

LIMERICK SOCIALIST

NOVEMBER 1974

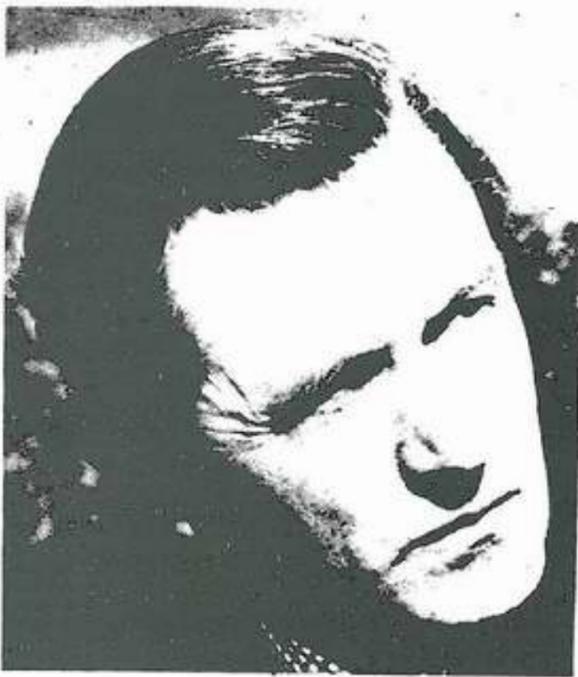
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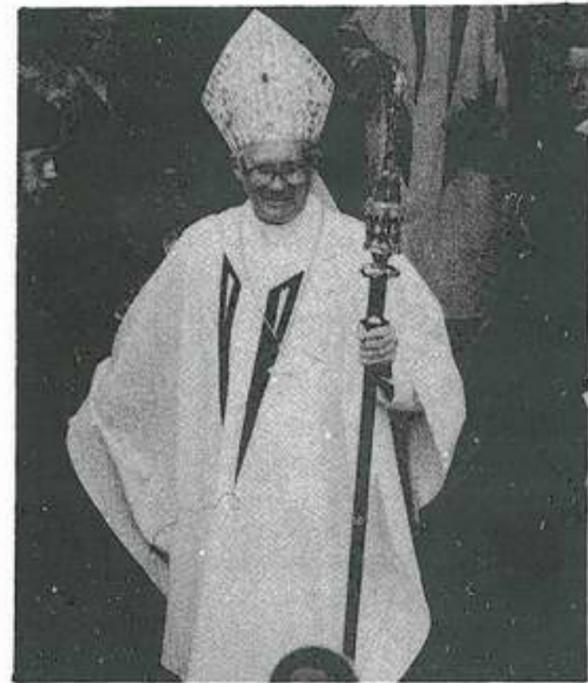
THE
VOICE
OF THE
WORKER

'That which is good for the working class I esteem patriotic . . . ' *James Connolly*

HOW THE GREAT PRINCE DIED



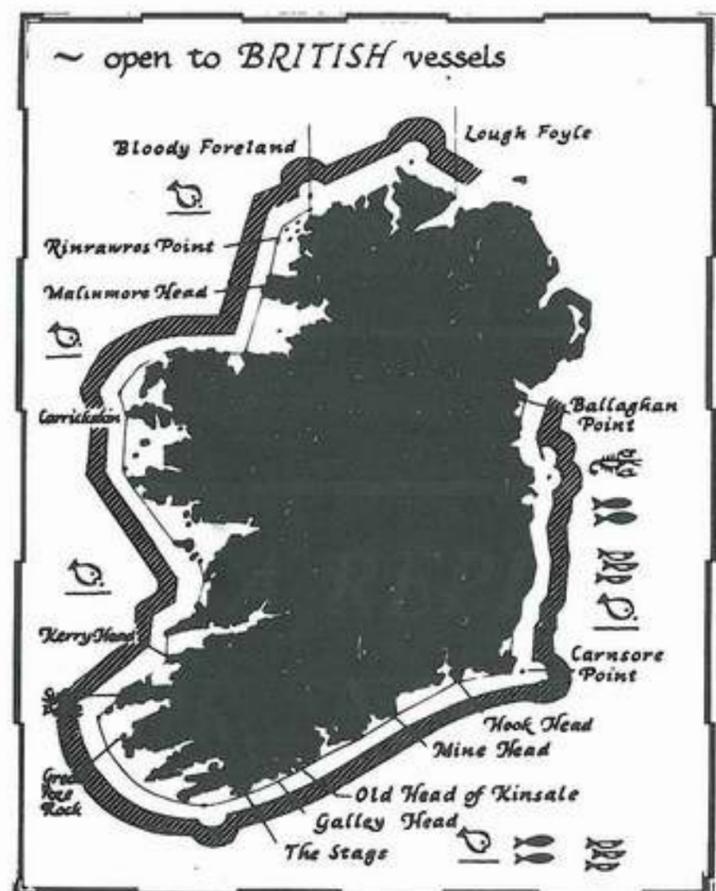
A REPLY TO DR. NEWMAN



FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS



The One Nation Theory



How the Great Prince

NOT yet qualified to be a delegate, I went to the Irish Labour Party's Galway conference as an observer. What I saw was disillusioning: Out-and-out republicans who want the British out of Northern Ireland, but, like St. Augustine and chastity, not yet. Doubtless they wish the departing British to make arrangements to continue to pay U.K.-rate welfare benefits to the liberated Northern Irish? What kind of republicans are republicans who don't want a republic NOW? Certainly, not the 1921-type of republican who couldn't get the British out quickly enough. But times change and we change with them.

Then there was Mr. Corish, the Minister for Health (ha! ha!). the only man on the platform who smoked-cigarettes-during the conference. Ignoring, for the nonce, that manners makyth man and Corish's lack of them, the advertisement for lung cancer, emphysema, bronchitis and other deadly ailments was appalling for one in his position. (Of course, there is also non-smoker Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien who permits cigarettes to be advertised on RTE without even the miserable health warning). There were also Justin Keating, sound and fury, Michael O'Leary one of the originals of Eliot's Hollow Men, and a Labour Minister whose name escapes me, but who was noisier than the others about nothing in particular.

Two men did say memorable things. One was Conor Cruise O'Brien, the other Steve Coughlan. Conor Cruise, *speaking, remember, as delegate for Clontarf*, got a standing ovation for his denunciation of murders by the Provos "committed in our name".

It was so well received that those who've been making fun of the leak story by calling him *Conor News O'Brien & Co* should now consider naming him O'Brien Boru.

The Limerick T.D. got an equally warm welcome for his denunciation of the outrageous treatment meted out to, among others, the Limerick poor who have to wait *months* to have their claims to welfare adjudicated on in Dublin. Why Dublin? None of the Labour Ministers, certainly not Corish, who is responsible, replied to the charge or even promised to look for the few honest Limerick men that Steve Coughlan asked to be judges of the pressing claims of the widow and orphan. If Steve is serious he must surely consider turning to (whisper it) socialism just like you know who ...

Mind you, during the socialising round Salthill, I had a jolt, something that set me asking myself what I was doing in that *galere*. A friend who may well have noticed my despondent air, certainly my lack of enthusiasm, said: "Bet you're sorry you didn't stay in England?" I replied, perhaps not convincingly, that Ireland is my spiritual home and at once he said, "You mean your MENTAL home ..." Sometimes I feel he may have a point there. Just like Partridge.

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Then there was the break I took to attend a meeting addressed by a priest in mufti. He had escaped from the bloodbath in Chile organised and paid for by Ireland's great ally, the U.S. of A, comrades of the fellows who were blessed by the late Cardinal Spellman for their civilising (napalming) mission to those sub-human gooks, the Vietnamese. The priest was appealing on behalf of Chileans who have found a temporary refuge at Shannon and also for a handful who escaped to Argentina and are in urgent danger of being returned to torture and death at the hands of the Kissinger-supported Chilean military dictatorship. Some curious Lefties at the meeting resented the presence of Dr. O'Brien and his wife and insisted that these Chileans should be helped only by trade unionists! A sort of peace was restored when I volunteered that an early victim of aggression did not ask the passing Good Samaritan to show his union card before he accepted his aid. As for Conor Cruise O'Brien he put paid to

PART ONE

Died

BY DERMOT MCEVOY

these ultra-Lefties by offering immediately to withdraw his promised help for the refugees' cause if his motives were doubted. The moral, as in the story of Buridan's ass, is that by trying to please everyone you wind up by pleasing no one. Or, put another way, never carry the donkey!

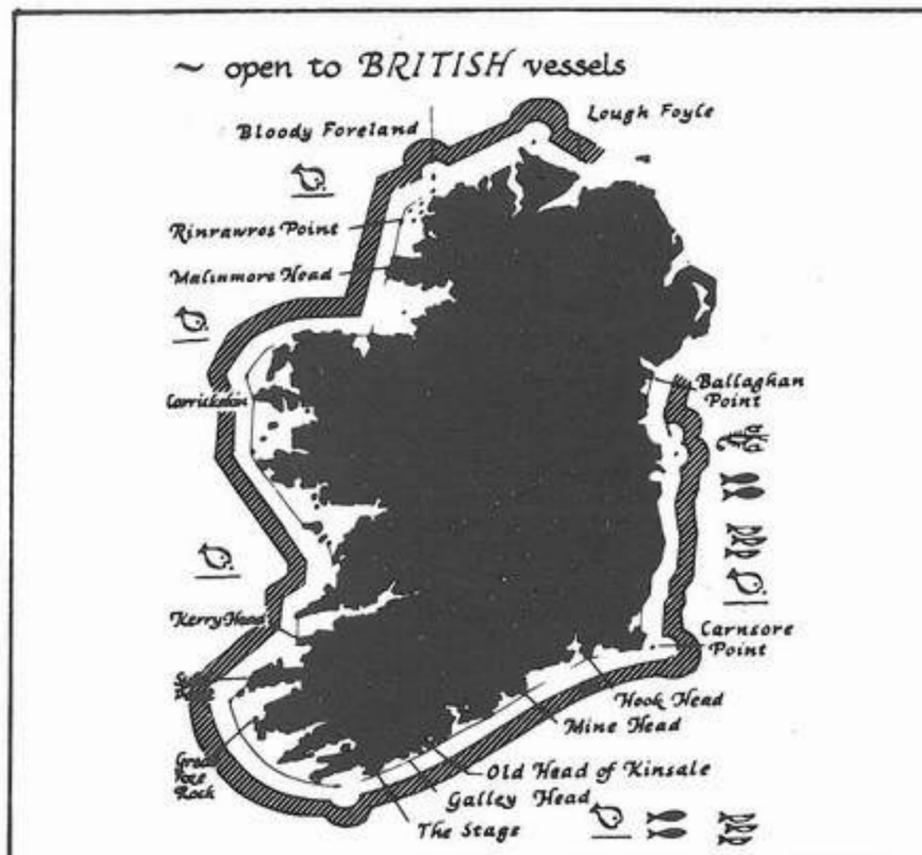
But back to the conference and the late Dr. Noel Brown. For five minutes he set the body of the conference alight and then ... Here let me quote from Stendhal's *The Charterhouse of Parma*:

We are about to speak of very ugly matters, as to which, for more than one reason, we should like to keep silence: but we are forced to do so in order to come to happenings which are in our province, since they have for their theatre the hearts of our characters. But, great God, how did that great Prince die?

I'll tell you simply how Noel Browne, who'd expressed my every thought at Trinity College's summer seminar, died. He committed suicide by continuing to speak after he had given every Labourite a lesson in true socialism: they'd almost have elected him leader if he'd stopped, but he went on to vent an unnatural spleen on Corish. Now, I don't fancy Corish or his style, but the attack was grossly personal, cornerboyish – and undeserved. Nor was it politic, for conference had not long before given Corish what I'm told was the greatest reception he's ever had. Poor Noel! And he could have been the Prince to lead Labour to red-blooded socialism.

But while Labour insists on bloodletting (think back to the disastrous Larkin-O'Brien vendetta!) Liam Cosgrave rides high on the backs of Labour T.D.'s. Sitting so easily that he can take time off to don buckskin and bowler and be pictured in the *Irish Times* setting out as MF – *Mongrel Fox Hiberniae* – to hunt in Co. Dublin with the Ward Union. I feel sure it was this Cosgrave (in a time-space continuum) Oscar Wilde had in mind when he wrote of "the unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable". The epithet fits Cosgrave like a rubber sheath!

Mention of the *Irish Times* reminds me of an oddly-phrased – for the *Irish Times* that is-reference recently by one of its political correspondents to Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act, "which permits the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs to instruct the RTE Authority effectively to impose a ban on members of so-called illegal organisations". Opinions differ about whether the organisations should have been made illegal, but there is no doubt they were made illegal by a democratically-elected Oireachtas. The legality of the Oireachtas is accepted by all parties though it took some years, many lives and much cost to persuade Mr. De Valera to that effect. If today the *Irish Times* choses to refer to "so-called illegal organisations", it can bring comfort only to organisations who think also of a so-called Dail, so-called



Ministers and a so-called Leader of the Opposition – The reporting of whose activities might very well be left to a provisional, rather than a so-called official correspondent.

At least one of my regular readers will be saying about now: Where's the anti-Catholic, anti-clerical piece this month. Just to please him here it is:

1. The Irish in Britain have every right to conclude that they have been deserted by State and Church in Ireland.
2. The Church in Ireland sends priests to England to complete an inadequate seminary education and very often summons them home as soon as their pastoral success is evident.
3. A Labour Attache has been appointed to the Irish Embassy in London to recruit for the homeland Irish who have proved their worth in England.

Now, friend, have a guess who said this. Not me. It was said by Father Noel O'Regan, a County Limerick priest, at the annual dinner-dance last month of the Limerick Association at the Tara Hotel, London. Fr. Noel, who is attached to St. Boniface's, Tooting, had me working for him when he, a poor curate, got the idea he'd set up a social welfare centre for the homeless, single Irish who were always begging for alms at Catholic presbyteries. His centre turned out to be a great success.

By the way, Fr. Noel went on to say that the Irish in Britain quickly learned to live in peace with people who hold greatly differing views on many issues "something that Irish people living in Ireland might well copy". He also suggested that "the authorities in Limerick" (the Church authorities?) should appoint a qualified welfare/social worker to deal with the 100-plus homeless Limerick families in London. Now there's a job for the Arch-Confraternity of the Holy Family at St. Alphonsus's whose members could be ably assisted by those who lay down banquets for bishops. They ought not leave the work to the likes of me.

But then the ways of Irish religious always puzzle me and I'm not alone. I Remember in the '30s attending at the Central Criminal Court in Green Street, Dublin, for the trial of some young men who out of religious, or other, zeal set fire to the Protestant Church in Kilmallock. Prosecuting counsel who had spent his lunch-break with me in the Court of Appeal (the gentle euphemism for Barney Kiernan's pub opposite) returned to the trial as glassy-eyed as myself. His winding-up speech was full of hesitation and Judge Hanna, no fool, was getting impatient. Said counsel: "What would a foreign visitor to Kilmallock think ... what would he say as he saw the church on fire ... what could he say ... only holy-Ireland, holy smoke!" It made my day. Think of me as you pass water – especially at Bishop O'Dwyer Bridge.

THE ONE NATION THEORY

Since Fianna Fail lost the Southern General Election nearly two years ago, they have been able to give full vent to the Catholic nationalism which after all has been their *raison d'être* since their foundation. When they were in government, the noise had to be somewhat muffled because the practical possibilities of bringing about a united Ireland seemed somewhat daunting. Of course a few of the ministers did what they could to help things along, but unfortunately for them things got a bit out of hand and they ended up in court, which in turn promptly found them not guilty.

One of the practitioners of this little example of remote control terrorism, Charlie Haughey, kept his head down, his nose clean and his mouth shut for a couple of years, and in due course found himself back in the leadership of Fianna Fail, although of course Jack Lynch pretends that he is not there in order to assure a wider audience that he at least is a keen supporter of "law and order".

However the time has now come, Haughey believes, for him to restate the traditional faith of Fianna Fail, seeing that people like O'Brien and Fitzgerald tend to obscure the ideology of the whole thing by waffly legalism and intellectual nit-picking. And so, this week, Haughey made a major speech in which he defended the whole bag and baggage of Catholic nationalism with its assertion of the one nation theory.

But it was more than just a defence, it was a cry from the heart. Haughey rightly pointed out the little difference, if any between the old Home Rule Party and the more militant republicans in their 'belief in nationhood', and he demanded to know what could be put in the place of such faith. "They suggest no way in which the feeling for national identity which they wish to discard can be replaced by something else, material, cultural or otherwise .. if those attitudes persist we will emerge from the present period of crisis with no faith in ourselves as a nation and become the first generation ever to have lost that faith".

For many, many years the whole ideology of republicanism has fostered this faith, and belief; a belief that the Ulster Protestants were indeed part of some mystical Irish nation, and they would one day recognise that; belief that the sole reason preventing this from being achieved was the British government; belief that in order to stimulate the Ulster Protestants' sense of identity with Catholic Ireland, the Northern Ireland state must be attacked unremittingly, and the Catholic minority enjoined to abstain absolutely from any involvement in it. And in the meantime, the Southern working class and labour movement have been trailed along in the wake of this miserable movement and all Southern society has been imbued with its reactionary politics. But the monolith has cracked, and the first agnostics have appeared in the Southern ruling class. Such agnosticism and loss of the faith terrifies Haughey, for what will be put in its place? And the answer may well be equally terrifying for the nationalist agnostics, for with the death of nationalism will grow and strengthen the politics of class and materialism. No ruling class can contemplate that possibility with equanimity.

(Reprinted from *Workers' Weekly*).

EDUCATION

A REPLY TO DR. NEWMAN

PART ONE

Early in October this year the new Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick addressed the students of the National Institute for Higher Education in that city at the opening of the academic year there. The Most Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Newman is held by many to be an "authority" on educational matters: his speech is worthy of most careful attention, not only because of this, but also because he sits "in cathedral" near the apex of the pyramid of ecclesiastical power in Ireland. For a long time now Irish education has been solidly encased within this very pyramid and it is becoming very clear that the whole ecclesiastical structure is leaning more heavily on its educational core. Thus, the significance of both the Bishop's presence and of his opinions proffered on the occasion of the Year's commencement at the N.I.H.E.

He ventured to speak in two capacities — a task of supreme difficulty even for a Bishop. As an educationalist — he was for some years President of Maynooth College — he spoke of the high value which he accords to the work of the Institute, showered praise on those responsible for its foundation, outlined the features which differentiated it from other third-level institutions, indicated the necessity of attaining a "nice" balance between innovation and tradition in an establishment such as Plassey, and finished with a sombre warning to students not to become entangled in "radical Programmes for social change which may be no means serve their future interests". He was, however, "confident that the Irish capacity for both tradition and innovation, for

BY JOE LITTLE

integration and absorption can be relied upon to ensure that this new Institute at Plassey will be revolutionary in the best sense of the word".

He was adamant that "at all costs it should avoid the ambiguity of endeavouring to serve Ireland's moorings". I find it necessary to discuss and take issue with these views individually and collectively (since the annunciate an old but dangerous philosophy of education in a new guise). I do so, not as a respected 'authority' on the subject of education, merely as one who for sixteen years of my life has been subjected to a system propped up by such dogmatic thinking. At all levels I have encountered it — first, second and third level — and I feel more than entitled to answer the educationalist who has defended it in such a conciliatory and "scholarly" tone in the Republic's newest educational creation.

"WHY LIMERICK SHOULD SUPPORT THE N.I.H.E."

To speak of education as an ennobling exercise, as a key to the unlocking of nature's riches, and as an invisible agent to progress is exceptionally easy, especially when one refuses to declare overtly this practical implications of nobility in our institutions; when one refuses to be critical of the direction of contemporary progress such declarations sound platitudinous. But to proceed with the statement that the N.I.H.E. is of particular value to Limerick simply because it guarantees "central positions" to locals within the Mid-West region borders on an advocacy of cultural inertia or even tribalism, features common in Irish society and promoted to hide from

our people the truth about the causes of social conflict. This is a minor point, but one worthy of note.

More important is Dr. Newman's statement that the Limerick region is the area best supplied with second level education. He qualifies this statement by saying that this is statistically true. He offers this as a reason why students in the area should support the N.I.H.E. This is analogous to saying that Dubliners should become alcoholics simply because Dublin has a high density of pubs. When an educationalist makes a quantitative statement on the state of second-level education without raising any qualitative questions, it is indicative of a lack of knowledge or a fear of radical questioning. Unfortunately for the future of this country (for each and every young person has the potential to mould the future) I suspect the latter. Does the fact that Dr. Newman's subordinated control most second-level education in the region guarantee an unquestionable quality of education? While delivering his speech he stood before an audience most of whom had recently been wrung through the mangle not only of the Leaving Certificate but also of institutions the very essence of which is a blatant negation of freedom and democracy, the mythical pillars of Irish society. This negation is made possible by the denial of second level school authorities of the right to parents and more important, to students to decide how schools should be managed.

The fact must be faced that the high density of schools in Limerick is a danger to the future of freedom in the area because of the dictatorial and arbitrary nature of authority and discipline within them. This is true of education whether it is under the control of a church or a bureaucracy. Apparently Dr. Newman has an aversity to questioning which might carry with it serious implications like action, (as we shall see later, he suspects that questioners might be controlled by outside agencies). Questions are guidelines for action; answers are dictates for action. I would fear those who, under the control of a hierarchical institution monopolise the right to answer our young and impressionable citizens. To justify the N.I.H.E. by stating that there are sufficient consumers of education in the region smacks too much of the salesman who, because of an inability to be critical, sells machine-guns to-day and chewing-gum tomorrow simply because a market exists.

Indeed it is true that education has now become a major industry since the inauguration of industrial development in Ireland. The effort to sell it as an attractive commodity has been immense. This is very evident in the case of the N.I.H.E. I do not wish to debate the commercial wisdom or otherwise of such activities: suffice it to say that it may create a demand for education without a corresponding degree of serious criticism of the very commodity which is being purchased at an increasing rate. It is easy to sell contaminated water during a drought.

"NEW FEATURES"

Dr. Newman then describes in his speech the new features evident in the educational methods of the N.I.H.E. "Difference", he says ... "is characteristic of your Institute". Ostensibly this is true. But does the Institute differ from other

educational establishments in its basic aim or are we dealing with a difference in methods between different institutions the aims of which coincide? The old Queen's Colleges were founded for the purpose of cultural transmission. Daniel O'Connell saw this very clearly and demanded that they should transmit liberal, bourgeois, Catholic values. They certainly did this as constituent colleges of the N.U.I. and built up an indigenous capitalist and professional class. However, they now find themselves training people to enter the professions, institutions which have been unable to adjust to Ireland's newer economic role in the Euro-American economic and cultural ethos. This new role is rooted in technological advance, an element in twentieth-century culture with which our third-level institutions have, on the whole, been unable to grapple. Hence the need for our new R.T.G's and for the N.I.H.E. This need is indirectly spelt out in the now famous Department of Education manifesto, "Investment in Education", published in the early '60's as the official reasons for the modernisation of the second-level education system. In the light of this Dr. Newman's observation that the N.I.H.E. is 'forgoing a new path in Irish education' is to be strongly doubted.

Such features as the modular system of study have their advantages and disadvantages for students; I submit that they are used now in Ireland because they have been proved in American institutes such as M.I.T. to be more effective methods of running teacher-centred education programmes. Similarly with the striking feature of curriculum-building in the Institute: as Dr. Newman states "the courses reflect the economic and geographical situation of the Limerick area". This reflection, however, is interpreted and formulated by the department heads within the Institute. This feature is common to all educational institutions whose chief aim is socialisation: the world-view in the environs of the institution is dominated by the authorities. Furthermore, the students' ingestion and assimilation of this given world-view can be efficiently monitored by its composers through a system based on modular study linked with continuous assessment. This seems to me to be the thinking behind the innovations on which Dr. Newman lays favourable emphasis during his address.

Therefore, let the Bishop have no doubts about the N.I.H.E.'s potential for thorough (if not covertly ruthless) socialisation: the odds are loaded in its favour. With only one reservation to which I shall direct my attention presently, I am also very certain that the courses offered in the Institute (and indeed the whole concept of the N.I.H.E.) "link up admirably with developments in the Shannon and Limerick industrial estates, the E.E.C. and American business interests in Ireland". Neo-colonialism has built for itself on the banks of the soon-to-be-polluted Shannon a virtually flawless pillar in its own image. When he speaks of the need to seek a nice balance between innovation and tradition, let us remember that he refers more to the colour of a social cement than to its binding-power. The innovations to which he has directed his attention are features designed to facilitate socialisation into a society whose face is changing but whose economic base is still well intact? He may fear the cultural consequences of an influx of foreign capital and business methods, but I am sure that the Church of which he is a prestigious member will lead the way by adjusting itself to cater for the life-styles of the foreign rich just as it has managed to cater for the strange ethical stances of our indigenous capitalist class.

"STUDENTS AND OVER-RADICAL POLITICS"

I mentioned that I had one reservation concerning the future success of the N.I.H.E. socialisation programme; apparently, Dr. Newman shares this reservation albeit in a different spirit: if the students and the academic staff become conscious of the dangers to the freedom of those who shall play a great part in the building of the country's future which are posed by the philosophy underlying the inauguration of the Institute, and if they follow up this consciousness with

constructive action aimed at the liberation of the youth of the area from such haughty oppression as that outlined in most conciliatory tones by the Bishop of Limerick and the Minister for Education in the same city and, significantly, within less than a month of one another, then the whole operation could backfire on the bureaucrats whose chief wish would seem to be self-perpetuation into the rank spiritual, intellectual, emotional and even physical prisons of generations to come. Such a backfire, it must be realised, would be no occasion for euphoric celebration: it would throw onto those who have no material stake in the present economic and social system, and upon those who would be willing to sacrifice their present stake, the burden of ridding our society of oppression without the use of oppressive means. For the form of revolutionary action used gives to the new society its chief characteristics.

How then can the students of the N.I.H.E. work with the people of the Mid-West region and with other students and the people of the country to bring about the changes which they deem necessary and in which all, and not merely an elite, participate actively? I shall suggest a solution to this question by continuing my criticism of the remainder of the Bishop's speech, which deals specifically with his view of the relationship between students and revolution.

ALONG THE DUREX TRAIL

WHERE THERE'S A WILL ...

Following the McGee court decision on the use of contraceptives, it was only to be expected that the laws of the capitalist market would soon take their inevitable and long delayed course in the supply of these commodities. The letter published below is, as far as is known, among the first general circulars of its kind to penetrate deepest in Limerick. The letter could yet become a collector's item as a souvenir of the opening up of one of the last stretches of virgin country along the Durex trail.

NORTHERN MEDICAL SUPPLIES

OUR REF: DATE:
Agent. As Postmark.

Dear Sir,

I thank you for your letter received today and am pleased to hear you wish to distribute our Order Forms for *DUREX PROTECTIVES* among your married friends.

I enclose herewith 20 numbered Order Forms, more will be supplied to you as you require same. You simply hand these Forms to those of your friends who wish to purchase our products, they will send the Order and Remittance direct to the company at the above address.

On every four orders we receive from your friends you will receive £1. These £1 payments will be accompanied by a list of the four relevant Order Form numbers to enable you to check your records.

Remember, be discreet when issuing the Order Forms as we do not wish our Agents to offend those people who may have moral objections to the introduction of our products on the market.

Please write when you require further Order Forms.

Wishing you every success,

Sales Manager.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

The rises and falls of tenant associations in various parts of the country in the last ten years have followed a clearly defined pattern. The form of these developments has usually been for tenants in new local authority estates to band together in order to achieve particular demands. The demands invariably include a fairer and cheaper rent assessment scheme and occasionally, improvements in roads, playgrounds and the maintenance of houses.

The most militant tenants association to emerge in Limerick in recent years has been the Southill Tenants' Association. The Southill tenants took part in a two-year rent strike against the Corporation's method of fixing rents in the period 1972-'73. During the National Association of Tenants Organisations' "general" rent strike - which was called off last year following concessions won from the new Coalition Government - the Southill tenants were the best organised group of the relatively small number of tenants in Limerick supporting the strike.

When the Southill strike first began in February 1972, 379 tenants joined in the dispute, but by the end of the strike this number had dwindled down to less than a hundred. During the strike the officers of the Tenants' Association collected the weekly rents of the striking tenants and lodged this money with the local Credit Union. When the strike ended, a sum of £517 had accrued in interest to the credit of the Southill Tenants' Association.

In September of this year the secretary of the Association was instructed by his committee to call a general meeting of the 379 members who originally started out on the strike. The sole item on the agenda of this meeting was the disposal of the £517. The committee met before the general meeting and, having dismissed as impractical the idea of distributing the £517 among the 379 tenants, placed the following suggestions before their members:

- That the £517 should continue to be held by the Tenants' Association. (This suggestion had received six votes at the Committee meeting).
- No 2. That a sum of £200 be retained by the Association and that the £317 balance be divided among the voluntary organisations in the area. (This suggestion had received 5 votes).
- No 3. That £50 be retained by the Tenants' Association and that the rest of the money be given to the local Catholic Church in Southill for the purchase of a bell or a cross. (This proposal got one vote).

These three proposals were put before the 56 members who attended the general meeting. After it had been proposed that the first suggestion (that the money be retained by the Tenants' Association) be implemented, another member recommended that £100 be kept by the Association and that the rest be distributed among old people living below the poverty level in the area. Paddy O'Donovan, chairman of the Limerick Tenants' Association and a member of the Southill tenants, stepped in at this stage and requested that the



motions on the agenda be voted on first before any further proposals were taken.

A member of the Association followed on by asking the chairman, Tommy Allen, to rule the third motion on the agenda (that the money be given to buy a church bell or cross) out of order on the ground that the National Association of Tenants' Organisations was a non-political and non-sectarian body and that the motion violated N.A.T.'s constitution. Chairman Allen ruled that the motion was not repugnant to the Association's principles and insisted on a vote being taken on the three proposals. He was supported in his ruling by a large majority of the members present.

The vote showed the following result:

- No 1. 18 votes.
No 2. 4 votes.
No 3. 27 votes.

The chairman accordingly ruled that the money be given to the Catholic Church for the purchase of a bell or a cross. Before the meeting concluded the secretary John Kennedy, referred to "outside influences at work" and pointed out that if the Tenants' Associations throughout the country were to give away their funds in a like manner N.A.T.O. would soon collapse. Paddy O'Donovan undertook to contact the headquarters of N.A.T.O. in Dublin to check on the legality of the decision taken in relation to the Association's constitution.

Since this meeting Matt Larkin, general secretary of N.A.T.O., has written to P. O'Donovan stating that in his personal opinion the decision to give the £517 to the Catholic Church was unconstitutional and he advised the Association not to carry out this decision. It has also come to light after the meeting that the Southill Tenants' liabilities could come to £200 in legal fees and other expenses resulting from the rent strike.

So the matter rests. Apart from some complaints about repairs and lack of amenities raised by Tommy Allen in the "Limerick Leader", the Tenants' Association in Southill has slipped backwards since the rent strike ended and it is now an almost spent force in the community. If and when a bell begins to peal out over Southill it could well be tolling the end of the once militant Tenants' Association. And the phrase "Sound as a bell" will have taken on a new meaning in Limerick.

WELL TRADE

How many readers know of the operations of the Welltrade International firm which has its headquarters at the home of Mr. Hurley, who is the owner, in Newport, Co. Limerick? The registered offices of the firm which, in business circles is known as an International Personnel Agency, are in Shannon with other branches in Brighton and Amsterdam. The firm may be better known for its involvement in the practise of providing contract workers.

For those who are not acquainted with this term "contract workers" it is first necessary to explain briefly what it means. Many of the larger firms in Europe, U.S.A., Canada, and the Middle and Far East oftentimes find it necessary to employ extra workers, most times highly skilled, for a short period of time, ranging from 3 to 6 months. Due to the short period of time involved many firms find it difficult to hire such manpower, particularly at such short notice. Thus the opening for these "International Personnel Agencies". They recruit their workers through the medium of the Press and have at their disposal a list containing the names of thousands of workers. These workers are willing to go, on request, to any country in the World being given only a few days notice. The Personnel Agency advertise by writing to the individual large firms in the World informing them of their services. Interested firms then contact the Agency and a contract may be signed between the two, e.g. that the agency will provide 6 workers for 6 months starting on Monday August, 12th. The agency are then responsible for providing the labour and ensuring they are at their particular destination on the specified date. The labour force of the Welltrade Company is almost exclusively British. Welltrade would, to my knowledge, claim to be one of the biggest such operators in Germany and Holland.

On being hired the workers are flown to their respective destinations to take up their particular employments. On arrival they are met by a representative of the Welltrade Company. He is responsible for the welfare of the employees, which includes finding accommodation for them and informing them of their rights in the particular country. This demands a highly responsible, well informed capable representative who cares for the plight of the workers. This is particularly essential when the employees are in a foreign country whose language they do not understand, a major problem here being the exploitation of workers.

Unfortunately this does not seem to be the case with Welltrade whose primary aim seems to be to exploit their workers as much as possible. Rather than have the interests of their employees at heart the representatives of this company are more interested in fulfilling the contract, second only comes the welfare of the labour force. Workers' complaints are dealt with by the rep. often times involving top level managerial discussions, but when the contract is at stake which is more important the continuity of the contract or better conditions for employees? In this instance the former is the case. Reps. are expected to follow Company Policy even if it be at the cost of the workers' welfare.

Wage earning possibilities often seem attractive. This is understandable as the average wage earnings in Germany and Holland are considerably higher than in Ireland or England. On closer examination however this attractiveness loses its flavour. As an example let us consider a contract which Welltrade undertook to fulfill in Bavaria, Germany. The work involved was forestry work more precisely stripping the barks from trees. Payment was Dm 8 – per hour (£1.35 approx.) gross.

Until recently comparatively little was known about the business activities of John (Sean) P. Hurley and his company. Welltrade East Limited, Shannon Airport. Hurley, a reputed millionaire, lives in regal splendour in a modern mansion at Ballymackeogh House, Newport, Co. Tipperary. Known to be a friend of Deputy S. Coughlan and the employer of Coughlan's son Thady, Hurley took Ivan Cooper and the Limerick Labour deputy on a jaunt to the Aran Islands during Cooper's Civic Week visit to Limerick earlier this year. Apart from a "Sunday Times" article titled "Easy Rider", which described the collapse of one of Hurley's companies on the Continent last year, the press has shown little interest in Welltrade's many and varied contracts in the "human labour" market. In its edition of October 26th the "Limerick Leader" published a report of a High Court case brought against Hurley for libel and slander by the firm of O'Donovan, solicitors, 13 William Street, Limerick. Hurley accepted that two letters and oral remarks made by him were defamatory to the plaintiffs. He made a public apology and paid £500 in damages, as well as £2,500 in costs. This article describes some of Hurley's business methods and how he exploits workers in supplying labour for contracts throughout the world.

for a 40 hour week. Overtime possibilities were unlimited, again for the princely sum of Dm 8 – per hour! So for a 40 or 80 hour week the hourly gross rate remains the same! Needless to say the Taxman takes a lot of this. That these workers will work overtime is understandable, more money and what else is there to do in a country where one does not speak the language and when the accommodation is often sub-normal? Even this Dm 8 – is to my knowledge less than the hourly rate of a person hired privately by the firm doing the same work. On being questioned about this matter the European Manager replied that the workers working under contract got "more or less" the same as their privately hired counterparts. Less I believe! How is it possible for the employer to pay the same rate for overtime as the normal 40 hour week? It is forbidden by law! The answer lies in the fact that the employing company do not pay the contract worker directly: they pay Welltrade, who in turn pay the workers. Needless to say Mr. Hurley fills his pockets during this transaction. Another interesting feature of this Company's operations in Germany is that this type of work is forbidden by law! Contract work in Germany is only allowed if the workers are paid directly by the firm which employs them. This is not the case with Welltrade. This of course makes it cheaper for the hiring firm in Germany. For instance, a German working in Bavaria on 8 Dm per hour would get 10 Dm – for the first few hours, 12 for the next and 16 for more. The contract worker gets the same all the time. The hiring firm pay Welltrade the amount due to the employee less a certain percentage. So both do well and only the worker suffers.

How Welltrade manage to bypass this law against contract work remains a mystery, but the important facts are: (1) In Germany they are operating outside the law. (2) They are not paying their workers the money they're entitled to. (3) The accommodation is often sub-standard, 4 persons to one room sometimes. (4) It would appear that the representatives are in adequate for their posts though adequate in Welltrades' terms.

There is no doubt that many people have made money from this type of work, some have been underpaid and exploited to a great extent, others overpaid and living on the hard-earned money of some unsuspecting worker. Surely such blatant, immoral exploitation and illegal work should not be tolerated. Could we (the people) ask for an inquiry and strict control over the operations of such firms? Or are such practices to be justified by their right to exploit and steal?

ECHOES FROM

- THE -

BOTTOM DOG

"We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of the
"Bottom Dog" – the oppressed – be it nation, class, or sex."

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THE BAKERS' STRIKE

Was there ever such a line of reasoning as was shown in the Press this week over the above; and if this hypothesis is good and sound it follows that the logical conclusion to any advance in wages to meet the increase in cost of living put forth by the B.D. must be accounted for by saying there are too many B.D.'s there. Such is the new school started by Matt Russell. In that brief column of the Press he sets forth all the defects of a Society that his Dada tried hard and failed to break; and any reader of Grant Allen's famous novel, "What's Bred in the Bone", would guess that the noble scion of a noble sire also shows the yellow streak. The issue now really is to break up the Society, not the 1s 6d advance asked. And that Society over 100 years old, and enjoying the right of self-determination as regards its members, is, according to Matt, to be scrapped to suit the Modern Machine Bakery Methods. The Dog has to heartily laugh at this 'Modern' Machinery, comprising a single drum or mixer and an obsolete gas engine, and you have the sum total of Matt's Modern Machinery. Tubridy has a secondhand divider in addition to the drum; so Madge Daly. Both of those have eclipsed Matt in that respect in installing scrap. Truth. Matt also says in the Press, or leads the public to believe, that he is paying 5s. 6d. per sack – the highest in Ireland. Well, the Dog says Matt is a damn liar, plainly. He never paid 5s. 6d. per sack to the bakers of Limerick; and as to being the highest in Ireland, we have said No, and we may say Matt's information is at fault. Or is it another 1 – ? We are getting on, you know. To prove what the men say is truth: An offer was made to the Mayor to procure 100 sacks of flour and hand it over to a responsible Committee of the citizens, have a definite number of men employed to turn those into bread, and the result made public. The Mayor – ah there! – has turned down this on the plea that no flour is obtainable. Facts are stubborn things.

Meanwhile the men's pickets are doing their work most satisfactorily and much to the annoyance of some of our local leaders of Patriotic Flag-wagging who have signified their august disapproval of that conduct by calling the pickets low, mean ruffians. Ah, poor dog! Now you are down and bear the kick. But say, Madge, was it not the bakers who have placed you in that seal-skin coat? Remember the time, not so very long ago – And the Dog merely asks, Who are those would-be Republicans who refuse to the Limerick Bakers a 55 per cent increase on pre-war rates of pay?

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS

The strike, sectional or sympathetic, is the last resource of the oppressed worker. It is a weapon he hesitatingly wields when milder means of redress have proved futile. It is a two-edged sword that cuts both ways. It entails present sacrifice and long suffering to the loiter as well as to the general community. It leaves a legacy of bitterness and bad

blood behind. But with the Limerick Bakers it was the only way. The rapacity of the masters – not the exaggerated demands of the men – is the sole cause to this conflict. We have not entered the embittered arena with light hearts. We have weighed the problem well. We feel where the shoe pinches, and foresee the cruel consequences. Like the Christians of old, we, too, are fighting for the faith that is in us, for the right-to-live, not in unsanitary hovels, from hand to mouth, but as civilised beings, as Christians, as Catholics, and as Irishmen. Fighting with backs to the wall to preserve the Bakers' Union from the out-to-kill onslaughts of Capitalism and Greed. Do they think that the bakers and their bretheren of the Trade, Labour, and Transport bodies will consent to a change in the working system which would send several of their bake-house-burnt veterans about their business to the poorhouse or boneyard? Is 3s to the man and £300 to the master in accord with the "Labour" of Leo XIII? Is a rack-rented room in a slum tenement, and a motor car and palatial mansions, "that which is just and equal", as set forth in the "Sermon on the Mount"? Masters, Labour must not be mocked!

THE PATRICK STREET SWEATING DENS

Some months ago we drew attention to the grave scandal that existed in our midst in regard to the miserable wages paid to Assistants in Patrick Street. We told our readers of the proposed step to be taken by the Drapers' Assistants. That was last May; and now we find that, through one fault or another, the much-needed bonus is not to date from May, but from September. We do not sanction this. The D.A. can, if they choose, put a stop to this shifting. Is it not perfectly scandalous in a Catholic city that £40 a year (including everything) is the highest wage paid by Griffin, Ryan and Co.? The public must be made aware of those monuments and living exponents of the gospel of Greed. Work in the dark won't do. Peaceful negotiation won't do. No. Come out in the light. Let every citizen know of these "Catholics" who will not pay that which will enable their employees to live in frugal comfort. Cast them from our midst. To H – with themselves and their babby rags. The Dog will have his say in his day.

HELD OVER

We regret that owing to pressure of space the concluding part of "Matt Talbot: Saint or Scab" series has been held over to our December edition.

Also held over is the second part of "The Parish Pump".