

ELECTION SPECIAL

Election Special, June 1st 5p

the worker

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

WHEN DID WE VOTE FOR

UNEMPLOYMENT

RISING PRICES AND THE

HEAVY GANG ?

AGAIN THE "democracy" bandwagon is being rolled out. Roll up, make your choice. They'll give us columns of print and hours of TV time to help us make up our minds.

And it's all irrelevant. Whoever wins, the bosses will still be sacking workers at will. They have that power though they're not elected. The speculators, bankers and business men who shove prices through the roof are not elected.

And no matter whether Tweedleliam or Tweedlejack is head of the government, the forces of "law, order and violence" will still have the freedom to turn police cells into torture chambers.

They have to give us an election jamboree every few years to keep up appearances and to get the most suitable administrators of the system into "power". But the real power lies outside of their set-up — where workers can directly defend themselves against the attacks of the system — and that's where we must organise.

See inside.



We didn't: but that's all they have to offer

Come election, go election — their crisis is here to stay

THERE IS an old saying in politics: "It doesn't matter who you vote for, the Government always gets elected." It couldn't be used more appropriately than with this election. Whoever gets in they will be parroting the same things: "You can't ask for a bigger slice of the cake, you have to bake a bigger cake;" "We will have to relinquish short-term gains to be able to take long-term measures that tackle unemployment" (no prizes for guessing who WE is).

But even supposing that we are all stupid enough to swallow this, would it work? The Coalition is trying to lead us to the polling stations with a chorus of: "The recession is over, we got you through, it can only get better—mind you, we still need wage restraint to make our goods more competitive abroad and to encourage more employment-creating investment."

Well, for a start Richie Ryan has it arseways: the recession is not over, the boom (if you missed it you must have blinked) has just ended.

Last month there was a summit conference of the capitalist heavy gang. The big seven met in London to try and drag the world economy out of its sick-bed, but unfortunately for them it refused to budge.

The bosses' magazine The Eco-

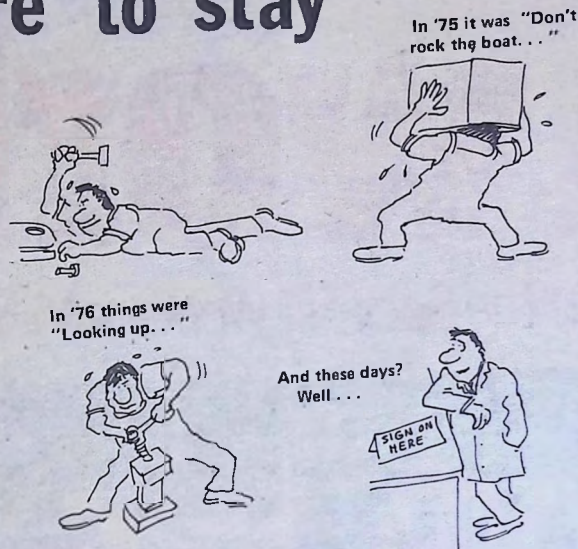
nomist tells the story:

"On present policies, the Germans are not very likely to meet the 5% growth target. Nor are the Japanese to meet their 6.7% target which depends heavily on export growth and will strain to the limit other countries' (decreasing) readiness to gulp in increasing quantities of Japanese imports. All export forecasts, in every country's 1977 predictions, may prove too optimistic. The United States, whose trade surplus has yawned terrifyingly wide, must be narrowed; the weaker deficit countries (Britain, France, Italy) are all taking steps to damp down import demand; and world trade is rising less fast than in 1976."

These are the words, not of socialists but of top-notch economists who are paid to give the bosses confidence to invest.

All this makes the electoral promises and strategies farcical. There is no way that accepting wage restraint will help unemployment, lower inflation, or (if it needs to be said) raise our standard of living.

The bosses' strategy is called 'export-led growth'. That means that by making Irish workers attractive to foreign investors, by showing them their low wage costs, they'll come and invest and create more jobs. By acceptance of wage restraint labour costs will



go down, so inflation will be reduced, and when exports are sold abroad they'll be riding on top of the wave, all our cheap goods will be sold abroad and foreign capital will come flooding into Ireland. Or so they say.

FACT: The strong capitalist countries are not in a position to lead weaker countries out of recession. Even in the strong countries that are going to do all this great work unemployment is rampant. Two weeks ago Japan's unemployment reached 1.05 million, the highest for 18 years.

FACT: As regards curing unemployment, 30,000 jobs are needed every year between now and 1986 to bring unemployment down to 4%. Last year 16,000 jobs were lost. Can investment change this? NO! Investment since the war was greatest between 1960 and 1971: it yielded the princely total of 250 jobs each year. Any new investment that comes to Ireland employs less and less workers and more and more machines.

FACT: Holding down the wages of Irish workers has not affected tea, coffee, and other things produced abroad, which are often stockpiled to force the price up.

Yet there is an alternative to the chaos of capitalism. Under this system the boss tries to burn the candle at both ends. He has to

have as much profit as possible, and to do this he must keep wages down, which are part of his costs. But he finds that once this is done he has great difficulty raking in the profits from the goods he tries to sell since the workers have less money to buy goods.

It is this insane drive for profit that causes the booms and slumps that workers have to suffer. For as long as there are bosses we will be used and sacrificed.

When the prattle starts about times being hard and we need to sacrifice, then we must argue that this is no wonder when there are so many thousands who have the hands that can create wealth but are instead down on the dole queue.

Whenever they get pious about unemployment we must demand the 35-hour week to create more jobs.

For an end to all forms of wage restraint.

For £15 across the board now. For a 35 hour week.

Against all cuts in the public sector.

For the nationalisation without compensation of all firms who can't guarantee employment.

WHAT

DESPITE the different colours and slogans on the posters, despite the shouting and the boring television broadcasts, the three main parties in this election are in fundamental agreement. They are united in their belief that Ireland must be kept safe for big business.

They agree that wages must be held down so that profits will rise in the hope of tempting the bosses to get "the confidence to invest".

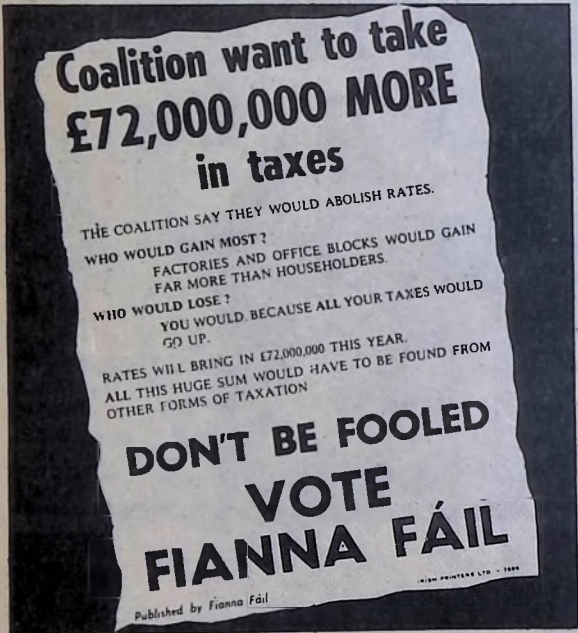
They agree that the real level of unemployment will be let rise.

They agree on the continued use of repression to smash anyone fighting imperialism and to cow trade unionists.



Jack Lynch tries to remember whether or not he's in favour of abolishing rates...

...while McGoilla, of Seán Fein, contemplates the difficulty of liberating the working class from Leinster House.



THE HYPOCRISY of the whole election farce is best illustrated by this Fianna Fáil leaflet. They produced it for the 1973 election to show how the Coalition couldn't possibly abolish rates. Then they decide that they could get more votes by saying that they would abolish rates. So they destroyed the leaflets, (but not before we got our hands on one!) Now, over four years later, both parties are still "promising" to abolish rates.

the worker

THE WORKERS' PAPER BUY IT, READ IT, AND SELL IT!

THIS is an Election Special edition of THE WORKER. The current issue of the usual 8 page paper is also available from the address below and the July issue is in preparation.

THE WORKER, monthly paper of the socialist Workers Movement, not only fights all the system's injustices but offers a fighting way forward. Available from SWM, 24 Talbot Street, Dublin 1.

THESE TWO MINUTES OF DEMOCRACY COME TO YOU COURTESY OF CAPITALISM

ALMOST FORTY years ago, on 1 July 1937, there was another poll taken. In a referendum, the people of the 26 Counties voted to accept the Constitution.

Article 6 of that Constitution tells us that "all powers of government, legislative, executive and judicial, derive, under God, from the people, whose right it is to designate the rulers of the State."

That is the myth that we are taught. That we live in a democracy. That the politicians depend on us, that we are their masters.

But we all know that it doesn't work out like that. Whoever we vote for, when they get into the Dail, they act just like the last lot.

And we don't see them again until they come knocking on our door in five years' time.

That's part of the trouble. We have the "powers of government" in our hands for

two minutes, while we mark down our 1, 2, 3... Two minutes out of every five years.

And if our T.D. breaks his promises from the moment he goes through the doors of Leinster House, there's nothing we can do about it through the "democratic system". What we can do about it—by means of strikes, demonstrations and other ways of exerting pressure—is quite separate from the parliamentary process.

But suppose a miracle happened, and we found a set of honest politicians who genuinely tried to do what their supporters wanted. Suppose a socialist majority was elected to the Dail, and all the faces at the cabinet table were those of socialists.

What could they do? Nationalise natural resources? The next minute, every capitalist in the country would be ringing up his bank and transferring his money to England,

the banks would run out of money, and there'd be an economic collapse. Take over a company declaring redundancies, without compensation? The rest of the bosses would go on an investment strike—refusing to invest in any new factories or machinery. (This was recently threatened in England when there were proposals for workers' representatives on company boards.)

CHILE

An act of parliament is not worth the paper it's written on if it has to be put into execution by the same top civil servants, police, and judges who were trained to run the capitalist system. Nobody elected them. Their upbringing, their way of life mean that they will bend over backwards to save their class brothers, the capitalists, and they will try to sabotage any socialist measures.

And if that doesn't work, they will get the army to take over. Don't say: "It couldn't

happen here!" That's what most people were saying in Chile before the Chilean army moved in and overthrew the elected president Allende, who was carrying out reforms within capitalism. The Chilean working class is still paying the gruesome price.

No. An election may be enough to carry out minor changes within capitalism, at a time when capitalism is prosperous enough to grant some. But to overthrow a ruling class, to change from one social system to another, we need a revolution. A socialist revolution cannot be carried out by acts of parliament. It can only be carried out by the workers. The Dail and the the capitalist constitution will have to be replaced by a workers' republic.

And this will not be an undemocratic revolution by an elite group. It will do away with this sham democracy that we have now. It will have to be really democratic, for if the workers do not enforce democracy, a small ruling group will emerge and we will be back to square one.

A CHOICE!

They agree that the British Army can stay in the North; that every help must be given to Mason to break any Catholic working-class resistance.

The argument between Fianna Fail and the National Coalition will be conducted at the level of two sets of personalities offering a mishmash of detailed promises. Behind the smiles and handshaking and baby-kissing of the politicians, there is a conscious recognition that whoever wins, they are prepared to stand over rising prices, over a brutal prison system, over falling living standards. Their subservience to business means that they can do nothing to combat the growing economic crisis.

There will be many workers and trade unionists who will consider voting Labour as "the party of the working class". But a vote for Labour is a vote for Coalition.

Whatever minor reforms the Coalition have introduced, these have been completely overshadowed by their record on repression and their back-up for the bosses' economic

attack on workers' living standards. Such minor reforms could have been won anyway by the slightest mobilisation of trade unionists.

A Labour Party which claims to represent the working class has blocked the introduction of real equal pay in the public sector. It launched a hysterical campaign against the bankworkers' strike. It did not raise a finger when Cosgrave and his friends voted against contraception.

The only role the Labour Party plays in Coalition is to make it easier for out-and-out conservatives like Cosgrave to reach an accommodation with trade union leaders. By the same token it allows the trade union leaders to pretend they are getting somewhere by chatting to Labour ministers.

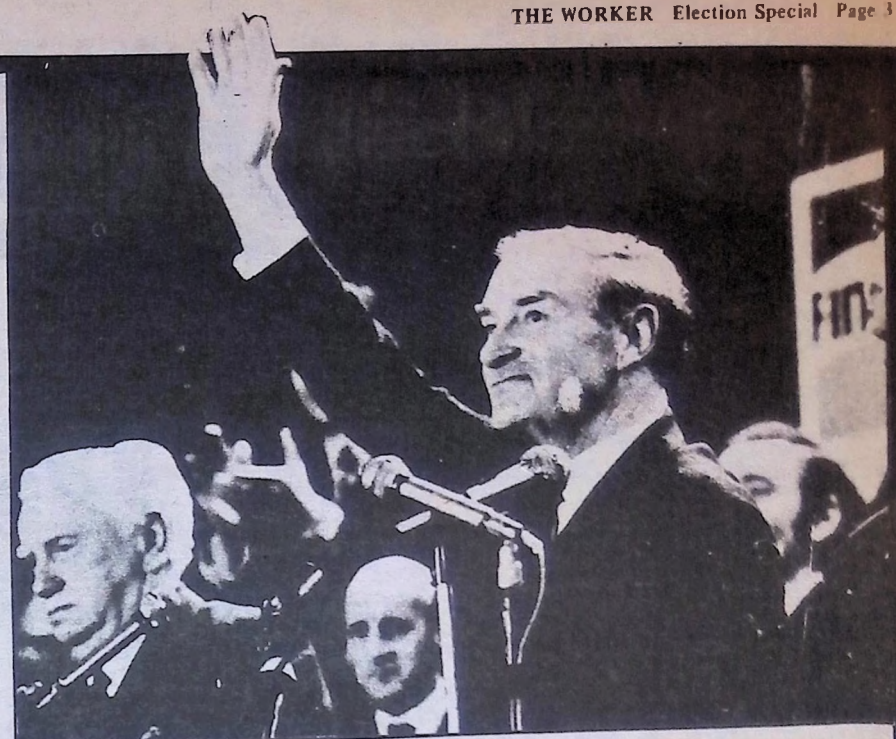
The very fact that the Labour Party fits in so easily to a Coalition arrangement proves that even if it formed a government by itself it would introduce anti-working class policies. It is and always has been a reformist party—a party which talks of gradual reform only when the system can afford it. When things get rough, it will line up with the boss class.

A massive vote for Labour or Coalition can only mean that Cosgrave and company return with the confidence to step up the repression, to begin to move against trade union pickets; the confidence that they need not do anything about rising prices or unemployment.

Fianna Fail will claim that one of the differences between them and Coalition is that they care more about "civil liberties". But we've got to remember that they began the present series of repressive laws. They introduced the notorious Special Criminal Court. In 1957 after defeating a coalition govern-



"Socialist" Corish sweats as his Fuehrer practices his salute . . .



ment they introduced internment.

There is only one option for trade unionists and militants who are voting in this election, and that is a protest vote for those candidates who at least verbally have put themselves on record as being opposed to wage restraint and repression. That in the main means the IRSP, Communist Party, Sinn Fein and independent Labour candidates such as Merrigan and Browne. And in particular we urge Worker readers in Limerick to vote for Joe Harrington, candidate for the local workers' paper Bottom Dog.

A vote for such candidates to the left of Fianna Fail and the Coalition will not mean any great changes. We have to organise ourselves to effect any change. But it will at least show that there are thousands who oppose the slashing of living standards and the build-up of repression.

We urge a vote for Official Sinn Fein and the Communist Party not because we think that these are the parties which can bring socialism. In fact it is our belief that

they opposed repression in a less than wholehearted manner. They stood on the sidelines during the Portlaoise hunger strike. The Officials in particular have marched with government ministers in the "peace marches". Nevertheless we can use the opportunity—in those constituencies where such candidates are standing—of showing that we stand with those voters who attack the major parties from the left.

Whoever wins, we should have no illusions about the ballot box. They will promise the earth—but the very fact that there is no control over T.D.s means that they will break every single promise. Power does not lie in the Dail. It lies in the hands of those who own and possess. They are the people who can throw thousands on the Labour Exchange. And they can never be opposed by mere votes. It's organisation that counts.

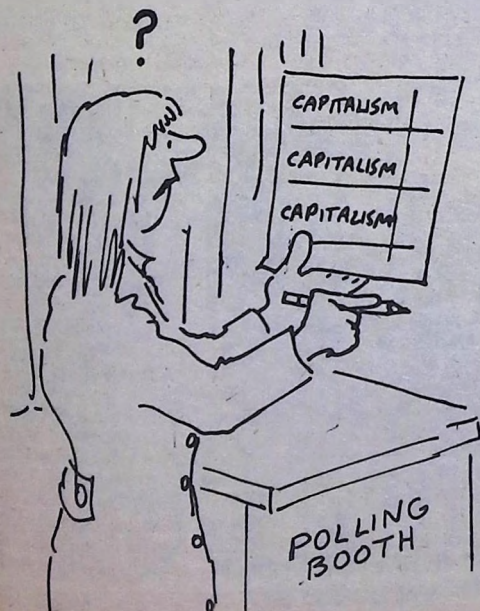
. . . while Justin Keating tries to keep an eye on prices.



Where workers have started to do this in the past they have established workers' control of the factories. They have come together in workers' councils of elected delegates, who can be recalled at any time and replaced. And public officials have been paid workers' wages, to prevent

them becoming a new ruling class. The capitalist police force and army have been replaced by the armed workers.

That is real democracy. That is what socialism is all about. But it will happen only if we organise and fight to make it happen.



MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE REAL WORLD...

IT'S ENOUGH to make a cat laugh. Branches of the Labour Party are invented almost overnight, others are squeezed out, "troublesome" individuals get the chop — all in the name of democracy.

But cats can afford to laugh. They don't get put on the dole, or get beaten up in police stations (not yet?). The real issues which workers face are far removed from the sordid scuttering around of the election farce.

And the real fight on those issues goes on regardless of who gets to sit on which side of the Dail.

We have recently seen the birth of several small groups of workers fighting in various areas on particular issues. Small though the fight back might be it is a one hundred percent advance on the charade which is being put on to attract votes.

THE FIGHT IN THE UNIONS: There used to be a saying that "An injury to one is the concern of all", and it was one which the trade union movement put into practice. Now it is quite common to see union officials down at a picket to browbeat their members across. Again and again workers have had their fight against redundancies betrayed and all the undemocratic tricks in the book used to sell National Wage Agreements and hold down wages.

In Ireland's biggest union, the ITGWU, a number of members have come together to produce NEW LIBERTY to argue for a fighting union which upholds the ideals of Larkin and Connolly. The second issue of NEW LIBERTY is out now and is available from: 15 Ventry Drive, Cabra West, Dublin 7.

FIGHTING ON REPRESSION: The repressive legislation which has been passed over the last few years and the physical repression carried out by the Heavy Gang, has helped to create an atmosphere in which anyone who opposes the government is labelled as "subversive". A Trade Union Coordinating Committee Against Repression (TUCCAR) was formed recently to campaign for the repeal of the Emergency Powers Act and the defence of those arrested and detained without

A Fight Unemployment Committee has been formed recently in Dublin to launch a fight back that can unite unemployed and those still at work. The first major issue the committee will be taking up is a campaign to win Free Travl for the Unemployed, the committee will be issuing tickets at the Labour Exchanges so that people can give the conductors their names

charge, for the reinstatement of all those sacked from public service jobs because of convictions in the Special Courts.

All of these are ICTU policy but are swept under the mat. An interim national committee with representation from Dublin, Mayo, Sligo, Limerick, Waterford and Navan, was elected for TUCCAR and they will be organising for a national conference in July. TUCCAR have also produced a bulletin, available from: C. Carney, 84 Nth Circular Rd., Dublin 1.

and addresses in place of a fare, It's then up to CIE to collect the fares and if they want to go to that bother they are only creating jobs for busmen. If you want to help in this campaign or better still want to join the Fight Unemployment Committee contact: 2 Tranquilla Terrace (off Camden Street) Dublin 2.

WHY YOU SHOULD BE A SOCIALIST



THERE IS little need to portray the present system of society as being cruel, ruthless, corrupt and oppressive. It exposes itself.

In Ireland:

- * Tens of thousands of people are dumped on the scrapheap of unemployment. Capitalism has no immediate need for them.
- * The value of wages are torn apart by rising prices. Capitalism must protect its wealth.
- * Women are denied control over their own bodies. It is a crime to choose not to become pregnant and to take means to prevent it. Capitalism fears the effect of any reform which might upset the status quo.
- * People are batoned on demonstrations and beaten senseless in the basements of police stations. Then sent through jury-less courts to inhuman prisons. Capitalism knows that its authority must remain unchallenged and its physical powers increased in the face of massive social crisis.

Across the world, different states to a greater or lesser extent, depending on how hard the international crisis hits them and on their own stability, protect the interests of capitalism with violence. Thousands are jailed or simply disappear as they threaten the system. Chile, Brazil, India, the jails are full, the torture goes on. And in the so-called "socialist" countries too. Workers shot and jailed protesting about the price of food in Poland.

The greatest crime is the deliberate starvation of millions. Famine rages in some parts of the world while in others food is destroyed in order to maintain prices. Capitalism cannot even feed its slaves.

We know that this barbarism is not "inevitable". We know there must be change, but how? Not through this or any other election. The politicians' promises have again and again been seen for what they are — soothing words calculated to win confidence and votes. But crisis and instability are here to stay, and whatever set of shysters sits in Leinster House doesn't make a blind bit of difference. They don't control the system, they merely administrate in its interests.

Reformism, working your way up the ladder of government, is no answer. The evils of capitalism cannot be ended by putting in a few of the "right people". It must be replaced, totally, by a new system of society.

But, aren't the majority of workers apathetic? There's no such disease. The "apathy" is engineered by putting a distance between workers and any real form of control over their lives. Anyone who has been through a strike or occupation knows the vast bounds in confidence and consciousness which people take when they aim for an achievable goal and take action into their own hands. Similarly, and on a massively larger scale, in situations like that in Portugal from 1974 onwards, masses of people took action aimed at taking control of their own destinies.

The prime aim at the moment is to overcome the barriers which prevent workers from taking action against the attacks of the bosses and state. The struggle is to break down the restraints, the physical and institutional ones, and the grip of the ideas which the present system has. It is that lack of restraint by the structures of capitalism which can lead to revolution.

But we also need a party, an organisation with a clear aim towards revolution, which can give coordination and direction to the various areas of struggle. We in the Socialist Workers Movement are working to build such a party.

Believing in a better kind of society is not enough. There will be no great awakening in the mind of humanity. Unless the ideas of socialism are spread, and activities initiated which will give flesh to those ideas in the minds of thousands of workers, then by the end of this century the world will suffer barbarities equalling and surpassing the worst it has seen in the past decades.

The forces of the right hold the power. They control the state. As the continuing crisis forces them into increasingly extreme measures to maintain that power they will use that state to smash resistance. They have shown already the ease with which they unleash their casual violence on any form of protest.

This can only be successfully opposed by mass working class action. And that will not happen without the intervention of a revolutionary socialist organisation. And that will not happen unless workers who oppose the present system become active now in the fight to build such an organisation. We urge you to join us in that fight.

THE SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT

has members and supporters in Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, Galway, Belfast and Coleraine. Our members are active in their unions and workplaces to promote rank and file workers' activity. We fight for rank and file control of the unions, against wage restraint and redundancy, and are active in the fight against unemployment.

We fight repression, not only because repression is the means by which the Irish ruling class helps British imperialism maintain its troops and rule in Ireland, but because the growth of state power dampens down the ability to fight of all workers.

We are active in the fight 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.

Our concept of socialism has nothing in common with that practiced in Moscow and Peking. For us, the essence of socialism is workers' democracy.

The S.W.M. is an open and democratic organisation. Through its activities it aims to lay the basis of a revolutionary party in Ireland. A party which unites the most militant sections of the working class.

JOIN US.

First Floor, 24 Talbot Street,
Dublin, 1.

Carworkers in one Dublin plant march out in support of carworkers in another factory. This kind of solidarity in struggle is the only real means of fighting which workers have.



JOIN THE SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT

Name
Address

Please send me more information

SEND TO: SWM,
24 Talbot Street,
Dublin 1