

THE WORKER

FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

THE LIST OF BROKEN PROMISES



WAGES

Held down while inflation raged at 20 per cent.

JOBS

One thousand jobs were lost in April alone.

NATIONAL ENTERPRISE BOARD

This con was used to get the last Understanding — and appears like magic just in time for the next one.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES

Funds cut by 72 per cent after inflation.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES

Funds cut by 59 per cent after inflation.

POVERTY

The funding for Combat Poverty was slashed.

HEALTH

Funds slashed, worsening conditions for patients. Cuts in funds to Meals on Wheels, Home Help, etc. An effective 45 per cent cut in the Government's payment to the social insurance fund.

EDUCATION

No increase in funds to the Free School Book Scheme, which means a cut after inflation.

TAXATION

Relief for big business — a spit in the eye for the thousands who marched to demand tax reform.

THE UNIONS

Our "Leaders" get to dine with Charlie and his cronies, while the cabinet draws up anti-union legislation.

NO WONDER CHARLIE'S LAUGHING!!!

HE WHO
PAYE,S
THE PIPER
CALL'S THE TUNE
THE WORKER



THEY'RE at it again. The Federated Union of Employers want workers to accept a wage freeze when the present National Understanding ends. John Carroll of the ITGWU huffs and puffs about how he wants big increases for his members. It's all so depressingly familiar.

Each time that one wage-restricting agreement is about to run out the bosses, the union leaders and the politicians go into their ritual. Will they make it? Can they agree? And then, in the dying minutes of the game, as Jimmy Magee might put it, they "reach a formula," mount a big propaganda campaign — and our wages are tied down again.

Last time, it wasn't a Wage Agreement, it was an "Understanding" — we were given to understand that the government would move mountains on our behalf if we'd just accept the shackles once more. We know what's happened to those promises.

Before the last deal was accepted, John Carroll pointed out that it went against crucial trade union principles — and vowed that he would lead us "to defend those principles with our lives if necessary." Since then, he and his ilk have had no problem renegeing on

those trade union principles and tying our unions into the apparatus of the state in return for spurious promises. They had no compunction about arranging the May 21 conference to consider renegeing on those principles again by considering a further "Understanding."

The experience has shown — if it needed to be shown after the past decade of Wagecut Agreements — that such strategies weaken the organisation of the unions, hold down wages — and that the idea that the trade union leaders get some say in running the economy is pure fiction.

The place for the trade union movement is not in the boardrooms and cabinet rooms playing footsy with the elite while they pick our pockets. Our job is to confront them where it matters — on the job — cutting back on the profits which they are making out of us and on the control

they have over our lives. Some trade unionists are setting about that job — it's up to every worker who wants to see out unions strong and our wage packets thicker to join in that fight

Union anti-nukes

GEORGE Colley's fancy dancing on the issue of nuclear power has taken none of the urgency out of getting the trade union movement committed to opposing a nuclear power programme. Formed at a meeting in Liberty Hall on 22nd March, the Trade Union Anti Nuclear Campaign is aiming to secure that commitment this year.

Active supporters of the campaign will be presenting anti-nuclear resolutions at the annual conferences of the Irish Post Office Engineering Union and of the Federated Workers' Union of Ireland in the coming weeks. TUANC also plans to hold a meeting in Belfast when the Irish Congress of Trade Unions meet there in July.

Two of the teachers' unions had anti-nuclear resolutions on their conference agendas at Easter. The Irish National Teachers' Organi-

sation didn't reach theirs. But the Teachers' Union of Ireland adopted, with only two or three voting against, a resolution opposing nuclear power and uranium mining. The conference of the Civil Service Executive Union later passed a resolution opposing nuclear power "unless approved by a referendum" after the longest debate of the CSEU conference.

TUANC is looking for recruits — trade unionists who oppose nuclear power and uranium exploration or mining and who want to work to get the whole trade union movement committed to that position. Until a permanent address has been found send £1 (fee for 6 months) together with name, address and union to Catherine Griffith, 52 Ranelagh Road, Dublin 6. A newsletter will be issued shortly to all paid-up supporters.

STEWARDS PLAN FIGHT

AFTER a stop-start year in which the latest move to initiate a Shop Stewards Movement has been floated among the (particularly Dublin) labour movement, a Conference of Shop Stewards was held in Dublin on 19th April.

It attracted 60 stewards and other representatives from 18 unions at different times throughout the day. While indicating a substantial degree of support for the idea of a Shop Steward Movement, the attendance was not a strong

enough basis for the actual launching, yet, of such a movement. Consequently the Conference endorsed "the aim of building a national Shop Steward Movement" which would "provide an alternative voice, within the trade union, to the policies and practices of the present leadership, and to provide

continued on page 3.

CIE The Driver Kelly case

MOST BUSES in Dublin are being driven illegally and CIE know it and have been covering it up for years.

Now they are threatening the sack against a driver who refuses to continue breaking the law.

UNTIL 1974, Dublin bus-workers worked a six day week. But following a bitter and defeated strike for a five day week — which split the unions because of the strings attached — a compromise 5.4 day week of forty hours was introduced.

The snag was that this required bus workers to work periods of seven days without a rest day.

But, as was pointed out to the unions at the time and ever since, this was against the 1963 Road Traffic Regulations.

These voices of dissent were

drowned by the enthusiasm of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and National Busmen's Union leadership, relieved at having freed their heads from the garden rails of an inter-Union dispute.

The company were happy to allow this illegal shift system because it saved them the trouble of conceding a five day week and provided them with a bargaining counter with which to try to win One Man Operation.

continued on page 6.

TEACHERS ADVANCE NO TO CHURCH CONTROL

The Irish National Teachers Organisation has been pushed to pass a resolution calling for the rules for National Schools to be changed so that teachers won't be obliged to teach denominational religion.

The relevant rule, which was drawn up by the Department of Education, clearly demonstrates how the reactionary attitudes of the church totally support a conservative state. And it is worth quoting:

"Of all the parts of a school curriculum, religious instruction is by far the most important . . . The teacher should constantly inculcate the practice of charity, justice, truth, purity, patience, temperance, obedience to lawful authority, and all other moral virtues. In this way he [sic] will fulfill the primary duty of an educator, the moulding to form of his [sic] pupils' character."

Apart from intruding on the basic rights of a teacher to freedom of conscience, the aim is to "mould" little carbon copies of the establishment's perfect child: obedient to the authority of the state and its various arms, accepting the

"lawful" order of class and property relations, "inculcated" with the church's attitude to sexual relations (sorry, that should read "purity"), including the oppressive relationship between men and women.

Although the state pays over 95% of the cost of education it is happy to leave control in the hands of the church — the church gets a free hand to brain wash and recruit supporters in return for stamping out those qualities which don't fit into an exploitative capitalism.

The growing number of teachers objecting to this set-up forced the INTO to pass the resolution objecting to the forced teaching of denominational religion. Last Easter, at the INTO Conference, well over a third of the delegates walked out when Monsignor John McCarthy, chairperson of the Catholic Primary School Managers, rose to speak. Rule 13 which says that a two-thirds majority of delegates must consent before an outsider can address the conference, had been ignored by the Executive — who were fearful that McCarthy would be rejected.

The INTO has been in dispute with the CPSM since 1978 over the issue of primary school management. The present Management Boards consist of two parents' representatives, two teachers and six nominees of the patron (the bishop).

McCarthy's speech, in which he said that the church wants "to have structures which ensure Catholic control through the patron," demonstrates that the church is still refusing to give up an ounce of control which they have had over national schools since 1831. The church will make no concessions to the INTO's not very radical demand that the three interests involved, parents, teachers and church, should each have two people on management boards.

Even in a "catholic country" they know they cannot trust their "laity." That is why they insist on the church hierarchy maintaining direct control.

The overhead cost of that control is a highly inefficient system of management — even in 1966, over half all national schools had no drinking water. A quarter of national schools have been declared obsolete by the Office of Public Works. No wonder, when management is in the hands of those who know little or nothing about education outside of propagating their brand of religion.

It is up to parents and teachers to take on the church. The 3 teachers unions can act as a major weapon in that struggle.

But they need to be pushed. The Teachers Action Alliance exists to keep up that pressure. Contact TAA, 27 Charleston Ave, Dublin 6 — phone 971109.

NEW T.A.A. PAMPHLET

THE Teachers' Action Alliance, a rank and file teachers group with supporters in the three teachers' unions — INTO, TUI and ASTI, have produced a second pamphlet. The first which argued the need for unity and merger between the three unions, has been sold out.

The new pamphlet, "Sexism in Irish Education", is a well documented exposure of the way that sexist attitudes run through the whole education system.

Firstly there is the fact that most girls go to single sex secondary schools where traditional academic type subjects are taught and Home Economics is the only practical subject. The pamphlet points out that in the Leaving Certificate in 1978, 1,310 boys took Applied Maths but only 68 girls did likewise.

The main point stressed by TAA, however, is that "equality of access to education will on its own not guarantee equal treatment of both sexes... all educational systems pass on a set of values and this hidden curriculum will determine how the students see society and their own role within it."

The argument is that children are conditioned by the status quo in society to believe that girls and boys have "natural" subjects in which they are interested — the subjects are themselves "masculine" or "feminine".

"Metalwork must not only be open to the girl, but she must not be conditioned into believing that home econo-



mics is her 'natural subject'.

Even at the earliest age sex differentiation is plain to see.

"A survey of children's picture books has shown that girls are found playing insignificant roles, remaining both inconspicuous and nameless." The pamphlet shows how the reading material available at primary school level reinforces and exaggerates traditional sex roles in society.

Many examples are given: "Daddy works outside the, at his job . . . at home he sits in the armchair. Drives the car and buys everything except cakes for tea. Mammy works in the house, cooking, ironing, never drives the car. Always fussing about cakes for the tea."

The pamphlet shows the key role played by the church in stereotyping society. A large majority of secondary schools, for example, are still under church control — and 75% of them are single sex

schools. Right up to Leaving Cert standard, therefore, the ideas boys and girls have of themselves are moulded for them by a sexist society, and its backward education system.

The result is a society in which discrimination against women is more rampant than in any other European country. To date, Irish society has not even reached a stage where basic rights for women such as access to free contraception and abortion is available.

The TAA pamphlet serves both as a weapon for those teachers who see the need to combat the traditional sexist methods of education and as a general introduction to the rest of us to the way the education system functions in society.

The pamphlet is available, at 20p plus 12p postage, from TAA 27, Charleston Avenue, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

Review by Dermot Byrne

Flats: the worms come crawling out

IT'S FUNNY how the same worms come crawling out time after time. In 1977 a certain Mr. Madigan, a Dublin solicitor, was brought to court for harassment and intimidation of his tenants, and fined £1,000 plus costs. He had bought a house, very cheaply with a number of sitting tenants, which he planned to sell off quickly with vacant possession and so double his money. But sometimes even the best plans fall to pieces. His tenants didn't want to leave, and so Mr. Madigan was forced into using strong-arm tactics — and failed.

Mr. Madigan has once again come to notice. He was one of the six landlords — members of the Landlords Association, who brought a case to the High Court on the Constitutionality of the Rent Acts. One effect of the High Court decision is that the estimated 6,000 old age pensioners living in rent-controlled flats are under the threat of eviction as there is no way that £15 a week pensioners could afford to pay the £25 weekly rents landlords are demanding for single furnished rooms.

The High Court decision also means that all future lettings will be made under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1860, which allows landlords to raise rents by any amount or to evict tenants at will. Ireland will be the only E.E.C. country with no tenant protection legislation.

The government will be appealing against the High Court decision but whether they win or lose their appeal, so long as the control of flats is left in the hands of private individuals like Mr. Madigan and his ilk, the present system of scarcity of accommodation, no security of tenure, high rents and lousy conditions will continue.

Collins's barbaric prison

GENE FITZGERALD, the Minister for Labour, told his bosses at the Irish Management Institute Conference recently that we may soon introduce new tough anti-union legislation. We now have a good idea where trade-unionists and militants on the left who actively oppose this legislation will be imprisoned.

On April 30th, Gerry Collins, the Minister for Justice, extended for another three years the Military Detention Centre for civilian prisoners at the Curragh. Justifying the renewal of this barbaric prison, Collins said that a special type of prison was needed for 'persons with suspicious motives' who

"promoted or actively engaged in seriously disruptive activity" and who had "active sympathisers outside" supporting them.

At present, only supporters of the Prisoners' Rights Organisation fit that description. But it is all too clear that it is wide enough to embrace the kind of opposition the Government's new Thatcherite legislation will surely meet.

Of course, Collins did not admit the real reason why he is renewing the Curragh. It has nothing to do with the Prisoners' Rights Organisation, but rather concerns the new secret 400 cell prison built beside the Detention centre. During the debate in the Dail, Collins had the temerity to deny point-blank that such a prison existed — even though his

notorious predecessor, Mr. Cooney admitted its existence to him when he was in opposition some years ago!

The renewal of the Curragh concentration camp means that prisoners there will have to endure for another three years a prison in which the psychiatric authorities are guilty of "medical malpractice" according to Dr. Noel Browne (two-thirds of the prisoners at one stage were on drugs, some actually receiving personality changing psycho-tropic treatment; in which prisoners are frequently strip searched, and subjected to two-month stretches of solitary confinement; in which letters and visits are arbitrarily withheld; and in which no education or useful employment of any kind is available to prisoners.

Prisoners who complain to the Visiting Committee are physically assaulted — one time actually in front of the V.C. . . From the authorities point of view this is understandable: since it opened the V.C.'s, comprising of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour appointments (depending on who's in power), have consistently exposed the brutal conditions in what is probably the most primitive civilian prison in Europe.

In case Trade Unionists and other militant imagine that they will never be at the receiving end of these kind of emergency measures, a recent development is another area of 'emergency legislation should cause one to think twice. For the first time, the special Criminal Court, supposedly intended for paramilitaries only, has been used to try ordinary civilians up on non-scheduled offences (i.e. offences not involving arms) — in this case, alleged larceny of a car and possession of a house-breaking implement.

The usefulness of this ominous practice for a Government intent on confrontation with the labour movement need hardly be underlined. It is up to militants in trade unions to make sure that this insidious 'normalisation' of so-called emergency measures does not go unchallenged.



Jean-Paul Sartre

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE, who died on April 15th in Paris, was one of the outstanding figures in 20th century Marxism. He was perhaps the last of that rare breed: the major writer and thinker who also figured prominently in all the major social upheavals of his time. Like Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg, his life was a fusion of theory and practice.

Sartre's lasting contribution to the revolutionary movement was that he not only used Marxism as a critique of Western society — he also used it to show up the so-called "socialism" of the Eastern Bloc, particularly in its Stalinist form.

Like many Western intellectuals, the experience of the Resistance movement had brought him into close contact with left-wing politics. In 1948 he founded an independent socialist group, the Revolutionary Democratic Rally. When it collapsed, and the Cold War set in, Sartre gravitated towards the Communist Party. During the next two decades, however, the Soviet invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the French CP's refusal to come out clearly against the Algerian war and above all, the defeat of the May '68 events due to Communist Party machinations, all worked to turn Sartre into one of the most implacable left wing critics of Communist Party reformist politics.

Throughout this period, though, Sartre did not let up on political activities. Travelling extensively to, among other places, Algeria, China and Cuba, he came to be a leading protagonist for Third World liberation movements and took a prominent role in the Stockholm Tribunal on U.S. War Crimes in Vietnam.

Sartre's early philosophy — existentialism — was characterised by two central themes — atheism and freedom. It is up to humanity, he argued, to become master of its own destiny, to shake off all escapist illusions such as religion, political rule from above, etc.

Many read into this view of life a philosophy marked by aimless, restless individualism. In its popular form, it became the hallmark of the fifties — the generation gap, the questioning of authority, the Beat generation, all summed up in the moody anti-hero of the film "Rebel Without a Cause."

By this time, however, Sartre had found a cause — Marxism. In 1957 he stopped liberals and anti-heroes alike in their tracks when he announced that "Marxism is the one philosophy of our time that we cannot go beyond."

The basis of his new philosophy was class consciousness — Rebellion to be effective must be a

collective rather than an individual activity. Even to be a disorganised group was not enough — he compared this to people in a bus queue, crowded together alright, but each one fending for themselves without any overall concerted aim. Only organisation brings class consciousness.

But why of all groups was the working class uniquely situated to achieve human liberation? Sartre's answer was that it was the producing class — through work and labour alone, humanity masters nature and conquers the age-old problem of material scarcity. Only then can true human freedom get off the ground. In saying this, however, Sartre was insistent that in organising itself for this task, the working class can achieve its own liberation. Any party or leadership which purports to represent the working class from above, which sees itself as the reservoir of class consciousness, is a hindrance rather than a help on the road to revolution.

Ireland did not fall outside the range of Sartre's activities. When public opinion in Ireland failed to organise a support group for theatre director Alan Simpson, who was imprisoned in 1958 for contravening the contraception laws by staging the play "The Rose Tattoo", it was left to Sartre and others on the continent to campaign on his behalf. Likewise, when Marie and Noel Murray was sentenced to death some years ago, Sartre was prominent among supporters of the "Relieve the Murrays" campaign.

Sartre's most enduring interest in Ireland, however has been in the anti-imperialist struggle. In 1971 he devoted a 1,000 page issue of his journal *Les Temps Modernes* to Northern Ireland. In the same year, he helped found the magazine *Liberation* which has since acted as a monitor on the British presence in the North. All during the last decade, moreover, he has lent his support to numerous campaigns and protests, especially those calling for the recognition of political status

Needless to mention, Sartre's works, even his novels were banned in Ireland. In the early fifties the Vatican paid him a special tribute by bringing out an absurd encyclical against him. On his death, the Vatican newspaper noted the passing of "one of the most disreputable figures of the European intelligentsia." Praise doesn't come higher than that!

Marx said that philosophers should seek not just to understand but also to change the world. Uniquely among philosophers, Sartre's life bears eloquent testimony to that remark.

Sinister find under

priest's bed



YOU DON'T get priests denouncing local strikes from the pulpit these days. At least, not very often. I recall that some time ago the p.p. in Arklow got stuck into the fitters whose dispute shut down the NET fertiliser plant near the town for several months.

It's not that the Catholic Church's commitment to the ruling class has changed. But it is no longer expressed so crudely. With the flock drifting away from their authority they had had to identify with some of their grievances.

So, Michael Cleary takes up the cause of young Ballyfermot couples desperately trying to get Corporation houses. At the same time, he uses his Sunday *Indo* column to bludgeon those who dare challenge the church's control of education.

Shock

Brian D'Arcy, in the Sunday *World*, uses the same method: a little bit of this, a bigger bit of that. "I don't believe in reds or the beds scares", he wrote recently at the tail end of a reds under the bed scare about the "sinister influence of anarchist groups in the unions."

Decrying the grip which "sinister elements" have on workers' groups, "for their own evil ends", he was careful to slip in, almost casually, that he, too, is a trade unionist.

I can vouch for that, even if there's nothing else in that column I can vouch for. Brian is a member of the same branch of the National Union of Jour-

lists of which I was a member until recently. Indeed — and I blush as I recall it — we supported the same proposals from time to time.

But for the "growing evidence" which D'Arcy claims to know of that these "radical groups" (anarchist, sinister, trotskyst, radical — it's all the same) are influencing workers and fomenting strikes, he offers not one example.

Horror

What has him so upset is a booklet called "Going on Strike, a guide for trade unionists to organising a dispute. It is published by Rank and File, a London coordinating centre of 13 pressure groups operating openly and publicly in different unions, industries and services.

For D'Arcy it is a "dangerous document" and full of "controversial advice". And, what's worse, "it is obviously being followed by many radical groups here". If there are more than a dozen copies of the booklet in the country that's a surprise but D'Arcy manages to conjure up an image of a major onslaught on Ireland by the people behind the booklet.

D'Arcy identifies these people wrongly as the Socialist Workers' Party. That's interesting, because there is a connection between Rank and File and the SWP in Britain but D'Arcy wouldn't know about that unless somebody told him. Like somebody who specialises in reds under the beds stuff.

The trendy priest (and ambitious too — see how he got the gig to preach at the Noel Lemass commemoration, with CJH present?) claims he has had letters from ten Irish trade unionists who have been sent this material by the SWP. Far be it from me to suggest that a man of the cloth is lying. But it just isn't true. Neither Rank and File nor the SWP have sent unsolicited copies of the booklet to anybody in Ireland. D'Arcy is just having visions —

In fact the Sunday *World* was only limping behind the other two Dublin Sunday papers in raising a scare about the possible influence of this booklet in Ireland. The Sunday *Press* did it last summer soon after *Going On Strike* was published and the Sunday *Indo* did it more recently. Could it be that the one copy is circulating among them? Or is it the same red-baiter putting them up to it?

Dolly Parton

If you can penetrate the fog the booklet is worth looking at. It's a very straightforward account of trade union organisation, preparation for a dispute, the organising of pickets, how to win solidarity, and so on. It's written unashamedly from the workers point of view and with the purpose of helping them win. For people (namely priests and politicians) who would prefer to bel-



I believe in the possibility of uninterrupted industrial harmony, that's already a bit too much.

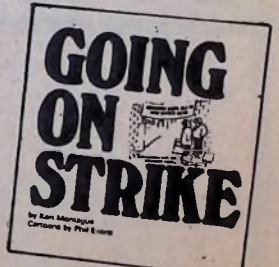
But when the booklet goes on to stress the importance of the strikers keeping the initiative themselves and preventing the strike being undermined by scabs or conciliatory officials, D'Arcy goes bananas. He misquotes the booklet, makes no reference to its cautions ("Don't just walk out whatever happens") and paints a lurid picture of Guy Fawkes figures planting bombs beneath the solid edifice of trade unionism.

The booklet emphasises democracy in action — the need for elected committees, for delegation of responsibilities, for frequent mass meetings, for everybody to be involved in picketing, and for everybody to have some task. It is in this context that the author, Ken Montague, argues against the soliciting activities of apparently sympathetic fulltime officials who want to take over everything. Coming from an organisation in which none of the officials is elected and the top one is infallible, D'Arcy swings all his ecclesiastical authority behind the much abused branch secretaries.

Scandal

The booklet is indeed emphatic: "Never allow anyone to take rol of your strike out of your hands. It's for the strikers and their strike committee to run the strike and be seen to run it." There's much more in the booklet that is well-established trade union practice, all of it drawn together to help encourage trade unionists' confidence in their own powers. There is absolutely nothing in it about manipulation.

If Brian D'Arcy can name two of the ten trade unionists he alleges wrote to him complaining about having received this he can have a free subscription to the *Worker* for life. — and the life hereafter. But there are certainly more than ten trade unionists who would now be interested to read this booklet. If they send 35p to the *Worker*, they'll get it in the post — under plain covers, of course.



From 35 Woodbine Rd, Raheen, Dublin 5.

Stewards plan fight

continued from page 1.

an arena of solidarity between shop stewards.

The Conference elected an Organising Committee to work towards the launching of a movement. The Committee was immediately charged with organising a campaign against the forthcoming second National Understanding, posing as an alternative: full support for all catch-up claims or claims for real increases on the widest possible basis of unity, to be fought for through rank and file controlled free collective bargaining" and "full equal pay for women workers".

The question of a national minimum wage was referred to the Organising Committee.

The Conference discussed how the tax campaign could be revived and what tax demands should be pursued by a Shop Stewards Movement. The following platform on

tax was adopted: "For full automatic compensation for inflation in tax bands and allowance; for a steeply progressive income tax on middle and large farmers and the self-employed; for tax allowance against rent payments; for a progressive wealth tax and capital gains tax; no more tax holidays and opposition to the reduction of corporation profits tax; no cuts in Government social spending; for direct industrial action to win the tax demands of the TU movement".

On the campaign itself it was felt that the Dublin Trades Council's resolution for the withdrawal of the ICTU from the Governments' Tax Commission should be pushed at other Trades Councils; that Trades Councils could hold public meetings on tax and there could be a national meeting of Councils on the issue. The ICTU Conference could be lobbied.

Other items adopted as the

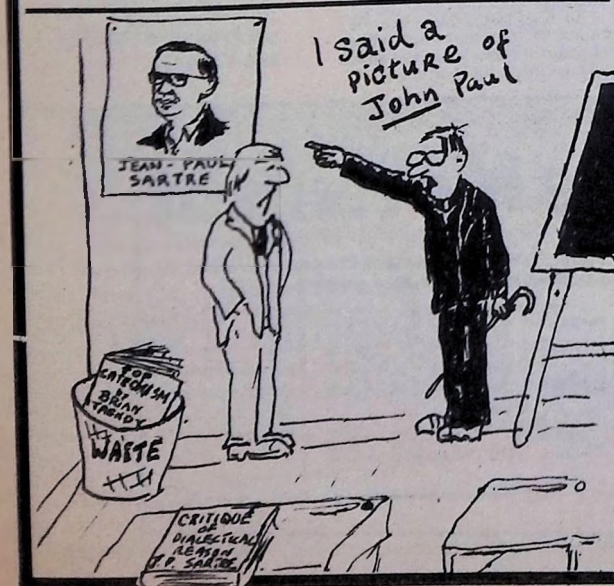
Conference's platform were "Opposition to attacks on unofficial strikes or imposition of secret ballots by Government legislation; opposition to redundancies and closures; for the right of trade unionists to join the union of their choice.

The Organising Committee is made up of members from the ITGWU, the ATGWU Irish Municipal Employees, FWUI, TUI, NEETU; from the "Busworker" paper and from the Teachers Action Alliance. The geographical spread includes Dublin, Limerick, Waterford, Caran, Belfast, Navan, Shannon and Galway.

An example of the benefits of a Shop Stewards Movement was seen when a steward at the Conference from the CIE Freight strike in Cabra, Dublin met other CIE stewards and discussed wider support with them.

Des Derwin

(ITGWU Steward)



Worker participation

TRADE UNION NEWS

COME INTO THE PARLOUR...

BLUE IS the colour of the Government's discussion paper entitled "Worker's Participation" — and it seems to come out of the blue.

TOM O'CONNOR examines the latest expression of capitalism's strategy of disarming the trade union movement — and finds that while our rulers are as ready as ever to throw punches, they are hoping that a bearhug might do the job even better.

THERE IS no obvious reason why a Fianna Fail Government, not noted for its interest in industrial relations, (apart from a Commission for anti-union legislation, a recently passed bill to cut redundancy payments and a constant striving to keep the trade union movement docile and bound by restrictive "agreements" and "undertakings") should suddenly produce a major discussion document on this topic. On investigation, there seems to be three sources for this document.

First, there is the continuing pressure from the EEC. Capitalists on the Continent, with a wary eye on the future, legislated for worker participation schemes shortly after the War, to provide an alternative to a strong rank and file based union movement.

Their early start has by now given their strategy a measure of success. In line with EEC policy of promoting Europe-wide companies, Brussels is pushing member Governments to pass similar legislation on company structure. And worker participation forms part of this.

Secondly, the discussion document, with a clear promise by the Minister for Labour to follow it up with legislation, can be seen as another attempt to suck the union movement into the system. The more the unions become part of the establishment, the less a threat they are to the capitalist system.

The National Understanding was a major step in this direction. Now the unions are "negotiating" at a national level about jobs, tax, health benefits and so on.

The increasing reliance on the Labour Court and the refusal of union leaders to make many strikes official are other features of this incorporation.

Sometimes it is hard to distinguish between the statements of union full-timers and capitalist politicians, indeed, it can be difficult to remember which side the union official is supposed to be on.

At least Gene Fitzgerald, the Minister for Labour knows which side he is on. It is not in the interests of the capitalists he represents to have workers thinking of

themselves as a class. So he specifically says in his introduction to the paper:

"In a rapidly developing industrial society, we must find a new order, an order, not based on the old class concept, but designed to reconcile the demands for social justice and individual freedom with modern industrial development and technology." (my emphasis).

Finally, the above quote points to the main reason for opening discussions on Worker Participation again — new technology. The paper is littered with references to the need for work-reorganisation, flexibility and doing away with union demarcation.

In other words, preparing workers to accept changes so that the new micro-electronic technology can be brought in with the minimum of fuss.

And as the icing on the participation cake, the document goes on to discuss profit-sharing. Presumably, if workers get a minute share of profits, they won't notice that these same profits came from their back pockets in the first place.

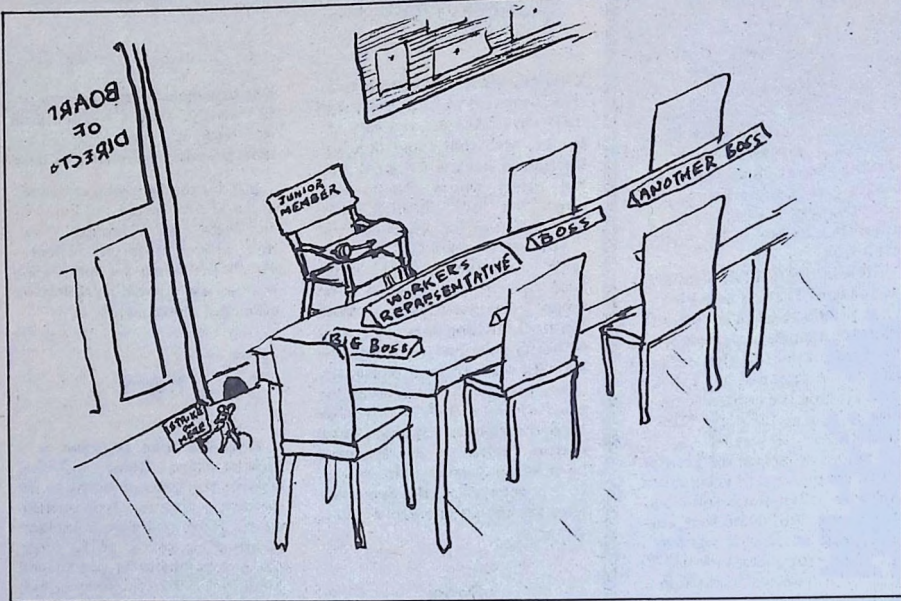
IN GENERAL we should be suspicious when a government (that, unlike the Labour Party, does not even pretend to represent the interests of the workers) introduces "progressive" legislation, without prior pressure from the working class.

Over the next few months and years, we will be deluged with plenty of arguments in favour of this "industrial democracy". About the only argument that comes near validity is that worker-directors would gain access to information on company plans not otherwise available.

However, on a recent radio programme, Rodney Rice interviewed some of the worker-directors on the boards of five state companies that were included in the "Worker Participation (State Enterprises) Act, 1977 (two companies have yet to elect worker-directors). Most of them were disappointed in their experience on the boards. The information they received was very much of the watered-down variety. They rarely learned of anything that was immediately relevant and otherwise not available to the trade unions.

They also felt that the real decisions were taken by management with the board of directors acting as a rubber stamp.

To what extent does the "Workers Participation" strategy bring



about real "participation" and "industrial democracy"? The "democracy" consists of one vote every three years — ten opportunities to vote in your lifetime if you are lucky enough to live long or hold on to your job!

The concept of rank and file democracy — yearly elections, right to mandate and to recall the representatives, responsibility on the representatives to report back to the workers — is thrown out of the window.

As regards "participation", the worker-directors are always in a minority. The ICTU has on paper a policy of demanding 50% representation, but the full time officials just laugh this off as being over-optimistic. And to rub salt into the wounds, the workers sit on Supervisory Boards, which are backroom forums that can only comment on the decisions taken in the Management Boards where no workers will sit.

The 1977 Act allowed for one-third worker-directors on the Management Boards, but the Minister for Labour indicates in the present discussion document that he's thinking of changing this to the European model of Supervisory Boards

BUT EVEN so, is there any harm in having worker-directors? Yes! We can argue this in two levels. First of all on the political level, worker participation not only does not challenge the fundamental class character of this society, but gives implied support to the class

society. The Government's document is full of phrases such as "co-operation rather than conflict," "remove sources of discontent," "complementary development" and "workers... future depends on the successful operation... of their company."

In other words, the concept of worker participation denies that there are two main opposing classes, workers and employers, and pretends that we are all in the same boat and depend on each other for survival. It denies that employers exploit workers, but pretends that each section get their fair share.

Just to prove this, the document discusses profit-sharing and worker-share-ownership, avoiding the fact that workers have no control over industry so that they are forced to make profits for the capitalists.

Secondly, on the trade union level, worker participation is a threat to the strength of the Irish union movement. This strength derives from the fact that the unions were built from the shop-floor upwards — unlike the European unions — and remain independent of the state.

This independence is being eroded by the union bureaucracies' increased involvement in national bargaining, state controlled conciliation and involvement in state boards and commissions. The rank and file base of the unions prevents them being totally incorporated into the state. But worker participation further threatens rank and file control.

As shown above, it blurs the power relations at a society level and also at plant level. Control of

investment decisions is the key to power in the factories, but workers participation is not workers control. Also, participation on the boards requires that worker-directors reach agreement with the bosses on issues.

Nor do these representatives have special privileges. They are not full timers, but continue to work along side their colleagues and continue to experience the working conditions. They are paid the average wage, not directors' salaries. And they are not bound to secrecy, but bound to report back fully to their work mates.

Only by a representative system such as this can we start the fight for workers control — only under socialism can we achieve real workers control.

Finally, I suspect that the bosses will use worker participation to weaken a strong shop steward committee. It is too early to judge from the English experience, but indications are from the European case, that worker participation mainly operates where one would expect to find strong unions (for example, engineering, coal and so on). The Government document says that the Minister for Labour will provide "enabling legislation which would facilitate the formation of the two tier system [Supervisory Boards] where this is viewed by companies here to be in their own interests" (p. 25, my emphasis).

In other words the bosses will choose whether they want worker-directors. I suspect that the bosses will use this as an alternative focus

to the shop stewards, and encourage workers to bring grievances through the worker-directors rather than the shop stewards. Needless to say, where the union is weak in a factory the bosses won't even consider worker participation. As one wisecrack put it "It's not so much the unions participating in management as management participating in the unions!"

However, it will not be easy for socialists and militant trade unionists to argue against the flood of worker participation propaganda that we can expect from the employers, mass-media, the Government and trade union leaders over the next few months. Against this flood, our analysis would be seen as negative. What we should do is argue for workers control every time the question of participation arises.

By workers control, we mean control of workers representatives of investment decisions at every level of the company — board, plant and shop floor. That means calling for real industrial democracy which means that workers in the factory elect representatives on a yearly basis. That the representative truly represents the workers by reporting back regularly and accepting mandates from them. That the workers have the right to recall their representatives when necessary and to replace them.

In next month's issue, we look at women in the Unions.

SUBSCRIBE

"THE WORKER" is produced by the SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT.

If you like this paper, then why not subscribe and have it delivered each month to your door?

I wish to subscribe to "The Worker" and enclose £1.30 for six months/£2.50 for 1 year. (Cheques etc made out to Socialist Workers Movement.)

Send to: SWM, 35 Woodbine Road, Raheeny, Dublin.

Socialist Workers Movement

The Socialist Workers Movement is holding a founding Conference in Dublin on the weekend of June 7/8.

All aspects of our policies and activities will be discussed and decisions for future action will be made.

All sympathetic to the ideas of *The Worker* and *The Socialist Workers Movement* are invited to attend. Admission is by ticket, available free with a stamped address envelope, sent with this coupon to 35 Woodbine Rd, Raheeny, Dublin.

I apply for a ticket to the SWM Conference on June 7/8. I enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Name

Address



PAYE: WE'RE THE RAGGED TROUSERED PHILANTHROPISTS

DESSIE O'Malley has lashed out at the banks, who had just raised their lending rates by 2%, saying, that the Government would refuse to sanction the rise. With Bank profits at record levels, AIB made £41m in 1979, while only paying £600,000 (1½%) tax, the banks screamed that profits would fall, and O'Malley promptly backed down the following week.

Now that he's got a bit of time on his hands, perhaps he could deal with Cement-Roadstone, who paid the exchequer £1m tax on profits of £24m for 1979. That's just four pounds in every hundred; I doubt if many in the PAYE sector

would object to paying tax at that level.

So, how do they manage it? In 1975, on profits of £8.6m Cement-Roadstone paid £3.2m tax (34%), about what you would expect. Five years later Profits are £24m and tax £1m. The trick is to expand, buy new equipment or other companies: you can offset this against profits and so reduce your Tax liability.

What about the shareholder, with all his investment in new plant, surely the dividend must have fallen? You need not be concerned. Cement-Roadstone intend paying out £8m (34%) of Profits this

year, whereas in 1975 they only paid out £2m or 22% of profits, so don't rush to sell your shares just yet. As well as that shareholders have seen the value of these shares rise from 36p in 1975 to 90p today.

If all of that was not enough, the government gave Cement-Roadstone £6.7m in grants for 1979, which means that the PAYE sector gave C-R £5.7m last year. No wonder someone once called workers, "Ragged trousered Philanthropists".

TAX: Suggestions are not enough

ONE YEAR ago, the tax campaign brought hundreds of thousands of workers out on strike and on to the streets. Today it has been reduced to making "constructive suggestions" to the Commission on Taxation.

That same commission includes amongst its members such great reformers as Donal Carroll of the cigarette company, a director of the IDA, two wealthy accountants, a professor and a barrister. And it is chaired by Miriam Heder-mann — a sister of the Fianna Fail Attorney General.

The dramatic change in the campaign is mainly the result of a successful effort by the ICTU leadership to win control. Its Tax Reform Committee first attempted to replace the strikes and marches by a petition campaign. It later used the minor reforms of the last budget to declare the "present agitational phase of the campaign" to be over. It also sought to weaken any Trade Union bodies that could offer an alternative lead. The Trades Councils had previously filled that role. The ICTU bureaucrats are now proposing to fire a shot across their bows by depriving them of votes at the ICTU congress.

Orderly

Instinctively, the ICTU sensed the dangers in a movement that could go beyond their orderly negotiating procedure. Rhuadri Robert's speech about "political strikes" was just one indication. For although the actual demands of the campaign were minimal and although most of the marches were silent and without focus — something else was happening. The tax campaign was an announcement that the Irish working class had arrived on the stage with a powerful political voice. That announcement was not simply made by the hundreds of thousands in Dublin — it was also made by the ones and twos of thousands on the march in the smaller rural towns. And it was the first massive class-wide use of the weapon of direct action.

But the awakening of the labour movement on the tax issue also showed many signs of political weakness. The focus of the campaign was for tax equity and against evasion. The frustration was directed against the farmers and the self-employed. Occasionally

the swindles of the banks were attacked. But the heart of industrial capital got off scot free.

The political ideas of the Sinn Fein Workers Party should not be underestimated in shaping that tone of the campaign. Their attempts to exonerate 'healthy' multinational capital fitted in neatly with the concern of the trade union bureaucracy. It helped continue a tradition where the labour movement doesn't challenge the idea that sacrifices must be made to bring about industrialisation. Deflecting the campaign onto the farmers meant that the principal aim of the campaign was not seen as that of:soaking the rich so that we pay less.

Escape

To those ideas we must give the answer: yes, we think that the farmers need to pay tax through an account system. But there are poorer farmers — farmers who should escape the tax net if the labour movement was to set an income of £3,500 as the minimum level for taxation. And the root cause of the tax burden on PAYE workers lies elsewhere.

Some recent figures are a glaring testimony to that burden. Ten years ago a single man paid the standard rate of tax at 69% of his average earnings. Today he pays 46% of his average earnings. Twenty years ago only 20% of the workforce were included in the tax bracket. Today it is up to 80% of the workforce. And the taxation of the working class is playing a proportionally greater role in raising funds for the state. A decade ago income tax represented 31% of the total taxation raised. Today it represents 45%.

There is a simple reason for that growing burden of taxation: we are paying more because capital is paying less and less. The drive towards industrialisation has been fuelled all the way through direct state subsidies to capital. Grants, low-interest loans cheap lease on factory buildings and tax free profits are just some of the methods. That use of state expenditure to subsidise capital has led to a massive rise in public debt. Despite the major industrialisation we have gone through the major capitalist firms have contributed little through taxation to the social costs of that development. The social wage of the working class as a result — in terms of schools, hospitals, community facilities — is still far below the level of industrial development.

Next year sees the introduction of a new measure to help the bosses. Their corporation tax is to be reduced to a mere 10%. In reality, they'll escape even that after all the fake tax-relief measures are claimed.

That measure must become the focus of a renewed and sharper tax campaign. The labour movement needs to fight on the basis of a clear and direct approach of taxing the rich, relieving the PAYE burden — and without any cuts in social spending. Specifically we need to begin the fight now for:

- a restoration of corporation profits tax to a rate of 55%.
- an increase on VAT on luxury goods.
- a wealth tax on all incomes above £15,000.
- automatic indexation of tax allowances for PAYE workers.
- no taxation on incomes below £3,500.

KEEP IN CONTACT!

The Socialist Workers Movement hold regular meetings, which are open to non-members. As well as that we are planning a series of Public Meetings at the end of the month, in Dublin, Belfast, Waterford and Cork, etc. If you would like details of our meetings or more information about the SWM please write for further details to:

SWM c/o 35 Woodbine Rd, Raheeny, Dublin 5.



DIRECT ACTION

THE TAX campaign needs to be revived. It needs to get back on to the streets and an end put to the ICTU game of playing with committees.

A start can be made by supporting an EEPFU sponsored resolution which was carried at the Dublin Trades Council. It called for a policy of non-cooperation with the Commission on Taxation.

But the Trade Councils need to go further. Open meetings need to be called to discuss how the tax campaign can be taken forward. Such meetings that are open to the rank and file trade unionists, would demonstrate the real feelings that are still around on the issue.

We also need to remember that the origins of the present campaign lie not in any Trades Council resolution. It was the oil lorry drivers and the workers of Aer Lingus who were prepared to launch independent industrial action, to whom the credit goes. That type of direct action from the major workplaces could once again revive the campaign.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

CABRA; A CONCRETE EXAMPLE

by KEVIN WINGFIELD.

ON A sunny summer's day — Friday June 1st, 1979 — ten CIE freight drivers came out on strike at the Cabra cement distribution works, at 2.30 pm.

Eleven months later they are still out, taking turns to keep the lonely vigil that has become their life.

This is a story of union intrigue and double dealing, bosses' ruthlessness and most important, the determination of workers to defend their own jobs against the odds.

In 1974, CIE opened a cement distribution network in Cabra, comprising three silos with a combined capacity of 2,500 tons, connected by the nearby railway track to the Irish Cement works in Platin, Drogheda.

Workers previously attached to the North Wall depot were transferred, some to unload the trains, load the lorries and thirteen to drive the lorries to users of cement in the Dublin area.

By 1978, business was so brisk, that these 13 drivers were working up to 12 hours a day, six or seven days a week. Low pay forced this level of overtime on the men.

Yet at exactly this time, CIE let it be known that they had it in mind to reduce the fleet to 9 lorries and drivers.

The drivers called for an increase in the size of the fleet, but to no avail.

Concrete manufacturers, users of cement, had for many years supplemented their fleet of lorries with "hackers."

These non-union cowboys represented a way of weakening the power of the unionised regular employees.

By operating on bonuses, payment by the load etc, the hackers made the negotiation and enforcement of rest periods, safety limits on loads and the upkeep of vehicles more difficult for the rest.

The manufacturers, therefore, wanted to encourage CIE to allow their own vehicles and drivers into Cabra to load up with cement and deliver, and having opened it up, get their hackers in too.

CIE saw its chance. It could attract still more custom to the depot by ditching its own workers and telling the manufacturers to "come as you are."

All that stood in the way of this grand slam was the workers themselves and the unions who represented them.

Some cement users got their supplies from Drogheda in their own lorries, but for those in the Dublin and Leinster area, it was clearly an advantage to have CIE lorries deliver.

For one thing, it saved them the expense of buying these costly vehicles.

But by 1978, CIE were, in effect, forcing cement users to buy their own lorries and transport their cement by road from Drogheda, by denying that their were drivers available at the weekends to make deliveries.

This was a lie. CIE drivers had always, and were still, working weekends.

The company approached the workers with its plans to open up the depot.

JE Maher, CIE's Area Freight Manager, wrote to Ken O'Brien, Secretary of the CIE Road Freight Operatives Trade Union Group, that agreement had been reached between CIE, Irish Cement and the Cement users in the Dublin area to regulate their collections from Cabra so that tonnage of cement delivered by CIE vehicles would remain as it had been.

He went on: "There will now be no necessity for any reduction in our fleet of 13 Bulk Cement Units attached to Broadstone [Cabra] ..."

Over the following months various items concerning the proposals were dealt with.

For their part, the drivers were prepared to have other drivers use the depot, providing they were the regular drivers and vehicles of the companies concerned.

As one driver told "The Worker," "So long as the outside drivers were employees of these companies and were driving those company vehicles, we felt we would be dealing with fellow trade unionists and any problems could be sorted out on that basis."

This was the importance of the term "Owner Account Vehicles" it meant that freelance "hackers" would be excluded. It meant that firms using the facility would need to have their own fleet of vehicles, not hired ones, and their own regular drivers.

On that basis, the men were prepared to accept the changes. Details were argued over for the next few months.

Eventually, Ken O'Brien for the Irish Transport and M Cox for the National Association of Transport Employees made agreement with CIE.

Although the main points of the new working arrangements had been negotiated and agreed to over the previous months, the men never saw the complete agreement!

On 18th December 1978, the agreement was put into operation. Only customers vehicles were to be allowed in, and a list was drawn up of which these were.

The list included Spollen, Goode, Kill, Tallaght Block; Concrete Pipes, Naas and Roadstone; Clondalkin Concrete, Readymix, Dublin and Morrissey, Carlow.

But as soon as the first outside trucks came in, it was clear that the agreement was being broken.

Clondalkin Concrete, instead of sending their own vehicle and driver, sent a hacker called Ryan, who was himself barred by the Clondalkin workers from many of their depots.

CPI, Lucan later sent a hacker called Collins. They were not even on the list of authorised users of the depot.

There was a stoppage and the workers approached O'Brien, from the Group of Unions, to see the agreement.

He had not got it, but would have it next week! It was round at the Labour Court, where it had been lodged, he claimed. Enquiries there showed no trace of it.

The lads agreed to return to work pending a Labour Court hearing that the Unions were arranging, still demanding the terms of the agreement be honoured.

The Labour Court hearing never materialised. The agreement could not be found by the time-servers of officials of the ITGWU and NATE.

Finally, the management gave notice that the depot would be completely open, and sent in the hackers again.

The men came out. And out they remain.

In July, 1979, at a Joint General Meeting at Liberty Hall, the men agreed to return to work "as per the agreement."

Management refused. A few weeks later, supervisory staff loaded the remaining cement out of the silos back into trains and away it went.

Since then Cabra cement distribution has been idle. The loaders who are not in dispute, go in and sit around playing cards. The drivers take turns at manning the pickets.

When the drivers sought sympathy action from fellow workers in CIE, they found that dirty stories had been spread — they were only after redundancy money, etc.

The tight-knit drivers have been left to hang by their fellow workers, their self sufficiency in the past has left them isolated when in need.

They wait and hope. They don't want to give CIE the satisfaction of seeing them just pack up and go, so they grimly wait.

ago, they closed the record pressing plant in Waterford with little warning. Then they re-opened it in Dublin with new equipment which was bought with the help of IDA grants. But the current managing director (they change every couple of years), Brian Dockery, has shown no interest in winning business for the Dublin plant. Quite simply, he dislikes being in Ireland (the posting seems to be some sort of booby prize for EMI executives) and he hates the Irish.

He doesn't mind telling them so, either. He told one of them that the Irish were only good for "breeding like rabbits".

EMI

FOR TWO months, a sales manager, four sales reps, and six other white collar workers were on strike at the Dublin depot of EMI, the giant music and electronics multinational.

And in a show of solidarity all too rare these days, the 30 workers in the record pressing plant, run by a separate EMI subsidiary and not directly involved in the dispute, supported the dispute.

The dispute ended with the acceptance by the strikers of a previously rejected compromise deal.

Drastic rationalisation plans dictated by the London HQ of this ailing international group provoked this dispute. Eleven workers are for the chop in a pruning exercise which will leave the distribution of EMI records in the hands of three managers and two marketing assistants who may be chosen from the 11 on strike.

It is not the first time that EMI has chopped jobs in an Irish subsidiary. Four years

Penneys



Midnight on Friday and a few people are still picketing the Penney's shop at Mary Street Dublin, they are still there at 3am and 4am, trying to ensure that all deliveries are stopped. To keep up this pressure on the company, some of the strikers have to do 16 hour shifts per day.

40 members of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union have taken on Primark Ltd, the company which operates the 20 Penney shops in the 26 counties. They are fighting to retain 21 jobs at the warehouse in Dublin, which the company wants to close down. And the company is using every dirty trick to undermine their fight.

Deliveries have been made in rented vans at the dead of night. The sales assistants have been intimidated from supporting the strikers. Advertisements have been placed in the evening papers and on radio, announcing special offers to entice the customers in.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions' two-tier picket policy is anything but a help to the strikers, who are quite clear that they are fighting for jobs and not for more compensation. With the support of the Irish Union of Distributive

Workers and Clerks members the strikers could win in a matter of days, but that Union's officials are opposing the all-out application and the Congress Committee which is hearing the application has left everything up in the air by postponing the decision until the 22nd May. By that time, the strikers will have been battling against the odds for a month.

The Westons, Garry and Galen, who control Associated British Foods, which in turn controls Penney's are well known supporters of extreme right wing organisations. They are also heavily involved in South Africa, with nearly 300 separate businesses there. ABF should make them over £80 million in profit this year.

Not too surprisingly, the Westons don't care too much for unions. If they succeed in closing the warehouse the work will go to non-union hackers. They must not succeed. The Penneys strikers need all the support they can get including the physical support of other ITGWU members to make sure even just the major shops in Dublin are covered. Contact shop steward, John Murphy on the picket line at the Mary Street shop.

DRIVER KELLY

continued from page 1.

Now the matter is coming to a head because Driver Tom Kelly of Dublin's Phibsboro Garage insistence on his rights.

At first he went to his manager and demanded his rights. The manager conceded him a static Sunday rest day, thus conforming to the law.

However, when others demanded the same and the manager could see that this would end in a collapse of the schedules if generally allowed, he withdrew the concession to Kelly.

None of the unions has been prepared to take up the issue but have connived with management to cover up the illegal nature of the present working week.

Kelly's next step was to absent himself from work every seventh working day.

For this, he has received disciplinary measures and has been told that next time he will get the sack.

But Driver Kelly is determined. He will continue to work just the legal week and no more. He is taking legal advice and is prepared to

The relevant section of the Road Traffic Regulations reads as follows:

(1) Every person employed as a driver or as a conductor of a large public service vehicle shall be allowed by his employer a weekly period of rest of not less than twenty-four consecutive hours in every period of seven days, and the right of such person to such weekly period of rest shall be deemed to be a term of his employment as such driver or conductor.

(2) Every person employed as a driver or as a conductor of a large public service vehicle shall take the weekly period of rest to which he is entitled under sub-article (1) of this article.

The situation is made worse by the fact that even the too infrequent restdays are regularly worked as overtime because CIE could not run any sort of a service without over time and rest day working.

INDUSTRIAL YARNS

WORKERS AT Industrial Yarns, in Bray, County Wicklow, occupied their factory on May 5.

The 137 floor workers had been on strike since February 22 for increases in basic pay shift allowances and bonuses in addition to a further week's holiday each year.

The occupation was staged by the strike committee, after they heard of managements night time removal of finished stock, for export to England.

ITGWU Shop Steward, Pat Nolan told "The Worker":

"The 88 Shift Operators here put a claim in to the company for an increase in the basic pay from £55.40 to £61. consolidation of bonus to 33% of basic pay, and an increase in shift allowance from 30% to 33.3% and 20 days holiday per year.

"This claim was served last June and the company offered the terms of the National Understanding with a 25% bonus.

"They would offer nothing on the basic, shift allowance or holidays."

The Labour Court was called in and threw out the men's claim as "outside the terms of the National Understanding."

Terry McEvoy, textile Official of the ITGWU, complained to the Minister for Labour and the Labour Court that this was inconsistent as a similar factory in Cavan had conceded the four week holiday just a few weeks after the claim by Industrial Yarn workers.

The Labour Court tried to reopen the case, but management refused to attend and would offer only £1 on the bonus.

So, on February 22, the 88 shift workers struck, supported by the fifty day workers, not themselves directly involved.

Since then there has been no production at Industrial Yarns.

LATE NEWS. Having secured the curtailment of further deliveries of finished yarns, the original reason for the occupation, the strikers have withdrawn. The strike continues.

take whatever consequences arise.

His own union, the Workers Union of Ireland, is offering him no help, yet interest among the workers in Dublin buses is great.

Alone, "Busworker" the rank and file paper of busworkers, has consistently argued against the 5.4 illegal week.

"Busworker" broke the silence on this matter and may claim some responsibility for forcing some urgency into the Unions' policies on the five day week.

The current issue of "Busworker" writes:-

"Driver Kelly's action is causing much embarrassment to Management and our Unions. Remember our Unions accepted this illegal 5.4 day arrangement in 1974 — hence their reluctance to fight for any reform.

"Now, Driver Kelly's action may be the main reason behind the sudden decision of the ITGWU and the NBU to seek meetings with CIE on the question of a five day week."

Unidare WORKERS FIGHT BACK

SOMETHING had to give. 1979 was, in the words of the Unidare's Chairman Michael McSkay, "the most successful year for the company".

It was also a year in which wages were held back by the National Understanding behind rises achieved by other workers. The company continued its tight-fisted and frustrating policy of resisting and delaying every claim, right into the Labour Court. Even the two

extra days annual holiday available under the N.U. Many grievances were getting 'stuck' in the procedure.

This situation was complemented by delays and inactivity at official level within the No 14 Branch ITGWU, who represent the general workers. Negotiations were dragging-out on Pensions and looked like doing so on a new claim for a basic wage increase. The company were flouting agreements on imports of work normally done by Unidare workers. A claim by one section for transfer to the No 16 Branch was being stalled. Patient waiting by the extrusion workers in the Alidare section had not produced a report on their bonus scheme from the Union's Development and Services Division.

These and other issues came to a head in recent weeks. The members and the stewards could take no more. Following the circulation of a petition, with 70 names, to

withhold union dues, and reports that other sections were threatening to pull out of the ITGWU, an Emergency Section Committee meeting was called on 13th March. The Branch official was not present.

Two resolutions were passed unanimously - that the Section's Annual General Meeting be brought forward a month and that the officers of the Committee meet the Union's National Group Secretary to complain about lack of service from the officials.

At the General Meeting, which was reluctantly brought forward by the officials, but was exceptionally well-attended, on March 23, the Union took a roasting from the members and some important resolutions were decided - that a new procedural agreement be negotiated with the company; that all future decisions be made at general meetings at Liberty Hall and not by site ballot; and that a further general meeting be convened for April 27 to review progress on the claim for a basic increase.

The reaction of Liberty Hall to this democratic movement was immediately hostile. At the AGM of the No 14 Branch itself, the following Sunday, the National Group Secretary, Paddy Donegan, spoke for ten minutes about "Strumpet City," "loyalty to the Union," "threats" of withdrawal and Head Office's un-

willingness to respond to such in future, and "caucuses." Unidare wasn't mentioned ONCE, but the message was clear: complain and you are disloyal; meet without the full-time official (as the elected Unidare Section Committee which was averting another Ferenka, did) and you are a caucus. There were, incidentally, three hundred out of a possible six or seven hundred Unidare members at this meeting.

Two meetings were held between the Unidare Committee officers and the Group Secretary together with the Branch officials, Arthur Kelly and Bob Brady. All complaints of lack of service were denied by the officials; Arthur Kelly describing the Unidare general meeting as a "vicious attack" on the officials. At the end of the day however, the Committee's officers got definite commitments of action on the outstanding issues.

From the MORNING AFTER the first meeting with Paddy Donegan, the attention given to Unidare by the No 14 Branch improved ten times over.

On April 8th a new and militant chief steward was elected and the Section Committee established a commitment to more regular committee meetings and a special meeting to clear up outstanding grievances locally. A few days before this, a one-day unofficial strike by workers in the Foundry had the total support of the general and craft workers.

But the new Committee have a tough year ahead of them. The strong feelings of the membership on the basic pay issue was conveyed to the company on 10th April, and the view that they were around £15 behind comparable jobs elsewhere. At a further meeting on the 25th the company offered progress on the two lowest grades only, in return for a "revolutionary" package of restructuring and changes in work-practices, including 'termination' for failure to reach bonus quotas, penalties for breaches of the Procedural Agreement and basic payment for the first 10 hours overtime.

The company's response was reported to the members on Sunday 27th.

The reaction of the general meeting on Sunday 27th to the document was a mixture of mirth and anger. The officials were for keeping parts of the document and using this as the basis for further discussion. A resolution from the floor to this effect was heavily defeated by a counter-resolution to reject the company's document IN TOTO and for the Committee to return to the company and seek a rise on ALL grades. It was also decided that the Committee should call another general meeting in the near future to review progress on the negotiations.

ITGWU Steward.

B is for Bureaucrat...

(It rhymes with rat)

IT IS a fact of nature that mankind must constantly work on nature to provide a living.

No society can escape this fact of life - it is the human condition.

The way men and women organise their labours is what creates society from chaos.

Any production more than the most simple requires a division of labour - different people make a different contribution to the total production of society.

A socialist society would consist in men and women collectively deciding where their efforts shall be put and planning the division of labour accordingly.

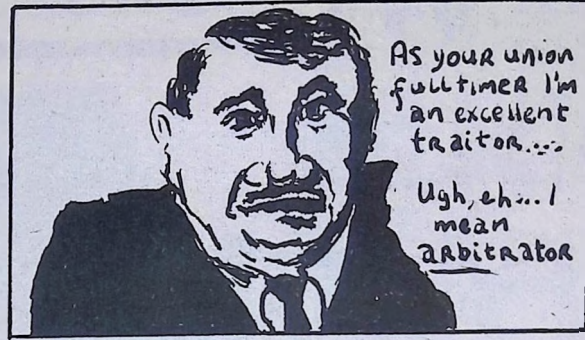
Unplanned

That is for the future. For today, the organisation of production is in the hands of those who own the wealth of society. And they do not have a free hand. The unplanned pursuit of profit means that even the most modest plans are ruined by unexpected events - booms, slumps, bankruptcies and wild market ups and downs.

But within the factory, inside the schools and over society as a whole, the bosses DO try to plan, in their interests, so that profits and their control of society continues.

Division of labour and co-ordination of activity, that is bossing people, is achieved by a body of men and women who are not themselves part of the productive work-force.

Bureaucracy, like every oppressive feature of life, is not God-given, it does not result from human nature or original sin, but has its roots in the material foundations of society.



In the earliest times, production was small scale and provided no more than a bare living for the members of the community. The "forces of production" - the power of men and women to create wealth was limited to what was needed to sustain the society. There was no surplus and there were no able bodied adults exempt from productive labour.

As the forces of production grew, there arose a surplus - something over and above the absolute minimum, something that could be accumulated to provide the means for yet more production in the future.

Those who began to take control of this surplus became a ruling class - and they began bossing people about.

The surplus provided the wherewithal to keep a class of person who spent their time organising, deciding and generally being a pain in the arse.

It did not provide enough of a surplus to allow all men and women to live in comfort freed from the full time task of scraping a living, not only for themselves but also for the bosses. Material conditions

did not exist for a world freed from classes, this had to wait until the enormous productive power of the modern world - modern capitalism.

From the beginnings of class society to the present the development of bureaucracies has gone hand in hand with the development of classes themselves. The worthies who surrounded the kings and emperors and the vast array of officials of every description that gained some advantage from being associated with the Tsarist machine in pre-revolutionary Russia show the line of development.

In the present day, capitalist enterprises are so big that a single boss could not possibly run them. Many are owned or controlled by the state itself and the bossing bureaucrats are called in to have their way.

In Russia, after the defeat of the revolution in the '20s, the whole of the productive powers and with it every area of public life is administered by a vast bureaucracy of party hacks, petty officials and dictators of every kind. A vast capitalist class bossing the

likes of you and I around.

Even in our own movement, the workers' movement, the trade unions are for the most part firmly in the grip of privileged time servers and careerists. This layer of officials do not live on the same wages as the members they represent, their conditions are much better and they come to see themselves as having more in common with the boss than the workers.

However red these characters start out, they invariably become moderate compromisers, NOT because of any personal defect of personality but because of their special social position. they enjoy.

For the most part they are secure, which is why they do everything in their power to encourage apathy among the membership and why they direct matters so that social peace is maintained as much as possible.

They don't want to upset the cosy arrangement which supplies their bread and jam.

Promises

Hence the yearly procession of Trade Union officials signing promises of good behaviour for the bosses and government.

Bureaucracy is the vomit of a society drunk on class division.

Socialist workers fight for workers' control of trade unions by organising the rank and file to take matters into its own hands; for workers' control of society by smashing the system of world capitalism that winds up a million clockwork bureaucrats to direct, pester, fuddle and defeat us.

Only a system where power belongs to the great mass of people - the workers - can we regain control over the only thing which we own - our lives!

Kevin Wingfield.

Raleigh sacks 135 workers

THE JOBS of 135 workers are at stake as Irish Raleigh prepare to close their factory at Hanover Quay in Dublin.

Raleigh is the largest distributor of components and accessories for the cycle business in the 32 counties, and though their sales were 10% above target as a result of the oil crisis they are putting on the poor mouth as an excuse to shove 135 workers on the dole.

The company produces 20,000 bicycles per week for adults and another 20,000 a year for children. They also produce parts for machines owned by 650,000 cyclists.

The excuses they put forward for the proposed closure are rather thin, even by the bosses' standards. They say a fire which caused £2m damage at the factory three years ago is

one reason, and a five-week official strike by storemen last year is another.

The strike occurred when the company refused to provide adequate transport for the storemen when shifting them to a new distribution centre at Tallaght.

In 1977 the company opened a 40,000 square foot extension to the Hanover Quay factory with a showroom displaying 2,000 varieties of toys. The same year they opened a warehouse at Newtownards, Co. Down, storing £150,000 worth of cycles and toys.

The continuing increases in bus and train fares, and in oil prices, ensures that demand in the cycle business is on the increase. Yet the bosses find it necessary to shed 135 jobs to maintain profits.

In talks between the company and the ITGWU it appears that the union is, as usual, aiming at achieving the maximum redundancy payments rather than

securing the jobs by challenging the company's right to rearrange its affairs at the expense of the workers.

If there is to be an attempt to halt the company's freewheeling free enterprise it will have to come at rank and file level - the union officials can only be depended on to back-pedal.

There is an irony in the sight of a government, supposedly concerned about an oil crisis, standing idly by while 135 workers who produce bicycles are thrown on the dole. A strong initiative by the rank and file could ensure that they are in a position to demand that the capitalist state take responsibility for protecting the jobs so casually disposed of by private capitalism.

PAT GANNON



THE WORKER

FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM



H BLOCK CAMPAIGN STEPS UP

THE H BLOCK campaign is gaining ground. Right across the country, new committees are being set up. Major public meetings have been held in such towns as Waterford, Cavan, Drumshanbo. But there has also been a major turn towards activity inside the unions.

At the Northern Ireland congress of the ICTU, a picket was mounted by H Block activists in the unions. Inside the hall, delegates passed a resolution calling for the withdrawal of Terry Carlin from the RUC Police authority. Carlin has stayed on that whitewash body — despite the massive protests on the police murder of Brian Maquire — a shop steward in AUEW-TASS. Now he has been told to leave.

In the South too, activity in the unions has been stepped up. The Meath Trades Council passed a resolution supporting the prisoners. At the IWTO congress a petition gathered 150 signatures in support of the struggle. And in Waterford the 11/64 Branch of the ATGWU successfully moved a resolution at the Trades Council for a Trade Union inquiry into conditions in the H Blocks.

The last move is particularly significant. It was the

mobilisation of trade unionists in the 40s in the south around a similar inquiry which led to major gains for the prisoners. It also is the means for forcing the trade unions movement as a whole to take a stand on the issue.

But while there has been an increased awareness of the need to work in the unions from republicans and others it is still not seen as a strategic priority. Some see the unions and the working class itself, just as yet another block to be won over.

CLASS

But the concern of socialists with the trade unions is not accidental. The H Block campaign faces two roads — the road to compromise on a 'humanitarian' basis or towards deepening the struggle. Ultimately that choice will be made on the basis of the class

forces involved in the campaign.

Many people at the moment are extremely enthusiastic about the level of support given to the demand for concessions by the likes of Thomas O Frach. It has certainly been useful from a publicity point of view — but publicity is not all. It's organisation and confidence in the end which counts.

The recent attempt by Atkins to be seen to accede to a request by the bishops represents an attempt to bolster the credibility of such 'moderates'. That credibility may be needed if Atkins is to win support or at least acceptance of his new plan. The concessions this time were miserable. But the overall aim still remains.

If the British government could succeed in defusing the campaign — without concealing political status and through negotiations with the Church and the SDLP — it would clear one obstacle in its way to new negotiations for a political settlement. The purely humanitarian tone of the campaign with its appeal to the clerics and 'profession-



Part of the Mayday demonstration for Political Status outside the GPO in Dublin.

nal people' plays straight into this trap. Significantly, Atkins himself has taken recently to demonstrating a concern for humanitarianism — in the release of Marian Price and in justifying his miserable offer of plimsolls and shorts.

Despite their recognition of the need to fight on broader

demands, the prisoners in H Block have consistently claimed their struggle is for nothing less than political status.

That aim will only be won on the basis of developing an anti-imperialist consciousness among the working class north and south.

The fight for political status needs, therefore, to start in the working class movement. And it can only be won on the basis of arguing for the political right of prisoners to oppose the northern state.



Army checkpoint at the hospital, where the SAS have a secret hideout

TROOPS OUT OF ROYAL HOSPITAL!

A GUN went off in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast, in the first week of last month. It was a machine gun dropped by a British army soldier. Two porters and two patients standing nearby were lucky to escape injury.

Members of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) immediately took action. Porters decided to handle only accident and emergency cases as a protest against the presence of the troops. The 39 workers who took part in this action were suspended.

When the porters went on strike, Brian Sullivan the Branch Secretary of (NUPE)

at the Royal said that they were also opposed to the installing of closed circuit scanning cameras for British Army use.

John Coulthard, the regional organiser of NUPE immediately opposed the industrial action. Coulthard was appointed by the Union's Executive Council in London as the negotiator on security matters, but he was rejected by NUPE

workers in the Royal. Coulthard claimed the NUPE workers were on their own and that the other main unions in the hospital, the Confederation of Health Service Employees (COHSE) and Royal College of Nursing (RCN) agreed with the installing of surveillance devices.

COHSE's Regional organiser Hugh Mishell, denied this but his union did not take any action against the British Army's presence in the hospital.

On Wednesday 9th April, the hospital's management area board and British Army

Chiefs said that they were only prepared to talk to Coulthard and they also rejected the call for the withdrawal of the military.

NUPE members voted no confidence in Coulthard, and 1,200 of them went on strike. Their demands were the reinstatement of the thirty nine suspended workers, the withdrawal of the British Army and negotiating rights with the management over the security issue in the hospital.

Paisley

Coulthard immediately attacked the strike and Brian Sullivan. He said the strike was "political" and "sectarian". It was also alleged that the strike was "IRA orchestrated" with Paisley raising the issue

in Westminster, and that Sullivan was an IRA member. This was aimed at scaring off Protestant workers who supported the strike. Terry Carlin (Chairperson of the Northern Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions) was another who ordered the workers to return to work. Carlin also sits on the RUC Police Authority which has been used to cover up torture and repression.

By the middle of April the attacks on the strikers paid off. Paisley succeeded in convincing some Protestant workers that the strike was "an IRA plot", and they returned to work. Finally, the strikers held a meeting and decided to call off the action.

The RVH workers are now pressing for a Congress of Trade Unions inquiry into the issues raised by the strike.