

Read inside

EVERYONE believes in "unity", but with whom and for what? On page 2 we look at the CP proposed "Left Alternative".

Waterford

A Shop Stewards Committee has been formed in Waterford, with a strong base. See page 4.

Portugal

After the defeat of Nov. 25th, revolutionary forces in Portugal are pushing ahead with the building of a revolutionary party. Page 7.

ALSO

Reports on Unidare, the P.O. Strike, the P.N.A. Strike, Crown Control, Chile, the "Better Life For All" Campaign, etc. etc.

Portugal tour is on!

THE SHOOTING of left-wing demonstrators by police are a clear sign of the mounting confidence of reactionary forces in Portugal. And they should be a signal to socialists and class-conscious workers in Ireland and elsewhere to step up efforts to get over to their brothers and sisters what the dangers are, and how urgent it is to show solidarity. It is almost two years now since the coup took place which overthrew the Caetano dictatorship. In that time, the Portuguese working class has made extraordinary advances. They have given flesh to the theory of revolution. They have put workers' power on the agenda.

But the speed of developments and the inexperience of the revolutionary socialists, who had little chance to test ideas and grow before April 1974, meant that Portuguese workers have not built a mass revolutionary party. And only such a party could have brought together the various strands of struggle into an assault on the state.

In spite of the setbacks, and in spite of the Right Wing's growing strength, the fight is far from over. While the Communist Party and the Socialist Party manoeuvre around each other for positions of power, the workers' commissions are still fighting the economic battles, and the revolutionary organisation, PRP (Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat), is building on that base.

A comrade from the PRP will be arriving in Ireland for a week's tour at the end of February. The Socialist Workers Movement has arranged these meetings in order to bring to Irish workers and to the Irish Left the rich experience of the Portuguese revolutionaries, the lessons we can learn from it – and, indeed, the basic facts about the present situation which the press does not print.

These meetings, organised under the heading **SOLIDARITY WITH PORTUGUESE WORKERS**, will take place as follows:

25 February – BELFAST
27 February – GALWAY
28 February – LIMERICK
1 March – WATERFORD

3 March – DUBLIN (Ormond Hotel)

We believe these meetings will provide an opportunity which socialists and workers have not had in recent years in this country, a chance to discuss with somebody who has been deeply involved in a revolutionary situation the problems and the lessons that provides.

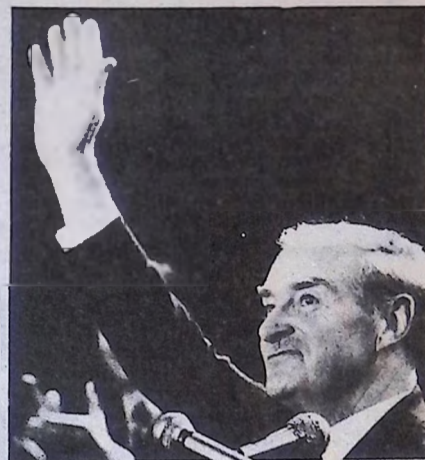
(The costs of arranging this tour are considerable. SWM is collecting funds now to help meet them. Send donations to Top Floor, 95 Capel Street, Dublin 1, or give them to a WORKER seller.)

the worker

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Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

KEEP YOUR 'PAUSE' OFF OUR PAY!



HERE THEY come again. Looking for a fight. They've taken away thousands of jobs, held down our wages and cut our take-home pay to ribbons with rising prices. Now they want a pay freeze. Or as they put it, a "pause". As though they had been flinging cash out in all directions and now they're tired and want to "pause" awhile before they start tossing out the goodies again.

The country's in trouble, they tell us, we must tighten our belts – just a little more. Again they trot out the scare that any wage rises will result in more unemployment.

But the bottom drops out of that one when we realise that the dole queues are longer now than they've been for 36 years, and that unemployment has increased by 25 per cent during 1975 – and it wasn't caused by wage increases since the real value of wages dropped last year.

The truth is not that "the country" is in trouble – but the bosses and the government. Their system has cocked-up again. And the methods they are using to untangle it (temporarily) is the classic text-book one of dampening down an "over-heated

economy" – increase tax, reduce spending power, cut wages, reduce government services – create more unemployment.

The money they would save from freezing our wages is not destined to go to the unemployed. The freeze is just another tactic in their impossible struggle to stabilise an unstable economic system. THEIR system. And we are supposed to pay the price of their stability by lowering our living standards and handing over our jobs and wages.

The brave words of our union leaders have been heard before. It remains to be seen whether or not their words will lead to opposition to the freeze.

If we go by their past record

they will wilt and grab at the first straw of compromise held out to them by the bosses and government. It is our jobs, wages and living standards at stake – the rank and file. And it will need a strong rank and file stake shoved up the arses of our union leaders to give the trade union movement the necessary backbone to fight the attacks of the bosses. Should the government attempt to give the wage freeze the backing of law our response must be just as determined.

"Next year is going to be tough", said Cosgrave last December. He wasn't kidding.

But tough for who? Workers, who have already had their belts tightened enough? Or Cosgrave and the rest of his class, who run, manipulate and benefit from their crazy, chaotic system?

The strength of the trade union response to the freeze will determine that. Our answer must be an emphatic NO! in the shape of a strong rank and file movement in the unions which will tell Cosgrave and Company "KEEP YOUR PAUSE OFF OUR PAY!"

AND EQUAL PAY NOW!

"NOW YOU see it, now you don't", was the comment of one woman trade unionist when the government announced that the Equal Pay would be postponed. Throughout 1975, the Bill was for many women the light at the end of a very long tunnel. By December the Government's hand was reaching for the light switch.

The protests which followed were indignant and moralistic, and cries of "not fair" mingled with suggestions that men's wages should be cut further to allow equal pay. Robbing Peter to Pay Pauline. Except that the money saved by the bosses, far from going to women, would go to add to profits.

Of course it's not fair or just, but then that's nothing new. Neither the government nor the bosses are in the justice business. The decision to waltz even on a Bill which would grant equal pay to just a fraction of women is part of the sacrifices that have been foisted on workers. And there are more to come. Our jobs, wages and conditions are being thrown overboard to keep the capitalist ship afloat.

In this situation it is ludicrous to see such trade union leaders as John Carroll of the ITGWU speaking at an Equal Pay meeting. Those leaders who have accepted sacrifices for workers can have no illusions that equal pay will be handed over on a plate – simply because withholding it is "unfair".

The "brave, principled" stand of the Labour TDs was dismissed as the hot air it was and the government's amendment went through with just a token effort to save face for Barry Desmond etc.

The truth is that legislation of itself – and especially the 1974 Equal Pay Act – could never guarantee equal pay. The main push will always need to come from the unions. But there are opportunities have arisen in the past – even in a limited way under the National Wage Agreements – the unions have generally failed to press equal pay claims. The few exceptions are mainly in the public sector, among clerical workers.

The fight for equal pay has to be taken up as part of the fight against all forms of wage restraint – and that's a fight the union leaders are not prepared to take up, preferring to delude themselves that co-operation with the bosses can yield something. If the union leaders are at all serious about getting equal pay they should now call a one-day stoppage – of all workers – and call off all talks on the economy.

But the real focus of the fight has to be with the rank and file – and particularly women members – of the trade union movement. They must start campaigning now to block any deal on wage restraint and push for the serving of claims on the widest possible basis, with equal pay as an integral part. They must organise to gain democratic, rank and file control of the unions in order to turn them into weapons of struggle to end women's oppression.



THIS MEETING was part of the 1974 campaign against the National Wage Agreement. It was organised by the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee, the activities of which have waxed and waned over the past year. Last October the Committee began reorganising and is now preparing a campaign against the proposed pay freeze.

An attempt to change the membership criteria and open the Committee to non-representative trade unionists – and even non-trade unionists – was defeated. Such a change would have weakened the strength and credibility of the Committee.

Such a campaign – canvassing support of many shop stewards not now members of the DSSC, and involving other spheres of influence in the unions including those stewards who were once involved with the Committee – in a common campaign of meetings, leaflets, marches, common resolutions etc., can be the spearhead of rank and file response to the freeze.

We urge all shop stewards, committee members and rank and file trade unionists to support the campaign.

FIGHT TO BUILD PARTY

OVER 70 people – members of the Socialist Workers Movement and visitors – attended a Day School organised by S.W.M. during January on “The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation”. The day-long meeting, which aroused lively discussion in all sessions, gave all present a much firmer idea of the problems in building a revolutionary party in Ireland today, and strengthened their determination to do it.

1917

Jimmy McCallum, Glasgow organiser of the International Socialists, drew lessons from the experience of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1917 to ask the key question: how does the revolutionary organisation relate to the working class? Lenin’s role, he pointed out, had been to push party members into

closer involvement in the struggles of the working class. He had to show them how the rank and file of the party and non-party members were often more advanced, more prepared to take chances, than the party leadership.

Recognising that, Lenin had argued that the party must accept into membership all those wishing to join and fight for the working class’s interests. There were great dangers, Jimmy said, in applying tests to those who wanted to become members of the organisation.

On that same point, Jimmy drew on the experience of the International Socialists in Britain and pointed to the weaknesses of the revolutionary Left in Portugal. He underlined how the Bolsheviks had been able to reach millions daily with newspapers in several languages. It worried him, he said, that S.W.M. could not publish ‘The Worker’ more frequently.

The discussion which followed ranged widely over such questions as economic militancy and revolutionary politics, the means to develop a programme, and so on. Comrades who had come from republican organisations stressed the fight against imperialism – but appeared to see it as something quite different from the workers’ economic struggles.

Eamonn McCann and Mike Miller spoke on aspects of the Irish experience. Mike detailed the (mostly unsuccessful) attempts to build a revolutionary organisation in Ireland during the 1920’s and 1930’s. He showed how the Irish supporters of the Comintern – the international communist organisation – twisted and turned to follow the line from Moscow, and were often thrown into complete confusion – as when the Comintern instructed the Communist Party members to join Larkin’s Irish Workers League.

In the ultra-left “Third Period” of the Comintern, the Revolutionary Workers’ Groups (forerunners of the Communist Party, formed in 1933) aimed to form “red unions”. They split the ITGWU in Castlecomer setting up an independent union among the coal-miners there. A couple of years later, the international line had changed again, and they were back to influencing republicans (or trying to . . .).

Eamonn McCann dealt with the roots of republicanism – Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen. He showed how present-day republicans distort the reality of what these men did and how their allegiance to this misunderstood tradition stands in the way of them ever developing in a socialist direction.

The final session took up again many of the points about present problems raised in earlier discussions. S.W.M. speakers stressed the need to focus on industrial workers as the section of the working class with the greatest potential power. They dwelt, too, on the importance of building a rank and file movement, and of forming a united front against repression.

At the end of a discussion which had largely turned around issues arising for those who have recently left the IRSP, members of our organisation emphasised how practical co-operation on such things as repression and unemployment could help sort out those issues. They also stressed how important it was to strive for unity among revolutionaries in the building of a party.

We were pleased to welcome new members and supporters from all areas where S.W.M. is active. The organisation has committed itself to another similar Day School in the spring to deal with the economic crisis.

The economic struggles and the national struggle may have taken a down-turn in the last months, but the depth of the capitalist crisis as well as the shock waves running through reformist and republican organisations make it our duty to build a revolutionary workers’ organisation as an urgent task. That is what the S.W.M. is doing.

LEFT UNITY LTD.

“UNITY is the most powerful weapon in the army of the people,” said Michael O’Riordan of the Communist Party of Ireland – and there was enthusiastic applause. “It is time we found out more about the things we have in common and dwell less on the things which divide us,” said Noel Browne.

The 300 – or more – people who attended the meeting on “The Economic Crisis – the Left Alternative” in the Mansion House early in February were quick to respond to the calls for unity. They cheered the speakers from Liaison of the Left, Official Sinn Fein, and Communist Party, who referred to themselves as “the serious Left”, “the responsible Left”. They jeered the people whom Mattie Merrigan chastised for delivering solutions from “ivory towers”.

But all the talk about unity and other peoples’ “ivory towers” is smothered in the “alternative” which these three groups are putting forward. The beginning, middle and end of their demands is a call for more state enterprise.

The details given by the speakers about unemployment, about repression (by the state), about the cut-back in living standards, about the crazy economic system only led to that. Do they really think that answers the problems?

Several of the speakers (there were six in all – and no contributions allowed from the floor) stressed that a good part of their common programme was



Michael O’Riordan . . .

already the policy of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. And look where it’s got them.

Congress has on paper all kinds of radical-sounding policies. This year they will add more to the list. And that will not make the slightest difference. Demanding that the government establish a state enterprise with “a foreign industries division which would try to attract investment from abroad with majority state equity and be labour intensive” commits them to precisely nothing.

Really radical policies in the trade union sphere are policies which the rank and file can take up actively. But when Mattie Merrigan was rounding off that

meeting he said they wanted people to join them in further study, and further discussion. And he made it clear that they would not be studying and discussing how to give a lead to workers threatened with redundancy and wage-cuts, or scraping a life together on the dole.

During two hours of speeches there was exactly one passing reference to workers in struggle. What comfort will it be to strikers at Crown Controls, at U.C.D. and in the Post Office to know that there are groups of workers discussing the need for a state-run “finance division responsible for industrial and commercial financing if those groups of workers are not also committed to active solidarity and active opposition to the sell-outs of the trade union leadership?

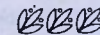
We urge workers supporting any of the organisations making up the Left Alternative to press for a campaign to block any form of wage restraint, to fight for shorter working hours, and resistance to redundancy. That way, the calls for unity could be addressed to all class-conscious workers and not just to the leaderships of three bureaucratically-minded organisations.

An SWM pamphlet on ‘which way for the Left?’ is available from: 95 Capel Street, Dublin. Price 5p, postage

Chilean workers call for support

THERE ARE over 100 Chilean refugees in Ireland – the last country in Western Europe to take them in. Many of them have been through torture and imprisonment. They are the living proof today that the Chilean working class can still and will still, fight back.

Four of the refugees, all of them formerly trade union militants of high standing in Chile, spoke to a meeting in Dublin last month attended by about 100 people. In a vivid and moving way they demonstrated the lessons of the Allende government and the coup and showed how the Chilean working class needed to build a revolutionary party to organise the growing resistance to the military regime.



The Chilean working class took great leaps forward in the period of Allende’s government (1970-73). They took control of estates and factories and built organisations called *cordones industriales* which were able to act independently of the compromising influence of the union leaders. They threatened the existence of the capitalist state. They went much further than the Popular Unity government ever intended. And the policies of that government were always bound to lead to the disaster which took place.

Norman Gamboa, a leading activist in the Health Workers’ Union in Chile, detailed how Allende had actually invited army officers into the government dur-

are employed. Neither factories are unionised – in fact one employer in the area gave each of his employees an individual warning not to join a trade union. The enormous profits must be maintained.

The glaring examples of class differences are everywhere but unfortunately class-consciousness is slow to develop. Even on issues which mobilise the small farmers and workers, such as the Golf Course issue, the gombeenmen make sure they are represented on both sides of the struggle. Divide and rule works well here.

One rainy day last year the contrast appeared strongly. Brid Fahy was evicted from the house which belonged to her family for 150 years. The bailiffs threw her furniture, books and other belongings onto the road made muddy by heavy rain. Three hundred yards away one of Pat Hughes’ holiday homes lay empty.

ing 1973 and so signed and sealed his own death warrant – and, much more seriously, that of tens of thousands of workers.

Hugo Ramirez, who had been a leader of the University workers’ union, stressed that the idea of “anti-fascist unity” which was put forward then, and which was still being put forward, was “folly”.

The Chilean comrades demonstrated themselves what they had learned from their experience: revolutionaries need to unite on those things which distinguish them from reformists. The strands of the present resistance to the military regime must be brought together to build a revolutionary party which can lead to workers’ power.

A socialist revolution had been possible in Chile, said Norman Gamboa. The chance was missed because of the absence of a party which could organise all the energy and drive shown by the working class and because of the traditional leadership to lead.

We can take great strength from the fact that only here have Chilean revolutionaries in exile been able to speak out in this way, escaping the stranglehold of bureaucratic manipulation which the Communist Parties (mainly) have placed on solidarity campaigns in other countries. Elsewhere, they have done everything to isolate those Chileans who were critical of the Popular Unity government and of the attempts to re-build it in exile.

Here, too, the Communist Party and their friends have sat firmly on the Chile solidarity campaign stifling political discussion. They have called a national conference of solidarity committees, and then cancelled it at the last moment, because they preferred to keep their control of the Dublin committee and use it as a “national” organisation.

The Chilean comrades have spelled out the way to develop a campaign which gives effective solidarity to the Chilean working class. Their proposals for mass involvement must be taken up at all levels in the labour movement.

Thousands of trade unionists are still imprisoned in Chile. You can help them now by getting your branch, section or works committee to sponsor one, keeping in touch with them and demanding their release.

Shooting Light-bulbs In Oughterard

APPROACHING Oughterard from Galway the first thing you see is the Golf Course. The farmers wanted this land – possibly the best in the area – and the rich wanted a Golf Course. The local farmers still have to draw the dole but they can watch the golfers as a consolation prize. In Oughterard the rich always win.

The contrast between the rich and poor is obvious in this area. It is like many other small towns in Co. Galway and in Ireland except that it has become a playground for the super-rich in summertime. Pat Hughes (Northgate, Tynagh etc.) and Paddy McGrath, (Waterford Glass, Irish Glass Bottle Co., Irish Hospital Sweepstakes etc.), are just two of the millionaires and would-be millionaires who spend their holidays in their normally empty

summer-houses in Oughterard.

Before the advent of the millionaires this was a typical small farmers’ town. Local gombeen-men held the small farmers down by the usual means – loans and threats. Capitalism displayed its well-known ability to survive and thrive on change when the super-rich began to arrive. Shops became supermarkets, carpeted lounge-bars appeared and the gombeenmen got rich. The small farmers can look at the stolen surplus value of other workers under the guise of profits. They can see it in the land-scaped gardens and the big cars on “Millionaires Row” and the Glann Road. The workers can see Cabinet Ministers who are “going to tax the rich” enjoying themselves in the company of those same rich who don’t seem to be very bothered.

Many locals will claim that these capitalists are “sound men”, which is easily understood when they employ

a few locals and pay them higher wages than the local capitalists. Even good local Catholics can reconcile their religion with tolerance of behaviour which they would condemn as immoral and disgusting if hippies were to blame rather than “good rich men”. Drunken outbursts such as shooting the light-bulbs off the local Christmas tree by a well respected mining magnate are glossed over. A few hundred pounds well placed can make life much better for Oughterard’s summer visitors.

For a population of 800 there are about six auctioneers and only two factories. Catering for millionaires’ property deals is more rewarding than creating jobs. The two factories are the Lough Corrib Mineral Water Co. and V’Soske-Joyce Carpets. The LOMW employs about ten workers. V’Soske-Joyce make carpets for the very rich: maharajas, millionaires and the top hotels. About thirty workers

COCA-COLA leaves us cold

THE COLD in the Coca-Cola factory, and the lack of heating, led to an unofficial two-day stoppage beginning on Monday 26th January. Some of the workers stopped on Monday and the next day they were supported by the rest.

The union official finished the strike by his speech telling the workers to go back. He is Conor O'Brien, Branch Secretary of the No. 3 Branch of the ITGWU. He told the workers that they "can't rock the boat". Yes he actually used those words. The reason? He had only 1 year and 9 months to go for his retirement (that's what he said) so he didn't want the strike. The workers called off the stoppage and talks with management begun. By the week-end the Coke and the Coke workers were still ice cold.

It's seldom that trade union officials are so open about their role of keeping the industrial peace, of keeping the capitalist boat steady. And it's seldom that they are so honest about their private interest in keeping that peace. The Coca-Cola workers who began the strike may be in a minority but by organising to influence their fellow workers they can win them away from the influence of wretches like O'Brien.



P.O. rank and file show the way

IT HAD TO come to a strike sooner or later in the Post Office telephones department. For months, trouble had been brewing in the Dublin exchanges, as it also had been brewing in the Dublin exchanges, as it also had been among sorters and postmen. Something had to give.

The suspension of 38 technicians over the 'illegal' parking of vans at Harold's Cross brought matters to a head. But from then on, the leadership of the Irish Post Office Engineering Union, in particular General Secretary, Seamus de Paor, did its best to take the steam out.

As the feeling of the rank and file rose, they tried to calm things down by adjourning, deferring and postponing. But the pressure from the base was too much to resist. The Dublin Branches and the Dublin District Committee were determined to put an end to bad conditions, and to the pre-historic discipline.

Despite De Paor's promise of the wrath to come after Christmas the general meeting on the 6th opted for a work-to-rule instead of a strike "by a 200 majority vote". There would be negotiations with the Department "and if they weren't reinstated by January 19th that we would strike."

As it neared the 19th January and the Department was showing no signs of reinstating the men the union officials again backed-down on strike action. Another general meeting held a few days before the 19th, saw the officials look for a continuation of the work-to-rule rather than a strike. But the ordinary union members voted for a strike and went ahead to organise it. An unofficial strike committee was formed, echoing the National Strike Committee which led the strike of telephone engineers in the West about a year ago.

At last the Executive of the Engineering Union declared that the strike would be official and nationwide on Monday 4th February. This not only meant strike pay, but an increase in the demands: a chance to sort out many other, long standing, problems of the engineers and installers.

Firstly, for about a year a re-organisation and pay claim had been dragging through the conciliation and arbitration maze ever since the Western technicians had ended their strike. It was delayed by the government's high-handed embargo on "special increases".

The union demanded a settlement of this and the question of private firms - Ericksons, BICC and Standard Telephones - doing installation work. "We want these out!" one of the workers we spoke to told us, but the union's demand was for a milder 'consultation'. According to De Paor there are over 400 vacant posts that union members could fill.

Link-ups between postmen, installers and RTE workers - all of whom had disputes recently - would soon have the Department on the run. The only answer to the union officials delaying tactics and sell-outs is for the ordinary union members to keep their unofficial committee intact after the strike, as a permanent rank and file structure and to extend it, in order to fight for democracy in the POEU, to fight for their rights themselves if De Paor and company won't.

Nurses set new traditions

Twice in January the members of the Psychiatric Nurses Association were forced to take strike action in an attempt to get something like fair treatment from the Western Health Board. This same management cynically disregards the recommendations of its own advisory bodies and agreements that it has reached with its employees after previous strike action. When the workers refuse to turn the other cheek the W.H.B. doesn't hesitate to use the latest bosses' weapon: the court injunction, aimed at undermining the effectiveness of workers' protests.

The present dispute arose when a probationary (student) nurse at St. Brigid's Hospital, Ballinasloe, was unfairly sacked because of a technicality concerning time, allowed to complete exams. Also involved in the dispute is the staffing of the new psychiatric unit to be opened shortly at the Regional Hospital, Galway. Having agreed after the 1971 strike on the principle of seniority in promotions the W.H.B. now want to staff the unit by 'open competition'. The ball is in the Labour Court until February 20th. Pending its outcome the PNA are preparing for a nationwide strike.

On January 2nd the day the strike became official and the day the second court injunction against picketing was issued - there's no red tape when it suits them - the branch secretary of the ITGWU instructed his members to pass the pickets; approximately 20 members refused to obey this directive until after dinner. Later a statement from the ITGWU accused the PNA of "acting contrary to the traditions of the nursing profession".

This is bosses' talk, pure and simple. And yet in a way it is true. The tradition of the nursing profession is one of allowing their responsibility to the sick to be used to blackmail them into putting up with poor wages and bad conditions. This is the tradition which the nurses in Ballinasloe, and their fellow workers in Roscrea and Clonmel, are rejecting. And rightly so.

AXE SWINGS ON JOBS AT UNIDARE

THE UNIDARE BOARD of directors are continuing to swing the job-cutting axe. One by one, starting with the Pump Section and continuing through Spanform, then the redundancies of June and October last year which resulted in about 30 jobs lost - Unidare has trimmed the rough edges off their profitable company. Along with these bit-by-bit redundancies Unidare has not been replacing workers who leave or retire. And now they have delivered another blow to the workers by announcing the closure of the Wire Fabrication department in Tinsley Wire with a loss of 35-40 jobs.

UNIDARE continues to show, and will go on showing, a profit. Even if the 19% drop in their profits recorded in June 1975 continues for the whole year their figures, when published, will show they made over £1 million. Tinsley Wire itself (a section of Unidare co-owned by Tinsley in England) has been booming up to fairly recently with overtime - including weekends - investment in new machinery (now idle), importing to keep up with orders, and on some machines the operators taking their tea breaks at the machines while they were still running. The company had control over the steel wire market and Tinsley recently got an apology from the 'Irish Independent' who exposed how they used that control to boost prices - and profits.

As a leaflet brought out by Unidare Workers for Action says "Between 1972 and 1974, £635,000 was made from steel wire sales . . . Are we just machines to be used when the business is booming, to be given overtime when they want orders met quickly, and then thrown on the dole queue when they have no more use for us?"

Not only is the site a whole making money, but they intend to invest £½mill. in another section of Tinsley. It's only the Wire Fabrication section that has genuinely lost its market. That's too bad, but those things happen under capitalism. The workers shouldn't pay the price, especially when, (as we reported in the last issue) Tinsley were advertising machine-guards NOT made by their own Wireworkers and when Tinsley want to import "little" orders of wirework in future, and they requested the ITGWU not to black this when it happens.

This latest battle for jobs must be fought by the unions and if the union officials let us down yet again - by the ordinary union members, especially at



Tinsley. The AUEW has refused to talk to management about redundancies in Unidare. The ITGWU has been more amenable. The No. 14 Branch Section Committee contains shop stewards who are opposed to any new redundancies in Unidare, while others - especially the Branch Secretary - are willing to be "logical" about the firm's economic difficulties. Anyway, that committee rejected the acceptance of redundancy notices on Friday 16th January. They have decided not to accept that the No. 14 Branch continue to take the brunt of redundancies at Unidare. They have pressed the company to see if they can transfer people to busier areas. But as yet they have not called a general meeting. Union members should point out to their stewards that as yet they have no mandate in regard to these particular redundancies. That means they have NO MANDATE to let jobs go - voluntary or otherwise.

At the moment, however, many Tinsley workers WANT to leave. There was talk in the factory of organising a petition to ask for to be let go. Even in other factories not effected, a few workers are coming to the head shop steward looking for redundancy. That's the level to which the morale of so many Unidare workers has

fallen. Why? Because - in Tinsley - they have been kept in the dark for so long. Demoralisation was bound to set in when workers have been left tending slack machines for some time now, without being assured by their stewards and union officials that they would lose neither job nor earnings, and that a fight would be led - against redundancies and for a share of the work available. The introduction of voluntary redundancy into Unidare last year - after the Branch Secretary and the Section Committee had argued for a mandate for this at a general meeting - clearly opened the flood-gates for the present stampede by many workers out of Unidare, and the present passive acceptance of the idea of voluntary redundancy by many Unidare workers. As we said at the time, the union's attitude ENCOURAGED voluntary redundancies.

Tinsley workers can still say NO to redundancies. And this battle effects ALL Unidare workers. Because if the Tinsley front falls an ever stronger management could move in, pushing redundancies in new areas. Bright, the General Works Manager is, we believe, retiring soon. From some of the hints he's been dropping about other areas on the site it seems he wants to bring as many workers as he can with him. Not in the same style of course.

Let's say no to Bright, Sheridan and the whole lot. Let's say no to the compromisers in the unions who would let jobs go. We can demand:

- * an immediate general meeting for the Unidare Section;
- * worksharing for the Wire Fab. Dept. sharing available work in Tinsley among all Tinsley workers OR
- * transfer to other areas where work IS available

This way we can make the bosses pay for their own mess. In another section the Wire and Cable workers have shown the way by banning overtime in their section because jobs have been lost there, with the likelihood of more to follow.

Every branch should have one!

EVERY MONTH brings new reports of bulletins being published by union section committees and by rank and file groups. They are a very welcome sign that the ordinary members are not letting all matters slip out of their grip.

Latest additions are a Theatre and Cinema Section Bulletin published within the Dublin No. 7 Branch of the ITGWU and 'Union News', published by the Works Committee of Draper-Erin, Limerick.

"With more articles coming in . . . we can improve it and create a good forum for discussion in the Section. That's one of

the ways we can make it a better union for all of us." That's how the Theatre and Cinema Section Bulletin sees its job. Articles in the second issue come from half a dozen different members of the Section, including an apprentice projectionist.

'Union News' (Draper-Erin) is launched with a statement by Dave Lee, the Works Committee Chairman, who is also associated with the Limerick rank and file paper 'Bottom Dog' (see last issue of 'The Worker'). The bulletin will appear, he says, "when there is anything of importance to be communicated to the membership. If the need arises it can be brought out daily . . . The 'Union News' is the voice of

the ITGWU Committee but its pages are open to any trade unionist who wants to write on any subject relevant to Draper-Erin."

You could fill a few books about the owners of Draper-Erin. This factory, which makes textile machinery parts, is just one subsidiary of a giant multinational which supplies parts for fighter planes, among thousands of other things. Rockwell recently admitted that it had paid out over ½ million dollars to foreign government officials in order to get supply contracts.

What charming people the I.D.A. is bringing in!



"AND WHEN THE RICH PRINCE TRIED THE GOLDEN SALARY SLIPPER ON CINDERELLA'S FOOT IT WAS JUST - MUCH TOO SMALL..."

THE POOR you will always have with you . . . as long as you have capitalism. In the Broadstone CIE Garage, in Dublin, a male canteen helper and cleaner is being paid £27.60 basic per week (40 hours). He works seven days a week PLUS overtime to bring his take-home pay up to a living wage. The man, who lives in Finglas, has seven children. His union is the ITGWU. The next time you hear a government minister talking about the "secure" and "favoured" workers in the public service, remember this CIE worker and remember his pay packet.

WHAT CHANCE FOR 'A BETTER LIFE'?

IN THE WAKE of the killing of ten workers, eight of them members of the ATGWU, as they returned from work in South Armagh at the beginning of January, the trade unions in the North have announced a 'major peace initiative'. Already the unions have mobilised thousands of signatures have been collected on a petition calling for peace and 'a better way of life for all.'

No-one could doubt the sincerity of those behind the latest campaign. They are trade unionists who believe in working class unity, and the fact that so many industrial workers marched against the killings shows that the sectarian killers, the great majority of them Loyalists, can be isolated by working class action. But the initial successes of the campaign, and the euphoria with which it has been greeted should not blind us to the many shortcomings, from which it suffers.

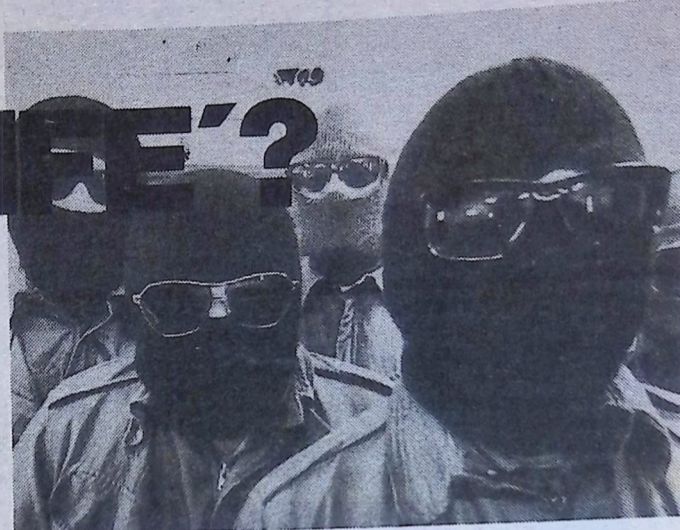
Sectarianism is not the product of twisted minds or pathological manias. It is the deliberate creation of the British ruling class and its Unionist allies, both ably assisted by the reactionary bigotry of the Catholic Church. British capitalism has thrived in Ireland on the basis of worker fighting worker. Sectarianism discrimination and state violence are the very foundation stones on which the Northern State was founded and the things that have kept it in existence for fifty-odd years. The state of Northern Ireland and sectarianism are synonymous. Any campaign against sectarianism which does not take that simple fact into account is doomed to failure in the long run. This is the fundamental shortcoming of the latest 'peace' initiative of the trade unions.

The unions in the North have

always prided themselves with their 'neutrality' on the National Question, taking a stand neither for nor against partition and the Union. One effect of this has been to leave the working class as easy game for the Orange reactionaries who have not hesitated to bring their pro-imperialist, pro-capitalist politics into the factories and trade union branches. But in fact the trade unions' 'neutrality' has been more of an appearance than a reality, for while they have never taken a public stand emphatically, one way or the other, all their actions have served to strengthen the grip of imperialism on the North, thus preserving the existence of the state, and with it sectarianism, discrimination and violence.



The trade union bureaucracy exists to ensure the peaceful co-existence of labour and capital. They act as mediators between workers and bosses, and have no real interest in seeing the workers take over the running of society for themselves. In the North



Friendly face of UDA

where 85 per cent of all industry is British owned, the bosses are of course, the British capitalists themselves. So the union bureaucracies' acceptance of capitalism is at the same time an acceptance of imperialism, and of the sectarian statelet set up as a necessary consequence of that imperialism.

The union bosses have never been capable of launching a successful campaign against unemployment, low wages soaring redundancies, or slum housing, because to do so would require them to challenge the capitalist-imperialist system at its very roots, and that is something they will never do. Yet ultimately these are the things which have enabled the bosses to keep the workers divided, by offering marginally better living standards to the 'loyalists' in whose favour discrimination has always operated.

It is to preserve these privileges and the political set-up which guaranteed them in the past that the loyalists have undertaken such a massive sec-

retarian murder campaign. The retaliation by 'republicans' is to be condemned by all socialists. It does not advance the anti-imperialist struggle one inch, but simply serves to justify the British ruling class argument that their army is in Ireland to keep two blood-thirsty communities from each others throats. The frustration which leads republicans to engage in such activities results from the political bankruptcy of their leaders who are totally incapable of offering any way out of the sectarian impasse.

But whatever criticisms we make of the degeneration of the republican struggle to the level of sectarianism, it remains the case that the struggle for the destruction of the Northern State is one which socialists everywhere must recognise as valid. The misguided

anti-imperialism of the republicans cannot under any circumstances be equated with the consciously reactionary violence of the Loyalist killer gangs of the UDA and UVF. Yet this is what the trade unions' blanket condemnation does.

The answer to sectarianism will not be found overnight. There are no short-cuts in the fight for working class unity. The holding of peace marches, the signing of petitions, lobbying Harold Wilson and Merlyn Rees, may all serve to convince the trade union leaders that they are doing something to combat sectarianism, and no doubt many sincere workers will follow their lead. But ultimately, without an all out challenge to the power of imperialism and its Orange sectarian state in the North, any gains made will be transitory. If the Union leaders are serious, let them demand the disbandment of the sectarian RUC and UDR many of whose members are directly implicated in the murders. If they are serious about ending violence, sectarianism and discrimination, let them demand the withdrawal of the British Army whose presence only maintains the whole sectarian state.

Sectarianism will only be overcome in militant working class struggle on issues common to all workers. Within these struggles it is the task of socialists to show that the interests of all workers will be served by the final overthrow of the British bosses and their replacement, not by Irish bosses, but by the workers themselves organised as the rulers of society. Our attitude to the trade union leaders' pacifism must be one of scepticism. In its place must go militant class war, and if they refuse to lead the way in this struggle the rank and file must do so independently of them.



THE RIGHT TO WORK

EVERY DAY IN December last, law 10,000 British workers thrown onto the dole. The latest official figures (which underestimate the real figures) are a million and a half and rising.

Eight thousand were chopped at Chrysler, and union leaders are haggling with British Steel bosses for between twenty-five and forty thousand redundancies over the next two years. Massive lay-offs are planned as a result of the public sector cuts. And all of this at a period when 25% inflation is cutting into the pay packets of millions of British workers.

The Communist Party offer little in the fight back, with their daily paper calling for a fight against "Enforced Sackings". Presumably they have no quarrel with voluntary redundancies? Their "Broad Left" prodigy in the unions have moved further to the Right following its defeat in union elections. In the Chrysler dispute their AUEW executive member, Bob Wright ruled that the local organisers were not allowed to vote at a meeting with management. This swung the decision his way and precipitated the fall in shop-floor resistance up and down the country.

But some light shines in the darkness. The National Rank and File Organising Committee has initiated a "Right To Work" campaign built around the slogan: DEFEND THE RIGHT TO WORK - NO RETURN TO THE THIRTIES.

Right To Work Committees have been set up in all industrial areas, leafletting Labour Exchanges and occupying Job Centres in protest against the rising unemployment. They undertook a national picket of Ladbroke's betting shops in support of a struggle for union recognition. In January 37 MPs (out of a total of over 600) had their leisurely debate on unemployment disturbed by a cloud of Right To Work leaflets

showered off the public gallery by members of the Committee.

Now this energy is being focused on an event which will demonstrate to the government, bosses and union bureaucrats, that the rank and file will not be ignored and laid off at whim. The Right To Work March is leaving Manchester on February 28th, passing through every major industrial town on its way to London where it will end in a mass rally on March 20th.

Support for the march is growing as Right To Work meetings are held up and down the country. Trade union branches, shop steward committees and 16 Labour MPs are sponsoring the demonstration.

The fight back involves those workers who still have jobs. Linking up with the unemployed and demanding that the unions campaign actively for a thirty-five hour week and a ban on overtime. The Right To Work Committees realise that the strength of workers on the shop floor must be harnessed if the struggle of the unemployed is to succeed.

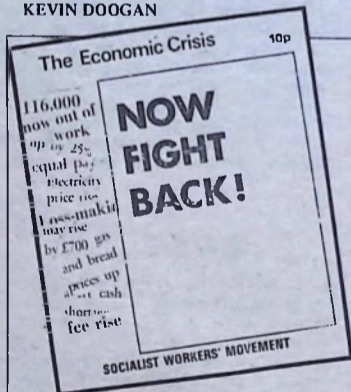
CAMPAIGN

With the Irish dole queues - North and South - stretching to 180,000 and no strong unemployed movement active, we can draw lessons from the growing success of the British workers Campaign. We too have union leaders who make militant speeches on unemployment yet refuse to mobilise their members to save jobs now. Their Left rhetoric on nationalisation of resources, promising that full employment would

follow, is just so much hot air. Even then, the jobs and wealth coming from the mines etc. would not pay off for ten years.

Jobs must be saved now. And in wishing our British brothers and sisters success we must push our unions now to take up an active campaign against redundancies and unemployment.

KEVIN DOOGAN



'NOW FIGHT BACK' is the title of the Socialist Workers' Movement's latest pamphlet on the economic crisis. Published in Budget week, it takes apart the myths and lies used to put over the case for wage restraint.

The pamphlet shows what the real causes of inflation and unemployment lie - in the drive for profit which is part and parcel of the bosses' system. The pamphlet urges the building of a rank and file movement within the trade unions to organise resistance to the bosses' attacks.

'Now Fight Back' offers a real and radical alternative to the present chaos, and a direction for workers' struggle quite different from the miserable collaboration of the trade union leadership.

Copies of the pamphlet - a weapon which all trade union activists can use - are being sold by WORKER sellers and by S.W.M. 95 Capel Street, Dublin 1. (Price 10 pence plus postage).

THEN THEY SAID IT... NOW THEY DON'T!

WHO WROTE this about what? "The whole concept is of course, ridiculous seen in national context". Answer: Official Sinn Fein commenting in 1972 on Dublin Port and Dock Board's plans to extend Dublin eastward by reclaiming land.

Three years later, the same "Studies" they criticised then were reproduced without comment in "United Irishman". By the end of 1975, Official Sinn Fein appeared to be saying little else about anything except that there should be an oil refinery in Dublin Bay (and the land should be reclaimed for it).

Writing in 1972, in a bulletin published for the Liberties area of Dublin, the Officials said that the proposed industrial development on reclaimed land "would mean, among other things, that the original centre of Dublin around Christchurch Place would be allowed to decay further... In Ireland it is not land that is in short supply. Any plan for increased harbour facilities in Ireland should concentrate on parts outside Dublin."

You don't have to agree with the middle class property-value-conscious objectors to the oil refinery to see that there are sound environmental reasons (traffic and pollution), as well as regional reasons, by an oil refinery should not be built in Dublin Bay. But whatever your views on that, it is clear that the Officials give all socialism a bad name by the absurdity and dishonesty of their case. They have had to inflate the number

of jobs which will be made available in construction. They have implied that somehow a French-owned refinery would come into Irish ownership. They suggest that the fight for jobs is a fight to pressure the government to

support their or that capitalist project. They insinuate - or state openly) that the objectors are in the pay of the multi-nationals. They even defend business secrecy when socialists should be demanding more information about company financing and profits.

None of these positions have anything to do with socialism. And there's yet another problem for the Officials coming up which they will have to slide around: the refinery would - if built - compete for the contract to supply ESB power stations. And where's the oil coming from now? Why, "socialist" Russia, of course. A refinery which competes with the seven major oil companies is good - but what about one which competes with Russia? In the Officials' book, that's a really "sticky" one!

The reason why the Officials put such energy into the oil refinery issue is obvious: it is a substitute for any sort of argument about fighting for jobs NOW, opposing all redundancies, ending overtime, and shortening the working week. You see, that would offend the union leaders, while the refinery nonsense does not.

Waterford

SHOP STEWARD COMMITTEE FORMED

ON MONDAY JANUARY, 5th, the four Dobson workers whose defiance of O'Briens manoeuvres had led to the occupation, were summoned to a branch meeting to explain their actions to the Branch Committee. At that meeting they were quizzed about who was responsible for bringing out the statement on the strike. O'Brien had stated at a meeting of the Trades Council, that he did not believe the strikers were responsible for producing the leaflet. Maybe he thinks that all workers are as thick as himself. They were also asked who produced the leaflet, condemning O'Brien for threatening to black the Glass Factory which was produced by the Shop Stewards Committee. The four workers confronted O'Brien with all they had said in the original leaflet and stuck to their guns.

MOST Shop Stewards on the Waterford Industrial Estate, because of the type of firms that operate there, were aware of the need for some sort of links between workers in the different factories. This was essential, if a fight was to be made against low pay, poor conditions, lay-offs, redundancies, etc. Isolated in their individual factories, lacking the strength and confidence, which only a unified body could bring, workers are in a weak position to resist the bosses attacks. In fact, what was needed was a Shop Stewards Committee, a committee which would bring together the shop stewards, from all the different unions: Irish Transport, E.T.U., N.E.E.T.U. and A.T.G.S.U.

The solidarity occupation of Dobson Fibres, 2nd of December 1975 provided the opportunity. At the end of the occupation it was unanimously decided by all the participants, approx. one hundred, that the shop stewards present would meet that night in Connolly Hall to firstly, discuss with the strikers the result of the talks with the I.T. & T. W. U. officials and plan further action if needed. Secondly, and more important, to elect a temporary committee from those present.

The immediate duties of this committee was to act as a kind of

This form of interrogation was not having any effect on the Dobson workers. Realising this, O'Brien tried another tactic, which was to put it to four workers that they could either belong to the Shop Stewards Committee or to the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. On hearing this, one of the workers gave O'Brien a rule book and asked him to point out where this was contained in the rules. Unable to do this, the chairman intervened saying, "Ah look lads, we don't mean it that way, but you must remember that the union is the union and this shop stewards committee cannot be taking over the functions of the union" etc. etc. etc.

As the article below explains this is not the intention of the Shop Stewards Committee. We will support the officials as long as they support the rank and file.

watchdog, on the Dobsons proceedings, and then, lay the groundwork for the setting up of a representative committee, involving all the factories on the state.

The first meeting was attended by shop stewards from Wellworthy, Rumbach Plastics, Fismar, Mirachem, B.D.I. International Packaging, with a representation from Krombach and Schubert. It was unanimously agreed that the shop stewards committee should lead the fight for a minimum wage in all factories on the Waterford industrial estate, equal pay for women, against all redundancies and short time working.

It is not the intention of the committee to set up an alternative union. Indeed, all shop stewards should be urged to take an active interest in their local branches. It is intended that this committee will be a force which will unify rank and file workers where their strength really is . . . on the shop-floor.

When workers organise and win back the control of the unions from the Bureaucracy and place it firmly in the hands of its own rank and file, the need for such committees, will not exist.

OLIVER CASEY
Shop Steward, Industrial Estate

WORKERS at Dobson's Fibres, Waterford, went on unofficial strike for a wage increase in November last year, and bosses all over the Waterford Industrial Estate are still feeling the effects.

The strike escalated from a demand for better wages to disgust at the behaviour of the union officials, a solidarity occupation of the Dobson factory by over a hundred Waterford workers and the setting up of the Waterford Industrial Estate Shop Stewards Committee.

Immediately afterwards, four workers from Waterford Glass who had taken part in the occupation were "suspended indefinitely" due to the intervention of one of the union officials. It was, of course, pure coincidence that this act of revenge was taken against four workers who also happen to be members of the Socialist Workers Movement.

Below some of the workers involved in the occupation and its outcome give their views on the developments.

HAVING gone through the usual channels of negotiations, with the usual non-results, the Dobson workers had a choice: work on for the same lousy wages, or strike. Of course it would have to be unofficial as the ITGWU officials, O'Brien and Reidy, far from having rushed into the battle to improve the workers' wages, were busy pussyfooting on the issue. Four of the workers carried on the picket while the rest, demoralised by the lack of official support, went on working.

O'Brien's main excuse was that a claim for a wage increase would break the National Wage Agreement. The men were earning about £30 a week, and the women £10 less. Remember we were told that the NWA would

help lower-paid workers? That must have been a misunderstanding. They must have meant it would help the EMPLOYERS of lower-paid workers.

After four weeks picketing the Dobson Workers realised that they would have to broaden the strike. They approached workers in several other factories on the estate and were promised support.

The following morning at 7.30am about fifty workers stood on the picket. By 9.00am there were over a hundred. At that point they decided to move inside and occupy the factory. This would put the strikers in a stronger bargaining position. And besides it was freezing cold outside.

Once inside the factory all the shop

stewards got together to discuss what should be done next. The rest of us went on a tour of the factory. Laughter broke out when we saw what was being used to heat the place; a neat little two-bar electric fire. One worker commented that it was the same type he used to heat his pigeon loft. The canteen facilities were of the same high standard. We knew it was the canteen because we saw an electric kettle and a tea pot. One worker said that he supposed they hadn't any room to build a proper canteen. "Well, the managers office would do nicely", said another.

"But then the manager would have no place to sit . . . eh, I mean work".

"Couldn't he sit at the top of the factory, where the kettle and tea pot are now?"

Reidy came toddling down to the factory, walked right past the workers and in to see the manager. He knows his place. When he tried to get out again he was surrounded by workers demanding to know if the Dobson strikers would get backing. "I won't be . . . intimidated", he yelled, and soon agreed to meet the strikers that evening. The Dobson directors were flushed out from beneath the rock under which they had been hiding for five weeks, agreed to negotiate and the sit-in ended by luncy-time.

The most striking thing about those few hours was the democracy. The shop stewards met at one end of



Inside Waterford Glass

the factory and discussed tactics, but nothing was done without referring back to the rest of the workers. Before we left the factory there was a mass meeting at which everyone could have his or her say. Any ideas were listened to and discussed. A suggestion that the Industrial Estate workers should leave the ITGWU and set up their own union was rightly answered that if they were strong enough to do that they were strong enough to force changes in the ITGWU.

The ordinary workers, men and

women, sitting and standing around the factory that morning, discussing the issues, debating them democratically and acting in unity, gave us a glimpse of what workers power is all about.

The second, and most deeply learned, lesson of that morning was the need for a strong rank and file movement. The Shop Stewards Committee needs strengthening and consolidation. The bosses on the Estate are still strong enough to close places like Dobson's, and the rapid building of the Committee is a priority.

REVENGE

THE DOBSON Occupation, was a concrete example of working class solidarity in action. With workers uniting across unions, sections and factories in common struggle with their fellow workers. Most workers in Waterford were appalled by the wages and conditions of the Dobson strikers. Much confusion arose during the strike and occupation of the plant. Some of this confusion arose from the lack of factual information available, and the wild stories that went around the city about the occupation itself, more was due to the newspaper reports; but the confusion itself was added to by O'Brien the ITGWU official.

After all, he was the one with everything to gain from the confusion. And all his manoeuvres and tactics, indicate that he deliberately set out to confuse the issue. Unable to answer the questions that were being raised, by his own members,

why members of the same union were working for £10 under the going rate for the estate. How could he explain that within hours of the occupation a meeting could be arranged between the directors of Dobson Fibres and the union? The Directors who "could not be found" for the five previous weeks?

And then, there was this shop stewards committee that sprung up within hours of the occupation, partly as a result of the dissatisfaction that was growing among workers at the antics of O'Brien and Reidy, the full-time officials.

All this militancy, was more than O'Brien could take. Something had to be done, if he was to extricate himself from the mess he was in.

Unable to take any action against his own members, because of their unity and militancy, he focused his

A.T. & G.W.U. employed by Waterford Glass, isolated from the workers on the Industrial Estate, who had taken part in the occupation, and under the hammer from the management of the Glass Factory, for being absent without leave, the morning of the occupation.

Without any contact with the Amalgamated Transport, he got in contact with the management of Waterford Glass, informed them of the four members activities that Tuesday morning, and then threatened to black the Glass Factory, because of the participation of the four employees in the Dobson Affair, and for "interference in I.T.G.W.U. business".

O'Brien was out for his pound of flesh, and he wasn't going to be short-changed. That he contacted the Bosses in Waterford Glass in the first place, indicated that he was prepared to provide the management of Waterford Glass with the big stick they required.

The management of Waterford Glass were quick to seize the issue, they called the union to a

meeting (informed the committee of O'Briens correspondence and threats) and informed them that the four workers concerned were suspended indefinitely. The union eventually got this reduced to six days.

BLACK

The newly formed Shop Stewards Committee, took up O'Brien on his threat to black the Glass Factory, in a leaflet which they produced. In the same leaflet they demanded from him the reasons why he singled out the Waterford Glass Workers for this kind of treatment when members of the E.T.U. and the N.E.E.T.U. from seven other factories were involved?

At the December meeting of the Waterford Trades Council, O'Brien brought up the issue, asking the council to condemn the occupation of the Dobson plant. When questioned about the Waterford Glass Victimisations, he denied that he ever

threatened to black the Glass Factory. He did however, admit that he was in contact with the glass factory management.

The important lesson to be learned from all this, must surely be that there is no limit to the sell-outs and collaboration that some full-time officials will involve themselves in to protect themselves from the membership, from the control of the rank and file.

As one of the victimised Waterford Glass workers, I believe that the six days suspension was worth it. If the effect of the occupation was only to make more workers aware of the O'Briens and Reidys and the role they play. If the Shop Stewards Committee formed out of the Dobson struggle becomes a truly representative committee, involving all the factories on the Waterford Industrial Estate, uniting workers and making them strong in the face of the bosses attacks, then it would certainly have been worth it.

D. CHEASTY
A.T.G.W.U.

Do You Remember Women's Year?

REMEMBER INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR? A lot of difference it made. A lot of sound, a little fury, and most women no better off than they were before.

It provided a lot of publicity, of course. The United Nations held a conference in Mexico. The delegates weren't chosen by women, of course — they were chosen by the governments. A lot of governments thought that the prime minister's wife would make an excellent representative of the women of their countries. As it happens there are four women heads of government in the world. Of these, two (Argentina and Sri Lanka) inherited from their husbands, and one (India) from her father. Just like the women T.D.s.

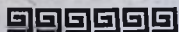
It is useful to remind ourselves — after that year is over — how little, if anything, has changed.

A married woman remains the "chattel" of her husband, and a husband can sue another man for "criminal conversation" with his wife: the "innocent" husband is entitled to damages, as if his wife as an animal that had been stolen; and such a case came before the courts in December. Of course, this medieval concept, which was abolished in Britain in 1857, does not work the other way round: a wife can't get damages if her husband goes wandering.

The law and the government still treat women as inferior beings. A wife is assumed to live in Kilburn if her husband lives there — even though she may never have been out of Ireland in her life. This means that he can divorce her, but she can't divorce him unless she goes to live in England. Divorce is a way out for the rich: the rest must suffer in silence. If you're a Roman Catholic, and some male theologian had developed the theology of marriage in a way that happens to fit your case, you may get an annulment. If the house is on a mortgage, the husband can sell it over his wife's head, and throw her out on the street; if it's a Corporation house, the husband is usually the registered tenant and has the right to hold on to it. A married woman

usually needs her husband's signature to get something on hire purchase.

The government discriminates too. A woman can't get unemployment assistance until she's had a job. Which is a bit difficult, these times. A married woman can't get unemployment assistance even if she has had a job — unless she can prove that her husband is not maintaining her. A married woman is discriminated against by income tax as well.



The biggest reform of the year, on juries, was obtained from a legal quirk. The opening of juries to women and to the working class was a democratic reform. It will have but a slight effect on the injustice of the courts: they will remain institutions of the ruling class. If the new juries exercise their power bravely, the ruling class will be forced to show its hand more openly, through its judges distorting the law and its T.D.s changing it. It was interesting to note that the man who was almost leader of the Opposition, almost Taoiseach, and almost President, Tom O'Higgins, voted against calling women for jury service.

The same Constitution which the Supreme Court interpreted on 12 December to reform juries, still states: "The State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved." A revealing statement: as long as a woman keeps her place in the home, she is less likely to — for example — join a trade union and more likely to act as a conservative force, teaching her children to support the State. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be by economic necessity obliged to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home." Fathers, of course, have no duties in the home. The mentality is that of Archbishop Ryan who can still say patronisingly: "Women can change society through their influence on their husbands, sons, brothers and men friends."

Right: Mary Robinson speaking at a Contraceptive Rally organised by Irishwomen United.



But if International Women's Year did achieve anything, the publicity got some people thinking. People got a bit braver. More clinics were set up to make contraceptives available, although selling them is still illegal. Women's organisations spread. A radical movement came back on the scene, in the form of Irishwomen United. Some of the activities of this organisation reflect its lack of direction. Invading the Fitzwilliam Tennis Club does not have much relevance to the working class. The building up of contacts in local organisations, tenants' associations, trade unions is less spectacular, but will provide a more solid base for women's liberation.

Women workers remain the worst-paid section of the working class. A third of workers in manufacturing industry are women. They are overwhelmingly in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs. They are concentrated in industries which pay low wages, like textiles. That is why the average hourly rate for female industrial workers is only 60 per cent of the average male rate. Equal pay would have raised that figure, but not all the way up to 100 per cent. In private industry, the differences between male and female rates is often 20 or 30 per cent. In the public service, two thirds of the difference between male and female rates has already been paid, and only a 7 per cent increase is still to come.

The government decision to postpone even the weak Equal Pay Bill came at the eleventh hour. Indeed, the only amusing thing about the decision was watching the government dedicated to "law and order" solemnly advising all employers to break the law for the first few weeks of 1976, until the Amendment Act could go

through.

The trade union leaders have been blamed for not carrying through the clauses of the National Wage Agreements allowing for instalments of equal pay. It is right that they should be blamed. But it should remind us that it is a rare trade union official who puts in a wage claim without being pushed. It is the job of shop stewards and rank and file members, male and female, to organise to force the officials to act. And it is also necessary to organise in order to allow women into craft occupations, and to allow women in general to play a full role in the trade union movement — by holding meetings at convenient times, by organising creches, etc.



The fight for equal pay affects all workers. It affects some single men in the public service who have been paid on women's scales. It affects every family depending on a woman worker. It affects the unemployed, because if women workers are paid more, they spend more, and if more goods are bought, more people will have to be employed to manufacture them. Any attempt to divide the working class, men and women, allows male workers to be blamed for the crisis, strengthens profits and strengthens the calls for a wage freeze.

The government's announcement, the Equal Pay Bill led to that sort of divisive trend in the women's movement when 6 women including Nell McCafferty wrote to the 'Irish Times' on 19 December to ask male workers to be generous and take lower wage increases so as to allow equal pay. This proposal only plays into the hands of Sinn Fein who attempted to make out, in a reply on 23 December

that this was the policy of "ultra-leftists" and of Irishwomen United. In fact, Irishwomen United do not back this proposal.

The support of Nell McCafferty for the suggestion represents a trend which has to be fought in the women's movement. It arises from the "radical feminist" belief that the antagonism between men and women is more important than the antagonism between classes, and that the way forward is for women to unite and fight all men. Socialists must answer that the basic antagonism is between the working class and the capitalist class; although all women are oppressed in some way, they are found on both sides of this barrier. Only in a socialist society will women be truly liberated.

It is also important not to fall into the opposite mistake of thinking that women's liberation will automatically follow the socialist revolution. Just as the working class must be their own emancipators, working-class women participate in the revolution, what comes out at the end will not be socialism.

The government's decision on equal pay must be fought hard. The beginnings of such a campaign are being made. That campaign must be brought into the trade unions. Women are a third of the members in the large general unions. The trade unions must be forced to live up to the resolutions on equal pay they have passed so often: they must be forced to put pressure on the employers and the government. It is the strength of the working class which will determine the outcome of the Equal Pay issue.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

The SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT is a revolutionary workers' organisation, which aims to organise the working class in the struggle for power and for the overthrow of the existing social order. All its activities, its methods and its internal organisation are designed to achieve this purpose.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit, not for human need. It is driven by the capitalist's need to amass more and more profits. This makes capitalists compete with one another for markets and for political control, both nationally and internationally. The fruit of that competition is seen in war, poverty and crises.

The capitalist class controls this society by its ownership and control of the means of production; that in turn is based on their exploitation of the working class. The capitalist class is a tiny minority governing the lives of the majority, and claiming to have 'democracy' on its side. In Ireland, 7 per cent of the population own 70 per cent of the wealth.

The working class — and only the working class — has the capacity to end exploitation and oppression. In Ireland its confidence and its strength

have increased enormously in recent years, and the working class is now the largest social class. What our class lacks, however, is a political leadership with the influence to resist all ruling class pressures on our actions and to point the way clearly towards socialism as the only solution to the working class's problems, and those of any social group oppressed by this system.

A working class organised independently of the middle class in its own fighting organisations in the work-place, and in its own democratically controlled socialist party can create a society based on production for human need. The establishment of a Worker's Republic the necessary goal of the class struggle, would not mean merely state control of investment and of industry, but workers control, from the bottom, of all aspects of society.

That kind of socialist society does not exist anywhere today. The attempts of the Russian working class to build socialism were halted by the failure of their revolution to spread, and by the actions of the Stalinist rulers, who established a new type of society based on exploitation and oppression. We oppose the

Moscow regime as we oppose those of Washington and Peking.

Because the capitalist system itself is international, and the world economy is increasingly dominated by a couple of hundred companies, the fight for socialism must be organised on an international basis too. A Workers' Republic in Ireland could not survive without the aid of the British and Continental working classes. In supporting all genuine anti-imperialist struggles, in Ireland or anywhere else, we hold that imperialism and capitalism can only be defeated by world-wide workers' revolution. For imperialism is simply the form which capitalism takes today.

The SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT fights to unite the working class irrespective of religion and sex in struggles to cut back exploitation and improve living conditions. We fight to make the workers' organisations, the trade unions, completely independent and democratic in order that they may play an effective part in these struggles. As immediate aims we fight for a minimum wage of £30 for a 35-hour working week, for rank-and-file control of the trade unions, and we oppose all anti-trade union

legislation. We oppose redundancy, unemployment and lay-offs.

On the national question, we believe that the present leadership of the anti-imperialist movement has shown itself incapable of maintaining a consistent approach because it is incapable of recognising the class content of the question. The national question can only be solved in the working class's struggle for power, and that can only be won by a united working class. As immediate aims, however, we fight for an end to intervention and to repressive legislation North and South, and for the withdrawal of the British Army from Ireland. We support the self-defence of working class areas

against military and sectarian attack. We fight for total separation of Church and State.

The SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT is a democratic centralist organisation open to those who accept its principles and objectives, who work in one of the units of the movement, agree to recognise its discipline and to pay dues. Along with revolutionary organisations in other countries, with whom we have fraternal links, we are striving to build our own organisation to gain such support as to work meaningfully for a revolutionary international of working class parties.

SWM

I wish to have further details of the Socialist Workers Movement

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Send to: TOP FLOOR, 95 CAPEL STREET, DUBLIN 1

Portugal

SOLIDARITY NOW MORE URGENT

"A BATTLE LOST IS NOT THE WAR LOST" was the headline on the first edition of 'Republica' to come out after the events of the 25th November 1975. The defeat of the left wing military units in the Lisbon area, on this and the following day, smashed the soldiers as a political force. But the organisations of the working class and their factory occupations remained intact. With the removal of the left-wing units the task of winning workers' power in Portugal revealed itself plainly as the task of building the consciousness, strength and organisation of the working class itself.

THE TRIUMPH of reaction that was the 25th of November led to scores of left-wing officers and hundreds of revolutionary soldiers being imprisoned the silencing of big sections of the press, radio and TV sympathetic to the workers, and the driving of the revolutionary left underground for a time. It paved the way for the Sixth Government to tackle the chaos of the economy by economic attacks on the workers - wage freezes, tax rises and price increases. The Government is attempting to roll back the agrarian reform also.

Where before the Government hadn't the military arm to back up these attacks, now the left soldiers are removed and a state arm - consisting of the commandoes and the fascist National Republican Guard - has been assembled and used.

The first task of the Sixth Government was to restore discipline in the army. When this was done the next step was to "restore discipline in the factories and get foreign investment going again". The struggle of Portuguese workers has now moved firmly on the wage and price struggles. Immediately after the 25th November the Government pressed their victory onwards by announcing a freeze of the building workers' wage rise (won with such a great struggle before the 25th, including the siege of the Government Palace) due to "the changed political situation". Before Christmas tax rises were announced and the Christmas spree led to shortages in the shops. Prices have rocketed including a 20% increase in travel fares.



But the workers are hitting back, demonstrating that they are far from defeated. The building workers called a national two-hour stoppage for Friday 16th January. Postmen and dockers are in dispute for shorter hours - the

postmen are refusing to work Saturdays. On Saturday the 17th the workers made their major first show of strength since 25th November when 20 unions and the secretariat of workers' commissions for the Lisbon district organised a rally.

The right are using their new strength to get away with arms searches in factories and the smashing up of the textiles union's office by commandoes. At Caxias and Custoias prisons, where revolutionary soldiers are held, demonstrations of 4,000 and 20,000 were brutally dispersed by commandoes and GNR police. At Custoias four people were killed and seven wounded when the GNR opened fire.

Revolutionaries must - and in many cases have - adapt to the new circumstances. Clandestine work combined with leadership of the economic struggle and a new openness and involvement with the working class is needed. The PRP (Party of the Revolutionary Proletariat) - the biggest revolutionary organisation and the SWM's fraternal organisation in Portugal - has changed its main slogan, significantly from UNIR, ORGANIZAR, ARMAR to UNIR, ORGANIZAR, LUTAR. Its paper is more concerned with the direct economic battles and it is endeavouring to gain a presence in every sizable factory in Portugal. It intends to open many new party offices and to increase the membership many times over. One hundred and fifty workers, members of the Communist Party of Portugal, turned up at their meeting at Marinha Grande recently and other blocs of CP workers have approached them.

The setback of 25th November was indeed a battle lost - but the struggle is far from over and the working class far from defeated. As the Portuguese revolutionaries shift the stress from arms to bread and butter the need for international solidarity with Portuguese workers is stronger than ever.

French soldiers' rights struggle

50 FRENCH PEOPLE, both soldiers and civilians face charges of spreading indiscipline among the ranks of the French army. 25 of them are now in prison. They will be tried before a "state security tribunal".

The last few months have seen an extraordinary flourishing of soldiers' committees who are opposing the brutality, the excessive discipline, and the mental conditioning of military life.

The example of the Portuguese soldiers has spread - not only to France, but to Italy too. In Holland, the soldiers have won concession from the authorities, including trade union rights. What all this means of course, is that the army in all of these cases is a less pliable and reliable tool in the hands of the ruling class.

Even supporters of the very moderate Socialist Party in France have supported the movement for democratic rights in the

army. The Prime Minister (Chirac) has attacked them for "gravely compromising the organisation of our defence."

Left-wing groups and one of the big national trade unions the CEDT, have demonstrated in support of the soldier radicals. The Communist Party has given reluctant support, stressing its respect for "national defence" and "military discipline". They actually reject the idea of trade unions for soldiers.

The bubbling discontent in the French Army - there are 120 soldiers' committees, many of them publishing bulletins - comes largely from the influence of conscripts who have joined in the last few years. Many of these had become radical in the colleges movement of the early 1970's.

The government knows a threat to its authority when it sees one, so it has lashed out at the "subversives", raiding the offices of political groups, attacking the unions, and making widespread arrests. But there is no sign at all that this has beaten the soldiers' movement back. (PNS)

NOVEMBER 25th

THE ABSENCE of a mass revolutionary party of the Portuguese working class led in no small way to the defeat of the 25th November 1975. 'A revolutionary party with real roots in the working class, a party whose militants were in a position of leadership of their fellow workers, and through them with the mass of workers, would surely have been able to make a more realistic appraisal of the situation. The defeat took place because a party did not exist with the weight, in the class, to carry forward the struggle DESPITE the CP's betrayal.

The government and the Socialist Party described the 25th of November as a left-wing coup. The Portuguese Communist Party (and many 'revolutionary' groups - inside and outside Portugal) say it was an adventure of the extreme left, particularly the PRP.

Firstly, the 25th November was not a coup. Tancos paratroopers who were resisting a replacement of Armed Forces commanders by Right-Wingers occupied air-bases that were threatening them. Secondly, the Government

would have moved at that time anyway, to restore their authority in the Army. The paras action merely provided an excuse.

Thirdly, there is more evidence for Communist Party involvement in the 25th November than for revolutionary-left involvement. Sometime before the 25th there were discussions between the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and the Antunes' 'group of nine' officers. This group were anxious about the advance of the Right in the army and they wanted continued PCP involvement in the Government. The PCP had been close to the paras - organising food and money for them when their wages were stopped. Two days before the 25th workers commissions (commissions dominated by the PCP) went to the Military Police barracks to demand arms. The commander, who was a PRP sympathiser refused them. The PCP encouraged the mutineers! Why? What would the PCP do with a coup? The answer is they weren't going for a coup but were involved to increase their leverage for more places in the government - where

they sit to-day.

But the Right responded with massive strength. Cunhal, the CP leader, saw Costa Gomez at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 25th. He made a deal with the PCP pulled out leaving the revolutionary left in the shit. The marines - a PCP stronghold - were not moved against and PCP leaflets were issued calling the revolt "a grave error" and advising against provocative action. A PCP officer surrendered before his unit and phoned another barracks to tell them. This led to the surrender of that barracks.

The price the PCP paid was the arrest of their officers and the disillusionment of many of their workers. In contrast to this only one PRP officer was arrested - and later released. The only military order the PRP gave throughout the events was to 'their' troops not to move against the paras. MES - a centrist group - and PRP tried to mobilize support on the 26th. But by then the CP had cooled the situation.



Worker's action can send Franco's regime to the grave with him!

The red mayor's wise words

IT'S OFFICIAL - The Communist Party in Israel is not fighting Zionism or for a democratic secular state in that part of the world. The much-publicised Communist mayor of Nazareth, Tawfik Zayyad, laid it on the line in a statement which is quoted in 'Free Palestine':

"I don't want any confrontation with the Israeli government, especially with the Interior Ministry. We are ready to give them our hand to co-operate for the future of Nazareth."

And this is how 'Free Palestine' continues: "He added that accusations before the election that the Communists would use a victory to launch radical politics among Israeli Arabs were made to 'justify national discrimination and national oppression against the residents of Nazareth. We think this is a racist accusation."

Now we know all the things the Communist mayor and the Communist Party are NOT going to do, when will we find out what they are going to do?

THREAT TO FRANCOISM

THE PAST three months in Spain have seen a massive strike wave sweep the country - despite attack after attack by police on strikers and demonstrators.

Strike meetings, like the one in the Madrid Chrysler plant, have been broken up by police. A march by 2,000 women, demanding equality, an end to the government wage freeze and amnesty for the thousands of political prisoners, was attacked with teargas and truncheons. In Barcelona, rubber bullets were fired into a 40,000 strong demonstration. And Franco's favoured tactic of breaking strikes by forcibly drafting strikers into the army has been continued by the 'new' regime. Nearly 200,000 workers have been drafted to date.

A feature of the struggle is the remarkable solidarity of the Spanish workers. During the Chrysler workers' three day sit-in representatives of ITT and Standard Electric workers arrived at the factory with donations. The metro-workers' strike

prompted several short stoppages in support. For every major strike there has been at least one such solidarity action.

But it will take a much more powerful movement to bring down the dictatorship. The revolutionary road is to develop independent working class action and organisation by taking the struggle forward to a general strike. This would not only challenge the present government. It would threaten the entire structure of big business and the Spanish state.

MODERATION

But the biggest organisation on the left, the Communist Party, thinks differently. They have launched a 'Democratic Junta' aimed at forming an alliance of all those in opposition to the government. This "opposition" includes old time monarchists and those modern business men with an eye on the European markets

who want a more Liberal Spain that will be acceptable to the EEC. The lessons of the Spanish Civil War and of Chile on the disaster of this popular front policy have been lost on the CP.

Meanwhile the big guns of international capital are trained on Spain. The ruling class at least have learnt some lessons. They don't want another Portuguese revolution. The United States has recently promised over half a billion pounds in military aid; 'aid' that will be used against workers in the struggle to come. The Spanish Socialist Workers' Party is being backed by the European social democratic parties and probably by the CIA who would like to build it up the same way they built up the Socialist Party's moderate influence in Portugal.

But 'moderation', particularly in the economic crisis conditions facing the Spanish working class, can only mean continued repression. The revolutionary left in Spain is small and it's task is mammoth but it is the only alternative to the bloodstained road of reformism.

E. O'DWYER

the worker

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

Fighting Fund

THINGS ARE hotting up. The efforts of our rulers to scramble out of their crisis means a sharpening of the class struggle on every front. We must respond

to their attacks by increasing and widening our activities.

The SWM has been doing this. Over the next few weeks we will be sponsoring a series of meetings by a Portuguese revolutionary, reprinting our pamphlet on the economic crisis and holding meetings on the crisis. We will be publishing further pamphlets on the ITGWU and womens' struggles, and purchasing equipment with which to ensure more regular production of THE WORKER.

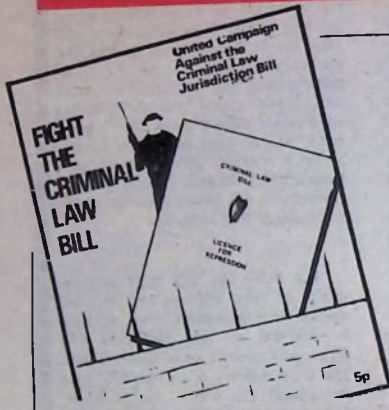
WEAPON

Our members are involved daily in the struggles of workers. We use this paper, written by workers for workers, as a weapon in those struggle. The pamphlets, leaflets and the experiences of a worker in the Portuguese revolution are also valuable weapons. And weapons cost money.

A leaflet costs a 1/2p, a poster 10p. Pamphlets, meetings, speaking tours and equipment for the paper cost a lot more. That's where we need your help. If you want to buy a printing press for THE WORKER, Great! — but contributions to cover the cost of some leaflets will be welcome too.

Donations can be sent to The Secretary, c/o 15 Ventry Drive, Cabra West, Dublin 7. Or you can cheat Conor Cruise O'Brien out of the price of a stamp by contacting any WORKER sellers.

JOHN GOODWILLIE



SIX RADICAL and Republican groups came together in December to form the United Campaign Against the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill. Last month, they published a pamphlet outlining the case against the Bill. 1000 copies were sold through the organisations in the campaign — including Socialist Workers Movement — and at political meetings and demonstrations.

The pamphlet explains what is in the Bill (or possibly Act, by the time this is printed) and spells out the dangers to civil liberties and to the working class and anti-imperialist movements. Some copies are still available from S.W.M. at 95 Capel Street, Dublin 1.

THE TRADES COUNCIL March in Dublin on Tuesday 26th January in protest against the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Bill brought the trade union movement out on the streets against the Governments latest piece of repressive legislation. It demonstrated how relevant the Bill is to all trade unionists and not just to Republicans.

However the protest took place more in spite of the executive of the Trades Council than because of it.

Initially it wasn't easy to convince the Council to have a protest at all. The fact that the Irish Congress of Trade Unionists is officially opposed to the Bill effects not the slightest bit the reluctance of the leadership to DO anything about it. Only 200 posters were printed and 100 of these were put up by the United Campaign Against the Criminal Law Bill (a committee comprised of left wing groups, including the Socialist Workers Movement). The United Campaign also printed 1,000 leaflets advertising the meeting which, disgracefully were not distributed until the evening of the march. No notices were sent to shop stewards or put in the newspapers by the Trades Council.

The Provisionals, who have done little or nothing on the Bill, at least took this opportunity and instructed their members to attend the Trades Council march.

The half-heartedness of the Trades Council executive came out immediately when they announced that due to the poor attendance they would not go ahead with the march to Leinster House, as decided by the whole Council, but that a few officers would go over to the Dail with the letter of protest. By the time Kader Asmal was half-way through his liberal and all-so-legal speech the hall was full. When he had finished the chair refused to recognise Paddy Healy — a member of the Trades Council, who asked the executive to reconsider the march.

Mattie Merrigan spoke next. He was in a radical mood

and drew attention to how this Bill could be used against trade unionists, as were other repressive laws, and how the Bill would be administered by "a class-ridden judiciary". Merrigan showed that he does after all know how to appeal to the rank and file when his call for the march to go ahead was greeted by enthusiastic applause. After this the Chairman announced that the march would go ahead as planned.

The interruptions and microphone grabbing by supporters of Frank Stagg's hunger strike only served to put people off (and to show how little training and experience in common work with other bodies that the Provisionals give their supporters).

Over four hundred marched to Leinster House. Again, just how little the Trades Council were putting into the protest was plain to see. There was no Trades Council banner at the head of the march. At this point it was after six-thirty — and the rush-hour crowds had nearly all cleared.

A full account of the unions objections to the Bill were handed into Leinster House. But letters of protest are easy to write and easier to disregard. The opposition of the ICTU to repressive legislation must be translated into a real campaign. We mustn't let the union leaders off the hook with just one march. The fair attendance at Tuesday's march shows the opposition there is to the Bill. The 75 signatures of shop stewards and elected representatives, against the Bill, reported in our last issue, is a sign of at least some commitment among the active rank and file.

The United Campaign against the Criminal Law Bill was a step towards united work by many organisations against repression. This united work must be kept up and extended. The aim must be to involve trade union bodies so as to make it a united effort of socialists, Republicans and trade unionists to oppose repressive laws.

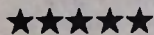
Final Fling For NI Convention

WHEN THE Labour Court recommended the re-instatement of the Crown Controls shop steward, Martin Daly, after a marathon ten months strike in his defence, many of the strikers felt that the tide had at last begun to turn in their favour. That the Labour Court has been FORCED to back re-instatement is a tribute to the courage and determination of the Crown strikers and the support they received — moral and financial — from thousands of other workers. But, as we have seen since, the need for workers to rely on their own strength has been emphasised. And the Crown strikers need workers' solidarity more than ever.

LAST ROUND AT CROWN?

AFTER the High Court ruling in December, when the official pickets had to be removed from the Galway factory, the Crown bosses and their supporters in the local press thought they had the strikers on the run. The scab lorries came back openly — this time during daylight. An offer was made to put the shop steward on the 'lump'. Again the strikers held firm.

Pressure was building up for the calling of a national strike of the AUEW. If the strike had gone ahead it could have brought immense pressure on the Crown bosses, but it was called off on the basis that the Labour Court would intervene. The only problem is that the recommendation is binding only on one side — the union.



The fact that the union had been willing to call a national strike certainly helped the Labour Court to make up its mind correctly. Furthermore, the Court couldn't be seen to be in favour of victimisation if it was to preserve its credibility with trade unionists in general. And the fact that many workers have a lot of trust and faith in the Court means a lot to the bosses and the state. They have used it time and time again to sell rotten deals, to allow firms to get out of paying the Wage Agreements, and so on.

Of course the Court, although admitting that the steward had been victimised, did not recommend any compensation for the period of suspension. And by telling the strikers that Martin Daly cannot hold the position of shop steward for two years they are really saying that the Crown bosses can have some say in the election of shop stewards.

At the time of writing the tempo of

the dispute has increased dramatically. Three large lorry loads of steel were brought in by Nestor, the local scab, the scabs inside have started overtime — although they are all agreed to an overtime ban against the redundancies before the strike — and they have voted 48-2 to refuse to work again with the strikers. It seems the Crown bosses may be counting on the fact that strike runs out in April.

The strikers' action, in replacing the pickets in defiance of the Supreme Court ruling means, in effect, that they will not accept directions on trade union principle and practice from a member of the ruling class simply because he has been robed and wiggled and propped up behind a court bench by Liam Cosgrave.

The trade union movement must now, more than ever, rally round the Crown strikers. A properly organised national strike by the AUEW, mass pickets on the Crown factory. The Trades Council must be forced to organise this.

It is vital to the trade union movement in Galway, and throughout the country, that the Crown strikers win. It is our job to make sure they do.



AS THE Northern Convention flickered into life like the embers of a dying fire, the British Government was faced again with the irreformability of the Northern state. It is still possible that some watered-down form of "partnership" (the new word for power-sharing) may emerge. But the idea of a coalition for a limited period shows precisely how impossible it is to obtain a permanent settlement.

THE BALANCE of forces in the Convention is such that the parties of the old power-sharing Executive must be joined by Craig's Vanguard Party and by at least 5 of Harry West's Unionists to win a bare majority. And this majority would have to be retained during a referendum or a general election. In such a vote, the SDLP would be weakened by having obtained no guarantees against an eventual return to Stormont; and the Protestant para-militaries are already wavering from their initial support for Bill Craig's intrepid foray into the graveyard of "moderate" Unionism.

But such a result would simply be a repetition of the Executive. The Executive fell not just because of the U.W.C. stoppage of work, but because it did not have the support of both "communities" that was implied by the Northern Ireland Constitution Act: it had a majority in the Assembly, but it did not have the support of a majority of the members elected by Protestants. This reality was at first hidden by the ambiguous position of West's supporters, then in the same party as Faulkner.

While a new coalition might be able to win an overall majority, it seems unlikely that it could ever win a majority of the Protestant vote. It could thus only be a temporary solution. Of course, that does not mean it will not be tried. British imperialism, hit by the economic recession, must stumble along from one temporary solution to the next, since it cannot resolve the basic contradiction within its Northern state.

That contradiction is that British imperialism would like to see a less sectarian society, more in tune with up-to-date capitalism and integrating the Catholic middle class into the Northern ruling class: a society which would more closely resemble the rest of Ireland, where British imperialism rules through its economic power, through its ownership of factories and



Paisley and Craig: The hard man and the new 'moderate' Both with the same objective-Loyalist rule-but disagreeing on how to re-attain it.

its influence on the banks, and the messy business of politics is left to the local small-time businessmen. This is the reality behind the supposed wish of Britain to withdraw. They would be delighted to withdraw the British Army, and even to break up the United Kingdom, if they could be sure of continuing to draw profits from their investments in the North — or even if they could be sure that there was no chance of finding Scotland 12 miles away from a Russian base, or, worse still, a workers' republic.

However, the sectarian state in the North, built by British imperialism in the past, cannot now be dismantled. Every advance by the Catholic middle class deprives the Protestant middle class of some of the levers which they have used to keep the Protestant workers loyal to them. Every advance by Catholic workers towards more equal rights to jobs or houses, takes those jobs or houses from Protestant

workers, since under capitalism there are not enough to go round.

Faced with this contradiction at a time of economic crisis, the British government is tempted to concede something like a return to Stormont, disguised by a committee system. And if the Provisionals continue along their present path of retaliating to sectarian assassinations, they may deprive themselves of support to the extent that the S.D.L.P. would feel able to accept a committee system and survive at the polls.

The only way of stopping this is to build a mass movement against repression and British imperialism, and to mobilise on these and other working-class issues which can enable Catholic workers to reject both the S.D.L.P. careerists and the Provisional blind alley, and which can show to Protestant workers a way out of their dependence on Establishment politicians.

'THE WORKER' Supplement Feb/March 1975

FRANK STAGG DIED while a 'guest' of the state. He was buried at the behest of the state. The British and Irish governments combined forces to crush a man and his memory. The Garda's bodysnatch and the Special Branch burial have set a gruesome precedent.

Convicted on a 'conspiracy' charge and on flimsy evidence, Frank Stagg had been held for long periods in solitary confinement and harrassed by several different prison governors. His demand for a transfer and for political status was a demand for an end to this treatment and for the right to associate with fellow-republicans.

Because he was isolated and because republicans outside the prison were unable to organise a continuous campaign to highlight his situation he felt he had no choice but to go on hunger-strike.

But this traditional republican weapon is only effective if it used by a large number of prisoners together or if it is backed by a wide movement outside.. The Provisional republicans seem unwilling to try to build such a movement with others, to inform the wider working class movement of the issues, to seek support there. They rely on an emotive response --- and that is why the funeral becomes so important.

The Socialist Workers' Movement urges all republicans and workers opposed to repression to learn the lesson of Frank Stagg's tragic death. We must build a united front against repression and in defence of political prisoners and their demand for political status -- in Britain and in Ireland, in the 26 Counties and in the 6 Counties.

The S.W.M. has already put this forward to the organisations involved in the United Campaign against the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill. We urge rank and file republicans in particular, to take it up. We don't need martyrs. We do need a united front to fight the mounting repression.

SOLIDARITY WITH PORTUGUESE WORKERS.

MIGUEL DA SILVA, a worker in the Portuguese airlines, TAP, and a member of the Revolutionary Party of The Proletariat will be speaking at a series of meetings throughout Ireland this week.

The experience of Portuguese workers in the revolutionary events of the past two years can be of immense value to Irish workers in our own fight.

The meeting in Dublin will take place

Wednesday 3rd March

The Ormond Hotel,
Ormond Quay,
at 8pm.

There will be another meeting in UCD on the same day at 1pm.

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT, 95 Capel Street, Dublin I.