

## We're Moving

The Dublin Branch of SWM are moving into new premises. The new address — for articles, news, subscriptions etc. — is:  
**THE WORKER, 1st Floor,**  
 24 Talbot Street, Dublin 1.  
 Correspondence to Waterford Branch should be addressed to:  
 SWM, 24 The Quay, Waterford City.

# the worker

Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

## WAGES:

# Support The Campaign!

## No More Restraint!



THEY'RE USING the same old formula. Oceans of "doom and gloom" propaganda from the bosses and politicians, followed by forthright speeches by the union leaders. "No pay pause", they say. Then, they put on their "reasonable" faces and sit down to work out a compromise. The charade is for our benefit — the outcome is for theirs.

The bosses want a straight pay freeze but they know that, along with the union bureaucrats and the government, they would have their work cut out to get us to accept one. So they'll settle for a National Wage Agreement which will cut our wages almost as effectively. On top of that the NWAs have played a very useful role in keeping workers in line. As Michael O'Leary says: "The National Agreements impose a useful order on the method of income formation". That's our wages.

Apart from wages, the value to the bosses of the Employer/Labour Conference is something they don't want to lose. They figure it's better to have the union leaders inside the tent pissing out — than outside pissing in. And our "leaders" like it that way too.

So, they'll try for another National Wage Agreement. They'll have to dress it up a bit, though. The previous con-jobs are looking a bit threadbare. 100,000 workers in private industry got nothing from the last NWA. Then the government claimed "inability to pay" its own employees. The Equal Pay clauses were shown to be not worth the paper they were written on. The bosses got out of paying the third phase of the Agreement with ridiculous ease. The promise that wage restraint would help the unemployed was seen for the nonsense it is. So they'll have to be very careful how they go about selling the next deal.

### NO MORE SACRIFICE

However they dress it up, the result of their negotiations can only mean more "sacrifices" from workers. Every aspect of our living standards is being attacked. Thousands of jobs gone; social welfare cuts; equal pay buried; prices soaring. It's all part of a deliberate attempt to get the bosses out of their crisis at our expense. And it will continue. They openly admit it. Liam Connellan of the CII — the bosses' spokesman — has announced their intention to increase productivity, and of course profits, "even if it must mean job losses in the short term."

And the key-stone of their plans is to restrain our wages. But this is where the fight back begins. The campaign is already starting. We cannot rely on our union "leaders" so the fight must be taken into the unions by the rank and file. And our opposition to any National Wage Agreement must be as determined as it would be to a pay freeze

## Get The Unions Moving!

THEY WON'T have it so easy this time. The old "one more sacrifice for the country" is wearing a bit thin. Already the campaign against wage restraint is under way.

Over 90 shop stewards, committee members and union officials have signed a declaration of opposition to the wage-cut plans of the government and bosses. As we go to press, final preparations are being made for a conference against the wage restraint to be held in Wynn's Hotel, Dublin on 27th March.

From there the campaign broadens. All rank and file trade unionists are being asked to sign the declaration and to support the campaign.

This is the kind of rank and file activity we need, for again our trade union "leaders" have forgotten where their loyalties should lie. Again they are sitting down with the bosses and government to hammer out a deal agreeable to all three. But ANY National Wage Agreement which the bosses find acceptable will be one which is designed to help them out of their crisis. And that means cutting the real value of our wages. And the union bureaucrats know this. What's

more, they admit it!

"The National Wage Agreement is the only system where workers will accept awards which diminish in real terms", said Ruadhri Roberts of the ICTU, talking to the bosses' magazine Business and Finance.

"A pay pause would result in members taking a cut in real incomes of up to 15%", said Brother Roberts. He doesn't think they can sell that to us. So, what kind of cut does he think they can sell under a National Agreement — 10%? or 12%?

That's what they're negotiating with the bosses right now.

We've carried the can for the bosses' crisis for far too long. Now — we fight back! Taking the Anti-wage Restraint Conference as a base, the rank and file must launch a militant campaign to ensure that we carry the can no longer. Get the unions moving forward. This can only happen if we push from the bottom. Our "leaders" have put the trade union movement in "neutral" at a time when our wages, jobs and living standards are under massive attack. It is time for the rank and file to get it moving again.

SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN!



Liam Connellan of the CII — the bosses boss — wants a pay freeze but he'll settle for a National Wage Agreement.

He wants to "increase productivity even if it must mean job losses in the short term".



Ruadhri Roberts, our top union "leader". He wants workers to accept "awards which will diminish in real terms"

He says that only the National Wage Agreement can get us to do this.



Our "Labour" Minister for Labour. He says he wants to "impose a useful order" on our wages.

He says National Wage Agreement can do it.

### Read inside

On page 4 an unemployed worker takes part the myths about the dole being a "grave train".

On page 6, a major article on the need for unity of the Left in the crisis.

PLUS: Reports on Draper-Erin, Crown, Unidare, Vecta, The Portugal Solidarity Tour, etc. etc.

Page 2  
 NOW  
 FIGHT  
 BACK!



And you, sir...  
Do you agree with wage restraint?



# NOW FIGHT BACK!

THE BOSSES and government will hit us with a pay freeze if they can get it — another National Wage Agreement if they can't. Either way it means further cuts in our wages.

They'll use the threat of unemployment again — but they'll ignore the fact that thousands have lost their jobs during the last Agreement, even though they promised that jobs would be saved if we tightened our belts.

We've had too many promises and we've had too many lies.

Below you'll find the declaration against wage restraint which was signed by over 90 trade union representatives and which is now being circulated within the trade union movement to build the campaign. The Socialist Workers Movement fully supports the campaign and if you agree with the declaration there's a form at the bottom of the page for you to sign.

"We, the under-signed trade unionists oppose all forms of wage restraint imposed by the government and employers in this country. In particular we reject the idea of a 'Pay Pause' for 1976, which would have the effect of a massive wage cut when the present level of inflation is taken into account — a level which is greatly increased by the recent savage Budget measures.

"Wage restraint of all kinds is simply an attempt to make working class people, and them alone, carry the burden of the present crisis for which they are in no way responsible. Already four National Wage Agreements have resulted in a serious erosion of workers' purchasing power. Another one would be used by bosses and government to secure a pay pause which would be an unprecedented cut-back on living standards. It is being made by the very people who are creating the crisis by their ruthless drive for profit and who are laying off men and women or bringing in short-time in order to keep up their profitability.

We see the refusal of the government to bring in even limited Equal Pay as another prong in an all-out attack on our living conditions.

We call for a conference of trade unionists to discuss these attacks and the policies needed to fight them. This conference should be a launching pad for a genuine campaign in the Trade Union Movement in support of all workers fighting pay restraint and redundancies."

"THE CRISIS" is a problem for the bosses. A question of how they will protect their profits from the inflation and instability which THEIR system has created.

So, it becomes for us a question of how we prevent them solving their problems at our expense. Wages is just one issue — it cannot be separated from the issue of unemployment and working conditions. We must be ready at all times to prevent them dipping their hands into our pockets.

That means a strong trade union movement fighting back on all fronts: defending jobs and wages uncompromisingly. There must be no trade-off of jobs for wages or — the reverse — taking wage cuts in exchange for the promise of employment. To make sacrifices for "the economy" is to make sacrifices for a system which — even in a "crisis" — provides profit for a few at the expense of the many; a system in which everything takes a back seat to profit.

It's not our system — it exploits our class — we must protect ourselves from its attacks.

That means adopting a series of demands to fight for within the trade union movement and organising to ensure that they are implemented:

## DEMANDS

The aim of militants who see the need for resistance to wage restraint and unemployment can only be realised if they set out to pull in the widest cross-section of workers... around a radical alternative.

This must be based on the struggle to win rank and file solidarity with all workers who, for whatever reasons, are thrown into a fight to defend their living standards and jobs. Beyond that, workers must start pressing for claims which take in as

many as possible under one claim. We must insist on rank and file control of all stages of negotiations.

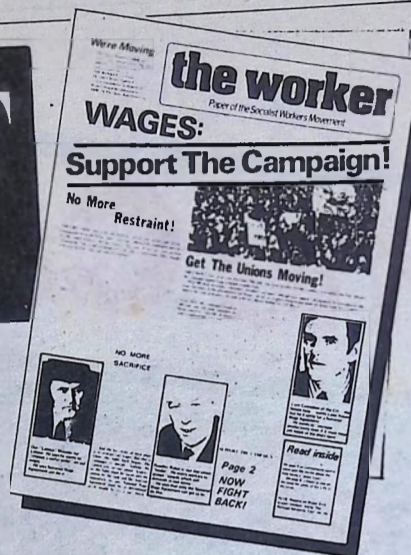
There must be all-out resistance to rationalisation measures for productivity deals which can only lead to loss of jobs. If the trade union movement is to defend its members it will have to recognise the notions of "rationalisation" and "productivity" as means of boosting the capitalists' profits. It will have to break the links which tie it to those ideas and to the capitalists' aims. We must press for withdrawal from the Employer-Labour Conference and the other joint bodies through which the employers and the government win the loyalty of the union leaders.

THE ANTI-WAGE Restraint conference in Dublin is just beginning. Trade unionists throughout the country must organise to defeat the bosses attacks.

The Industrial Estate Shop Stewards Committee in Waterford can set a lead by mounting a campaign on the Estate — and taking it further — on the question of wages.

The campaign can become a springboard for the embryo rank and file committees throughout the country in Galway, Cork, Limerick, Drogheda etc.

Pay freeze of National Wage Agreement — one thing or the other, they just need to find a formula which they can get us to accept. One which will pass the burden of the crisis onto us. Only by organising and fighting can we refuse that burden.



ONE OF the really great things about capitalism is the freedom of the press. I mean, you can lose your job, be imprisoned on a senior cop's word, come out to live in a little house with damp walls, and if you're lucky get a job that numbs your mind and gives you £28 a week. But you can always write a letter to the papers about it. That's fine kind of freedom.

We're going to get a sharp dose of that "freedom" in the coming weeks as the wage restraint propaganda pours out.

## Thinking About Capitalism

by MARY BURN

ON PAGE 5 you can read details of the visit to Ireland by Miguel da Silva, a Portuguese revolutionary. When SWM organised his speaking tour we put up posters, produced press statements, leaflets and advertised the meetings in THE WORKER. In other words, it was a public tour.

Then the SUNDAY MIRROR got their hands on it. Amid the usual "tits and bums" pictures they ran a story announcing that Miguel was a "terrorist" over for a "top secret" meeting with Provos to arrange lessons in bomb-making for the Portuguese. "Wanted: A Lesson in Death From IRA" ran the headline. Leaving aside the fact that Portuguese revolutionaries gathered enough experience through the years fighting fascism not to need the Provos, the story is just plain silly. The arrival of a "terrorist" for "top secret" meetings is not usually advertised by posters.

However, there are many people who have read the story, who will not see through it and who do not read THE WORKER who will now be under the impression that the MIRROR rubbish is fact. And that story — though it is a classic; smearing socialist, Portuguese workers and republicans all at once — is one story among many which has distorted events to make propaganda for the ruling class.



A lot of what is printed on the North, for instance is the same as the article on Miguel; British Army press hand-outs dolled up in lurid journalism.

What is just as significant is what the papers don't print. In the same week as the MIRROR story appeared, 50,000 Portuguese were demonstrating on the streets. The papers — British and Irish — ignored it. Portugal's image must remain the one of a defeated working class.

You won't have read anything about the stoppage of 200,000 engineering workers either. Or the 30,000 strong strike against social welfare cuts in Scotland. Or the Right to Work March from Manchester to London supported by hundreds of trade union bodies and thousands of rank and file trade unionists. You certainly won't have read the facts about the Crown Control strike printed on page 8 of this issue. The attacks on picketers were described as "scuffles".

This use of words is the most common way of influencing us in the bosses' interests. The press never say that our wages should be frozen to help the bosses out of their crisis. They say that "soaring" wages must be moderated in order to save "our" economy. A prime example of this was the BBC comment that the strikes in Spain were the "worst" in 40 years. Personally, I think the strikes against the Spanish police state are the BEST since the civil war — but then, unlike the "impartial" media, I don't see things from the bosses' point of view.

So, they can use outright distortion, or they can use more subtle ways of making up our minds for us. And we all know by they do it. The papers are not owned by benevolent individuals, but by bosses. And those bosses have other interests. Alexis FitzGerald, senator and newspaper shareholder, is a director of over seventy companies at last count. The other newspaper bosses have similar interests, and while they don't stand by the editor's shoulder he still knows which side his bread is buttered on.

On top of that there's the control which advertising money has. If there's a sit-in at a Guinness factory you can be damn sure that the papers won't run a story supporting the workers alongside an ad for a Guinness product.

What it adds up to is that, for workers, freedom of the press is non-existent. It's a bosses press, they own it and control it. That's why we're going to see a lot of subtle — and not so subtle — wage restraint propaganda in the near future.

To combat this we need our own press, putting OUR case and informing OUR class of how we should act — free of the bosses' influence.

Papers like THE WORKER have not reached that stage yet. Our own regular and widespread press — informing and organising — can only be built side by side with a growing workers movement.

Meanwhile we can write to the papers; they might even print it; they've got a lot of space to fill up between the ads.

I support the declaration against wage restraint as outlined above:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Union \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Dermot Whelan, 38 Arran Quay, Dublin 7.

Advertisement

### RANK and FILE ANTI-WAGE RESTRAINT CONFERENCE

Wynn's Hotel

Middle Abbey Street, Dublin

Saturday March 27

2.30pm

Organised by the Dublin Shop Steward and Rank and File Committee

All trade unionists welcome



# DRAPER-ERIN RULE, OK?

## Union Militants Victimised

THE SACKING of a shop steward at Crown Controls, and the strike that followed, captured the headlines of the press.

But this was not just an isolated instance of victimisation by some especially nasty capitalists. Employers all over the country are taking advantage of the high unemployment figures to eliminate trade union militants from the labour force. Activists are being given the bullet for the most trivial of reasons and, in some cases, for no reason at all.

Take, for example, what happened in the Draper Erin factory in Limerick, an off-shoot of the American multi-national Rockwell International.

LAST OCTOBER Draper Erin hired Joe Harrington as a machinist and, like all new employees, he had to serve three months probation. During that time it dawned upon management that Joe took his trade unionism seriously. They discovered that he was an editor of an excellent local workers' paper called 'The Bottom Dog'. They also learned that while working in SPS, a Shannon factory, Joe had organised a union there. So naturally the Draper Bosses weren't exactly wildly enthusiastic when Harrington got himself elected as shop steward even before his probation was up. Something had to be done, and quick.

On January 26th, just four days before his probationary period ended, Joe was informed that he was unsuitable and dismissed on the spot. Management refused to give a reason; they said they didn't have to. Nor did they, because it was obvious. Joe was being victimised for his past and present union activities.

In response to this the Works Committee convened a general meeting to discuss the case. As chairman I said that

by  
**DAVE LEE**

Harrington had been victimised and that it was vitally necessary that the union fight the issue. After some discussion the rank and file directed the ITGWU to pursue the matter through the grievance procedure. The case went into the hands of the labour court.

### SACKED

Several weeks later I also got the sack. How did this happen? It was like this. One of my first actions on becoming chairman of the shop stewards was to bring out a factory bulletin called 'Union News'. Management quickly demanded that copies of 'Union News' and Liberty, the ITGWU paper, should be submitted to them for examination before being distributed to the shop floor. When this attempt to establish a censorship board for trade union publications was rejected, I was threatened with disciplinary action.

Meanwhile, the Harrington case was continuing. Having accused management to their face of victimising Joe, and repeating this to the membership, general meetings were called and an emergency issue of "Union News" produced.

Management decided then to put the boot in again.

Having been out sick for several weeks I received a letter from management giving me the sack for "contravening the works agreement" by not explaining my absence.

This was rubbish as I'd let them know I was sick on the very first day I was out. I also sent an illness certificate for the period.

As in the case of Joe Harrington they simply wanted to stamp on any rank and file initiative in the factory. Typically, they circulated a rumour during the troubles that the plant would close down if there was any dispute. By using the threat of the dole queue they were undercutting any militant response to the victimisations.

As always, when dole queues get bigger workers can be demoralised. There is a danger that many will think that what is needed is to lie on our backs with our eyes closed and pretend to be dead, hoping that management



won't kick us again. The only way to guarantee against that is to put the boot in first.

To fight the bosses, and to overcome the fear of the dole which they use so skillfully, there must be developed in Limerick a strong and militant working class movement. Without unity and solidarity amongst workers Draper-Erin and their fellow bosses will be in a position to continue to victimise militants and defeat

the isolated struggles of workers.

It is the intention of the rank and file workers who produce "The Bottom Dog" to help build a militant class movement in Limerick city and North Munster. The lessons we draw from our experience in Draper-Erin can be one of the planks on which this movement must be built.

## Know Your Enemy

Know your enemy. He does not care what colour you are as long as you work for him.

He does not care how much you earn as long as you earn more for him.

He does not care who lives in the room at the top as long as he owns the building.

He sings the praises of humanity but knows that machines cost more than men

He will let you write against him as long as you do not act against him.

Bargain with him, he laughs and beats you at it. Challenge him and he kills.

Sooner than lose the things he owns he will destroy the world.

— Christopher Logue

# Parasite Of The Year!

### MAN OF THE WEEK



Michael McStay, the chairman of Unidare which has reported pre-tax profits of £1.52 million.

THE EXPERIENCE of Unidare workers over the past two or three years has led a small number of trade union activists on the site to see the need for the ordinary workers themselves to organize. That is, to come together and put forward an alternative — not only to the aims of the Unidare management, but to the weakness and, at times, the sell-outs of their union representatives.

BRIEFLY their experience has been:

A decline in the size of the workforce and increase in the productivity of reach worker; job-losses in Pumps, Spanform, SCA, Heating, Tinsley and among office-staff while the firm continues to clear the £1 million profit mark a high accident rate; fumes and inadequate heating; men retiring on £2 and £4 per week; a continuing problem of foremen doing general work; losses of shift allowance, bonus and transfers without disturbance money; the constant importation by Unidare of goods that can be produced on the site; etc. etc.

### BLOCKED

Their experience of the trade union leaders on the site has been hardly happier:

On two occasions the officials of the Unidare Section, No. 14 Branch, ITGWU, have argued in favour of voluntary redundancies and on one occasion negotiated them without consultation; on all occasions they have supported acceptance of the National Wage Agreements modifications and all; they blocked

action in support of a 1974 wage claim and brought ballot boxes on to the job when the company offer had been rejected at two general meetings; they sent letters to management saying that payment would not be claimed for further unofficial stoppages; and so on. And on.

Small steps have been made towards organizing the rank and file fight back. Within the No. 14 Branch (which represents the general workers a number of activists have formed a loose pressure group called Unidare Workers for Action. They produce a bulletin called The Unidare Worker, which reports struggles in the different factories on the site and which opposes wage restraint and redundancies on the site. It has met the need to expose bad conditions, oppression by supervisors and the sometimes outrageous actions of the Section and Branch officers. It supplies information on other areas to workers split up into many different factories.

Unidare Workers For Action has had four shop stewards in it and its bulletin was once unsuccessfully proposed at the Joint Works Council (the inter-union committee) to be its

official organ.

Here are the main aims and "programme" of the action groups, as laid out in the first issue of the bulletin:

1. Wage increases, better conditions, shorter hours and job security — No more National Wage Agreements with their restrictions on the right to take industrial action and their mangy pay rises.
2. A more representative Section Committee, which can be controlled from below by the ordinary union members: new shop stewards, all negotiations reported to and voted on by the workers concerned; meetings on the job etc.
3. A factory committee in every factory: to aid the shop steward and involve the rank and file.
4. Changes in the No. 14 Branch: regular quarterly meetings (since achieved) election of delegates etc.

The struggle against the latest phase of redundancies, in Tinsley, although it ended in defeat for the real interests of Unidare workers with the acceptance of 30 voluntary job-losses brought forward a great

number of activists opposed to the idea of redundancies than are involved in the action group. Unidare Workers for Action need to make links with these and with the activists in the other unions who support many of the group's policies.

Why have such a pressure group? Because until such time as the unions are under the control of the rank and file, until such time as the officials represent our interests, until all the ordinary members are fully involved in the union — the members who see the need for change, however few — must be brought together and not remain isolated.

That's why Unidare Workers for Action works within the union and does not want to split, rival or breakaway. The aim is to CHANGE it. Likewise until the union officials supply the information the membership is entitled to, the active rank and filers must do it with their own bulletin.

Similarly rank and file groups and factory bulletins need to be set up in places like Smurfits, CIE, Semperit, the Post Office, Ferenka, Chrysler, and so on. Bulletins are already under way in Waterford Glass and the Cinema Section Branch, ITGWU (which has official standing).

BUSINESS and Finance, the bosses magazine, likes to flatter individual bosses. On 26th February they made McStay of Unidare their "Man of The Week", because he'd screwed a million and a half out of Unidare workers.

We're glad to add to his list of honours by making him our Parasite of The Year. On the right, a Unidare shop steward writes about the efforts Unidare workers are making to trim his sails.



# 'Oh We All Have A Ball On The Dole'

UNEMPLOYMENT figures have reached nearly 120,000 in the 26 Counties and could well reach 150,000 before we see any real slowing down in the increase. The government's drive for wage restraint will not lower the levels. On the contrary, if there is less money circulating, less goods are being bought and there is likely to be more redundancy.

For the last few months, while everybody has been lamenting the high level of unemployment, we have also had an orchestrated campaign from employers organisations telling the unemployed how well off they are.

As someone who has been out of work since May 1974, I want to tell Arthur Rice of the F.U.E. and Douglas Thornton of the Shoe Manufacturers just where they can stuff those claims. We feel more sharply than most, the increases in the cost of living brought in by the Budget. We bear the brunt of the crisis of the bosses' economic system.

EVERYBODY knows that pay-related benefits have made something different of unemployment from what it was in the 1950's. They have made it easier for bosses to sell redundancy. But they are not the gravy train which many people - including, unhappily, many workers - imagine.

Tables and figures printed in the 'Irish Times' on 18th December last show how quickly the unemployed worker's standard of living falls off. People who lose their jobs suffer not only the humiliation inflicted by a loss of status, by a sense of failure, but they also suffer financially. Their families suffer as a result, most particularly young children.

Let's compare the initial income of an unemployed person with their previous earned income. The current figure for average industrial earnings is calculated from the figures given for manufacturing industry last March and allowing for Wage Agreement increases, but also taking account of the fact that about 100,000 workers received no increases under the 1975 Agreement.

The average gross pay comes out at £53.31 for a man. Different reductions give different take-home pay according to whether he is married or single, has no children or four. That's the "weekly disposable income".

## BENEFITS

On becoming unemployed, the worker receives no benefits for the first three days, while for the following nine days only the flat rate benefit is payable. When the full benefits are being paid - after twelve days - they may not together come to more than the previous weekly earnings while at work.

Flat-rate benefits are related to the number of dependents, and pay-related benefits to previous earnings. For the first six months, the unemployed person, in addition to flat-rate benefit, receives 40 per cent of previous gross earnings, over £14 per week. (It should be noted, again, that this is calculated on the previous year finished, not the current year.)

The Table shows at (10) and (11) the "take-home pay" for unemployed workers in various categories and the difference between the previous earnings and for the present income. The tax "claw back" has been accounted

for, and this gives a top figure of 91 per cent of previous earnings for a married man with four children.

The second table shows how this declines over the months. After one year, the unemployed worker is down to subsistence money: £8.10 per week, if single, and £22.75 per week, if married with four children.

*These tables do not show that women are in a much worse position. A single unemployed woman only qualifies for unemployment assistance in very special circumstances after her entitlement to pay-related benefit has ended. The freezing of equal pay shows just how committed the government is to ending this kind of discrimination.*

But unemployment means more than just losing money, although many of the other problems arise from that. After a few months out of work, you develop a feeling of uselessness, a lack of confidence; you become depressed, and disillusioned. And this spreads to the family.

With stress, tension and depression in the home, the sights of the family are lowered. There are no expectations of better things. Children's development is affected, as educational toys and books can't be afforded. They begin to lose interest in school and have to be forced to go. With relations between father and mother strained, and arguments over how the income is to be managed, it is little wonder that educationists say this kind of experience can impair a child's capacity to learn for life.

There is bound to be strife, too, when you consider a home has to be

run on £18.95 (my weekly income) - weekly rent £2.50; electricity £2.50; (has to be put away each week otherwise the bill will not be paid and the supply will be cut off); fuel £2.25 (fires in the evening only); TV rental £1.00.

That leaves £10.70 and out of that must come bus fares for shopping and for the kids to go to school, as well as some item of clothing for the children. The rest has to stretch to feed four for seven days: breakfast is pared down from sausage and rasher to an egg; meat for dinner is a rare thing, and then usually only in stew or tripe; late-night supper is cut out altogether.

## SOCIAL LIFE

Quite obviously there is little scope for social life, although it is in this situation where you really need it. You quickly lose contact with your friends and work-mates.

*There is one consolation in all this, however - if you can call it that. You get T-I-M-E to think and you begin to understand that the causes of the present crisis are in the bosses' system itself. You also realise that our so-called trade union leaders are not prepared to face up to that.*

They moan and groan about the need to curb unemployment. They talk about the flood of foreign imports. They advocate Buy Irish campaigns and embargoes. But these are all a justification for doing NOTHING. They are afraid to use the muscle and power of the movement - or else they don't know how to.

The alternatives seem clearer, too - building a rank and file movement within the unions which will oppose all sackings and fight fearlessly all attacks on workers' living standards. But the organisation of workers at



From the Fifties: (right): An Unemployed Workers demonstration outside the Bank of Ireland.

the place of work has been weakened over the last few years by the national Wage Agreements - the job is now to re-build and strengthen that organisation.

Beyond that, we need to fight for democracy in the unions to be able to tell the full-time officials what to do, rather than take the orders from them. Only in this way can we hope to overcome the apathy of so many workers. We need to be able to bring rank and file workers into the leadership of struggles to defend jobs and living standards, and on behalf of the unemployed - pensioners, tenants, etc.

*AND THE UNEMPLOYED THEMSELVES must be linked with that through their own action committees working side by side with shop stewards' committees and union sections and branches.*

But, above all, as you spend time poring over the paper or watching yet another news programme on TV, every bit of new information coming to you from every new crisis underlines again and again the need for a complete alternative: a socialist society where production is planned democratically for human need and not for profit. And to get that we have to build now a revolutionary workers' organisation which is completely independent of the influence of the ruling class and of reformism.

That's one thing unemployment has done to me: it's strengthened my determination to get rid of this crazy system.

J. CLOONO

*These tables were drawn up before the January budget cut benefits to a max of 85 per cent of previous earnings'.*

## HOW WE FIGHT!

UNEMPLOYMENT is part of the same crisis which cuts our wages and worsens our working conditions. The unemployed struggle cannot be effectively waged without being linked up with militant rank and file pressure within the unions to stop the effects of the bosses' crisis being passed on to workers.

Employed workers can fight for:

- \* a 35 hour week without loss of pay, to create more jobs;
- \* no productivity deals;
- \* longer holidays;
- \* a ban on overtime;
- \* fight all redundancies

If the first of these - the 35 hour week - was fought for and won by the ICTU unions alone it would create more than 70,000 jobs at a stroke.

The fight of the employed workers is not a substitute for organising the unemployed. It must go hand in hand with the building of an Unemployed Workers Movement. This way the strength of the employed can be used in solidarity with our brothers and sisters on the dole queues and the spectre of unemployment cannot be used to restrain wages and worsen working conditions.

10p

**The Economic Crisis**

116,000 now out of work up by 25% equal pay Electricity price rise 1,000 gas and bread prices up 25% cash shortage fee rise

NOW FIGHT BACK!

SOCIALIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

'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).

	Single man	Married man, no children	Married man, 2 children	Married man, 4 children
(1) Average industrial pay .....	£53.31	£53.31	£53.31	£53.31
(2) Weekly tax .....	£12.29	£9.74	£6.79	£4.49
(3) Stamp contributions .....	£2.45	£2.45	£2.45	£2.45
(4) Weekly disposable income ...	£38.57	£41.12	£44.07	£46.37
<b>ON BECOMING UNEMPLOYED:</b>				
(5) Unemployment benefit .....	£9.90	£16.35	£21.95	£26.65
(6) Pay-related benefit .....	£11.83	£11.83	£11.83	£11.83
(7) Total State benefit .....	£21.73	£28.18	£33.78	£38.48
(8) Tax "clawback" .....	£4.17	£5.07	£6.07	£3.77
(9) Redundancy payments .....		unquantifiable		
(10) Weekly disposable income ...	£25.90	£33.25	£39.85	£42.25
(11) Lost purchasing power .....	£12.67	£8.87	£4.22	£4.12
(12) State benefit as a % of previous income .....	56.3%	68.5%	76.7%	83.0%
(13) Unemployed income as % of previous income .....	67.2%	80.9%	90.4%	91.1%

	Single man	Married man, no children	Married man, 2 children	Married man, 4 children
Previous disposable income .....	£38.57	£41.12	£44.07	£46.37
Disposable income when becoming unemployed (1) .....	£25.90	£33.25	£39.85	£42.25
As a % of last pay .....	67.2%	80.9%	90.4%	91.1%
Unemployment benefits - six months later (2) .....	£18.77	£25.22	£30.82	£35.82
As a % of last pay .....	48.7%	61.3%	69.9%	76.2%
Unemployment benefits after nine months (3) .....	£17.29	£23.74	£28.34	£34.04
As a % of last pay .....	44.8%	57.7%	64.3%	73.4%
Unemployment benefits after one year (maximum) (4) .....	£8.10	£13.95	£18.95	£22.75
As a % of last pay .....	21.0%	33.9%	43.0%	50.1%

(1) From table 1. Includes flat rate benefit; pay related benefit; tax "clawback". (2) Pay-related benefit reduced from 40% to 30%; tax "clawback" ceases. (3) Pay-related benefit reduced from 30% to 25%. (4) Unemployment and pay related benefits cease, being replaced by flat rate unemployment assistance.



# 'Building': Keynote of the Portugal solidarity meetings

CAPITALISM won't just go away; we have to knock it down, and in the process fashion a new society. And will-power alone won't do that. We need to harness the experience of the working class and learn from the victories and defeats where ever workers clash with capitalism. It is only armed with this experience that we can build our forces.

OUR OWN day to day experience in our work places can be taken, analysed and understood. There is a wealth of experience and analysis left to us from the struggles of workers and revolutionaries in the past. The writings of socialists, from Marx to Connolly and further, were not thought up out of thin air; they were drawn from the living struggles of the working class.

PORTUGUESE workers have advanced further against capitalism than any other section of the international working class has done in forty years. It is to benefit from the experience of that advance that the Socialist Workers Movement organised the speaking tour of Miguel Da Silva. The workers at TAP, the Portuguese airline - where Miguel is a maintenance worker - have been involved in crucial battles since the coup of April 1974. As a member of the PRP Miguel has been at the front line of the revolution, witnessing the advances,

mistakes, victories and defeats.

One of the best meetings was held in Waterford where a packed hall listened to Miguel's explanations of the Portuguese events. Over sixty workers participated in the discussion which followed.

Waterford workers have made their own advances in recent months by building a shop stewards committee on the Waterford Industrial Estate.

## Questions

In the three meetings held in Belfast and the one in Derry the interest was, naturally, in the aspect of imperialism manifested itself in Portugal and the ways in which Portuguese workers fought back. Some of the meetings - notably Galway and Dublin - had their

share of the phrase mongers trotting along to score the same old points. Happily, however, the meetings didn't degenerate into slanging matches but produced interesting and fruitful discussion.

"Building" was the key idea stressed throughout the tour. For the Portuguese workers to build their organisations to resist the growing right-wing forces; for the international working class to build within the crisis-ridden capitalist system; for workers in Ireland to build their own organisation to fight against the continuing attacks of the bosses and the state. Ultimately to build a force which will end those attacks by ending the source - capitalism.

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the pressure of the rising workers' movement, some of those same officers took up positions in solid defence of working class gains.

COPCON, established as an internal security force, became an important ally of workers in strikes and occupations. The problem was, that workers came to rely too much on this outside assistance and so revolutionary class consciousness in the working class lagged behind that which was developing among soldiers, including some officers.

There is no doubt that many workers looked to the revolutionary officers as a leadership which could substitute for their own efforts. In November, however, a group of revolutionary officers issued a manifesto which called for a revolutionary army based on the workers' own armed organisations and which saw clearly that the leadership had to be found among the workers and the rank and file soldiers.

3. The P.R.P. helped lead to the disaster of 25th November by calling for insurrection.

The P.R.P. had always insisted since April 1974 that there was no "third way" between capitalism and socialism, and that capitalism's only possibility of achieving stability was through severe repression, or a re-built fascist regime. They did over-estimate the speed at which it would come to that fundamental choice.

In the summer and autumn of last year, however, everything was in the melting pot. Army discipline was wrecked by the rank and file soldiers' movement. The new government could not impose its authority on the working class. Always fearing that the ruling class would attempt a military solution, through civil war, the P.R.P. insisted on the need for the class to unite for the taking of power.

Their plan for an insurrection was not one for a military coup; it was for taking of state power through an armed workers' movement in alliance with revolutionary soldiers. The weakness was not in putting the taking of power on the agenda but rather in the revolutionaries' failure to overcome the Communist Party's restraining influence among workers and the failure to make permanent gains out of the several important victories over the C.P.'s line. Such gains could only have been consolidated in the building of a revolutionary workers' party.

That particular weakness was seen in the response to the events of the 25th November. The revolutionaries were unable to mobilise working class support for the paratroopers when they were isolated in their response to right-wing manoeuvres.

P.R.P. supporters in the army (and there were many) did not take the paratroopers' revolt as the signal for insurrection. Not surprisingly they understood what the P.R.P. meant by that better than the armchair critics outside Portugal many of whom have ended up in positions well behind the possibilities of the situation.

# REVOLUTIONARY ANSWER

IT WAS striking how the same questions cropped up at the meetings on Portugal in several different places. Some were the same, indeed, as those raised at previous S.W.M. meetings on Portugal six months ago!

The evidence given in answering the questions then, and since then, in 'The Worker', does not seem to have shifted what can only be described as obsessions. We can only hope that the patience and experience demonstrated by Miguel da Silva in dealing with them may have had some effect.

Below, we deal with just three of the repeated points. In some cases, they were the starting point for misinformed and

union affiliations. It was pasted together by a group of middle class politicians after April 1974. The 38 per cent vote it got at the 1975 elections was only in very small part a class-conscious workers' vote, and is likely to be lost to the Right in next month's elections.

There has been little or no working class opposition from within the ranks of the S.P. to the leadership's manoeuvres. Left-wing groups inside the party have been forced out. Working class supporters of the party play little or no role in the rank and file of the class in Southern industrial areas.

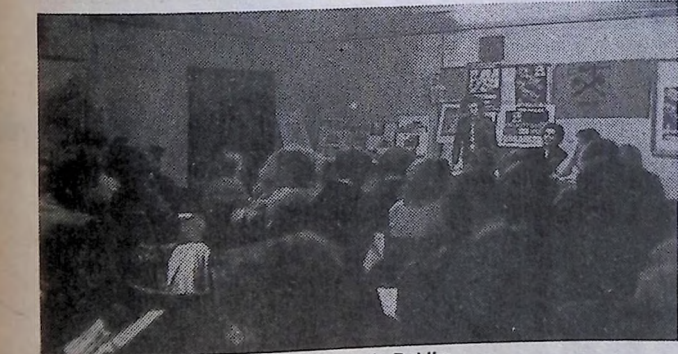
In power, the S.P. represents a section of the bourgeoisie which relies heavily on

the international support of ruling parties in Britain, West Germany, Scandinavia - and on the C.I.A.! It is totally committed to rooting out any remnants of workers' control. The call raised (mainly in the safety of Britain or Ireland - and only by a tiny group in Portugal) for a united government of Communist Party and Socialist Party would be most likely to win support on the understanding that it would be a government which would undo nationalisation and smash workers' self-activity.

2. Revolutionaries (and specifically the P.R.P.) placed too much trust in "left-wing" officers and particularly in COPCON.

The suggestion made here is that officers, by virtue of their position, must always be on the opposite side from the workers. If it is possible for middle class teachers to adopt working class positions, then it is surely possible for officers in an army which was rent asunder by internal class struggle in a way not seen since Russia in 1917.

The officers who organised the April 1974 coup represented the interests of a section of the middle class who wanted to smooth out the more obvious excesses of the Salazar-Caetano regime. But under



The meeting in Dublin

cynical attacks on the P.R.P. The Socialist Workers' Movement has discussed its criticisms of the P.R.P. with the party itself. We have tried to place ourselves in their shoes and imagine how one could deal with the rapidly changing situation.

Not so some of the incurable sectarians however, who arrived at meetings with their prepared texts and, in two cases, misleading leaflets. The P.R.P. has not been in the business of supplying "correct" theoretical answers to the problems of the Portuguese revolution, as these people try to; they have been part of the working class movement, fighting with it, and responding to its changing moods with new proposals and new ideas. If they didn't make mistakes, it could only be because they were completely irrelevant.

These are three points raised in various forms at a number of our meetings:

1. Revolutionaries (specifically the P.R.P.) were too sectarian towards the Socialist Party and thus failed to win its supporters.

This one is based on many misconceptions about the Portuguese Socialist Party. It is not a social democratic party with a mass working class base and trade

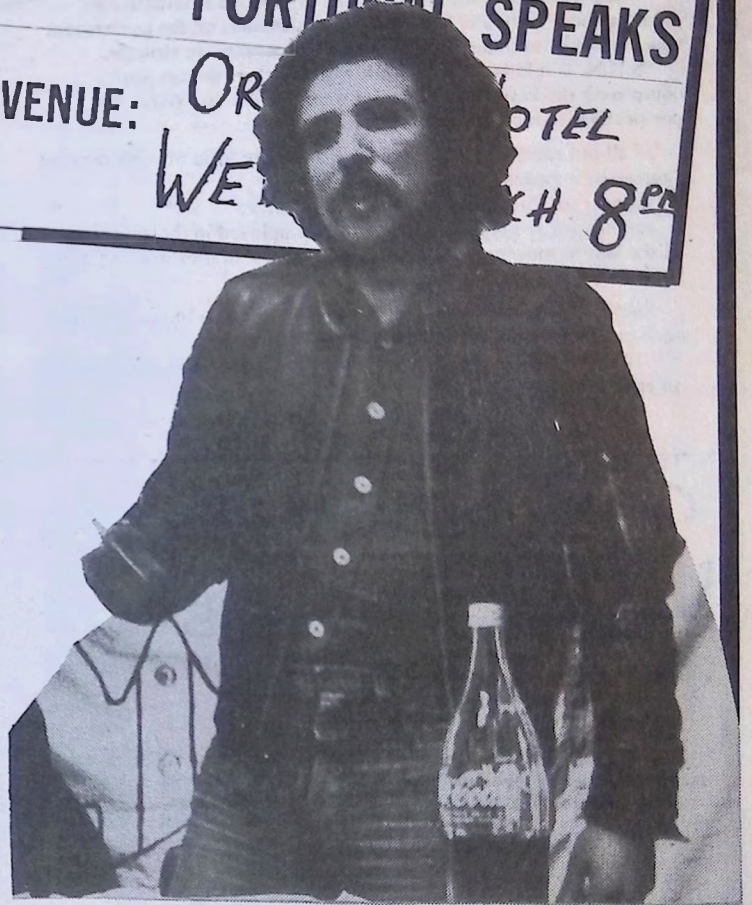
# SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT

## SOLIDARITY WITH PORTUGUESE WORKERS

public meeting

A WORKER FROM PORTUGAL SPEAKS

VENUE: OR... HOTEL  
WE... H 8 PM



## Miguel da Silva

of the Partido Revolucionario Do Proletariado (PRP) speaking during the tour.

"Ireland, like Portugal, has long been dominated by imperialism. There are many multi-nationals operating in Portugal which have enjoyed a cheap labour force over the years... you too must know the same problem.

The working classes in our two countries have fought a long and hard battle against the forces of capital, we have a common enemy, and it is up to us to learn the lessons from our common struggle.

We in the PRP believe that in the face of repression a revolutionary front is necessary to unite left wing forces against the right and the state. The largest demonstration since the coup of November 25th was organised by CLARP, which is a united front of the left.

Like the Socialist Workers Movement, we in the PRP believe that a revolutionary party must be built inside the working class to give leadership and co-ordination to all sections of the people."

## THE ASSEMBLIES

"They are composed of delegates from workers committees, tenants committees, cooperatives, political organisations etc. In this way all the various sections of the working class can meet and discuss the way forward. The delegates are all recallable, so that there is complete democracy. We in the PRP believe that assemblies such as these can form the means by which the working class can fight the capitalist state. They can, in turn, become the means by which the working class can govern in a workers state."

## THE FUTURE

"It is a question of time and activity. Activity to unite and organise the working class before the Right can form an effective machine for repression.

For the Right will win the elections in April. The middle class who supported the right of the Socialist Party, along with big business and the 350,000 who have returned to Portugal from Angola will vote for the right. These last have no jobs, they will blame this on the revolution - and vote for the Right.

However, the elections are irrelevant for the working class. For the Right wing government to reconstruct capitalism they will have to repress the working class. They will have to take back the gains made by workers. This means big repression. So, the issue will not be decided in any parliament. The workers assemblies are organised and armed and there will be a confrontation."



# ARE YOU SERIOUS, MATTIE?



THIS LETTER was sent to Matt Merrigan on 13 February by the Socialist Workers Movement. One month later, as we go to press, we have received a reply to say it is 'under consideration'.

"In view of your closing remarks at the Left Alternative meeting last week about other groups being welcome to join in this common front, we would like to ask on what basis such co-operation would take place.

"S.W.M. is committed seeking unity with all working class forces willing to oppose the attempts to unload the burden of the capitalist crisis on the workers. We are working for united rank and file action in the trade union movement against wage restraint and unemployment. This needs, we believe, a programme for resistance at the work-place, in the union branches and on the dole-queues.

"While we support the five demands of the Left Alternative we consider them limited in being a series of demands on the government which provide no immediate guide-lines for workers in struggle.

"S.W.M. would be keen to work with the three groups now comprising the Left Alternative if it were possible to extend the perspectives to include such points as:

- an all-out campaign in the unions against any form of wage restraint "agreed or imposed, local or national;
- support for direct action against redundancy;
- support for the organisation of the unemployed in the wider context of the labour movement to press demands for a shorter working week, ban on overtime, higher benefits, etc.

"Failing that, we would wish to have the freedom to put forward such perspectives from any common platform.

"We would appreciate your comments on this and look forward to an early reply.

Fraternally, S.W.M."

## CRIMINAL LAW BILL: United Campaign fights on

"WE ARE committed to continuing this campaign against repression", said chairman DES DERWIN, winding up the meeting of the United Campaign Against the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill held in the Dublin Mansion House at the beginning of March. He was clearly speaking for all present who, judging by the speeches both from the platform and the floor, saw the Bill as just one sign of increasing repression.

"Repression increases according to what the government thinks it can get away with", said MICHAEL FARRELL of Peoples' Democracy. And BRIAN TRENCH of the Socialist Workers' Movement, drew attention during the discussion to the vastly different treatment of three big republican funerals in 1974, 1975 and 1976. Michael Gaughan's had taken place with full "honours"; Tom Smith's (the Provisional republican shot dead in Portlaoise) was attended by the most massive show of force ever mounted by the Gardaí in the streets of Dublin; and Frank Stagg's had been hi-jacked in a way that even revolted people quite unsympathetic to the Provos.

"You don't have to agree with the republicans' methods and tactics", Brian Trench said, "to see the danger of this increasingly repressive attitude to all who oppose the government and the system".

### HARSHER

Detailing some of the points and the implications of the Criminal Law Bill, which became an Act the very next day, Michael Farrell pointed out that it would oblige the government in the South to accept the evidence of such people as the notorious mass murderer mercenary "Callan", who had once been "keeping the peace" in the North. Farrell suggested that the harsher

sentences which the legislation sneaks in makes the Irish penal code among the most severe in Europe.

ANN SPEED, member of the Executive of the Dublin District Council of the I.T.G.W.U. (speaking in a personal capacity), spelt out how the legislation would seek to make housewives, students and trade unionists, "the eyes and ears of the state". The same point was taken up later in discussion when it was said that the people who said that nothing would happen to anybody who "kept their nose clean" would be less and less willing to oppose the status quo in any way.

### FEAR

The big difficulty in getting this across is - as several speakers recognises - the fear many people - including class-conscious trade unionists - of being identified with the Provos. But while the Provos themselves give little or no thought as to how they can get their message to workers, or even get workers to defend them, it is the job of socialists and militant trade unionists to insist that a defeat for the Provos has very serious repercussions for the whole working class movement.

The task of the United Campaign in the months ahead is to keep up the pressure and the propaganda which helps trade unionists argue the case with their mates. The first attempt - and any subsequent attempt - to use the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Act must be highlighted, and protests mounted. The work of the Special Criminal Court needs to be detailed and explained in terms that are easily understood, especially as sentences for membership of the I.R.A. are being increased. The first to suffer the consequences could be Brendan Magill

## Crisis for Capitalism:

# The Left, The Crisis, and S.W.M.

MOST PEOPLE interested enough in socialism and the struggles of the working class to read THE WORKER will only have a vague idea of the differences between all the groups in Ireland which claim to be socialist.

Just sitting in a pub on a Friday evening they will gather that there's quite a number of organisations jostling with each other for the same audience.

The difficulties of keeping track of them all have increased, however. In the past few months several of these organisations have split: first the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP), the the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI) and most recently Peoples' Democracy (PD).

In all three cases, the groups which have split off have formed discussion groups to examine the issues over which they differed so radically with former close comrades and to consider what attitudes socialists and Marxists should have to the main problems facing Irish workers.

But why all this quarrelling? Why all the arguments? And why should all this be happening when workers are under heavy attack, when repression is getting steadily worse, and prices and unemployment are soaring? Is this not a time when workers more than ever need a lead, when the rottenness of the bosses' system becomes obvious to many more people, and when the socialist alternative

needs to be presented very loud and very clear?

All of these things are true. We are living in a time of very severe crisis for the bosses' system, a crisis which has them at sixes and sevens with each other. But the impact of the crisis is felt not only by employers and politicians who grapple for solutions, but also - and often disastrously - by workers, by the unemployed, by housewives, students, and so on.

THE POLITICAL crisis for imperialism in the North in particular has been sharpened by the overall economic difficulties. It has had a serious effect on those organisations which have been to the forefront of the fight against imperialism and on the people of those areas - West Belfast, for example - where they have had their most lasting support. The several shades of republicanism have multiplied.

Where the splits and divisions in organisations reflect issues relevant to the wider population and not just very internal, or personal squabbles, they reflect this crisis. They reflect a situation in which traditional republicanism has come to a dead-end in the national struggle and a variety of "left" brands of republicanism have been seen to be no more effective.

They reflect a situation in which unemployment has reached record

heights without there being much more than token resistance to loss of jobs - a situation in which real wages have been falling for tens of thousands of workers and the trade union leaders sit down with the employers to negotiate another National Agreement which can only mean further restrictions on wage rises.

In these circumstances, differences easily come up even between socialists who do share a great deal about what emphasis to give to the "national question", about whether it is best to set up broad fronts or recruit directly to the party, about the role of physical retaliation in resistance to the threat from loyalist sectarianism, about how close one should keep to the "better", and "more left wing" trade union officials and so on.

It is also true however, that in the hothouse atmosphere of small left-wing groups there is too often a tendency to dwell on the things which separate socialists from each other rather than trying to concentrate on those things which socialists may share with any section of workers.

## Nationalism

THE ORGANISATIONS which have put their central emphasis on the fight against Imperialism in the North have suffered most. The people who have sustained the republican organisations most actively have seen their

mainly from those who have never had to face the practical difficulties. There was a suggestion, too, that some socialists had shirked doing this. If that was addressed at the Socialist Workers' Movement, it was off-target.

## ACTIVE

S.W.M. members have been among the most active in the United Campaign itself, on occasion providing more resources than all the other groups combined. Our members have, too, raised anti-repression resolutions in several branches of the I.T.G.W.U. and in a number of other unions.

The Socialist Workers' Movement is committed to united action against repression aimed at drawing in working class support. Such action has to be carefully prepared and effectively presented.

The groups supporting the United Campaign, and must, build it as a credible focus for all trade unionists, socialists and republicans who wish to broaden the fight against repression and halt the growing cancer. Let us set about that task.



Michael Farrell speaks at the Mansion House Meeting.

who faces trial on 19th March.

The argument for defence of political status in the North and for its granting in the South must be spelt out. As Michael Farrell said, it means a recognition by the government that there is a political struggle going on. The Provisionals do none of this, although it is their members who are most involved and who take the rap.

The United Campaign can all the more strongly appeal to Provo supporters to press their leadership into united action with others if the campaign itself is presenting a defence

of republican prisoners to the wider working class and anti-imperialist movements. Doing that in no way means providing a radical "cover" for the disastrous consequences which the Provos' militarist and elitist actions and ideas lead to.

The Mansion House meeting was agreed that the main aim of any movement against repression must be to win support within the trade union movement. There was much talk of being "courageous" in doing this, but



enthusiasm roused and let fall again. The promises of victories held out to them by the Provisionals have been put on a longer and longer finger — and the Provos have through their own stand-offishness let many opportunities for broader mass action slip by, and so contributed to the growing disillusionment and even cynicism.

Some would-be revolutionary groups, notably Peoples Democracy and the Revolutionary Marxist Group have long tried to give themselves a role and get closer to leading republican activists by insisting that civil war and a loyalist takeover were just around the corner and that defence committees needed to be built.

But both of these groups have had to adjust to the reality that the loyalists have been incapable of uniting behind a single political perspective and a single leadership. In making the shift, PD got entangled in a row which split their organisation down the middle.

## Reformism

IN THE economic struggles of Southern workers those organisations which have hugged close to the trade union officials, or actually put their own members into the union as full-time officials raise demands about nationalisation as an answer to the economic crisis. They do not propose any radical, independent action by workers themselves for fear this would offend their friends in full-time officials' posts.

So, we have had the spectacle of an organisation calling itself socialist — the Socialist Party of Ireland (SPI) — and therefore, you would think, committed to some kind of independent class programme for workers simply reproducing in its paper the speech of a union official on the government's plans for CIE without so much as one suggestion what workers should do about them.

The attempts at winning the confidence of union officials, or republican leaders, may be aimed at getting out of isolation. In fact, they don't answer that problem at all because the allies don't open up the path to a wider audience; they actually fear doing open public work in the mass of the working class.

IN A PAMPHLET published last November called 'Which Way For The Left?' the Socialist Workers Movement dealt briefly with the situation facing the working class and anti-imperialist movements and considered how the Left should deal with it. We pointed to several possible (and necessary) areas of co-operation but we also drew the essential line between reformist and revolutionary approaches. That is the line between seeking step-by-step changes through compromises with the ruling class and an effort to build up the organisation and consciousness of workers independently of middle class influence.

That crucial line of division has to be insisted on all the more as it becomes apparent that some of the would-be revolutionary groups show themselves very ready to apologise for the worst kind of reformists. Some of their responses to events in Portugal (see elsewhere in this issue) demonstrate this.

The Socialist Workers Movement believes that there is no quick way out of the isolation of socialist groups, even though changed conditions in the country and in the working class could very rapidly break down barriers. Agitation and propaganda on immediate struggles and on the broader political fight for power need to be done openly and systematically within the working class. They need to be aimed at drawing workers into action with the members of the organisation, and, where possible, into the organisation itself.

## What Do We Do?

THE SOCIALIST Workers Movement believes that socialism is an act of self-emancipation by the working class, not something handed down to them. That's why our work is directed at moving workers forward some steps to more developed consciousness and organisation not at providing immediate solutions to this or that problem.

While other organisations have

been stagnating and splitting, the Socialist Workers Movement has been growing — however modestly — and has been able to take on new tasks like more regular production of THE WORKER and of new pamphlets. While other organisations have been preaching about their commitment to the national struggle and the fight against repression, we have done more than any other organisation to try to boost the United Campaign Against the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill.

While other organisations "forget" the fight against repression inside the trade union movement and others have never had to face the practical demands because they have no real root in the workers' movement, our members have taken it up at various levels in several unions. While other organisations have made themselves experts on this or that international situation we have set a headline by bringing over a Portuguese worker to address meetings and meet workers and socialists throughout the 32 Cos.

Our members' suggestions, too, have helped bring forward the Dublin Shop Stewards Committee. Our members are involved in the production of the only regularly published rank and file factory bulletin in a Dublin engineering works.

WE KNOW more acutely than anybody that our organisation

does not have a mass audience or a widespread influence. But we are also convinced that those who have stayed inside republican organisations even when they disagreed with the leadership's politics in order to reach a larger audience have fooled themselves. And that is even more true of those calling themselves socialists who stay inside the Labour Party, or actually choose to join, at this time.

The fight for a workers' party with an independent socialist perspective goes on. S.W.M. is not that party; our influence and our roots do not go deep enough. Such a party, to be worthy of the name, would need a substantial influence and membership among the most advanced workers. It would need to have shown itself the most effective voice on the socialist Left.

The Socialist Workers' Movement has laid a base, however. A base on which much yet remains to be developed. But a base, we believe, on which all socialists committed to the fight for a revolutionary leadership within the working class can unite.

We have not solved — nor do we claim to have solved — every single question of analysis of Irish capitalism



Just some of the faces of the Left

and of the Irish working class. But those who, because of recent splits and divisions, suggest that absolutely everything needs to be discussed from the beginning are retreating from the arena within which the answers can be given: the arena of class struggle. The group of people who left the IRSP to form the "Irish Committee for a Socialist Programme" are not building up any experience against which they could test the ideas they are discussing so intensively.

## Join Us In The Fight

THE IDEAS which guide socialist action are not developed in a vacuum. Discussion of theory needs to be constantly related to the action it is supposed to shape. Socialists in Ireland have for too long swung between abstract and polemical discussion of ideas (and particularly of ideas about international experiences of which nobody knew anything in detail) and uninformed, opportunist action.

There is a need for unity of left-wing forces to promote militant working class action in the face of crisis. The Left Alternative set up by the Communist Party, Official Sinn Féin and the Liaison of the Left might have provided a framework. But to judge by their silence in response to a letter from the Socialist Workers Movement (see panel) they want to keep it to themselves and keep it to their safe non-controversial demands.

The main concerns of socialists today must be to forge united rank and file action against unemployment and wage restraint, and against repression. In the context of that struggle, a socialist workers' organisation which rejects parliamentary "solutions" and fights for workers' power must be built.

That is the struggle which the Socialist Workers Movement is committed to. We urge those who agree with these ideas, and with the principles outlined below in 'What We Stand For', to join us. And we are ready to meet at any time with other groups to discuss common action on any of the issues mentioned.

# 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 crisis.

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

has 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 struggles, 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 worker's 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 £40 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 internment 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 independence 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

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Paper of the Socialist Workers Movement

## Northern Jobs Go ...

"THE PAST six years have seen significant and far-reaching changes." So said one of the now jobless SDLP Convention members. Most people will not have noticed any changes – for the better that is. One thing which has certainly not changed is Northern Ireland's massive unemployment, to whose record levels those Convention members now add.

In the past few months new redundancies have been announced every second day: Ballymena Textiles is to close; 60 more Cross Channel dockers in Belfast are to be laid off, leaving only 200 where there were 1000 in 1960; ICI is rationalising 600 jobs out of existence at the Kilroot plant; (they hope all redundancies will be voluntary – no nastiness you understand); the closure of the Omagh Model Bakery brought 70 redundancies; over 100 jobs were just at the Molins factory in Derry; now there is a danger that Peter Pan Bakeries in Belfast may close.

There are big signs over the windows of the Rolls Royce factory at Dundonald: "S.O.S. – £50,000 profit in 1975 – No Jobs in 1976". Rolls-Royce aims to close their Northern Ireland factory where 780 have been working. While the unions have tried to have the Dundonald factory kept within the Rolls Royce group, the government has accepted the closure without question and immediately started talking about Short's taking over the plant and

keeping some of the men there at work.

Indeed, the British government is directly adding to the unemployment by cutting back government spending in Northern Ireland. Healey's magic saving operation is not going to save jobs. Hospital services will get worse. Schools will be more crowded. Old-age pensions will fall way behind rising prices. Working mothers' demands for creches will not be met.

Meanwhile, the government continues to "fight inflation" by making us pay more; butter, cheese and milk will cost more; rail and bus fares are going up; so too are the electricity rates (up anything up to 40 per cent) and the price of coal. Consumer prices in the North have gone up nearly 22 per cent in the past 12 months, so that it is now the most insecure part of the "U.K." to be working in, and the costliest.

And who's got the answer to these problems? Not the politicians – certainly not the ones who put "social democratic" and "labour" into the title of their party. Gerry Fitt, ex-docker, ex-trade unionist, voted for the cuts in public spending in Westminster. Hugh Logue says that jobs could be saved if Northern Ireland had a parliament – his job, for instance.

Loyalist politicians are quick to get in on the act when their constituents face redundancies or closure in a factory. Not to give a lead, of course, but to confuse the issues and grind their own political axes. Paisley blames the IRA. Others claim that the British government is deliberately discriminating against the North. But companies like ICI, Rolls Royce

and Fairfax Jersey which have their main bases in Britain are rationalising there too.

Unhappily, the union leaders echo this fallacy and encourage workers to see their problem purely in a Northern Ireland context, purely as a local problem. But if workers are to resist redundancies in companies with factories in Britain and Ireland, they need to link up within these companies, across regions and Borders.

The unions' "Better Life For All" campaign includes the call for the right to a secure job but it does not make a single demand with which to oppose redundancies. The campaign against unemployment started some months ago by the Confederation of Ship Building and Engineering Unions held one badly prepared march and seems now to have been forgotten. The Northern Ireland Committee of Congress lists a number of demands against unemployment – all of them demands on the government which give no direct lead to workers facing redundancy.

Nobody but the workers themselves can answer that S.O.S. at Dundonald. Only the action of the rank and file can save jobs. But they need to be quite independent of the compromising politicians, and indeed of the compromising union officials. Rank and file workers have the power to stop the cut-backs, if they

## Which way to 'A better life?'

ON APRIL 10th the "Better Life For All" campaign will hold a march in Belfast. The Northern Committee of the ICTU claims to have gathered over 100,000 signatures for its declaration against sectarianism and violence. But there is little to show the campaign is sparking any great enthusiasm among rank and file workers. Most have only the vaguest idea what it is all about.

That's not too surprising. The "Peoples' Declaration" and the Campaign themselves are based on worthy – but vague – ideas. The list of "rights" is obviously intended to be non-controversial. But if you want seriously to tackle sectarianism – which affects the workers' movement in the North deeply – how do you avoid controversy?

Only the working class movement can defeat sectarianism. Legislation may outlaw some types of discrimination but it cannot root out the attitudes on which they are based. Organisations operating on only one side of the sectarian divide can have a limited effect – if they set out to isolate the active sectarians in their own community.

Simply listing out worthy principles – as the trade unions have done – will make little impact, however. Trade unionists need to see that their own interests are distinct from those of any section of the capitalist class. They need to see that no capitalist state, Orange or Green, independent or not, can guarantee

organise on the shop floor, in the union branches, in the housing estates. Too many jobs have been sold or given away without a real fight – we must organise now to stop the lay-offs and the closures.

JOAN KELLY

jobs and living standards.

The 'Better Life For All' campaign has at least opened up the possibility of industrial and political action by workers free from the stranglehold of sectarian organisations. It provides an arena for those fighting repression, unemployment and wage restraint to argue a way forward. By putting in fighting demands where the campaign announces rights the campaign could become much more meaningful.

The campaign supports the "right to security of employment and to well-paid work". We should say: oppose closures and redundancies; shorter working week; no wage limit, full equal pay now.

The campaign supports the "right to live free from threats of violence, intimidation and discrimination". We should say: end repressive laws; withdraw British Army; self defence of workers against sectarian and military attack under democratic control.

The campaign supports the "right to associate freely and to advocate political changes by peaceful means". We should say: end police and army harassment of demonstrations and of individual activists.

The campaign supports the "right to good housing". We should say: nationalise the building industry; freeze rents; tenants' control of estates; crash building programme.

The campaign supports the "right to equality of educational opportunity and to adequate social services". We should say: end sectarian division of education; no cuts in educational and social spending; welfare benefits to rise with inflation.

At any opportunity trade unionists may have, North or South, to propose ideas on the "Better Life For All" campaign, they should take up the kind of demands we have suggested. Then we might begin to move forward from the position where the unions look to Jack Jones (architect of the £6 pay limit) and Harold Wilson (engineer of the same, and more) for answers to the problems of Northern workers.

# Victory At Crown!

**VICTORY!** After eleven months of hard slog, the Crown Control strikers in Galway have got shop steward Martin Daly reinstated. But more than that; they have successfully defended trade unionism from an attack which pulled no punches.

FROM the beginning the forces of the state came out against the strikers. Every evening an average of 20 cops turned up to intimidate the picketers. When a scab lorry was due up to 60 of them turned up to "protect" the driver. They ignored the false number plates, and when the drivers – complete with dark glasses and hooded anoraks – accelerated out through the gates at illegal speeds the cops ignored this too and concentrated on preventing the picketers following the lorries in order to trade and black them. The courts weighed in with their "neutral" interpretation of the union rules.

Special Branch thugs were known to mix in and around the crowd on occasions. The most intelligible grunt to come from this shower was a shout of "lay into the bastards".

Most sinister of all was the presence of a detachment of troops in the Mervue area on the night of 24th February. The state was pulling out all the stops in order to intimidate, and demoralise the strikers.

## Solidarity

At 6 p.m. on the night the army was present a squad of cops arrived to escort in a scab lorry. The mass picket of strikers began a sit-down in front of the lorry. At this point the scabs inside the factory saw their chance to attack the few remaining picketers on the side gate. They dragged one of the strike committee inside and beat him up. The cops turned a blind eye. The striker was later hospitalised. When one of his mates asked a Garda Superintendent to call an ambulance

he was told to "Fuck off and find a public call box."

All arms of the ruling class – the bosses, the politicians, the cops, the judiciary and the army – were used in the attempt to smother the spark of trade unionism in Galway.

What the bosses hadn't reckoned on was the solidarity of other workers. Forty electricians stopped work in sympathy on 27th February. Then 180 workers at Crystal followed suit three days later. So did 60 dockers. A hundred students marched to Crown from a rally organised in the university by left-wing groups. More stoppages were planned before the strike ended. Then the prospect of a national strike by 8,000 AUEW members put the bosses on the run.

Throughout the strike workers all over the country supported the strikers with collections and moral support. It was the knowledge that this support was there – and growing – which prompted the Labour Court to find in the striker's favour.

The fact that the victory had strings attached to it by the Labour Court doesn't take away from the achievement of the strikers and their supporters throughout the working class. There was something lacking from the beginning which made it inevitable that the outcome would not be as clear-cut a victory as it could have been. The Labour Court recommendation that Martin Daly cannot hold a union position for two years and the Employer-Labour Conference sticking its nose into grievance procedures are concessions that need not have been made if the pressure had been better organised.

The "something lacking" was a body which could have coordinated the



Return to work at Crown. Now to build on the victory

support given to the strikers and worked energetically to arouse more support. The organisation whose job this is supposed to be – the Trades Council – remained in Rip Van Winkle slumberland. The failure to build a proper Shop Steward and Rank and File Committee in Galway which could have carried out this coordination was clearly illustrated. What is even clearer is the remaining need for such a committee.

The victory at Crown should be a

starting point, an incentive, to build a rank and file organisation. The bosses have lost a battle on one front – the war goes on. Redundancies, wage restraint, and further attempts at weakening trade unionism continue. The most fitting salute to our brothers in Crown is to learn the lessons from their fight.

## And redundancy at Vecta

SACRIFICES for the bosses get you nowhere. You can tighten your belts until you're blue in the face and before you've had time to recover you'll be on the dole.

This is the bitter lesson that 180 workers in the Vecta International jeans factory in Galway are learning this month. Recently they accepted their bosses argument that payment of the last round of the NWA would put their jobs in danger. Now the jobs they made sacrifices to protect are being taken from them and they're being thrown like so much scrap onto the dole queues. The old myth of wage restraint protecting employment has been smashed again. And the need for strong rank and file organisation on the shop floor once more underlined. For it was only militant action from the workers themselves that could have forced their union, the ITGWU, to take up their fight.

But the Vecta workers, who were only unionised two years ago, had little experience of shop floor activity. And now Sean Meade, the Galway ITGWU official, rather than taking up the fight against the sackings, is engaged in secret negotiations with possible new owners. Meanwhile the Vecta Workers Action Committee have placed their hopes on an injection of government money to make the factory a more attractive proposition. This is like stroking the tiger's tail after it's bitten your hand off.

As the Crown workers quickly found out, they could rely on nothing but their own strength and the solidarity of their fellow workers. It is this solidarity and strength which must be built in the form of a militant Shop Stewards and rank and file committee in the Galway area.