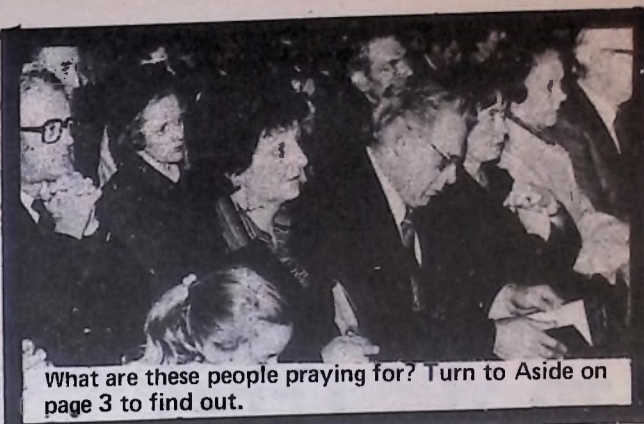


WORKER THE WORKER

FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM



What are these people praying for? Turn to Aside on page 3 to find out.

Don't let them die POLITICAL STATUS NOW!

THE TIME for talk is ended. The massive upsurge of support for the hunger strikers, in the North has come as a spit in the eye to Thatcher and Atkins.

Every day there are occupations of Belfast city centre shops and government offices and road blockings in Derry.

Every day the Irish News carries dozens of ads from Gaelic Athletic Clubs, Social clubs, darts teams, workplace groups in support of the hunger strikers.

It seems everyone is coming out—former peace people others who disagree with the Provos, many who haven't marched for years are back on the streets now.

Banners are going up on every street in Catholic areas in Belfast. Across the North marches and meetings are held every night.

The mood is militant and serious. People are saying we must win this fight.

The prisoners have led a heroic protest for over four

years to be recognised as political prisoners. They are in jail because for 12 years there has been a struggle against sectarianism, against the Orange state, against the British presence in this country.

As a response to that struggle the British ruling class set up special procedures to fill the jails in the North.

The British Parliament passed emergency legislation.

The British Army is allowed to harass, to arrest, to kill. The RUC is allowed to torture.

The Diplock Courts were able to convict on the basis of signed confessions only.

That was the special political conveyor-belt to jail for

the men in H Block and women in Armagh jail.

There can be no sitting on the fence during this fight.

Every socialist, every militant worker has a stake in this fight. All must unite behind the hunger strikers for defeat on this issue will be felt far beyond the H Blocks.

If this struggle is lost, the entire anti-imperialist cause will be set back for years.

But the hunger strikers on their own cannot win. Nor can cardinals or bishops or other important people save the prisoners.

by JOAN KELLY, Belfast SWM

Nor will all the rosaries be any help. And there is no way can count on the gombeen parties of Fianna Fail and SDLP for help.

They are opposed to political status.

We need a united anti-imperialist movement that mobilises mass working class activities north and south—to move the Brits and win concessions for the prisoners.

We must organise at our strongest point—where we can hurt the most—in the trade unions and workplaces.

The British government is quite willing to let the prison-

ers die. The men are already in a weakened condition. It is only workers of this country who have the power—to stop the buildings, to stop the factories, to stop the offices. We can't wait until the coffins begin coming out of Long Kesh.

We need to act now.

The British and Irish governments must be warned that the cost will be too high.

Business in this island must be told there will be no trade, no profits if the prisoners die.

Organise workplace committees. Begin by organising now for workplace actions, for strikes.

Organise protests at every local government meeting,

every trade union meeting.

The trade unions have been passing enough paper resolutions. The trade union leadership must be forced to call a day of solidarity with the hunger strikers, a one day strike with marches organised by the trade union movement in all the large centres in Ireland.

They did it for the PAYE issue.

They can do it to win political status.

This is the only kind of power the Thatcher and Haughey governments will listen to.

After Bloody Sunday, they lost the British Embassy.

Let us make sure they know how much greater will be their losses if they let the prisoners die!

The Story of the H Block

See pages 4 & 5

the movement

PROVOS MOVE TO THE LEFT?

FOUR OR five years ago the Banner headline of Republican News read "Contraception—a British Plot!" Times change and politics develop and nowhere faster than inside the republican movement. At their recent Ard Fheis in the Mansion House, the Provos passed a policy document proclaiming a woman's right to contraception and divorce.

The document certainly left much to be desired from a feminist point of view. It saw many of the issues as problems to be dealt with by a liberal society rather than as areas women need to fight around to increase their freedom and control.

Further, the document's approach to abortion—we're against but understand—was kicked out with the cry "Sinn Fein is totally opposed to abortion."

Nonetheless, the change is significant. The growing left wing of the Provos have shown through such a debate that they have the confidence to take political arguments to their members on areas that lie *outside the field of the national question*.

For years Sinn Fein abstained from taking a position on a variety of political matters. Its purpose as a political party was the solving of the national question and nothing else was thought significant enough to warrant an argument.

The Republican Movement was, and still is, an all class alliance. Its goal is basically the driving out of the Brits and the smashing of Orange Rule. Everything else—from socialism to federalism—is up for grabs only when that basic task is done. Republicanism will therefore welcome and look for support from any quarter to achieve that aim whether it is the sympathetic small businessman or the industrial worker. Under these conditions it can never become a party of the working class.

But twelve years of struggle—which Northern Ireland workers have borne the brunt—has forced the Provos to ask the question: *which class do we appeal to to bring about this republic?* The answer is increasingly coming back that it's got to be the working class and that the Southern working class holds the key.

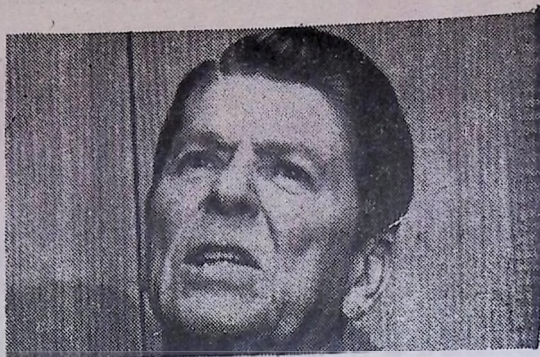
The Socialist Workers Movement can only applaud these developments. But we have a different approach to Republicans. Many left wing Provos will talk about the importance of the "social question", about the need to work in the unions and about the need to attack the union bureaucracy. But they see it as some sort of trade off. "If we are seen to be supporting the unions in their struggle, they will support us on the national question." What is missing is any idea that the struggle against the Northern state will only be won when the mass of the working class take the leadership of that struggle and impose its will through its industrial strength. That can only happen if the struggle is not just for a 32 county Ireland but is part of a struggle against capitalism itself and for a workers republic.

All of that has practical consequences. As long as the Provos hold to the stages theory that it's got to be a united Ireland first, as long as they see themselves, through an armed struggle, being the only force capable of bringing that about, it will never take its own trade union work seriously, which would mean organising your members to fight for definite policies inside the unions; bringing their experiences back to your Ard Fheis and discussing it; agitating and building support around strikes; getting rid of the idea that work in the unions is only secondary economic work compared to the real politics of support for the National Struggle.

The Provo Ard Fheis also saw some defeats for the left. An amazing ban on even discussing using parliamentary elections was imposed. A repetition of the sectarian attitude to the Bernadette McAliskey EEC election campaign is made more likely by that decision. The policy of federalism was once again reaffirmed.

The arguments of the left on federalism, is shot through with vagueness. You cannot pose an alternative to the utopia of local councils running society unless you have some idea of what sort of revolution you are fighting for. A working class revolution brings with it a different type of democracy—direct democracy based on workplaces. That has been the experience internationally. The fact that the policy of Eire Nua is based on the federalist idea of decentralising the existing system shows its real distance from socialism and workers power.

More immediately, the federalist policy leaves sections of the Provos open to a variety of solutions ranging from the Independent Ulster option to Haughey's federalism. But the Dail Uladh idea at least has the merit of *pretending* to deal with the aspirations of Protestant workers. We agree with those Republicans who see it as opening the gate for consolidating loyalism, but we also say it is no solution to ignore the problem of winning Protestant workers from loyalism. That task cannot be left until after the smashing of the Northern Statelet—the backing up of loyalism with the industrial might of Protestant workers makes that option almost impossible.



Reagan—how the West

was won

by Dermot Byrne

BOB HOPE cracks a sick joke about people living on welfare, Clint Eastwood smiles and waves to thousands of raving fanatics who sing "America, America, God shine his light on thee".

Frank Sinatra joins Sammy Davis Jr for a chorus of "This land is your land". Merl Haggard and a well-known racist Country and Western singers, then gets the crowd really hopping:

I hear people talking bad about the way people live in this country.

Harping on the wars we fight and saying how things ought to be. If you don't like it, leave it, let this song be a warning.

Cause if you knock my country you're walking on the fighting side of me.

It's the last day of the presidential race. The euphoria at this Reagan rally is unprecedented.

The next day he wins outright—although only 25% of Americans voted for him, 80 million never bothered to vote.

Reagan has won as a Republican. Republicanism in the United States stands for the worst in "American pride".

Reagan's vote and the euphoria he has whipped up represent a backlash by the extreme right against the defeats imposed on American imperialism over the last decade.

It began with Vietnam and has continued through to Iran.

Economically, the US has been going through a series of deepening recessions since 1967.

Massive investment in arms and government spending softened the blow for a long time. But now the upward spiral of prosperity for America is over. Instead, US workers face the harsh reality of crisis.

Reagan's answer is similar to Thatcher's. He hopes that by huge cut backs in government spending, by knocking down all the social welfare programmes of the boom years, he can save money for the bosses to get industry going again.

He can hand the money out O.K., but he cannot force them to invest. The long dole queues will continue to make up the new American Nightmare.

The bosses know they are in for a rough ride. That's why the heads of the leading multinationals are financing Reagan's tougher line campaign.

Tougher on women's rights; tougher on "subversive" groups and tougher on those existing on welfare.

Reagan's backers promise greater arms spending and renewed respect in world affairs.

Reagan's first place of call after the results was to six prominent millionaires who have been financing him since he first became Governor of California.

The Conservative Caucus too is made up of businessmen. It has worked as an extreme right caucus inside the Republican Party. It is they who bought the television time for the McCarthy-style anti-commie ads.

The role of the media in Reagan's victory shows up American democracy for the sham it is. The media plays on the separation and bewilderment of the majority of Americans with government structures.

Cut off from any real control over government or big business the American electorate becomes highly influenced by personality politics and media fabrications.

The presidential race is restricted to the super-millionaires club. The principle difference between Carter and Reagan was whose make-up made them look more "statesmanlike".

The "personality" cult has now become the main feature of American democracy. The idea is put about that Reagan now controls the course of the United States.

It's a load of rubbish. The workings of the American economy is way out of the control of any President or government.

Ten million unemployed, the defeats American imperialism is suffering cannot be stopped by a new President.



Don't cross your heart cross your fingers

Special report

THE LATEST venture in tampons, the deodorised variety made by Playtex, should include in its packaging the words 'Warning: this tampon can seriously damage your health'.

Take the story of fifteen-year-old Diane Silva of Livermore, California, who was using Playtex's deodorant tampons when she became ill in August this year. Three days later she was dead as a result of TSS. The family's lawyer is filing a wrongful death case against Playtex; he is convinced that the tampon caused Diane Silva's death.

The bacteria which produces the poison can only cause TSS if it reaches the blood stream. The Playtex applicator, a plastic tube with six rounded teeth at the end, is capable of scraping the wall of the vagina and allowing bacteria to pass into the blood stream. The market leader in tampons, Tampax, is made from a cotton and rayon mix with a cardboard applicator. Lil-lets are entirely cotton and have no applicator.

The biggest selling point of the Playtex tampon, the 'plus deodorant', is unnecessary and probably harmful. Playtex do

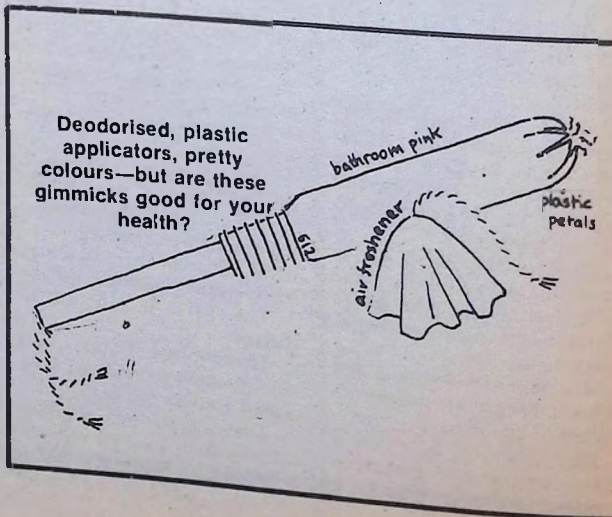
include a warning on the package: 'Caution: Discontinue use if sensitivity or irritation occurs. Persistent or unusual odour of discharge may indicate the presence of a condition for which a doctor should be consulted.'

Playtex can market their tampons here because there are no regulations covering their sale.

All the major stores are carrying promotions for Playtex at the moment and they expect to take 10% of the market.

The Department of Health has so far done nothing about Playtex tampons.

Perhaps women's health is not important to the bureaucrats who run this, department.



aside

A SUNNY Sunday in October.

Pedestrians stroll through the leaf-strewn streets of Cork city.

Children throw pieces of bread to the swans on the river Lee just above Patrick's Bridge.

Inside St Mary's Dominican church on Popes Quay, a mixed congregation gather at 4pm to pray for peace—industrial peace, that is.

In attendance in an expensive dark suit is Gene Fitzgerald, Minister for Labour and ex-director of Brien's Haulage, well known polluters of Irish rivers, ("Don't polluters of Irish rivers, ("Don't risk it, O'Brien will shift it").

Also on his knees in a prominent place at the altar rails is the Labour party Lord Mayor of Cork Toddy O'Sullivan, with his heavy chain of office.

Other minor civic and trade union dignitaries abound in their minor regalia.

The mass is organised by Peace (Prayer, Enterprise and Christian effort). They're mostly a well-heeled lot with plenty of expensive fur coats, tweed suits and dark serge suits.

Also in evidence though are a few thin, worn coats of working class poverty, even one or two union badges.

But they are out-numbered by sodality badges.

Gene Fitzgerald reads the lesson. "Your integrity will go before you . . . Do away with the yoke, the clenched fist . . . and your light will rise in the darkness, for I Yaffa love Justice, etc."—all delivered in a husky voice, reminiscent of a Chicago hood.

Some prayers and then a well-groomed woman with a posh English accent reads another lesson "Give success to the work of our hands O Lord". I wonder what kind of work she does—she's certainly doesn't look like one of the canteen women made redundant at Irish steel.

The Reverend Ronan Cusack O.P. gives the main sermon, "We have come here to call on God for the blessing of Industrial Peace"

He bemoans unemployment, but stresses that workers and employers "must pull together"—"By pulling together WE will win".

He says that there is a "basic right to strike", but it, "must be exercised with responsibility" adding that "The Lord bids it". "The unofficial strike is weakening the power of the Union leaders.

They are skilled negotiators and we should leave it to them—otherwise there will be anarchy".

And then his sermon got to the bit that really mattered as far as the church is concerned.

"Union members must attend their branch meetings—it is perhaps more important to attend your union meeting than your monthly sodality". They must "speak for Christ and become active". He warns that "Those who stand up for Christ will not be popular but they must pray".

The ushers looked real tough nuts who could do quick evictions so we retired outside to give out our anti-National Understanding leaflets from the Committee for a Shop Stewards Movement. Somehow, I don't think the kind of trade unionism the Committee (or most trade unionists) are calling for has much in common with that of the Rev. Ronan Cusack or Gene Fitzgerald.

by JIM BLAKE

It's death by...

IN BRITAIN the Tories are openly committed to public spending cuts. In Ireland—where there is less social spending to cut back on in the first place—Haughey's green Tories are openly breaking the promises on social spending given in the National Understanding.

Social spending cuts are an issue in themselves, but when there is a supposed Social Contract between the Government, the bosses and the workers that pretends to trade improved social benefits for wage restraint, well that's adding insult to injury.

Slap bang in the middle of the misunderstanding, the 1980 budget raised the benefits of "short term" social welfare recipients—the unemployed and the disabled—by 15% when inflation was running

at 20%.

Even the ITGWU described this as "a savage cut in their standard of living."

Yet those same union leaders have the gall to put their names to a document that lies about increasing social spending.

The Irish State is up to it's neck in debt. Government borrowing this year is likely to go another £200 million over the original target of £896 million.

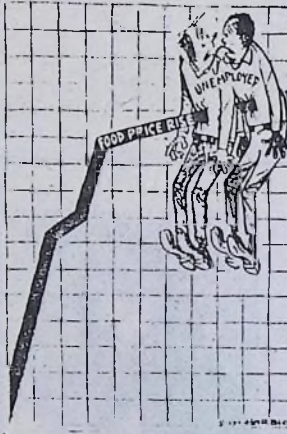
Just as the bosses respond to ailing profits by attacking wages, so the Government has responded to ailing finances by attacking the social wage.

The emphasis of their cut backs has not been on capital spending—grants to industry, big projects, state capitalist ventures, etc—but on current spending—social welfare, health, housing, local government, public-sector pay.

The budget cut the capital borrowing requirement by a mere 0.3% but the current side was cut from 7.1% of Gross National Product to 4.1%

The strength of the trade union movement ensures—still—that public sector pay cannot be severely cut, so Fianna Fail—despite all the abuse heaped on organised workers for their "selfish" disregard of the "underprivileged"—have concentrated their cuts in the non-pay areas.

The poorest sections of the population, those most dependent on Government allowances and services will feel the cut backs



...a thousand cuts

THE new National Understanding says "The Government is committed in principle to a programme designed to develop a sound and effective approach to the tackling of poverty in our society including research projects where appropriate."

Yet the Government cut the allocation to the Combat Poverty Committee by 24% in real terms and then virtually wound it up.

When some local authorities ran out of funds for housing loans earlier this year, young couples were simply told—after all their

hard saving—that there was no money left to give them the loans to which they were legally entitled!

Local authority workers, in jobs previously thought of as perfectly secure, are now facing redundancy.

The free schoolbook scheme was allocated the same funds this year as last—a cut in real terms, meaning that less kids will get free books than before. And there was not much before!

Callous as these "current expenditure" cuts are, they are below what most bosses economists are



more than anyone else.

And it is quite deliberate. The budget restricted current spending growth for non-pay items to 5% and inflation was hitting 20%.

They attempted to restrict the rise in funds to the Department of the Environment to 7.7% and Health to under 6%.

Sheer pressure has, of course,

forced them to release more all round and increase the borrowing accordingly.

Nonetheless, the cuts are biting and economists, professors and commentators are clamouring for a full stop to Government borrowing with dire threats of world bankers taking over the economy—directly.

shouting for, and below what the Government would impose given half the chance.

When Haughey took over he set out to reduce the Government borrowing rate from 14% to 10% and take it down to 3%.

Instead, the Government borrowing rate was allowed to stay around 14%.

Why? Because faced with for instance a determined teachers' strike they dared not chop public salaries too deeply and faced with a General Election by June 1982 they dare not screw the poor too much.

But the economic establishment are warning of a "financial crunch" and if the public sector workers were decisively beaten or if the Election were over the spirit of Margaret Thatcher would stalk the land with a vengeance.

The capitalist economists are not too worried about borrowing to finance capital—that holds out the hope of future profits—but they are panicking because half these borrowings are financing the day-to-day running of the state, including social spending.

They all agree that it is a choice between borrowing, higher taxes and spending cuts—including wage restraint—because "there is no money in the kitty."

LET'S look at how the kitty is being spent and lets see if there are other untapped kitties available in the system.

Interest payments on loans have really pushed up the "national" debt.

Interest on £7,500 million is now owed to Irish lenders and on £2,500 million to foreign lenders.

Interest—that is money for NOTHING—is now pouring into the hands of the native and international rich at the rate of 25% of all Irish taxation!

And how is the balance spent? Multinationals may avail of grants up to half their costs of setting up shop here, with other hand-outs such as cheap "advance factories" available.

The Government is pouring £100 million into a build up of the Gardai and 'security'—including the creation of paramilitary forces which only escalate armed crime—to ensure its power and the safety of the banks. What about the untapped resources? Ireland is one of the most profitable places

in the world for US companies, yet they export tax-free. Next year tax on all manufacturing profits will be reduced to 10%.

Many large companies pay less than this through clever accounting. Fianna Fail quite consciously reduced the tax base when they were elected by cutting or abolishing rates, car tax, wealth tax and capital gains tax.

The "poor-mouth" argument of the "experts" and the ruling-class only holds water within the logic of their own system.

Workers must reject THEIR logic by saying that inflation and unemployment are not inevitable except under capitalism and that crippling public debts are the debts of the rich to the rich.

The cuts can be fought. The old, the mentally ill and the homeless may be relatively powerless until organised. But hospital workers, local authority workers and teachers can resist reduced services and redundancies, by refusing to do extra work or fill in for vacancies, by demanding proper working conditions and by pressing their unions for organised action and demonstrations against any cuts in social spending, jobs and public sector pay.



The latest scandal to reveal the face of capitalism in Ireland is the state of the psychiatric hospitals.

The conditions have been desperate for a long time, yet this year Michael Woods, Minister for Health, wrote to the Southern Health Board telling them to make economies in

their spending.

The Board's Chief Executive Officer wrote to the other Board members on March 26, to explain exactly what that meant:

"It will mean a reduction in spending on furniture, crockery, bedding, clothing, heating, lighting, medicines, medi-

cal appliances, X-ray, pathology, travelling expenses, stationary and telephones . . ."

And that is happening in hospitals like Our Lady's Hospital in Cork where, there is a prevailing smell of "urine, excrement and sweat" about the place.

Derek Spelina (Report)



But not for some.....

| ALLIED IRISH BANKS | | |
|--|--------|--------|
| Profit and Loss Account for the Half-year ended 30th September | | |
| | 1980 | 1979 |
| | £000 | £000 |
| Operating profit | | |
| Parent Bank | 17,158 | 12,110 |
| Subsidiaries | 6,172 | 7,498 |
| Associated companies | 600 | 365 |
| Profit before taxation | 23,930 | 19,973 |

Compiled by DES DERWIN
ITGWU shop steward

H-BLOCK

CHRIS RYDER writes a weekly column on Northern Ireland in the Sunday Times.

Ryder has also the ears of the Army generals and the Thatcher Cabinet. But the same man made a very simple and sharp point a few weeks ago.

The key to the victory or defeat of the H Block hunger strike, he says lies in the South.

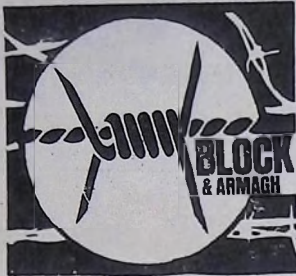
He is absolutely right. The massive display of support for the prisoners in the North has come as a surprise to Thatcher. It's brought the biggest demonstrations since Bloody Sunday. It's brought fantastic unity and re-organisation in the local areas.

Take the Ormeau Road/Market area in Belfast

A year or two ago, the campaign amounted to a few activists plugging away with petitions, posters and leaflets. Today the hunger strike committee meetings are packed; spontaneous public meetings will turn out over a few hundred; marches and road blocks are being organised.

It is that sort of mass movement that fights the Atkins and Gerry Fitts of this world.

But even more is needed to beat the Brits on this one.



Thatcher will only be defeated if she knows there is a direct threat made to British investments here is one of the hunger strikers die.

She is making a simple gamble: that the demand for political status can be crushed once and for all—through death if necessary—but that stability can still be maintained. Stability in security arrangements; in investments; in common ruling class friendship across the Irish sea.

The key to turning the odds against that gamble lies in the South. British imperialism interests cover the whole of the island.

As long as it can count on Southern passivity, it can use to the full its repressive armoury. But workers active as was seen in the tax marches, as was seen in the 1920s—is one thing they cannot face.

Massive industrial action on a 32 county basis is the one sure guarantee of victory for the prisoners.

The National H Block campaign should be throwing everything into bringing that about.

Unfortunately it is not. Two things are standing in its way.

Firstly, it has consistently stood for lobbying of "influential people" as the means to bringing about a compromise. Where the Irish liberal class was discovered not to exist, the Catholic Church was found to replace it.

National H Block Committee has even gone so far as to call for 'prayers' for the prisoners. That sort of rubbish forgets one thing: the Catholic Church will use any credibility it has in the struggle to push through a sell-out. Had Atkins genuinely offered civilian clothing, the Church would have done everything to sell the deal.

Secondly there has been a romanticism about the hunger

strike tactic itself—particularly from the Provos. We are not in a 1916 situation where the actions of a few brave men will arouse the country, nor is the spontaneous Bloody Sunday upsurge in the South guaranteed.

That upsurge was around a civil rights struggle. Today we face massive divisions in the anti-imperialist movement; we are fighting against eight years of solid pro-imperialist propaganda; and we are fighting around an issue that, when all is said and done, involves the armed struggle issue.

What does all this mean? We are not talking of 'arousing basic Republican instincts' but of organising and agitating now for action.

Sitting back waiting for the upsurge isn't going to make it happen.

The actual work of taking the arguments back into the workplace—through bulletins, through factory gate meetings, through lobbying of shop stewards—is the only way we will get mass industrial action.

KIERAN ALLEN

DON'T

THEN



Where the action is

IN THE LOCAL AREAS

If you have not joined a local H Block/Armagh action group, then join immediately.

You can find where your nearest local group is by contacting the National H Block office at 29 Mountjoy Sq. Dublin 2 Tel: 747200

Make sure your group is getting a well-organised local public meeting off the ground. The hunger strike has brought us a new audience to speak to. Try to organise a local march in the area.

Find out the times of the local TDs, councillors clinics. Picket them. Lobby them. Tell them we are not going to stand for their silent collaboration anymore.

Build for a massive turn out on the demonstration to the British Embassy on December 6th.

Ask your local tenants association to sponsor the demonstrations.

Get leaflets around the local housing estates.

Organise buses for the demo.

IN THE UNIONS

The time for talk is over. We've got to organise now for militant action to save the prisoners lives.

Get a relative into workplace meetings to address a lunch time meeting.

If that's not possible try for a factory gate meeting.

Organise a lobby from your workplace down to your union headquarters. Tell them we want official union headquarters. Tell them the H Blocks and Armagh with workers—many of them union members.

are filled with workers—many of them union members. Tell them we want official action from the unions to defend the prisoners, to support their demands.

Make sure there are trade union banners on the 6th of December demo.

If you can't get an official one, make your own from different jobs.

Prepare now for strike action.

The PAYE protests started with independent action from a few major factories and later got official backing. It will be the same with action on the H Blocks.

CORPO.

A GROUP of us felt fairly concerned about H Block.

We sat down and decided to get something done.

We're getting a leaflet out to all the depots. We are trying to get as many as possible onto the demos.

We'll be on the demo with a Corpo Against the H Blocks banner.

The support is very good. But we still need to take up the arguments. Particularly if you are going to get some action.

by John Byrne, Corpo Against H Blocks

TEACHERS

A FEW of us had been working in the union over the last year or so on a variety of issues—wages, church control, sexism. We decided it was time to do something on H Block.

We called a meeting for Teachers Against the H Block. We leafleted a union meeting against the wage deal and got in touch with few militants.

The meeting was fairly small—but enthusiasm made up for the scope. We are now circulating a resolution passed by the West Belfast INTO to all branch Secretaries in the South.

We drafted up a letter and decided to get as many teachers to sign it, calling for support for the prisoners demands. And we are turning out on all the major demos in the South with a Teachers Against H Block Banner.

by Kieran Allen, Teachers Against H Blocks

MEETINGS

SUPPORT THESE EVENTS

Saturday 29th

Mass Ulster Rally
Monaghan Town. Assemble
Fergal O Connor Monument,
Clones Road.

Saturday 29th

Finglas March
Assemble Bottom of the Hill
Finglas Village. 2.30

Sunday 30th

March in Belfast

Sunday 30th

Ballyshannon to Dublin march

Team of 35 walkers leave
leave Ballyshannon.
Marching through Sligo,
Carrick on Suir, Mullingar,
Lucan. Holding Public
meetings on the way.

Saturday 6th December

Saturday 6th December

Massive demonstration to
British Embassy.
Assemble St. Stephens Green
2.30

Sunday 7th December London

March organised by Ad Hoc
Hunger Strike Committee.

Monday 8th December

March/Rally in Sligo.
Speaker: Bernadette McAliskey.

An old political

THE HUNGER strike has been used throughout the last 70 years as a political weapon in Ireland.

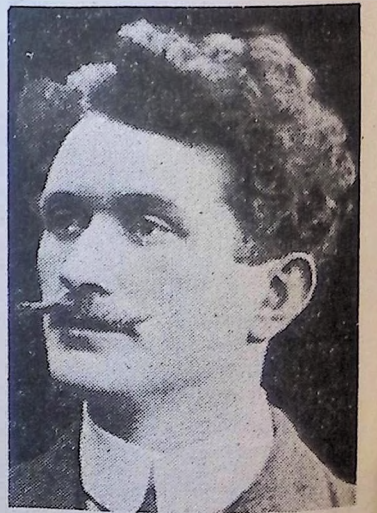
The first major hunger strike was in September 1917. 84 men in Mountjoy raised the demand for prisoner of status.

When it was refused they smashed up their cells and declared a hunger strike.

Thomas Ashe was subjected to forcible feeding. He collapsed and died after a few hours in hospital.

But the most important lesson for us, relates to the hunger strike in April 1920.

Nearly one hundred political prisoners went on hunger strike in Mountjoy jail. Then, as now, the British declared



Thomas Ashe, the first man to die on hunger strike.

they could die if they chose to do so.

What made this strike so different was the intervention of the labour movement.

After a meeting on April 12, 1920, the executive of the Labour Party—which was then firmly linked to the trade unions, decided on a dramatic demonstration for the release of the men involved.

It issued a manifesto for a general strike in support of the prisoners.



Terrance McSweeney died on October 25th 1920 after 40 days on hunger strike.

CK



de- is a itish of the e gam- poli- d death bility tab- ents: on cross e lies erial- hole t on use rm- as nes, -is ce.

Massive industrial action on a 32 county basis is the one sure guarantee of victory for the prisoners.

The National H Block campaign should be throwing everything into bringing that about.

Unfortunately it is not. Two things are standing in its way.

Firstly, it has consistently stood for lobbying of "influential people" as the means to bringing about a compromise.

Where the Irish liberal class was discovered not to exist, the Catholic Church was found to replace it.

National H Block Committee has even gone so far as to call for 'prayers' for the prisoners. That sort of rubbish forgets one thing: the Catholic Church will use any credibility it has in the struggle to push through a sell-out. Had Atkins genuinely offered civilian clothing, the Church would have done everything to sell the deal.

Secondly there has been a romanticism about the hunger

strike tactic itself—particularly from the Provos. We are not in a 1916 situation where the actions of a few brave men will arouse the country, nor is the spontaneous Bloody Sunday upsurge in the South guaranteed.

That upsurge was around a civil rights struggle. Today we face massive divisions in the anti-imperialist movement; we are fighting against eight years of solid pro-imperialist propaganda; and we are fighting around an issue that, when all is said and done, involves the armed struggle issue.

What does all this mean? We are not talking of 'arousing basic Republican instincts' but of organising and agitating now for action.

Sitting back waiting for the upsurge isn't going to make it happen.

The actual work of taking the arguments back into the workplace—through bulletins, through factory gate meeting, through lobbying of shop stewards—is the only way we will get mass industrial action.

KIERAN ALLEN

DON'T LET THEM DIE!



Brendan Hughes



Sean McKenna

action is

CORPO.

A GROUP of us felt fairly concerned about H Block.

We sat down and decided to get something done.

We're getting a leaflet out to all the depots. We are trying to get as many as possible onto the demos.

We'll be on the demo with a Corpo Against the H Blocks banner.

The support is very good. But we still need to take up the arguments. Particularly if you are going to get some action.

by John Byrne, Corpo Against H Blocks

TEACHERS

A FEW of us had been working in the union over the last year or so on a variety of issues—wages, church control, sexism. We decided it was time to do something on H Block.

We called a meeting for Teachers Against the H Block. We leafletted a union meeting against the wage deal and got in touch with few militants.

The meeting was fairly small—but enthusiasm made up for the scope. We are now circulating a resolution passed by the West Belfast INTO to all branch Secretaries in the South.

We drafted up a letter and decided to get as many teachers to sign it, calling for support for the prisoners demands. And we are turning out on all the major demos in the South with a Teachers Against H Block Banner.

by Kieran Allen, Teachers Against H Blocks

MEETINGS

SUPPORT THESE EVENTS

Saturday 29th

Mass Ulster Rally
Monaghan Town, Assembla
Fergal O Connor Monument,
Clones Road.

Saturday 29th

Finglas March
Assembla Bottom of the Hill
Finglas Village. 2.30

Sunday 30th

March in Belfast

Sunday 30th

Ballyshannon to Dublin march

Team of 35 walkers leave
leave Ballyshannon.
Marching through Sligo,
Carrick on Suir, Mullingar,
Lucan. Holding Public
meetings on the way.

Saturday 6th December

Saturday 6th December

Massive demonstration to
British Embassy.
Assembla St. Stephens Green
2.30

Sunday 7th December London

March organised by Ad Hoc
Hunger Strike Committee.

Monday 8th December

March/Rally in Sligo.
Speaker: Bernadette McAliskey.

An old political weapon

THE HUNGER strike has been used throughout the last 70 years as a political weapon in Ireland.

The first major hunger strike was in September 1917. 84 men in Mountjoy raised the demand for prisoner of status.

When it was refused they smashed up their cells and declared a hunger strike.

Thomas Ashe was subjected to forcible feeding. He collapsed and died after a few hours in hospital.

But the most important lesson for us, relates to the hunger strike in April 1920.

Nearly one hundred political prisoners went on hunger strike in Mountjoy jail. Then, as now, the British declared



Thomas Ashe, the first man to die on hunger strike.

they could die if they chose to do so.

What made this strike so different was the intervention of the labour movement.

After a meeting on April 12, 1920, the executive of the Labour Party—which was then firmly linked to the trade unions, decided on a dramatic demonstration for the release of the men involved.

It issued a manifesto for a general strike in support of the prisoners.

The strike began the next day and was completely effective in all parts of the country except the area around Belfast.

On the third day of the strike, the British changed their policy and unconditionally released all the prisoners.

It was a complete victory and saw the fusion of the National and Labour movements at its most effective.

The lessons of that struggle are still valid. We must demand that the labour movement throws its whole weight behind the struggle of the H Block prisoners.

That will only happen today from determined rank-and-file pressure from below.

by PAUL O'BRIEN

IN MARCH 1923, 91 women prisoners in Kilmainham went on hunger when their right to receive and send letters and to communicate with their families was removed.

After a week the Free State Government restored their rights and the strike ended.



Thomas Johnson, Thomas Farren and J. H. Thomas investigate hunger strike (Irish Independent 1920)



Terrence McSweeney died on October 25th 1920 after 40 days on hunger strike.

LET M DIE!



WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

CIARAN MCGILlicUDDY

THE PRISONERS of H Block and Armagh are often the anonymous "blanket men and women". The faces behind those blankets are not so well known.

Ciaran McGillicuddy is the youngest prisoner on the blanket.

When Ciaran was first arrested on 9th January 78, he was 15½ years old. He was taken to Strand Road Police Station in Derry to be questioned in connection with a bombing at Smith's Mill, Strahane. The bomb had caused £2,000 worth of damage.

His father was allowed to be present on two interrogations lasting approximately 1 hour to 1½ hours.

He was eventually released that same night, with no charges against him.

His parent's home had meanwhile been raided—but nothing was found.

The next time Ciaran was arrested was in February. He had been picked up on Strahane Bridge on his way to town. He did not attend

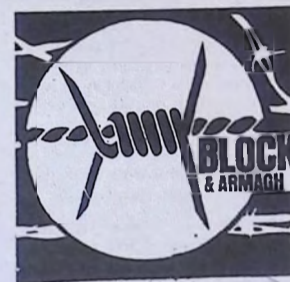
school that day because his grandmother had just died. His parents were not informed that he had been taken to a police station 18 miles from his home.

This time the parents were refused permission to see him during questioning. They tried several times—but it was no use.

On the morning after his arrest they were finally let in for a visit.

They were told that Ciaran had signed a statement stating that he had been a look out when the bomb was being planted.

Mrs McGillicuddy takes up the story: "When we saw our son, he was shaking like a leaf. He was white and he looked very shaken. He told us that he had been very badly beaten and tortured and that to save further beatings he had signed the so-called 'confession'. He also told us on his grandmother's honour, he was totally innocent"



He was sent to Crumlin Road prison and held in the Junior wing until his case came up on October 78. His case lasted eight days. Finally the well-known Orange judge, Robert Babbington, decided he was looking at three hardened terrorists and sentenced them to four years.

The other two lads who also signed the statement, Danny McGarrigle and Gerry Patterson, got 4 years on the same charge. But they only spent 2 years in prison and were released in March of this year. The reason? They did not go on the blanket. Ciaran, who did, got double the time.

But that's not all. Since Ciaran went on the Blanket, he has been savagely beaten several times. On one occasion, a screw pulled Ciaran from his cell, dragged him to another room and beat him so badly that two other prison officers had to drag him off Ciaran.

On July 20th of this year Ciaran and another prisoner, Nugent were caught with contraband on them. In this case a Mars leaflet and an old biro refill. They were beaten up immediately.

They were taken to the Medical Orderlies room where their anus was examined intimately before being sent to the punishment blocks. Here in a cell, both men were to suffer terrible degrading searches; they were held upside down by the feet and a pair of long-nosed pliers inserted into their back passage.

Ciaran McGillicuddy entered the Blocks as a school boy. He has spent over two years of his youth in those hell holes.



Brendan Hughes



Sean McKenna

political weapon

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THOMAS McKEARNEY

THOMAS McKEARNEY, 28 years old, from Moy in County Tyrone is now on hunger strike to the death in the H Blocks. His mother has been to see him but has not tried to dissuade him from the strike.

"He wouldn't be in prison except for the political situation," she explains.

McKearney's case was reported by both Amnesty International last year and the

recent Peter Taylor book on police interrogation in the North.

Taylor writes that when Dr Irwin saw McKearney after a week in Castlereagh, "he was pale, nervous and exhausted. He had a black eye that looked fairly recent and bruises whose colour suggested they were five to six days old. His forehead was swollen and many of the muscles at the back of his neck, forearm and



Tommy McKearney

abdomen were swollen and tender". McKearney told Dr Irwin that "his head and trunk were covered with a plastic sack. He said that he was beaten around the head while the bag was pulled tight around his throat. He managed to tear a hole in the bag so he could breathe."

McKearney signed a statement, was convicted of murder, and sentenced to 20 years.

PAULINE McLAUGHLIN

PAULINE McLAUGHLIN is dying. At 23, after 4 years in Armagh jail, she weighs 4½ stone. Her hair is falling out and her teeth are rotten.

She is unable to keep her food down and the authorities have still not come up with a diagnosis for her mysterious illness.

When she became dangerously ill recently, she was moved to Musgrave Park Military hospital where the only medicine she received was Vitamin pills and where the con-

stant surveillance of the male warders frightened and unnerved her.

Now she is back in Armagh under the attention of the notorious Dr Cole, described by ex-inmate Margaretta D'arcy as a "sexist and a male chauvinist pig".

This is the doctor who withheld medical attention from Pauline while she was on the protest for political protest.

She came off the protest in March this year. It has



Pauline McLaughlin

done nothing to prevent the deterioration of her condition.

Pauline will die unless she is given proper medical attention.

She is not the only prisoner in Armagh suffering from illnesses for which they are not being treated.

This is a systematic campaign by the authorities to use medicine as a weapon against political prisoners. We say: Proper Medical Attention for all Political Prisoners. Don't let Pauline die.



Thomas Johnson, Thomas Farren and J. H. Thomas investigate hunger strike (Irish Independent 1920)

LETTERS

RAPE

IN AN otherwise excellent article on Rape (Worker No 5) I feel Mary Gordon may have inadvertently provided some ammunition to reactionaries who often claim that most rapists are just nasty men from the lower classes (and in particular, blacks) who could not be expected to behave in a proper civilised manner.

produces such people—and what both women and men need to do to destroy such perversions.
JOHN CANE, Dublin.

reply

ALL OF your points are, of course, taken. Some of mine weren't clearly put. The FBI and other official figures that I used in fact bolster the misconception about rape that it is a street crime like mugging or assault. The point is that only men from ghetto or working class areas are, for the most part, convicted for rapes although it is a much more wide spread crime and can as easily take place inside a middle class home as on the ghetto street. Given that people who live in ghettos are far more likely to be convicted of any crime than people with a middle class address, it is not surprising then to find a disproportionate number of black men on the records in America. I didn't mean to imply that black men are more likely to rape than white—they are just more likely to be convicted.

What I was trying to show by citing Eldridge Cleaver was that rape of any woman is an act of violence against all women. By practising on Black women Cleaver clearly demonstrated that his political rape campaign was as much a denial of the humanity of women (including his Black sisters) as it was an act of war against his white oppressors. For revolutionaries fighting against capitalist oppression rape can never be a weapon, any more than racism can be used as a weapon by women to make gains. But of course, Cleaver is a nut (his views now prove that)—I was just using him to make this point.—M.G.

First, she says "the majority of convicted rapists are from the lower socio-economic groups". Now this may well be so but without an explanation of why such groups are more prone to all kinds of crime, not just rape, the bald statement comes across as anti-working class.

This is followed with another reference that "47% of convicted rapists are black". Again, the same argument applies. Without saying why it merely sounds racist. I'm sure that the writer would agree that it is the capitalist system, and not original sin, that ensures so much violence by exploited and oppressed groups against women. To understand this is not to condone it.

Finally, of course, the ravings of an ex-revolutionary (now absolutely mad) religious fanatic like Eldridge Cleaver should be opposed as well, but let's not forget what society it is that

H BLOCKS

WE WISH to bring to the attention of the general public that an H-Block Action Group has been formed in the Rathmines/Ranelagh area.

This broad based group has come together to work for the 5 demands of the H-Block and Armagh Prisoners.

With the protest now escalated to a hunger strike, we appeal to any person who supports these demands to come together so as to avert possible deaths in the Prisons and further hardships on the beleaguered families of the Prisoners.

The Action Group meets weekly on Monday nights at Halla Croabh Liam Bulfin Observatory Lane (beside Leinster Cricket Club) Rathmines Road at 8pm.

The Action Group is presently gathering petitions and contacting Community and Sporting Groups in the area.

If you want to become involved or need further information, please phone the Secretary at 985549.

NUALA SMITH,
Secretary, Ranelagh/Rathmines H Block Action Group.

'Stop the Junkets' call from SFWP Councillors

THE following article appeared in the SFWP paper, Irish People, in June of this year.

"It's conference time again when Irish Councillors get their annual free trips abroad under the guise of fact-finding missions on housing and town planning. This week alone Dublin Corporation spent nearly £14,000 sending 23 Councillors to planning conferences in four different countries.
Councillor Tomas Mac Giolla of Sinn Fein The

Workers' Party nearly threw a spanner in the works when he proposed that the number of delegations be cut back.
Sinn Fein The Workers' Party are fast earning themselves a bad reputation on local Councils throughout the country for opposing foreign junket s."

And quite right too, we say. There's far too much of this sort of thing going on. But, unfortunately, the wise words of Tomas MacGiolla don't seem to have penet-

rated down to Waterford, as can be seen from the following piece in the Munster Express just one month later.



● Tomas Mac Giolla condemned spending by Dublin City Council.

Cummins are the three men chosen to travel."

....."But three of the members will travel to Brittany to prepare a report to be considered regarding the possible twinning of Waterford with Saint Herbrlain.

Alderman Patrick Gallagher, Councillor Davy Walsh and Councillor Maurice

Because just look at the names of the Councillors off to sunny Brittany. There's Maurice Cummins of Fine Gael and Patrick Gallagher and Davy Walsh of..... you've guessed it—Sinn Fein the Workers Party. Ah well!

UNEMPLOYMENT

IF YOU walk down D'Olier St. in Dublin you will see a poster, in the window of the Manpower office, proclaiming—"Whatever your age, whatever your experience, there's a job inside for you".

That's a bit of a sick joke when we have the worst unemployment figures since the thirties.

'The Worker' spoke to a few of the unemployed at the Gardiner St Labour Exchange who weren't laughing. Frank has completed a few ANCO courses without any chance of getting a job.

He has lived a few months at a time on the measly 'allowance' they give out. At other times during the six years since he left school, he has been unemployed except for spells abroad and on the building.

He correctly points out: "With so many people looking for jobs the employers are able to offer lousy wages for the jobs that are going".

Joe used to work in the jewellery trade from when he left school until he was laid off about a year ago. He hadn't even finished his time.

He is angry that his apprenticeship has been wasted. "I spent three years working with a jewellery firm and had become fairly skilled. It is now virtually impossible to get a job in the trade".

So, Fianna Faul's 1977 election job target is a farce. And so

are all the promises of the National Understanding.

The unemployed have always been the butt of promises and insults. Promises of jobs by a few jumped-up politicians who never came through. And insults from the same crew when they don't deliver the goods.

One thing is clear though. We've got to fight for the Right

to Work. And its got to be a fight that links the militant action of the unemployed with the strength of organised workers in a campaign that says:

a 35 hour week

No redundancies—occupy to nationalise.

Ban overtime—Fight for a decent basic.



2,500 workers in Gardners Factory in Manchester are fighting unemployment and defending jobs in a militant sit in against redundancies.

news from swm

THE SOCIALIST Workers Movement held a womens day school on Feminism and Socialism on Saturday 25th October which was attended by about 25 women—not bad for a bank holiday week end.

Guest speaker was Anna Paszuka, leading member of the SWP in Britain.

Other speakers dealt with the issues which the women's movement has raised: Armagh prison, rape, abortion, women in trade unions etc., and some time was devoted to discussing the concrete situation in which socialist feminists find themselves in Ireland today.

The Feminist Federation has been in decline and there is no single focus for the kind of left-wing feminism which it had represented.

It was therefore felt that there was room for a socialist womens group that would specifically work around issues that affect working-class women and that a start would be made by holding regular meeting of SWM women and those who agree with SWM's approach to womens politics.

Much still has to be decided about the relationship between Socialism and Feminism and the way in which the struggles will be linked.

A socialist womens group will enable a beginning to be made on this discussion and a plan of action to be drawn up.

WATERFORD

WATERFORD SWM hosted a public meeting on Wednesday 5th November.

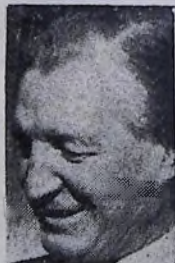
Over 20 women heard a talk on women at work and another on the issues concerning women outside work.

After a lively discussion which dealt with the issues affecting women in Waterford—equal pay, wife battering, the fact that there is no family planning clinic—it was decided to set up a Women's Group in Waterford to discuss these issues and attempt to take up the fight in some of these areas.

It was agreed to draw up a leaflet inviting women to an introductory meeting on Wednesday 19th November.



If you don't subscribe to their politics



you can subscribe to ours

by getting the Worker—the paper that fights for workers' power.

I want a Worker Subscription. I enclose £2.50 for a years subscription.

Name
Address

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Waterford workers beat back bosses

MANAGEMENTS UP and down the country are increasingly attempting to weaken trade union organisation. When they recently took on the workers at Performance Sailcraft and Bell Lines in Waterford, however, they got more than they bargained for.

The Worker spoke to John Griffin, one of the suspended workers at Sailcraft, and Paddy Kiely, shop steward at Bell Lines, for the story.

Early in October, the management at Performance Sailcraft on the Industrial Estate unilaterally decided that the Spray Booths needn't be cleaned every week as usual.

As well as cutting the bonus received for this work, the decision meant that the health and safety of all the workers was put at risk.

John Griffin takes up the story.

"Management obviously thought they could get one over us. We'd just returned to short-time working after a 9 week lay-off.

They thought we'd put up with anything, just because we'd got a bit of work.

They soon learned different".

Four workers on the spray booths refused to operate the new procedure. They were dismissed on the spot.

Immediately all sixty manual workers walked off the job. And immediately the ITGWU, the workers union gave them full backing..

Well, not quite, according to John Griffin, "The ITGWU officials gave us no help at all throughout the 4 weeks we were on strike. They even tried to stop other factories on the estate giving us financial support. All we wanted was the suspension lifted and arbitration on the spray booths issue. Management broke the rules, not us. Yet our union attacked us, everyone here is disgusted at them".

The Sailcraft workers eventually got what they wanted thru the mediation of the local mayor and President of the Trades Council. Management won't be as keen to try it on again, unfortunately the same probably can't be said for the ITGWU.

The Performance Sailcraft strike was also responsible for a day strike at Bell Lines, the container terminal in Waterford.

On hearing of the Sailcraft dispute, one of the Bell workers, Sean Halligan, threatened (only threatened mind you) to black 3 Sailcraft containers on the docks. Bell management dismissed him on the spot.

Shop Steward Paddy Kiely, continues the story.

"To my mind either management were off their heads or they just wanted to provoke a dispute.

Whatever, they certainly got one. We all walked off the job, our union (ATGWU) backed it immediately and we got support from Bell workers in England and the Continent. Management attempted to use the return to work negotiations to bring in a new Procedural Agreement.

Learners are poor earners

by Hugh McPartland
Apprentices Committee AUEW

WHILE SUCCESSIVE national wage agreements have drastically cut the real level of workers wages, there is one group of workers who have been doubly hit by continuing wage restraint.

These are the country's thousands of apprentices.

Apprentices have long been used as a source of cheap labour, but in the past couple of years their discontent has been growing.

Probably the main point of anger amongst apprentices would be their low wages. While most 2nd, 3rd and 4th year apprentices do basically the same work as qualified crafts men, because they are under contract and are supposedly only learning their trade, their wages can be kept to a minimum.

For example 3 years ago the average take home pay of a first year apprentice in some semi-state companies was as low as £9 a week; and recent NWA's have done nothing to change the relative position.

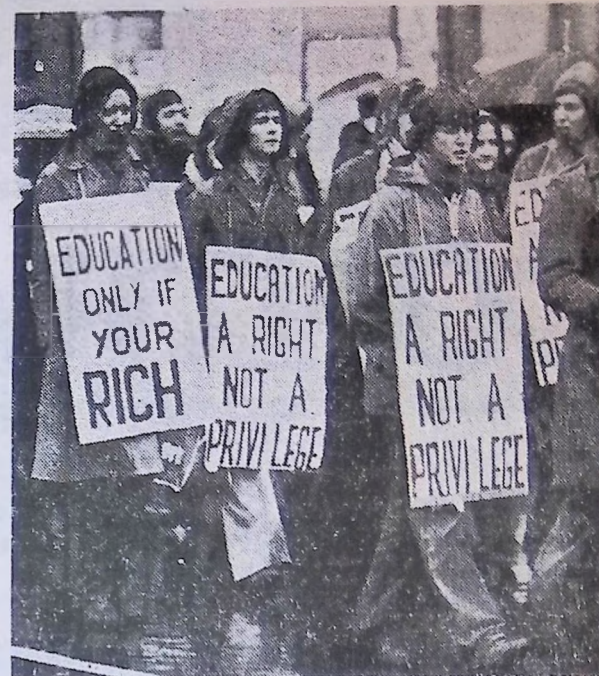
Low wage rates is only one issue and it must be viewed in context in the overall situation. For a number of reasons apprentices have suffered from a lack of organisation.

Firstly, apprentices have no job security, which is necessary if an organised front is to be built.

Secondly, apprentices have little or no overall view of their position amongst other workers.

Before they can organise they must see the need for unity.

Thirdly, apprentices have been ignored by most unions, and therefore they don't have any experience of the qualities necessary to set up an apprentices organisation. A point to remember is it is



"Apprentices could successfully take over the ready made machinery of student's union....."

not only the employers who fear the independent organisation of apprentices. The majority of unions are very much opposed to the idea. AnCo is also another major stumbling block to the organisation of apprentices.

In the sixties a new sheet steel mill had to be sold off to Greece because the salt water used for cooling was destroying the metal (Haulbowline is an artificial island, originally built by the forced labour of Fenian political prisoners).

Currently a whole new plant is under construction on the site. It is said that this will make Irish Steel "viable".

Judging by the past record, and the impossibility of escaping the worldwide recession, Irish Steel workers are advised to take this statement with the proverbial pinch of salt.

Unfortunately, there has been virtually no opposition to the recent redundancies.

The skilled workers—mainly AUEW and EEPTU—have not been affected. Obviously the six month crafts strike in 1976 over differentials has persuaded management to "leave off" these well-organised workers.

The general workers in the ITGWU—who all passed the 1976 crafts pickets—have proved a far easier touch.

Not that they were exactly shown a fighting lead by their officials, whose only response to the redundancies was to demand that management also laid off some—non-union—office staff!

Management complied—the 230 now contains 15 staff and 2 ITGWU canteen workers.

It is clear that these redundancies, as well as being in response to the recession, are a softening up process for a new productivity deal when the new plant gets into production.

It is now vital that all workers—craft, general and staff—learn from past mistakes and organise together to resist all management attacks.

And as a first step, there must be no working of the new plant until every one of the 230 made redundant is re-employed. Cork Branch SWM.

STEELYARD BLUES

THERE IS a demand for steel. Farmers need tractors, people want cars, buildings must have girders.

But capitalism is going through one of its many periods of recession and that means there is no money available to back up the demand.

So steelmaking becomes "unprofitable", less steel is produced and steel workers are thrown onto the dole queues.

People want more steel, but less is produced—it's a crazy system.

Throughout the world, the response of the steel bosses is the same—concentrate production in fewer and fewer big plants and let the "less economic" plants go to the wall.

Whole communities of traditional steel-making are becoming wastelands—South Wales, the Ruhr, the Ohio Valley.

But, as the recession deepens, "more economic" plants are also beginning to suffer.

Recently, the Consett works works in Durham was closed, now comes 230 redundancies at Ireland's only steel production plant, Irish Steel at Haulbowline outside Cork.

Irish Steel has experienced many ups and downs since it was established in 1937 by scrap metal dealer David Frame.

In 1947 it had to be rescued by Government intervention. Civil servants were appointed to the board, though Frame's grandson is still Managing Director and his company still supplies the scrap metal.

Well known trade unionists from the paper mills and buildings, for example, have been quite blatantly refused work in the town for a long period.

This renewed activity by the Council should be supported by all workers. But the shop stewards meeting showed the way forwards clearly.

If it takes a meeting of the rank and file to get the Council moving, doesn't it make sense for the rank and file to come together on a much more permanent basis?

Think what could be achieved by a proper shop stewards committee representing all Waterford workers directly on an elected workplace basis.

After all, it's the stewards who will have to implement the decisions, it's the stewards who should have a major say in making them.

More power to the elbow of the Trades Council for moving on these vital matters, but they'll need the backing of the rank file if anything's going to come of it.

Action on jobless

WATERFORD has always been to the forefront of any fight against unemployment in Ireland. In September 1978, the Trades Council organised a virtual general strike in the city with over 10,000 workers marching in support of the paper mills—workers threatened with redundancy.

Since those heady days however, little has been heard and less done. Meanwhile the list of redundancies and short-time working in the town has snowballed. Gone are the paper mills, Munster Chipboard and Pharaon Textiles. On short-time are Wellworthy Engineering, Fisman and Sailcraft among many others.

Perhaps the best indicator is that, this time last year up to 20 building sites were in operation employing around 200.

Now the Trades Council, prompted by SWM supporters, has begun to move again.

At the end of October they called together a meeting of

WATERFORD BRANCH SWM

over 60 Waterford shop stewards and union activists to discuss the situation, along with that of their ill-fated paper the Trade Union News.

As a result, the Council is now considering the launching of a campaign of meetings, leaflets etc., throughout the Waterford factories, culminating in a token stoppage in a few months time.

Alongside that activity, the Council is also to look into the setting up of unemployed registers in the unions as one means of countering the scandalous blacklisting of trade union militants that is growing apace.

Originally this organisation was set up to look after all of their needs. But now rather than leading the fight for better conditions AnCo is policing the apprentices.

In fact, the only organisation which can claim to have done anything for apprentices is the VEC.

The VEC has been in the forefront of the fight against AnCo and for a long time has been attempting to do the job AnCo was set for. The VEC has also supported to a certain extent the setting up of local apprentice committees in its colleges.

But it must be remembered that because AnCo and the VEC are organs of the state they can never and will never attempt to solve all the problems facing apprentices. This can only be done by apprentices organising, locally at first, and then nationally, to build a united apprentices movement.

This will be a hard and difficult task but fortunately with a lot of work, apprentices have the necessary resources and are in a position to fulfill it.

Apprentices have a few points in their favour.

Firstly, most apprentices get together in large numbers at least once a week for day release to Regional Technical Colleges. By this means the difficulty of communicating about related problems can be overcome.

Secondly, many apprentices have been active in Smash H Block and Anti Nuclear movements at a local level whereby they have gained experience of how to organise effectively. Fortunately it is these apprentices who realise the need for an effective organisation.

Thirdly, if the need ever arose apprentices could successfully take over the ready made machinery of the student's unions. It must be remembered that in most RTC's there are twice as many apprentices as full-time students, but up to the present apprentices have rarely joined student's unions.

Finally, the level of trade union membership among apprentices is high. Apprentices must fight in their own particular union for the support that any national apprentices movement will need to effectively solve the issues at stake.

THE WORKER

FOR WORKERS POWER AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

Family Planning
Church may change view on Pill
Haughey's Bill upsets Mr. Haughey's Bill
I.M.A. REJECT KNIGHTS
CONTRACEP:

SINCE Mr. Haughey finds it inexpedient either to define what constitutes a 'married person, or to invoke sanction to implement the pious intentions of his Bill, it must be obvious that in practice it will in no wise prevent the whole in ... and distribution o

CONTRACEPTION

Access for all

by Marnie Holborow

YOU HAVE to be married. You have to get a doctor to agree to give you a prescription.

And then you have to go yourself to the chemist and shout for them over the counter.

That's what the new Family Planning Act means for anyone wanting any form of contraception.

a plan designed to encourage accessible contraception.

And yet, increasing numbers of people are already seeking contraceptive advice.

Last year, 50,000 people attended the Irish Family Planning Clinic alone. 9,500 people used the Well Woman contraceptive services in Dublin; 7,000 the Cork FP clinic and 12,000 the Galway clinic. In a recent poll it was found that 75% of Irish women were in favour of some sort of contraception. Popes and bishops continue to pronounce on "the evil that contraception entails". But, for more and more people, what unwanted pregnancy entails, as the figures show, is far more disturbing.

The government's law lies in the face of this reality. And in no uncertain terms.

It threatens six months imprisonment for the unlicensed sale of contraceptives.

It imposes stringent conditions on the few clinics al-



"Your husband just told me the good news, Mrs O'Farrell. And may I be so bold as to suggest that if it's a boy you call him John Paul."

lowed to operate. Licences for them have to be renewed yearly. The government has even suggested banning some forms of contraception—such as IUD's—altogether. Contraception under the new act will be about as available as pennies from heaven.

Panic-buying and the long queues outside the FP Clinics during the last few days before the enforcement of the

act (November 1st), proved that people realised quickly just how serious the new act was. The unavailability of contraception will inevitably open the door to blackmarket selling at rip-off prices.

But it will also undoubtedly increase the already large numbers of women forced to make a costly trip to England for an abortion. Both of these can only hit working class women the hardest.

Already women, doctors and clinics have refused to accept this situation. On the day of November 1st women openly defied the law and sold contraceptives from a public stall in Trinity College. The Contraceptive Action Programme continued to sell from their stall in Dandelion Market, Dublin.

Dr Paddy Leahy has said he will refuse to comply with the terms of the act and will continue to make contraception available from the Ballyfermot Health Centre.

The Well Woman clinic, too, refuses to recognise the law and is continuing its services as before, at least as long as stocks last.

But all these people risk arrest and imprisonment.

For asserting a woman's right to decide whether she will have a child or not, they could face, under the act, being treated as criminals.

That is why a massive campaign against the act must be built now, not only to support the clinics continuing to operate in spite of the law

but also to show the government that we are not prepared to sit back and let IT dictate whether women become pregnant or not.

Nor is it the question of the "constitutionality" of the law—ie, whether the law fails to protect marital privacy—which will defeat the act by making it legally inoperable.

Such legal intricacies are a diversion from the real issue of contraception. The only way to ensure that this act is defeated is by rejecting the principle of it and asserting our right to free and legal contraception.

Contraception Access for All—a campaign set up against the act—is planning a "Watchdog Campaign" over the next two months.

Its objects are to establish exactly which doctors are breaking the law, what prices are being charged by chemists for contraceptives and who is refusing contraceptive services on moral grounds.

They hope from their results to be able to bring all the facts and figures out into the open and lift the hypocritical veil of silence that shrouds the whole issue.

The more public becomes the actual reality of contraception, and the more we voice our demand for that right, the more chances we have of making contraception properly available.

For more information about the Campaign Contraceptive Action Programme, 3, Belvedere Place, Dublin 1, tel. 787801.

CAP meets every Thursday at 8pm at the above address.

Frank begs bosses



The leader of the Labour Party, Mr Frank Cluskey.

THE IRISH Labour Party is in a financial crisis. That just might have something to do with its politics.

After all a party that finds it difficult to distinguish itself from Fine Gael on such vital issues as H Blocks or the tax is hardly likely to stir up much enthusiasm from ordinary working people.

As a result, it comes to depend more and more on funding from the EEC in Brussels and from the trade union bureaucrats at home.

But now the Labour Party leadership has found a new

source of finance—Big Business.

In the last month or so, Frank Cluskey has issued a personal signed letter to managing directors of some of the big multi-nationals.

Cluskey's been complaining that it is not fair that Fianna Fail get all the gravy. You see, there are three parties in this bosses' democracy and the money should be spread around.

After all, it is only fair—those, like Frank Cluskey, who serve the interests of big business should be paid for it.

