.

All direct actions and sit-ins against redundancies must be linked up. The car workers are suffering from the lack of rank and file organisation and the Armstrong's occupiers are being isolated from their fellow car-workers. The inactivity of the Cars Action Committee mustn't be repeated by the shop stewards in the electrical industry.

To make the National Federation of Shop Stewards and Rank and File Committees into a genuine mass movement of militant trade unionists, the Committee must become a practical, fighting organiser within the individual unions and the individual industries, with clear guidelines for each.

Finally, the effectiveness of the Conference was not helped by the failure of most of the speakers to turn up and by the late start and sloppy chairmanship.

EEC: European economic chaos

PAUL GILLESPIE

A COMMON reaction on the Irish Left to the present crisis has been to raise the demand for withdrawal from the Common Market. The cry is heard from all sections of the Republican Movement, from the Communist Party and from a number of Trade Union Officials.

There are considerable dangers for Irish workers in such a strategy, for two reasons. First, the Common Market itself is not a cause of the recession; it is only a set of institutions which reflect closely enough the nature of present-day capitalism; these institutions, like the system as a whole, are at once closely linked but also in contradiction with one another.

Secondly, it is not enough to respond to the recession simply by mounting a campaign to withdraw from the EEC. Such a campaign may divert workers away from the struggle on the shop floor which is where our main effort has to be concentrated.

THE capitalist system is now going through a crisis, the like of which has not been seen for a generation. It bears many similarities to the depression of the 1930's, and yet there are significant differences. Economists have coined the word "stagflation" to describe the system's present problems: a combination of stagnant production and increased unemployment with continuing inflation.

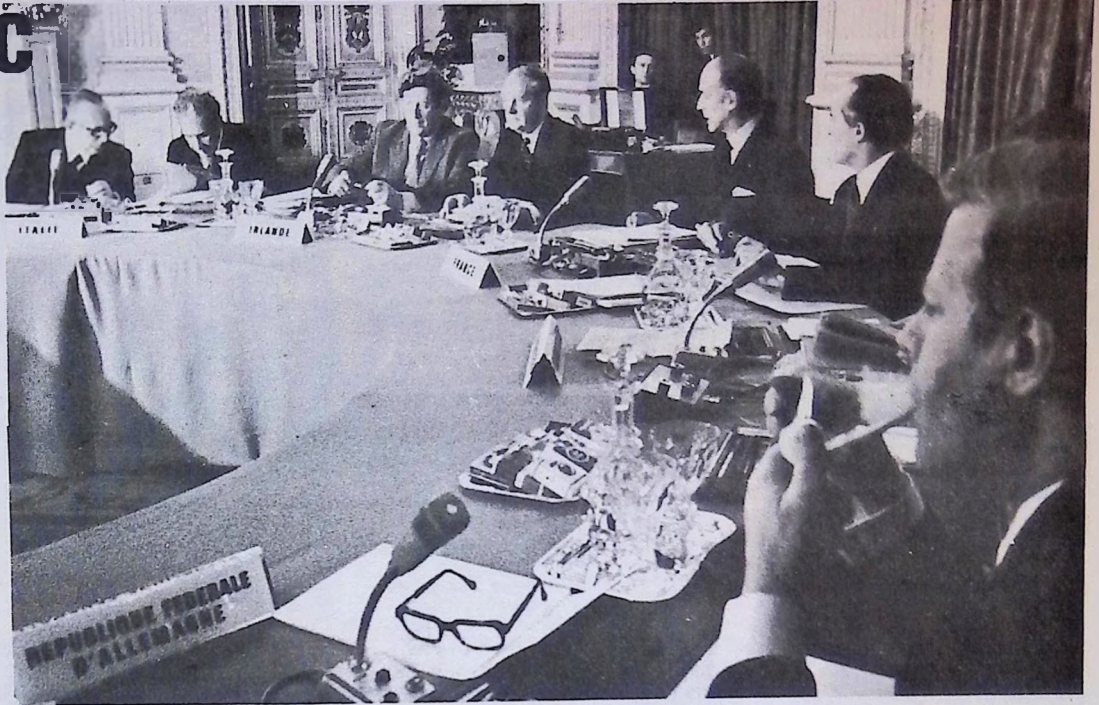
Stagnation used to produce a shake-out of resources. The "laws of supply and demand" reduced the inflation created at the tip of the boom by sharply increased unemployment. But in the last 20 years the structure of capitalism has changed in ways that have counteracted this effect.

MARKET

All over the capitalist world, the State has taken on a much more central role in controlling the national economy. It also provides a very important market for the largest companies, especially those producing arms. In the United States one half of investment money goes into the Arms industry.

Simultaneously, the whole capitalist system has become much more centralised and concentrated. Centralisation has occurred both within nation states and between them. Mergers are increasing year by year. In West Germany, for example, the 100 largest firms are now responsible for two thirds of industrial output - they employ one third of the country's workers and produce over 50 per cent of exports. The overseas branches of the thousand largest US enterprises now actually form the third largest "country" in the world with an annual turnover - only behind that of the US and USSR. Concentration on this scale means that these firms can pass on increased costs without fear of competitors.

In the last generation, state expenditure insulated the system from a boom/slump cycle. Now it is less effective in doing so. Between 1971 and 1973, the whole capitalist world experienced a boom which generated inflation, speculation and excess demand at its peak. When the boom collapsed (and the collapse was made worse not caused by the 400 per cent increase in the price of oil), inflation continued rather than declined because of the link-ups we have mentioned. Economic cut-backs have increased competition between the respective nation states and have highlighted their inability to "plan" their way out of it.



This is where the EEC comes in. The EEC is neither the utopian United States of Europe of the Marketeers' propaganda nor the source of all our economic ills. It is essentially a customs union between nine sovereign states. The process of integration has gone very little further than this, with the important exception of the Common Agricultural Policy which absorbs almost 80 per cent of the EEC budget.

Plans for economic and monetary union - meaning essentially an integration of the currencies of the EEC - have been quietly abandoned. There is a small social fund, largely for retraining workers and even more pathetic Regional Fund, from which the 26 Counties will get £35 million spread over three years. This is just about enough to pay for 30 miles of a motorway - although the fund's

provisions stipulate that it may be used to finance only existing projects - 30 per cent for infrastructural projects (i.e. roads and services) and 15 per cent for aid to industry.

This leaves a large bureaucracy responsible to periodic and increasingly frequent poker sessions of Ministers and heads of Governments of the nine member states.

The economics of the Nine have become more and more intertwined, both in terms of trade and in terms of the simultaneous presence in all of them of multi-national companies, as well as relations with the rest of the world. The EEC's main function is to control the interlinked economies of these countries.

But the EEC has shown itself unable to plan or even co-ordinate strategies to deal with international recession. There are many examples of unilateral action: Italian and Danish decisions to interfere with the free flow of trade; French, British and Italian withdrawals from the system of connecting currencies; the very belated decision of the Germans to boost their economy; the British re-negotiation. Each has been dictated by national capitalist considerations, which illustrates a major contradiction in the EEC as a whole. It is a contradiction between the idea of a United Europe and the reality of national power.

For all its internationalism, capital still operates from national bases and international competition is as fierce in recession as it was in the boom period.

SLUMP

Prospects for developing into slump in the short term depend on whether the US Japanese and West German governments decide to go for expansion of their economies rather than further contraction - attempting to beat inflation by jacking up unemployment.

If they choose expansion, the international economy is likely to pick up by the end of this year and 1976-7 may see an even more frantic boom than the 1971-73 one but with a very much higher rate of inflation built in from the start. If that happens, the end of the boom will come much sooner and the major crisis which is spoken of prematurely now would be due in 1977-78.

In the meantime of course, the situation is bad enough for millions of workers all over Europe affected by unemployment, short-time working and cuts in real living standards. But the workers are not to blame for this crisis. It is a crisis of the bosses and their system.

Further there is plenty of evidence that workers are in a far stronger position to resist attacks now than they were in the 1930s. The news from Europe is that they are doing this in Denmark, Italy, France, West Germany, Spain, Portugal and, indeed in Britain.

Occupations have been one form of resistance all over the continent and in certain countries there have been symbolic national stoppages as well as large demonstrations.

The bosses' crisis must be thrown back in their faces by resisting attempts to solve it at the workers' expense. The central base for such resistance is at the work-place but it must be extended across work-places into the Trade Unions and across the Trade Unions into National rank-and-file movements and across boundaries into international workers' resistance. Finally, of course, any such movement must be political as well as economic. If the bosses cannot run the system, we will break it and take over power ourselves - workers power, socialism.

This is the lesson for Irish workers from their continental brothers. To concentrate on a campaign for withdrawal from the EEC is to direct workers from the most important task of their resistance to the employers offensive and away from the places where they are strongest.

The alternative to the EEC is not some independent capitalist Ireland, a pipe-dream, but workers' power in Ireland and in Europe. A campaign for withdrawal plays into the hands of Trade Union Officials and bosses ideology of national partnership, "buy Irish" and so on. Such a campaign hinders the development of independent working class organisations.

TARIFF CALL NO ANSWER - see page 4

Student struggle

By now many will have forgotten the recent student protests. The students themselves are on holidays at the time of writing, and we will have to wait until mid-January (beginning of term) before we see further action on the grants campaign. However it seems that despite the publicity given to the action taken by the students, the public still don't know what all the fuss is about. And up to now the campaign has been so badly handled by the officials of the Union of Students in Ireland that many students are as ignorant of the demands being put forward as the general public.



1. Grants for all third level education institutions.
2. Increased grants for all.

At present the grants are available only to those who wish to study at a recognised university. There are not the same grants available for people wanting to study at a regional technical college.

An interesting point to note here is that only 20 per cent of students receive grants. For the most part they are not working class - working class children comprise only 6 per cent of university students. They cannot be expected to live on the current grant which is at most £276 for a student living at home and £450 for a student living away from home.

The other main demand is for increased grants. Since the grant scheme was started in 1968 the grants have gone up only once - this year! There has been an enormous increase in the cost of living in the last six years, but only now has this been acknowledged. But the increases given to students holding the grants has been so meagre that in today's terms it is meaningless.

The U.S.I. calls for a maximum of £750 for students living away from home. The S.W.M. calls for this sum for all students, so that they will not be forced into continued dependence on the family. There should also be an escalator clause incorporated into the grants system. This would make it possible for the gains to be more permanent. Otherwise, due to growing inflation any gains would be made meaningless within a year or two. This is a very important demand which U.S.I. has not mentioned in its campaign. Students have not got the power that workers have to protect their gains. They are not in a position to go on strike each year in support of their demands.

BOOKSHELF

Chris Harman: *The struggle in Ireland. Socialist Worker. 15 pence.* 'The Struggle in Ireland' has been produced by the S.W.M.'s fraternal organisation in Britain, the International Socialists, "to give a brief history of" the domination of Ireland by the British ruling class, "to show its effects on Ireland today, and to indicate the way in which it can be brought to an end."

The history is inadequate - not to mention at least ten inaccuracies on the first page. It is particularly weak on the Northern Protestants, who come out as mindless morons manipulated by British Imperialism. The roots of sectarian domination lie in the uneven development of the Irish economy, which produced in the first half of the nineteenth century, the great shift from radical nationalism to unionism, and sectarian bitterness has been stirred up by Unionist bosses in order to maintain their grip over their own working class. Imperialism has been the ultimate creator of this system, rather than a day-to-day manipulator.

The pamphlet is much better when it goes on to talk of the reality of British economic control today, North and South, and to show how the British Army are not "protectors" of the Catholic population. But there are only a couple of paragraphs on the way forward. The Official Republicans are not mentioned at all, and the Socialist Workers' Movement only in the bibliography. If it reaches Irish workers in Britain, it will be of little use to them. And if it is intended for British workers, why no mention of what they can do in campaigning for the withdrawal of the British Army? - an effort which would be more useful than verbal expressions of solidarity, and which is particularly necessary in view of the British working class's faith in parliamentary government and the neutrality of the State. J.G.

the worker

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Strike wins jobs back

OVER THE past three months 63 redundancy notices have been issued in ACEC (Irl), Waterford — 40 from the factory floor (I.T.G.W.U.), 1 electrician (E.T.U.), 20 clerical (A.T.G.W.U.), and two supervisors (A.T.G.W.U.)

Prior to these notices being issued, A.C.E.C. employed 350 workers. Unfortunately, of the four different unions within the company on the A.T.G.W.U. has shown any interest in contesting these redundancies. As we have already reported in THE WORKER an inter-union committee was originally set up within A.C.E.C. to fight all redundancies irrespective of whether one or all unions were to be affected; it seemed that things had got off to an encouraging start. However, the I.T.G.W.U. now not only have refused to contest the redundancies but have actually aided management by signing a death warrant agreeing to all redundancies affecting their members provided that it is on a seniority basis. In the event, only the A.T.G.W.U. was prepared to fight the redundancies by industrial action.

A.C.E.C. (Irl) Ltd. is an electrical manufacturing industry of 25 years' standing. It is a member of A.C.E.C. International which in turn is now controlled by the giant Westinghouse group, one of the top ten corporations in the world. The Westinghouse takeover took place about two years ago.

The products manufactured by A.C.E.C. (Irl) are transformers, light fittings, electrical motors and instrument transformers. There is an annual turnover of about £3 million and the main customer is the E.S.B. which buys over 80% of the products. The main product transformers, is an essential part of the E.S.B. electrification scheme. There is only one other manufacturer of transformers in this country, Unidare, and even their manufacture is on a more limited scale than A.C.E.C.'s.

So A.C.E.C. have a guaranteed market for their main product and also for their next largest product, lighting, for which the main customer is again the E.S.B. A.C.E.C. have almost 70% of the total Irish market in transformers and lighting.

The original reason given for the redundancies — management announced 21 to take place in August — was that sales of motors and instrument transformers had fallen and these lines were losing money. These were not the main products and one of them had only recently been introduced at great expense. A couple of years previously the management had turned down a suggestion from the union that they do repairs and winds. This work now provides employment for 50 men elsewhere in Waterford. Whatever orders A.C.E.C. now get for motors will probably be re-routed to Portugal.

Under pressure from the unions the first redundancies were deferred. But many left voluntarily and finally only four of the



21 remained. Management still warned that there would be more lay-offs; they were aiming to cut back on overheads and planned some redundancies among clerical workers — this in spite of the fact that four had left over the previous months and had not been replaced. In November, management announced their plans to sack 20 clerical workers, that's about 40 per cent of the total. Then they announced 20 further redundancies among production workers. The A.T.G.W.U.'s threat of strike action on behalf of the clerical workers got all the notices deferred. The management's attitude at subsequent meetings made clear what had been suspected all along (and was stated in THE WORKER):

that they were simply engaged in rationalisation for which they were using lower sales as a convenient excuse. It also transpired that the production workers had accepted a £1.09 productivity increase and the inevitable redundancies. These workers had also continued to work overtime throughout the whole of this period.

So the A.T.G.W.U. had to strike on its own, having been assured by the I.T.G.W.U. representatives that their members would pass the pickets. Again they appealed to the other unions for support, offering not to try and stop others coming to work, and seeking assurances that those who worked would not do supervisory work or assist non-union labour and thus dampen the effect of the strike. After several days picketing (starting each day after the others went in) the plant was closed, or so we thought. But on the following Monday December 10th, the non-union workers reported for duty. Pickets were immediately reinforced.

During the course of the strike, and beforehand, management got up to all its usual tricks in trying to find jobs for those who were being made redundant. This turned out to be one of our most difficult problems. Slowly jobs were being found by our members, although in many instances their job security was open to question. However, we had trouble trying to convince our redundant members that we could get them back to work and to forego the offer of a new job. These new jobs were, we confirmed, in a few instances, arranged by management through their contact with the F.U.E. In one instance a job had been so hastily arranged for one of our members that before he started in his new job trouble started in the firm. The established practice of displaying situations within the company had not been complied with, so immediately the union in the firm concerned got wind of the new appointment the protests started. Within a few days the manager of the firm turned up at our member's door to inform him that the job he had been promised was not there anymore.

As is usual in all strike situations moves were being made in the background for a settlement. The Labour Court invited management and union to talk on the redundancy issue. After a full day of conciliation talks, agreement was reached. Management first suggested that the redundant workers be taken back for a month and that negotiations take place in the meantime. This was not accepted by the union. Finally it was agreed that the redundant workers would be taken back without any time limit and that talks would take place.

A.C.E.C. workers, led by a group without any tradition of militancy, have won a significant victory. We will have to ensure now that this success stiffens the back of the negotiators so that they refuse to discuss redundancies or any rationalisation measures. Also, we must insist that at all stages of the talks there is a full report back to all workers.

A.C.E.C. WORKER

INFINITE MERCY — BUT NOT FOR SOME

By
EAMONN McCANN

WHEN I WAS a small boy I was taught by the nuns that the mercy of God is infinite. Now I know better. Archbishop Dwyer of Birmingham is a big man in the Roman Catholic Church and I have to take his word for it that the mercy of the Catholics' God does not extend to those who enter the afterlife via politically-inconvenient crime.

Dwyer decided in November that there could be no requiem mass for the few fragments they found of the Provo bomber James McDaid, a decision which called forth bouzannas of happy praise from every bourgeois newspaper and politician in Britain. Like every other RC dignitary these days Dwyer seems to have a hot-line to heaven which enable him to keep upsides with the changing political position of God the Father. Thus he is able to hold forth on the definitive "Christian" attitude to this of that political issue, telling his flock the Sunday after the Birmingham bombs that it was their religious duty to support whatever measures the government took against "terrorism"

As an atheist, the pronouncements of these gaudily-dressed merchants of mumbo-jumbo are ordinarily of little interest to me. But as a socialist I am compelled to take them seriously when they enter the political arena on the side of the class enemy. And that is what they are doing, and doing more and more openly.

When politics were stagnant in these islands the Catholic Hierarchy was able to maintain plausibly that its role was "spiritual". On one or two occasions, mostly in the South, it was forced to put at least one foot over the line into political territory: on the issue of the Mother and Child Bill, for example. But for the most part it was content to stay in the background, knowing that its virtually unchallenged control of "Catholic education" was enough to preserve its position within a society to its liking.

Then came the troubles in the North. Tens of thousands of Catholic working class kids rejected authority: all authority. Because having decided they were not going to be pushed around by police, they were suddenly less than willing to be pushed around by priests either. Attendance at Mass declined, and some clerics who had never had the word tuned

in their mouths were being told to "fuck off" by members of the rioting classes. A traumatic experience surely.

The Church was alarmed. It always is when a status quo wherein it is comfortably ensconced is threatened. In Ireland it was very alarmed because in Ireland it had been very comfortably ensconced. And, moreover, the new anti-authoritarianism was being expressed, in part, in disrespect for the rules and representatives of the Church itself.

Which is not to say that it is or was merely an Irish problem. The "crisis of authority" was a reflection of something deeper and more wide-ranging. In Britain, as in the rest of the western world, there was nervousness about the future of "society as we know it", a growing uncertainty about the ability of political and economic institutions to survive the tensions of political and economic crisis.



Edward Daly

It is in such situations that churches — not just the Roman Catholic one — have to begin to play their political role in public. It is no longer enough to murmur quiet platitudes about "behaving in a Christian manner". Specific political positions have to be adopted. Cardinal Heenan has to come within a hairsbreadth of saying that it is a sin to go on unofficial strike. The Anglican Bishop of Southwark feels called upon to tell the readers of the 'News of the World' (!) the Social Contract is akin to a deal struck between God and mankind. Bishop Philbin, no longer able to operate via telephone calls to Catholic MPs, has to mount his pulpit to denounce named political parties. And the grotesque Dwyer goes on television to announce that Roy Jenkins stands at the right hand of God with a special mandate for the exorcism of diabolical Paddies.

That trio of ecclesiastical troglodytes are, of course, shamans of the old school. In response to the crisis there has also been emerged a more trendy class of cleric: "Eddie" Daly of Derry, for example. He doesn't go in for the bible-and-thunder denunciations of "evil men in our midst". Not very much anyway. He is more your man-of-the-people, cracking risqué jokes with the parishioners, saying mass at Magilligan Camp and coming on strong about the ill-effects of internment. A great man for the candle-lit marches. He deals with the problem of disaffected youth, not by trying crudely to stamp the disaffection out, but by making a show of "understanding" it, updating the image of the Church, retuning it to suit the tenor of the times.

OPEN ASSAULT

Philbin would like to destroy radicalism by open assault. Daly thinks it more efficacious to kill it with kindness. It is a tactical difference, no principle involved. The aim of each is to ensure that as events shake society, the grip which the Catholic Church has taken on a considerable section of the Irish population is not loosened.

The Catholic Church is the enemy of the Irish working class. It is one of capitalism's chief ideological policemen in this country, peddling bourgeois poison, and it is not the least of the Irish left's failures that it has never found the nerve to face up to it. For example: whatever our disagreements with the Provos, and with no sentimentality whatever about lumps of dead flesh, it was disgraceful that the Left as a whole had near-nothing to say about the long furtive trek of James McDaid's body back to Belfast. Approval or disapproval of bombs in Britain has nothing to do with it. As Marxists we know, or are supposed to know, who, ultimately, is responsible for the war, and it isn't the likes of James McDaid; the obscene suggestion that it is, from the lips of an obese British Bishop, should heartily have been spat on.

POTENTIAL OF THE MASS STRUGGLE

(from page 1)

NOW THE alternative we find ourselves faced with seems to be one between more of the same of the Provisional campaign, or a steady accommodation by the Provisionals to the polite, and futile, talk of the established institutions. Neither is acceptable. Only recently there had been evidence of the willingness of the nationalist population to give some mass backing to the struggle against repression; there were large, spontaneous demonstrations of support for internees, and bitter demonstrations of anger at the shooting of Gerry Conroy. The Provisionals are unable to relate to that, unable to help develop that; they don't even pay it much attention. The first mention of a ceasefire which people in the areas which have given the Provos their support heard was on radio or T.V. They were again reduced to being passive spectators in a spectacle which affects them centrally and crucially.

The Provisionals are caught on their own hook. They want any kind of gesture from the British to help them off it. And if the British can find the right kind of gesture it will give them the advantage, it will undermine the support for the Provos and for a militant struggle against imperialism it will encourage the notion that changes can be brought by pressuring them, and eventually, it will give the initiative to the SDLP who are more experienced operators of the political machine. An indefinite ceasefire (and one in which the IRA did not reserve the right to take reciprocal action for specific repressive activities of the British troops) would be a defeat for the IRA. It would allow the re-introduction of the RUC into Catholic areas; it would give the British government a chance to prepare for the convention elections on the terms most suiting them.

At the time of writing, the Loyalists are making their presence more sharply felt again. The pressure they put on the British government could cause the breaking of the ceasefire. Certainly their confidence in regard to the coming Convention elections can only increase the threats to the Catholic population. In this situation, the IRA must insist on the right to carry out actions in defence of the Catholic population against any sectarian or military attack. We urge rank and file Provisionals to oppose any tendency in their leadership which would sell the struggle short, and to use the ceasefire to build up a mass political movement which can carry on the struggle against repression and against the military occupation. Above all, they must make it clear both inside and outside the organisation that the politics needed to guide the struggle is not backroom manoeuvring in which only the leaders take initiatives. The politics of the fight to defeat imperialism, revolutionary working class politics, must be fought for openly in the working class around the proposal for a united front against repression, around demands which bring the workers forward to challenge the power of the bosses. For that is the power at the centre of imperialism.