

# FROM THE DOLE

# the worker

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE UNION LEADERS

Brothers and sisters,

Presumably a number of trade union leaders will be taking part in the Trades Councils' Day of Action on March 12th, just as some of you marched last June against unemployment. Thanks a lot.

It's quite right that the Trades Councils should have taken this initiative and hundreds of active trade unionists and unemployed will back it up. But pardon us if some of us grit our teeth when we see the full-time, appointed officials toddling along in front of us, displaying their hypocrisy. You have the safest jobs in the country. Appointed, untouchable — providing you aren't caught walking off with the dues. And some of you will be directly responsible for the loss of thousands of jobs.

And don't point the finger and shout "Wrecker, splitter, you're knocking the union!" No. Those of us who fought against redundancy by sitting-in in the Ambassador and Academy cinemas at the beginning of the year saw who the wreckers are. We saw our fight betrayed by the officials we pay to represent us. We were split away from the other members of our union — cut off by direction of an official. Thrown out of our union office by an official — though the boss was brought in for a chat. We saw workers who had fought in the best traditions of our movement stabbed in the back. And we know it has happened at different levels all over the country.

So, forgive us our doubts about your loyalty. Who has encouraged and pushed the productivity deals which cost thousands of jobs? You have. Who has helped the bosses hold down wages through the National Wage Agreement and put on more pressure to sell jobs? You have. Who has refused to aid, let alone encourage, any direct fight to stop the bosses throwing workers onto the dole to protect profits? You have. And don't protest that workers aren't willing to fight. When we fought you betrayed us.

**Whose bloody side are you on?** It's a fair question. Remember, all the pressure for action — for this Day of Action in March and for the demonstration last June — came from below, from predominantly rank and file bodies. You just toddle along for appearances sake.

And who will carry on the fight when the march is over? Not you. You will be too busy administering the finer points of Wage Agreements and the two-tier picket, making sure that some uppity workers don't go beyond the limits you have set for them.

Who will press for action around the country? Not you. Who will carry the message through our unions that workers didn't cause this bosses' crisis and shouldn't pay for it, that we should resist all efforts to put us on the dole with all the strength we have. Certainly not you.

That will be a job for the rank and file members. To fight in every workplace, on every union committee, on every trades council, for resistance to redundancy: for an end to productivity deals: for an end to double-jobbing: for an end to recruitment bans: for a 35-hour working week and longer holidays to create jobs.

And we will fight. For unemployed committees in every branch to put the pressure on to protect existing jobs and keep more workers off the dole. There's enough of us down here. And for policies which will create jobs and give us our right to work.

It would be nice to think that you were with us in the fight — but experience tells that we can only rely on our fellow rank and file members.

Fraternally,

Gene Kerrigan, former shop steward, Ambassador Cinema.

# WANTED



## FOR ROBBERY, VIOLENCE AND POSSIBLE MURDER

**APPROACH THIS MAN WITH CAUTION.** On February 28th 1973 Liam Cosgrave took over as leader of the Irish state. Since then he has blazed a trail of destruction through workers' living standards, freedoms, and our very right to live.

He has presided over and protected the wholesale slashing of jobs, more than doubling the already high unemployment. With his associates, he has promoted measures which have reduced workers' real earnings by over 20% and assured that women workers would continue to be paid about half the average male rate.

He has greatly enlarged the forces employed to protect his regime and supplied them with sophisticated weaponry to do so. Soldiers are now

being trained to fire on cars from helicopters. He has enlarged the Special Political Police and increased its activities. An unprecedented number of people have been beaten senseless in police stations in recent times. He has brought in numerous new laws designed to intimidate workers, and has increased the activities of the Special Juryless Courts.

Cosgrave is the one employed at the moment by the 'community of interests' which runs the country: the employers, bankers, speculators etc. He is the front man and chief enforcer of their needs. To facilitate those needs over £7 million was chopped from Health Board budgets last year, resulting in the closure of hospital wards and wings all over the country. Since these wards exist to protect people's health it is reasonable to assume that without them — people die.

Replacing Cosgrave with another 'leader' would be ineffective. The position is only open to those willing to carry out the dictates of the real rulers. Only resistance by workers acting collectively to oppose every aim of this man, his associates and employers, can bring him and his class eventually to justice.

For further information on this man and his associates see centre pages.



**MARCH 8 is International Women's Day.** It is 68 years since the first International Women's Day was called by socialist women garment workers. They were on strike in New York City for an end to sweatshop conditions and the right to organise a union.

15,000 women came to the first march. They carried red banners calling for equal pay, childcare and the right to vote. The first International Women's Day demonstrations in Europe took place in 1911 in France, Germany and Austria. The organisers never expected the massive turnout they got. Meetings were organised everywhere. Men stayed at home with their children for a change. 30,000 women demonstrators stopped a police attack on their march.

These demonstrations and activities throughout the world helped increase the

consciousness and organisation of working women. International Women's Day became a day to pay tribute to the struggles of women and to build for the fight for women's liberation and the socialist revolution.

Russian women celebrated International Women's Day for the first time in 1913. Their meetings were illegal, but their halls were packed. Many of their speakers were arrested by the Czar's police.

The Russian Revolution was sparked off by the International Women's Day demonstrations of 1917. Women workers and soldiers' wives were on the streets demanding "Bread for our children" and "the return of our husbands from the trenches." Soon they were joined by other workers and soldiers.

This was the beginning of the Russian Revolution, the first

time that working people seized control of their society.

The revolution brought many changes for women. These included complete legal equality, equal votes, equal pay, maternity benefits, communal laundries, nurseries, legal abortion. But these gains were wiped out when Stalinism took hold of the defeated workers' state.

## SISTERS

This year in Northern Ireland and in Portugal, Angola and Spain women have continued the struggle against imperialism and capitalism. In Ireland we have seen women confront the bosses, the government and the Church in making demands for their rights to equal pay, jobs, and contraception.

Socialists should join in the International Women's Day activities to pay tribute to the battles our sisters have fought in the past.

And as an encouragement and support for the struggles of today.

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

by Rachel Carroll and Joan Kelly

## SWM MEETING

### THE POSITION of working class women in Ireland is one of double exploitation and oppression as workers and as women.

For women who are socialists the struggle is a two pronged one, for the overthrow of capitalism and the achievement of equality. Perhaps it would appear that the achievement of the first aim would make the second unnecessary, but established attitudes die hard and unless we as women are prepared to fight for our rights we will find ourselves always in the position of second class citizens. The creation of a new society necessitates the creation of new women and men.

The Irish Constitution of 1937 states that the accepted place for women is in the home and intends that any attempt to draw her away from her 'natural' niche should be forcefully prevented. Out of this has spread a vast network of laws and regulations to uphold this status quo.

The ban on contraceptives in the South is a denial of a basic human right, the right of a woman to control her own body. Contraceptives are, of course, available—but only if you know the 'right' doctor and are not too embarrassed to ask. Working class women are more likely to be affected by the fact that information on the use and availability of contraceptives is banned.

The Irish State's ban on divorce also hits the working class harder. If you are articulate enough to persuade your priest and rich enough to afford the cost the Catholic

Church has a little system of divorce called nullity.

For those many victims of marriage breakdown the prospects are grim. It means living on a pitifully low handout from the state, with no chance of getting a house. The forced isolation of the deserted or separated wife is intolerable—she is viewed with shame or at least pity by her family and as a threat by married women. This grim alternative can prevent women from abandoning miserable marriages and chain them (and any children) into a cruel, sometimes violent, existence.

The Church reinforces women's oppression in ways. By encouraging the belief in a glorious afterlife it discourages them from seeking a better life on earth. In its eyes the 'ideal' woman is submissive, meek and completely without sexual desires. At the same time she is seen as an object of temptation and responsible for the sins of the flesh. The 'good' woman restrains man's natural passions.

## RAPE

The idea of Mary giving birth without sex permeates Catholic thinking. The idea of sex as a marital duty and not a pleasure is one which is instilled into thousands of Catholic girls throughout the country. Hence a common attitude to rape is to treat the victim as an object of derision. Many women who have been raped are too ashamed to report it. Very often the woman is blamed for 'leading him on'. A British soldier who raped a woman was recently freed by a court in

Northern Ireland when his commanding officer said he would welcome him back to his regiment if he wasn't jailed.

## KIDS

Even the woman who is happily married does not live a fairy-tale existence. The woman with young children has little time to call her own. Most women spend much of their lives doing the housework and shopping. It is repetitive, uninspiring work. Yet for many women, isolated, bored and forced to stay indoors this work takes over their lives and a polished door step becomes more important than self-development. It is hardly surprising that for so many women their ambitions are all second-hand: they have

to live through their husbands' jobs or the achievements of their children. The present crisis ties women more closely to the home. Ever rising food prices mean more shopping around, more queuing and more time spent in preparing cheaper food.

The moulding of women to become wives and mothers starts early: girls are given dolls and toy household utensils. Single-sex education reinforces the division and the jobs which women take up reflect it. In 1968 2000 girls entered commercial colleges and only 155 men. Only 1 in 4 university students are women. When women do work the majority end up in the worst paid and most boring jobs.

There are no state-run nurseries in Ireland North or South. Both children and

mothers suffer from this. As well as providing a facility for working women, day nurseries also are necessary for those who are 'only' housewives. They would make shopping easier, or just enable a mother to be by herself for a while.

\* \*

It is on the shop floor that women will have the greatest impact in changing society. The liberation of women is impossible without the liberation of the working class, it ultimately involves the complete change in the structures and values of society which will enable both men and women to live fuller and more complete lives.

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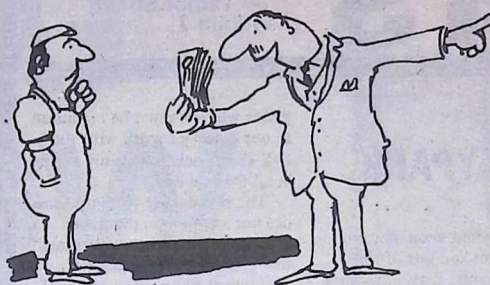
Women have been at the forefront of the fight for political status in the North.



WHAT WE THINK

# DEAD END SOLUTION

I'M TAKING THIS MONEY OFF YOU SO I CAN INVEST IT IN MORE JOBS!



(Then there's the one about wage restraint helping the unemployed. Where has the money which the bosses saved over the past few years of belt-tightening gone?)

AS THE number of unemployed continued soaring and the bad old days of the fifties became more than a memory some dead-end solutions to the crisis began to be trotted out.

They come from all directions. From the bosses, from trade union leaders, even from Christian Brothers.

The particular solution offered by a prominent and extremely noisy Brother is an attack on women workers. There have been some favourable noises in response from the unions — and some unfavourable ones. But the practice of getting rid of women first when redundancy is threatened

goes on. Here is an answer to "the brother" and his supporters.

## "WEED OUT THE WORKING WIVES"

That's a catch-cry which has been heard with increasing frequency — it even appeared as a newspaper headline. It looks simple enough. Married women work for a bit of "luxury money", right? No. Many women are the only wage earners in the house. Others, with husbands working, need the money as the single wage packet simply

isn't enough for a decent standard of living.

But this is all incidental. If the right to work is based on the number of wage packets coming into the house why pick on wives? Why not working brothers? Or why not weed out working fathers if they've got a son earning a full wage?

The fact is that this is just another way of passing the buck to one

section of the working class — weaker than others, less organised or experienced.

## DIRECT ACTION

Unfortunately the catch-cry has taken root in some areas of the trade unions. It is an attractive idea for those officials who dread the thought of workers fighting back in a wholesale defence of all jobs. "Pass the buck to the women". Just like the other "solutions" which dodge the issue such as the call for import controls. That too sounds easy, and it doesn't require direct action

against our own bosses. But how many socialists or trade unionists would raise that slogan in its bleakest and truest form: "Pass the buck to workers in other countries"?

The buck cannot be passed. Not to other workers, definitely not to women workers.

Our answer is simple. Some women want to be at home, others go out to work because the family needs money. And prefer to work because at work we are independent people — that's where we meet people as equals. Too often that doesn't happen in the home. So, we say to the bosses — women have the right to work, don't expect them to solve your problems.

# MORE HIT THE DOLE QUEUES IN NORTH

"YOU MAY get a job as a sandwich girl". That's what Maire, an unemployed play-group leader, was told at the Northern Ireland employment service.

She's been out of work for most of a year and was ready to learn a new skill by entering a catering training course offered by the service. But they weren't too hopeful that any job would be available at the end of her training.

Meanwhile . . .

THE PROSPECTS for industrial workers in Northern Ireland are bleak. That's the very clear message of an analysis of employment and unemployment in the 36 biggest companies published last month by the London-based Labour Research Department "Labour Research" takes a close look at those 36 companies which provide just

under half the total jobs in manufacturing in the North. And they point out that 24 of these have reduced their work-forces in the last two years, and a similar number are likely to cut their work-forces further in the next two years.

The recent record makes grim reading: 800 jobs gone in ROLLS ROYCE, when it closed; over 2,000 gone in INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING; STC's Larne factory closed with 2000 made redundant in the group; 500 jobs lost in the closure of COURTAULD's Carrmonee factory.

For the next months and years, ICI plan further voluntary redundancies on top of the 300 which have already taken effect at their Kilroot plant. HOECHST and BRITISH ENKALON are in trouble in their parent plants. The cuts in Post Office spending will affect jobs in PLESSEY, GEC and DAVIDSON & CO. in Belfast. The orders for ships to be built at HARLAND & WOLFF have dried up.

## LOYALISM

In most of these places of work the vast majority of the workers are Protestant. For too long now, they have passively sat by while loyalist politicians pretended to concern themselves with the closures and lay-offs. Their "loyalism" has made them even softer targets for rationalisation and for the unloading of the crisis on to workers' backs.

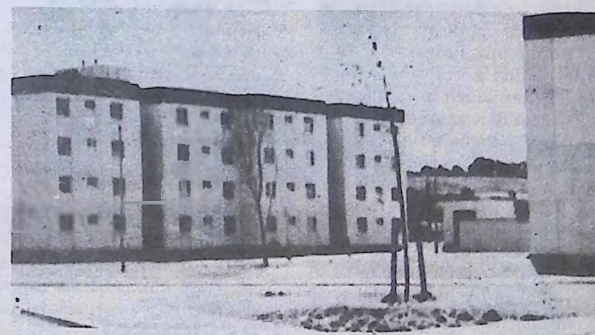
If the industrial working class in the North is not to be decimated, a lead must come from the trade unions — and from the unemployed, concentrated in the nationalist areas — for resistance to all redundancies. If that lead is given and if it is maintained, then the shackles of the loyalist organisations and their sectarian stranglehold can be thrown off.

The only solution to the perpetual crises of this system will be a final solution — the dismantling of the system. Meanwhile, we can not afford the "solutions" of those who want to tinker with capitalism. The only option for workers, if we are to protect our jobs, to protect our living standards and stop the endless dole queues is a direct fight.

A fight to protect every job: no redundancies, no productivity deals. A fight to enlarge the workforce: a 35-hour working week to create jobs; no "natural wastage" or recruitment bans.

When we say that only the working class can end unemployment it is not just a slogan. Only this direct action will work. We look here at just some of the "dead-end solutions" and why they won't work.

## Housing agitation in Galway



Rahoon flats

IN JANUARY of this year tenants in Galway's Rahoon flats were served by the Corporation with notice of a rent increase back-dated to last July. Many of the increases were as much as one third of the previous rent. Some tenants were hit with bills for up to £100 in back rent.

Rahoon flats has an unemployment rate of up to 40%. On top of all this there is a promise of a further increase in heating charges in the next few months.

In return for your money you get walls discoloured from dampness. There's no individual heating — you pay for the heat even if you aren't there to use it. And when it breaks down, as happened at Christmas, the whole estate is left without heat.

Then the tenants are left for months without maintenance. The Corporation has a ban on recruitment, yet wastes money on painting poles in

middle class areas like Salthill. There is a clear need for links between the tenants association and the shop stewards in the Corporation on the issue of maintenance and the hiring of more workers.

A group of concerned tenants forced the calling of a general meeting on January 30 to discuss the issue. Though the meeting clearly showed itself in favour of concrete action against the rent increases the old tenants committee (who had previously resigned) have stalled and prevented any protest developing. They regarded proposals for a demonstration against the increases as too militant.

The coming battle in Rahoon flats on the question of the rent increases can be the beginning of a general struggle which can put life back into the Tenants Association.

## DEAR LORD...

HERE'S ONE horses ass who isn't worried about the dole. It's Lord Faulkner of Downpatrick, no less. Carrying his saddle to the House of Lords where he

can sit and pontificate on the problems facing the British ruling class. A just reward for doing his best on behalf of that class. Perhaps he will be better remembered as Lord Brian of Internment.

Meanwhile, another Lordship has been offering some "help" to the unemployed.

Lord Melchett, minister for health and social services, had his own scheme to help the unemployed. He wants to bring groups of unemployed young people down to Craigavon to learn what it would be like to have a job. When asked if there would be jobs available at the end of the course, he shuddered, Oh No! "The scheme is not designed to create jobs. It is designed to help young people who don't have jobs now. The only way to guarantee jobs would be if the government would be willing to employ them and that is not desirable."

Perhaps to Lord Melchett and the government it is more desirable to see the new unemployment figures. You guessed it. More on the dole last month. The total for the North is now 57,976; 6,558 more than this time last year. It was the highest for any January since 1940. Twenty-two industries showed increases in unemployment. There are 2,102 more building workers on the dole this month. 2,781 school leavers are looking for work.



# A FILE OF REPRESSION

THE EMERGENCY powers were no sooner in force than the Gardai were trying them out. The power to hold people for seven days without charge—under section 2 of the Emergency Powers Act—has since been used widely. Below is a list of just some of the incidents of repression which have grown out of the government's aim of intimidating its opponents.

THE Irish Republican Socialist Party was already singled out for very special attention even before the emergency powers came into force. Four of their members still face trumped-up charges for a train robbery. The District Court threw the case out because the state had no evidence to produce. So, the charges were renewed in the Special Court! Their members, too, in different parts of the country have been arrested and held for periods of 1, 2 or 3 days under the Emergency Powers Act

JOE STAGG, chairman of the I.C.R.A., was arrested with a couple of members of Sinn Fein from the Finglas area of Dublin before they even had time to decide whether or not they would mount a protest picket at a "peace" mass on New Year's Day being attended by a string of political dignitaries.

AS a response to the growing threat to civil liberties, the Irish Civil Rights Association was reformed in October. Five of its new committee have been arrested and held for various periods under the Emergency Powers Act since the New Year. One of them was Elizabeth Murphy, a 62-year-old woman who acts as the association's P.R.O. She was arrested with another person as they tried to put a protest picket on the Department of Foreign Affairs when Roy Mason was supping there. She was held in conditions which even a much younger and fitter person would find difficult to take.

PHIL RYAN, a member of Official Sinn Fein and of the Unemployed Workers' Association, was arrested in Dublin city centre before Christmas while taking photographs of shop displays. He was held in the Bridewell from November 27th to December 1st.

PETER JENNINGS, an English journalist, was going about his business interviewing Sean Mac Stiofain (whom the police know well is no longer actively involved in republican affairs) in a Navan hotel when he, Mac Stiofain, and Frances Magill, who was with them, were arrested at (machine-)gunpoint and taken to the local Garda station. They were held there in separate rooms for three hours before being driven back to the hotel.

MEMBERS of other organisations have been hit, too. Brendan Walsh, active in the Prisoners' Right Rights Organisation, had his flat raided, and all the contents turned upside down, while he was away from it for several days. Visiting Belmullet, Co. Mayo, during that period, he was there held for 24 hours under the Emergency Powers Act.

SINN FEIN (Kevin St.) members have been arrested and detained under the Act when there could never have been the slightest suspicion that they were committing any "terrorist" offence. Eight members of one Dublin cumann were arrested and held for over 20 hours as they came from a protest picket about conditions in Portlaoise prison. Other Sinn Fein members have been arrested when painting "Brits Out" slogans. Joe O'Neill and Ruairi O Bradaigh, of the Ard Comhairle, were arrested and held in Ennis during December, after seeing a friend off on a plane from Shannon.

IMMEDIATELY following the killing of Garda Clerkin with a booby trap bomb in October, nearly a dozen "suspects" were rounded up in Counties Offaly and Laois. Several of them were held for three or four days and afterwards made detailed statements on ill-treatment in Garda stations. Some people were arrested twice over. At least one of those detained, a woman, had no connection with any republican organisation. And Edmund Hoey, the prize "catch" from all of this had to be released in January, when the Gardai couldn't make the charges stick on him—not even a membership charge.

# FIGHTING BACK NOW

FOR 6 MONTHS, a defendant, Ronan Stenson, in the Murray case was unable to appear in court, because of the beatings he had received at the hands of the Gardai. In Cahir, Co. Tipperary, a prisoner jumped through a window, South Africa style, after being tortured by Gardai. Newspaper reports have pointed to the existence of a special heavy squad in the police—whose speciality is torture and confessions. The increased naked brutality is only a small and dramatic part of the overall lowering of democratic standards in the 26 County State.

For the last five years democratic rights are being steadily strangled in the South of Ireland. Ever since the introduction of the Special Criminal Court a steadily increasing system of repression has been built up.

The army and the police force have been professionalised, and turned to act against 'subversives'. And the meaning of that word has widened to take in almost anyone even likely to oppose state policy. Even Trades Council meetings and marches against unemployment are now kept under observation from the Special Branch.

In all that time resolutions have been passed by the official Trade Union movement 'deploring' this law and 'condemning' that attack on democratic rights. Yet with every new repressive law the ACTIVE opposition gets weaker and weaker. The few attempts by groups of militant workers to oppose the recent Emergency Powers Act were left isolated and received no encouragement from the official trade union movement.

Basically the official trade union leaders believe that the growth of repression poses no threat to the working-class. They will refuse to put their cosy relationship with the government into danger by translating their words into deeds.

And even the organisations that have borne the brunt of repression—the Republicans—have not tried to mobilise their own supporters. The leadership of Provisional Sinn Fein were happy to organise a huge rally to commemorate 1916 to prove they were the true inheritors of Irish nationalism—but they didn't lift a finger against the 7 day detentions.

Why? Because they too reckon that repression is directed solely at the Republican movement; that the organised working class, as such, have very little interest in or reason for opposing repression.

But it is our view that repression is not only directed against a small isolated group of 'subversives'—that one of its aims is to intimidate wider sections of the working class. Certainly at this point in time, Cosgrave and company have

no intention of INTERNING unofficial strikers. They do not need to as long as there are trade union leaders who will stick the boot into sit-ins like the Ambassador, the E.S.B. shiftworkers' work-to-rule. The central strategy of the coalition government in dealing with working-class militancy is to coax the trade union leaders into doing the dirty work. The atmosphere of fear and passivity induced by the increasing repression helps them do this.

The iron fist is kept in the background. Repression against Republicans helps to mark out what are the legitimate areas of protest. And all the time these areas get cut down. The name of the game is to isolate and brand the 'subversive' in order to intimidate and cow down the labour movement and anyone who supports the anti-imperialist struggle.

So unemployed organisers are harassed. Police make increasingly regular appearances on the picket lines. Injunctions are slapped on at a moment's notice. The gradual, softly softly, build up of repression gets passed over almost unnoticed.

As long as trade unionists fail to lift a finger against the jailings, the beatings, the inhuman degradation of Republicans, the more we face a stronger law-and-order state. The labels 'subversive' and 'wrecker' get shifted easier on to the E.S.B. workers who take action to defend jobs. The climate is created for increased direct use of state force to attack working-class living standards.



Thomas Connors, who jumped from the window of Cahir Garda station in a suicide attempt to escape the treatment he was receiving from the police.

## PORTLAOISE HELL IRISH

The following article is based on an interview with a prisoner released from Portlaoise a month ago.

LAST Christmas political prisoners were allowed receive only 6 Christmas cards and send out the same number. Each Christmas card they received had to carry a name and address on the back. In a small way that shows up the petty viciousness that prisoners face every day in Portlaoise.

The Coalition's aim is to demoralise and break the resistance of political militants. To do that they have eliminated any trace of free association between political prisoners. That means that prisoners are isolated in their own individual cells for up to 22½ hours every day. There is no work in the workshops; no education courses; no political literature available. The dis-

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The time to oppose state repression is now. But it will not be through using military tactics, nor through pleas for the restoration of civil liberties. The only effective way of forcing back the fist of repression is through the collective strength of workers.

And the willingness to fight is there. Fragmented, isolated, sporadic—but it exists. The building workers who struck against the introduction of the Emergency laws last August distributed leaflets calling for a trade union campaign against repression. And that is exactly what is needed. Because, though resolution after resolution has been passed at conference after conference, the union leaders will not act.

That is why we need to begin now with a rank and file campaign which can gather around it all those trade unionists who are prepared to fight on the issue of repression.

And we must be clear about it—that means defending all victims of state repression. It will mean coordination in union branches, trades councils, section committees of resolutions calling for action against repression.

It will also mean building up support and solidarity for victims of state repression—through pickets, leaflets publicising the cases. Above all, it must attempt to break through the wall of silence surrounding the issue.

At the moment, a small number of trade unionists are meeting to discuss how such a campaign can be organised. The WORKER fully supports such initiatives.

BELOW: A Dublin boy comes up against an increasingly familiar street scene.



Thomas Connors, who jumped from the window of Cahir Garda station in a suicide attempt to escape the treatment he was receiving from the police.

## PORTLAOISE: HELL IRISH STYLE

The following article is based on an interview with a prisoner released from Portlaoise a month ago.

LAST Christmas political prisoners were allowed receive only 6 Christmas cards and send out the same number. Each Christmas card they received had to carry a name and address on the back. In a small way that shows up the petty viciousness that prisoners face every day in Portlaoise.

The Coalition's aim is to demoralise and break the resistance of political militants. To do that they have eliminated any trace of free association between political prisoners. That means that prisoners are isolated in their own individual cells for up to 22½ hours every day. There is no work in the workshops; no education courses; no political literature available. The dis-

cipline of the screws is absolute. Prisoners can find themselves in solitary confinement for up to a month simply because a screw has a grudge against them.

Solitary confinement means being locked up for 23 hours a day and allowed one hour exercise when other prisoners have left the exercise yard. It means a ban on cigarettes—one of the few comforts of prison life.

But "disciplinary measures" are not just restricted to solitary confinement. Two months ago 5 prisoners lost remission for talking during mass. Or take the case of Michael Hegarty from Clarecastle. He saw a screw taking a prisoner's cigarette, and reported it to the Governor. He was threatened with loss of 8 days remission. He told them he would take it up with a solicitor but then the threat was dropped. Then on

the night before his expected release he was told he had 8 days more to serve. His mother had a celebration party arranged, but was never told why her son was not let out.

Besides the petty harassment, two things really stand out about Portlaoise. Firstly, the stripsearches which most prisoners face on average once a week. And it is not uncommon for prisoners to be held upside down, have their legs pulled apart and be subjected to anal searches.

The other brutal feature of Portlaoise is the treatment of visitors. Every day there are only 30 visitors allowed into Portlaoise. That means on a busy day like Saturday people who travel from Belfast can be and are turned away. Visitors must wait around for hours and are subjected to two searches. They are forced to supply information about themselves to the Special Branch—e.g. where they work. People like Denis Faul and journalists are barred from visiting Portlaoise.

On arrival inside, a screw listens to every conversation.

If any attempt is made to describe prison conditions the visit is stopped. Once a woman was describing how she won a prize in the Lyons Tea Draw and the screw cut short the visit—presumably because she was talking in a secret code.

Prisoners in Portlaoise are treated differently. The aim is to demoralise them by isolating them from each other and from their political organisations. They are victims of the overall government strategy of intimidation and harassment of anti-imperialists. The fight for political status is a fight not for separation and distinction from 'ordinary prisoners'—as Provisionals often emphasize. It is basically a fight for the right to maintain political discipline and political education in the jails. That is why the key issue is the issue of free association. It is part of the overall struggle to force the British and Irish governments to recognise the existence of a political battle in the country over the dominance of imperialism.

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

# THE GANG OF FOUR BITE THE DUST

by JOHN GOODWILLIE

WE ARE grateful to the bosses' journal *The Economist* for an insight into the Italian Communist Party. Their impression is that the CP, having shown their "social responsibility" by not voting against the Government in order to prevent its fall, they may now have to show their further "responsibility" by putting the rein on their members in the unions to cut back on wage demands.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of India supported the Declaration of Emergency by which Mrs Gandhi has repressed the working class and enhanced her own power, with perhaps 8000 people still interned. Some of its own members have been arrested. Now it is a bit more critical. But in the areas where it has the best chance of winning seats in March's general election, it has formed an electoral alliance with Mrs Gandhi's Congress Party.

VLADIMIR BORISOV, who has already spent nine years interned in mental hospitals in the USSR, has been arrested again and despatched to a mental hospital in Leningrad, this time for participating in a demonstration in Moscow.

Borisov took part in dockers' strikes in eastern Siberia when younger and then organised a group of young workers in Leningrad who wanted to reconcile socialism and democracy. More recently, he has cooperated with Grigorenko in working for the Crimean Tartars and for human rights.

General Pyotr Grigorenko, a dissident Marxist who calls for a "return to October" (1917), recently formed a Watchdog Committee on Psychiatric Repression.



Poster from a demonstration organised against the purged "Gang of Four"

**EVERYBODY** was waiting for Mao Tse-tung to die. In fact, rumours had said he was dead already, and his double was acting the part. Factions in the leadership manoeuvred to make themselves his heirs.

But when he did die, politicians talked of the death of a world statesman. And everybody waited to see who would take over in China.

Surprisingly quickly, there seems to have been an overthrow of the "revolutionaries", the "radicals", and the return to power of the "experts", the "capitalist roaders". In such simple terms does the capitalist press serve it up to us.

For there is nothing they like better than to give the impression that revolutionaries are people who run round waving little red books and chanting incomprehensible slogans.

But neither side in China are real revolutionary socialists. If China was a workers' state, the workers would decide what policy the State was to follow, which leaders were to be on top. This would involve newspapers and

radio stations setting out the programmes of each faction, free discussion among the workers, and democratic taking of decisions.

Instead of this, the workers are not told what is going on. Mao's widow, Chiang Ch'ing, was first attacked by means of discussions about a famous dowager empress. We do not hear the purged leaders from their own lips, but only what their enemies accused them of.

## PARTY

A revolutionary workers' party in China would realise that the only hope of bringing this back-

ward country to socialism lies in spreading the revolution to the working classes of other countries, Japan for instance, whose highly-skilled workers and developed economy could give tremendous assistance. But both Mao Tse-tung and his successor, Hua Kuo-feng, have chosen another course, to follow in the footsteps of Stalin and build that impossibility, "socialism in one country".

## RUSSIA

Stalin industrialised Russia. But China started with even less industry than Russia. Its agriculture does not produce the surplus which Stalin took from the Russian peasants to invest in industry: China produces only just enough food to feed itself. In any case, the intensive Chinese farming is very difficult for the State to supervise. A large proportion of Chinese industrial production is wasted in arms and the enormously expensive atomic programme.

The "moderate" bureaucratic faction advocates a slow and steady strategy, offering higher wages to skilled workers and managers, and greater opportunities for peasants to cultivate their private plots of land, concentrating investment in the more advanced coastal areas where it will produce more profit, expanding foreign trade. Hua Kuo-feng seems to be following this policy, and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, the "number two capitalist roader", seems to be returning to office to administer it.

## IDEALISM

But such a policy increases inequality among workers, among peasants, and between different regions. And it does not produce the goods: industrialisation is so slow that the number of people living on the land has risen since the 1949 Revolution. Twice the bureaucracy has thrown itself into a rush programme: the Great Leap Forward (1958-60) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-68) were attempts to break through the barriers of underdevelopment by building up investment through pure idealism: persuading everyone to work harder and not be selfish, giving them an illusion of creating a communist society. In

the Cultural Revolution, there came to prominence the "Gang of Four" who have now been overthrown, but also Hua Kuo-feng: the degree to which the ruling bureaucracy is divided into factions is greatly exaggerated by its habit of blaming a few prominent people whenever it changes its mind.

The Great Leap Forward collapsed in economic chaos. The Cultural Revolution had to be halted for another reason: the workers were getting out of control. After the Shanghai general strike of December 1966 the leaders of the Cultural Revolution Group had to prevent the workers going further. There were widespread denunciations of workers' "guild organisations" designed to "formulate economic demands", i.e. genuine trade unions. And in Hunan province a prominent workers' organisation, the Sheng-wu-lien, denounced the new government apparatus of "revolutionary committees" as bourgeois reformism. They called for the overthrow of the "new bureaucratic bourgeoisie" and a new revolution "to negate the past 17 years" (since the Communist takeover). The struggle, originally put into the hands of students by Mao in order not to disrupt the economy, was going too far and in February 1968 he announced that workers should "firmly stick to their production posts, firmly uphold the system of eight hours work, and make revolution only in spare time outside their work hours."

The Cultural Revolution produced a turnover within the bureaucracy. It is the manoeuvrings of officials vying for position which even now unleashes popular discontent, so that in various parts of China hundreds or even thousands are said to have died in fighting around the most recent purge. There probably are forces which have yet to show their hand. Hua will in any case run up against the same economic problems of China's state capitalist society. The working class will one day get an opportunity again.

**JOIN US IN THE FIGHT**

## SWM What we stand for

**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.

Capitalism produces war and poverty, racial and sexual oppression. It is based on the exploitation of those who produce the wealth. It is geared to profit and not to human need. It wastes resources - above all, human resources. It is driven into ever-deeper crises.

"Only the working class can destroy it and build a socialist society based on workers' control of production. Our political action to prepare the working class for that is based on the following principles:

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM:

Capitalism cannot be changed by piece-meal reform. Increasingly it is unable to bring in even those small reforms which some sections of the ruling class think necessary. We support all struggles of workers against capitalism, seeking to co-ordinate them and direct them towards a fight for workers' power.

### CAPITALIST STATE MUST BE SMASHED:

The state machinery - courts, parliament, police, army - is used to maintain the domination of the ruling class. Working class revolution produces a different kind of state - one based on councils of delegates from work-places and localities who are democratically elected and subject to recall at any time.

**SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION:** Imperialism dominates the country, props up the Northern state and keeps the working class divided. But the problem can only be resolved in the working class's struggle for power. Only a united working class can defeat imperialism and capitalism, leading the fight to end repression, to force withdrawal of the British Army and against every aspect of the bosses' system.

### NO SOCIALISM IN ISOLATION:

Capitalism is an international system and can only be overthrown by the working class internationally. Socialism in a single country cannot survive. We work for solidarity with workers in other countries and support the struggles of oppressed peoples against imperialism. Along with revolutionary organisations elsewhere we aim to build an international of working class parties.

### RUSSIA AND CHINA NO MODEL:

The attempts of the Russian working class to build socialism were halted by the failure of their revolution to spread. The Stalinist rulers established a new type of society based on exploitation and oppression. Russia, the countries of Eastern Europe, China and Cuba are not socialist or "communist" - the workers are not in control. We oppose these regimes as we oppose Western capitalism.

The main area of political action for socialists is in the mass organisations of the working class, particularly the trade unions. We fight to make them - independent of all ruling class influence and any state interference and to make them effective organs of struggle for the workers.

In the trade unions, we fight for the right to organise free of restrictions, and against all laws and agreements limiting the right to take industrial action. We fight for democratic control of union affairs and the election of officials.

We oppose all forms of wage control and wage restraint; we oppose unemployment, compulsory and voluntary redundancy, and closures. We fight for shorter hours, five day's work or five days' pay, and demand the nationalisation without compensation and under workers control of companies which cannot guarantee job security.

We fight for a national minimum wage of £45 per week, for equal pay for women, and for the adult rate from 18 years of age. We oppose attempts to lower living standards by cuts in social services, health and education.

**FOR A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT** which draws together militant trade unionists willing to oppose the class collaboration of the union leaders.

**FOR FULL EQUALITY FOR WOMEN** which can only be won if women themselves are organised to fight for their demands and if that struggle is part of the fight for workers' power. **FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE** in order to break the hold of reactionary ideas on workers, and remove a principal obstacle to women's equality. We support the demands for contraception and abortion to be made available on request. **FOR DEFENCE OF ANTI-IMPERIALISTS** who face the full force of state repression. We fight for the abolition of repressive laws and for the withdrawal of the British Army. We support the self-defence on working class areas against military and sectarian attack. We fight to build a united front of working class and anti-imperialist organisations for those aims. **FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS' PARTY** which can draw the most advanced, class-conscious workers together to fight for the political leadership of the working class. A revolutionary socialist leadership based in the working class can have a decisive influence especially in periods of upheaval.

The Socialist Workers Movement is working to build such a party. It is a democratic centralist organisation open to all those who accept these principles and objectives, who agree to work in one of its units, and recognise its discipline. We urge those who want to fight for the socialist, working class answer to the mess that is capitalism to join us.

If you want to join or to get more information about the Socialist Workers Movement, send to: **THE WORKER**, 24 Talbot Street Dublin 1.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Join us in the fight **SWM**

## NEWS

## In Brief

**BELFAST:** Workers in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast have been successfully fighting the oppressive conditions in the hospital. Their third walkout in recent weeks won the rehiring of temporary workers who had been fired by management. Previously the union, NUPE, led a walkout to protest at the poor rotten working conditions in the hospital. Many of the workers don't even have a place to change their clothes.

The NUPE leadership wasn't so happy though, when the workers themselves led a walkout to protest against the actions of the Paras inside the hospital. The Paras drop in from their regular tours around the hospital area. They bring their brutality with them as they wander around the hospital wards. One Para beat up a hospital visitor, bashing him on the head with his rifle butt. Just because he wasn't quick enough in giving his name.

\* **WHAT'S GOING ON** in Mackie's? That's what the 3,000 workers in the Mackie's plant in West Belfast wanted to know. They held a mass meeting demanding a meeting with management, to find out. Recently, Mackie's, a family owned firm, turned the shares of the company over to a trust for the benefit of the workers. Four new directors have been appointed, but none represent the workers. Management has been refusing to meet the workers to discuss their status and the future of the firm.

\* **LARNE TEACHERS** issued a strike warning to protect jobs. Members of NAS/UWT, they said they would strike if the board continued to refuse to fill two vacancies.

## MEATPACKERS

**THREE** hundred workers at the Irish Meatpackers took immediate strike action after two of their fellow workers were given the sack when they had been absent after lunch.

Despite the fact that the bosses had broken the disciplinary agreement the Workers Union of Ireland refused to make the strike official. Shop stewards set about organising their own support by travelling to sister plants in Leixlip and Midleton.

After two weeks the bosses caved in by taking the men back after a one-day suspension.

There is the probability that the bosses provoked the strike in order to save paying wages as the plant was not working at full capacity due to a hold up with the delivery of cattle.

Next time, and there will be a next time if past experience is anything to go by, different tactics may be needed to outwit the bosses' manoeuvres. Such as a prolonged work-to-rule or hitting them when they are in full production.

From the shop floor and the unions.  
Send us your report

## Toro Bravo

IT IS not often these days that workers are threatened with alsation dogs and given the sack for joining a union. But that is what happened in Toro Bravo, a slick, jumped-up cafe in O'Connell Street, Dublin.

Three workers were given the sack after they had organised the union there. The bosses Paddy Rogers and the Carson brothers, managed to divide the workers by giving a slight raise to anyone who tore up their union card.

Conditions in Toro Bravo in no way resemble the smooth exterior. Wages are well below the union rates. 16 and 17 year-olds work until 1.30 in the morning for less than £20 a week.

Workers at Toro Bravo have shown fantastic courage in sticking to the picket line 12 o'clock at night. They have received support from their fellow workers in the hotel and catering section of the ITGWU No.4 branch who have joined the picket lines at regular intervals.



## Chrysler win

"YOU DON'T need such disruptive things as strikes these days. This is the era of central bargaining. Leave it to the lads at the top to get it for you. It may not be much — after all, these are hard times — but you'll get . . . something."

That's the message we get all the time. And too many workers fall for it. But a victory by recently organised clerical workers at Chrysler, in Dublin, gave the lie to that.

The workers, members of ASTMS began a go-slow to fight their claim for a 37½ hour week, 13 weeks paid maternity leave and a six-month review of their house agreement to catch up with inflation.

Their go-slow involved a strict keeping to their job descriptions. For example, not answering phones. The bosses tried to pick off one or two to create divisions, but when the



Workers from the Ambassador and Academy sitting in.

## This is why we need a Rank and File Movement

"IT'S ALRIGHT being militant, but workers just aren't going to fight to defend jobs."

That was the excuse given over the past three years as hundreds of jobs were lost in Dublin cinemas. But what happened when Dublin cinema workers did fight? That fight was betrayed.

Forty workers sat-in in the Ambassador and Academy cinemas at the beginning of the year. Guess which side the officials were on from the following facts:

- two of the workers were thrown out of the branch office by Mick McEvoy, Branch Secretary, and told that they had no "right to be in this office as the action is unofficial".

- they were told that they would have to deliver a petition of support (signed by a majority of Dublin cinema workers) by registered post as they could not enter the office.
- McEvoy prevented a branch Committee meeting being held by putting conditions which would have meant a fortnight's wait — so cutting the workers off from the rest of the branch.

- McEvoy, and Eddie Browne, Group Secretary, met with the boss before the action began, and refused to allow representatives of the workers to attend. After almost two weeks of

refusing to talk to the workers and blocking any access to their fellow workers they offered to give official support to strike action — on condition that the sit-in was ended. When the sit-in was ended the workers were told that official action would be "stupid" that they should vote to go back to work for a day to collect their cards. The forty workers are now on the dole.

The union was the ITGWU, and this is just the latest of a long line of horror stories to come from there.

## sit-in

During the sit-in the workers got a tremendous amount of support from the rank and file of the ITGWU, and of other unions. This case, more than any other, illustrates clearly the need for a rank and file group in the union which can rally round such struggles as the cinema sit-in and other actions which the officials ignore or try to defeat.

That would be the first step to organising a rank and file opposition in the union which would gather support to defeat the sell-out merchants.

## GALLAHERS

**GALLAHER'S TOBACCO**, the cigarette and tobacco factory, made news when they announced that they were investing 8 million pounds in Northern Ireland to modernise their factories. They also intend to cut 500 jobs. That didn't make headlines.

Gallahers, which makes Benson and Hedges, Silk Cut and the UK's leading pipe tobacco, Condor, is installing modern technological equipment in their plant near

Ballymena. They also intend to make their Henry Street plant in Belfast "the most modern tobacco factory in Europe."

But their plans include a reduction of the workforce by about 10 per cent. That means 500 jobs in four years. Gallahers, an American owned firm, doesn't expect to need redundancies. They think natural wastage will do the job. They just won't replace workers who retire or leave.

Keeping these 500 jobs is vital in an area of already high unemployment. But it sounds as if the trade union in the factory is will-

## Hickey's go back

THE WORKERS at Hickey's, in Dublin, went back to work having got back only £3 of the £7 which was cut from their wages.

They had coped with overwhelming odds during the eight week strike. They were out over Xmas, had to contend with sluggish service from the ITGWU officials, were scabbed on. It was while trying to stop these scabs that they were set upon by the police. About a dozen cops punched and kicked the women and then charged them with assault.



Then another arm of the state stepped in and gave the boss an injunction to restrict picketing which was only lifted when the workers' fighting spirit had waned.

Hickey's next step will be to try to break or hamstring the union organisation on the job in its moment of weakness. The workers will need to display the solidarity they showed during the strike. It will need general meetings, to pass a vote of confidence in their shop stewards and to discuss the ways and means of fighting the attacks which Hickey is certain to make. That fight can be turned into an attempt to regain the lost ground and to get rid of the scabs.

ing to accept the loss. Their reaction is said to be "extremely positive."

Gallahers is making a profit. Their domestic tobacco business has grown by 22 per cent in a market that has fallen by 18 per cent. The company is getting incentive grants from the government which will cover 30% of the cost of the new machinery. So they are not risking very much. And they will take the increased profits. Every vacancy not covered at Gallahers means a job lost for future school leavers whose only alternative will be the dole queue. Rank and file workers on the shop floor can organise now to fight for these jobs and join the struggle against unemployment.

# the worker

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

REPRESSION

See  
centre  
pages

## POLITICAL STATUS: ONE YEAR

MARCH 1st marks one year since the removal of political status for prisoners. The British Government originally recognised political status as a result of hunger strikes by Republican prisoners. By their hypocritical 'criminalisation' policy and the introduction of the R.U.C. and U.D.R. into nationalist areas they thought they could defeat the national struggle and end the political war.

However, in 'H' block, Long Kesh, over 50 young men sit naked in their cells every day refusing to accept the removal of political status. But it is significant to note that these actions are voluntary and not part of any strategy by the Republican Movement outside Long Kesh. Nevertheless the prisoners and the Relatives' Action Committee continue to fight for political status, putting up with a lot of apathy in Republican areas and the continuing hypocrisy of the Brits: Airey Neave recently said on television that Britain was "at war with the I.R.A. in Britain and Ireland." They know the war is political, so why try to impose hypocritical solutions?

### ignore

Relatives' Action recently held public meetings in Short Strand and Ardoyne. In Ardoyne members of the R.A.C., mothers of prisoners and speakers from People's Democracy and the Socialist Workers' Movement took part. This is an example of co-operation which could be developed between Sinn Fein and other groups in the future. Women from the Short Strand and the Markets area picketed Belfast Central station recently and leafleted the Friday rush hour commuters to tell them about the horrors of 'H' block—the facts the media so easily and conveniently choose to ignore.

## ON

May McGrandals spoke to 'The Worker' about her son Paddy who is a sentenced prisoner in 'H' block. He has been in 'H' block since December 15th and has been refused any visits or parcels. He has to spend 23 hours a day in his small cell because he is one of the lads refusing prison clothes. Now their beds are taken away in the morning and not put back until 8 p.m.

Since January 4th the prisoners are taking only one meal a day. All this, the boredom, isolation and regular verbal and physical abuse from the screws—plus the regular pleas from civil servants for them to be good lads and wear the prison gear and do prison work—is gradually wearing away at the morale of the young prisoners.



But 17 year old Paddy is getting an additionally bad time. He was originally charged with the attempted murder of a prison officer but found to be not guilty. The warders don't care about the verdict and continue to beat him.

Even with the lack of outside support from Republican sources there is tremendous solidarity among the prisoners who are willing to risk their own privileges in support of political status. One Sunday the prisoners turned up naked at mass to show their solidarity with the men in 'H' block.

But the prisoners alone cannot win this issue. Activists at the moment in the fight are a real minority of relatives, some Sinn Fein supporters, some political groups and some individuals. We have to mobilise support in every area in the North, and the fight must be linked to the other issues in the fight against British imperialism.

Inside the prisons the prisoners are isolated from the Republican Movement. Outside their relatives, friends and supporters are isolated and fragmented. People in the nationalist communities are seeing the uselessness of S.D.L.P. policies on all issues. But there seems to be no political alternative for people to turn to for leadership and guidance.

It is time for all anti-imperialist groups to work with the Relatives' Action Committee on the immediate issue of political status with a view to expanding the fight against repression and all the manifestations of British imperialism. Indeed is it not time that local democratic committees were established, to develop confidence in the people, whose morale must be at a new low? Given action now, confidence will be restored and we will go on to defeat British imperialism once and for all.



## JUST SHUT UP—AND DIE

THE PARAS killed 68 year old Frank Moyna. He died of a heart attack while they were raiding his home in Bombay Street in Belfast. The Paras refused to let his wife try to get a doctor. They pulled her back from the window as she shouted for help. As her husband gasped for breath, the Paras shouted at him to 'shut up.' Then he died. One more victim of the British Army. There will probably be an investigation and some sort of cover up for the army. But Moyna will still be dead.

The soldiers have been going wild in the Markets area. One of the soldiers was killed there. The unit, unable to get at those responsible, are taking it out on the local residents. People totally uninvolved are being beaten and harassed, their homes raided and wrecked. In the Markets as in other areas of Belfast there are

many "armies of the people" around. But they never seem to be there when the local people are being victimised. They seem to be too busy with their shooting and bombing missions.

The elitist actions of these armies have become more and more separated from the struggles of the local people. As ordinary people step aside to let the bomber do the job, they are losing confidence in their own ability to fight back. The Paras can then feel free to run riot through any area they wish.

Republican and socialist organisations in the North have recently been discussing the possibilities of forming an anti-imperialist united front. The many instances of killing and repression in the last few weeks point to the great need for that unity. We need to work together to rebuild confidence in the local areas, and to politically organise to

fight the repressive actions of the Brits. We need to build united groups to fight the harassment, defend political prisoners, and to organise on all the issues that affect working people like unemployment, the cuts, and bad housing.

Bombings and shootings, in isolation from the workers' own movement, won't get the Brits out. But united activity to fight repression can begin to build the working class movement that will finally get Britain out of Ireland.

## STRIKE AGAINST ARMY

OVER 100 building workers in Ardoyne stopped work to protest against British army harassment in the area.

Soldiers have continually harassed young men and boys and have been arresting former prisoners "for no good reason". After six arrests in six months the workers decided to act.

LEFT: The Worker, June last year. Nine months ago we, as well as other socialist and republican groups warned of the existence of a "heavy mob" in the police. Only now the daily papers have written the story.

Read it first in The Worker!

