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THE
VOICE
OF THE
WORKER

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

LABOUR EXCHANGE

8,000

UNEMPLOYED



SILLY

~~CIVIC~~ WEEK

GRANDEUR AND GUINNESS

BY NOW you'll have read all the bishops' Lenten pastorals and decided to give up one thing or another for the prescribed forty days. Giving up Guinness is easiest of all for to reinforce pulpit exhortations you have 'Bishop' Richie Ryan's 5p extra Excise Duty and 1p VAT, the deserving Guinness Family's extra 2p (by the way, they did have a real bishop in the family, Bishop Plunket, who, in my day, lived in some affluence in Clontarf. "Wrong" colour of course) and publicans: 2p more (My Goodness only knows how many bishops the trade has produced). All these additions come to a healthy 10p a pint on what is essentially the workingman's drink and I don't recall reading one word of protest from Labour's standard bearers in Limerick, Steve T.D. (speechless again) and Mayor Thady. You do pick 'em!

The Ryan Budget's 3p on fags has now been enlarged to 5p; rail and bus fares have had a post-Budget rise of 25 to 33 percent; petrol, paraffin and heating oil yet another hoist. Of course, that's only for starters. Our patriotic shopkeepers will be adding tuppences and thruppences to every item on their shelves in the next few months (weeks?) to make up for the possible tenth-of-a-penny extra VAT and transport on each such item. All of which is allowed by law for we live in what is humorously called a free economy, a capitalist state where the publican can add 2p to the pint without as much as a by your leave, and the worker is prohibited from seeking 2p an hour more on his wages. It is a state of affairs supported by Fine Gael, Finna Fail and your very own Steve T.D. and Thady. You do pick 'em!

As if this were not enough, the Brussels bureaucrats are getting ready with the blessing of our Minister for Agriculture, Mark Clinton, T.D., to order a swingeing rise of 6p a lb. for butter and equally smart rises in the cost of milk and cheese to help the downtrodden farmers of the EEC. Not, of course, that your local friendly shopkeeper will confine himself to inviting you to pay just the official rises; he'll want what he regards as his whack on top. Now I'm partial to imported Stilton cheese (just as Jim Kemmy is to Carlsberg lager and Steve Coughlan to Ceylon tea-though I haven't heard of Steve being denounced for drinking a foreign import instead of a local brew of dandelion leaves) but not any more. My luxury item used to cost 47p a quarter, the other week it was marked 62p. I left it back on the shelf, and I've given up Stilton for Lent. Also cross-country running. I haven't read the Lenten Pastorals yet but I'll wager these items are not mentioned. If the rapacity of Irish shopkeepers is not covered in these pastorals — and condemned — I shall, for such future Lents as Providence allows me, give up something else: *I'll give up reading Bishops' Pastorals!*

Of course, we should not expect bishops to do our work for us. Theirs is the care of souls and I've no wish to relieve them of any part of that duty but when one of the Irish hierarchy sneers at Joseph-Pierre Proudhon ("All property is theft") and his relevance to our human condition, he will get his answer from me in just as uncompromising terms as the reformist Sidney Smith replied to the Bishop of Exeter. Smith, no mean economist, said he was confirmed in his belief in the Apostolic Succession of bishops else how could the Bishop of Exeter take on with the such ease the mantle of Judas Iscariot. With or without (and, regrettably, mostly without) the clergy to back us we have to fight the battle of the worker, the fight for a just society.

IT WILL be posited that all that appears in the *Limerick Socialist* is mere glib, eccentric, destructive criticism. So mere rebuttal is not enough. Let's try to be positive: it costs money to run a country and taxation has to be raised to maintain services. First of all, this piece of a island is too expensively run: three million people have 14 TDs. On the basis of population alone (leaving aside, and it's difficult, the gross national product) Britain with 17 times our population would

BY DERMOT McEVOY

be entitled on our scale of grandeur to no fewer than 2,448 MPs, yet it makes do with 615. Could not our little country be run with 30 or 35 TDs? Do we have to have a Senate? Do we really need Ambassadors, Counsellors, and Second Secretaries from Paris to Canberra? WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE? And all those Ministries of State, with £12,000-a-year Secretaries, deputy-secretaries, assistant secretaries, principal officers and assistant principal officers, not to speak of the Bords-for Failte, Mona, Greyhounds, Electricity, Fish and the Sacred Galetacht! All these buckos and assistant buckos — flying first-class round the world "projecting out image" or some such nonsense! Now, do you wonder we have the eight-shilling pint, the near ten bob packet of fags

Two hundred years ago Adam Smith wrote "The Wealth of Nations" — we are celebrating its bi-centenary this year — and in it he said: "It is the highest impertinence and presumption in kings and ministers to pretend to watch over the economy of private people . . . They are themselves always, and without any exception, the greatest spendthrifts in the society". In all this, I'll take a chance with the rather unfortunate expression of Chancellor Denis Healey and say that with our grandiose posture we're out of our Chinese little minds. Yes, Minister, and No, Minister, and Minister would you kiss my arse!

It is time the Irish people dropped this *folie de grandeur*, threw aside all notion of keeping up with the Joneses. We can do without mechanical dish-washers, colour televisions, Japanese cameras, Mercedes cars, glossy magazines, hi-fis, deep-freezers — the false gods of Madison Avenue. Is this a Luddite view? I don't think so? Gadgets don't make one a whit happier. The only real satisfaction in this short life comes, in my experience, from helping your neighbour and making a few friends. The only unforgivable thing is to sit back and whine "what can I do?". You and no one else can do a helluva lot: you can send Jim Kemmy to Dail Eireann to voice your displeasure at the way this country is run. It will be a slap in the teeth for the greedyguts of Limerick. Meanwhile, of course, save up for a Guinness to pour over the rabbitmen and their ilk when they come knocking at the door with their promises of 32-county republics, perpetual sunbursts, algebra through the medium of Irish, jobs for all, that Second Channel, that third bridge, that new City Hall, another round with England, or whatever is the accepted nonsense of the day. Remember: You pick 'em!

NOT SO long ago I drew attention to advertisements in the *Limerick Leader* (the Buckley's money-spinner) and I warned you among other things not to put your few quid in, *inter alia*, the fringe banks that offer higher rates of interest than are commercially available, that the "guarantee", as advertised in the *Leader*, was a dangerous catchpenny. Well, Irish Trust Bank has since closed its doors and the hapless depositors are whistling in the dark, looking to the Central Bank to give them back their savings. The Central Bank is YOU, the taxpayer, and I don't see why you should come to the rescue. Before the year is out some more of the "banks" that supply the Buckley's with more money than they can reasonably need will go the way of ITB. Depositors should look to the Buckley's rather than you when bankers' adventures into property development (faulty towers?), super-dupermarkets and gold mines in Toomevara come unstuck. But would the exercise be worth while? I think not; they'd give you what you'd get if you mixed their integrity with honey — sweet f.a!

WILL THOSE Fianna Fail-ers ever learn? Even after the way they came unstuck with their baseless accusations of corruption against Tully (fancy Fianna Fail calling *anyone* corrupt!) another of them sticks his neck out by saying that Conor Cruise O'Brien was once a member of the Communist

Party and less than half-heartedly accepting the Minister's denial. Now the poor FF-er has to prove it all, or withdraw it all, before the Dail Committee of Procedure and Privileges.

Jack Lynch, when Conor Cruise O'Brien returned to Irish politics, contented himself with going around the convents and colleges saying "I don't know if he is a Communist, but some of his friends are". No harm, of course, in that! Oh no; oh, don't nail his ears to the lamp-post! Conor Cruise O'Brien is not and never has been a socialist, let alone a Communist; he is a liberal who finds the Labour Party a handy tribune on which to advance his usually sensible ideas. For his courageous stand against the patriots, God save the mark!, he deserves the unstinted support of all decent people. He is an ornament to the country, towers head and shoulders over anyone in the Dail or out of it, but he is not, repeat not, a socialist. Sad but there you are.

But is there one, just one, socialist in the Labour Party? Socialist and socialism are dirty words at election time; you won't find the Coughlans using them, or Corish, or O'Leary, or

that great Panjandrum of Economics, Senator Halligan. "Socialism" is a word to be used after an election, not during one. In answer to any possible queries about myself: I am a Red and I have been a member of the Communist Party. Jim Larkin, Big Jim, signed me in on the stage of the Tivoli Theatre, Dublin, when Dublin people, young and old, were protesting against the judicial execution in the U.S. of Sacco and Vanzetti. The Tivoli on Burgh Quay, Dublin, has since changed hands; it is now the place where the Truth in the News is worked over, embroidered with shamrocks, Easter lilies, Gaelic bullshit, and the sayings of Uncle Tim Pat (Let's have a shoot-out) Coogan an' all. Yes, the Tivoli has changed since the days Japanese acrobats and Chinese jugglers cavorted on its boards and the Lancashire comedian produced a ham 'cured at Lourdes'. Oddly, I haven't changed; I'm still a Red, and who wouldn't be on this Animal Farm? You should join me for it takes two to tango... tetigi... tactum! Tactum! Contact! That way we'll get 'em yet and it'll be Up Garryowen! with a vengeance.

NEW YORK JOTTINGS

BY BILLY LEONARD

New York City may be going down the fiscal drain but there's a lot of the green stuff still floating around our canyons.

Take Stewart Mott, for example. Or to give him his full moniker, Stewart Rawlings Mott. Stewart is 38 and a bachelor. He also is the heir of one of the founders of the General Motors Corporation. But the poor fellow has problems. He has a nice penthouse pad on posh Park Avenue where he has been able to indulge his passion for husbandry. And therein lies the rub. For his neighbours complain that Stewart has created "a great hazard" by overloading the roof with "vegetation, livestock, soil, mulch, feed, pots, plants, trellises, cages and machinery". Not to mention furniture, fencing, lumber, bricks, stones and construction equipment. And they've taken Stewart to court. Stewart pooh-poohs the livestock charge. He claims he keeps only "a little, white bunny rabbit, four chickens, praying mantises and ladybugs".

The case is still in court. Meanwhile, Stewart has decided to hedge his bets — just in case. He has rented four top floors of a new condominium that is described as "the ultimate in luxury". When completed, Stewart will be able to greet the sun on rising from his bed in the East Solarium and to bid it goodnight from a desk that faces west. All this amid 10,000 square feet which Stewart has reserved for planting. The cost: a cool three and a half million dollars. This does not include monthly maintenance charges for the quadruplex penthouse which are bound to be substantial. Wonder if Stewart is familiar with Veblen's famous phrase — "conspicuous waste".

Out West, in the land of Make-Believe, one express lane of the Santa Monica Freeway has been set aside for autos carrying two or more persons. It's an energy conservation ploy. The other day, a highway cop noticed something peculiar about a passenger in a car using the special lane. He stopped it and discovered the passenger was an inflatable rubber dummy wearing a dress. The driver was quoted as saying she and the dummy had been using the quicker, less congested lane for some time. She was given a 25 dollar ticket.

The Reverend Billy James Hargis is a right-wing evangelist and longtime crusader for traditional American virtues. Billy, who is 50 and who has often denounced promiscuity and homosexuality, is himself embroiled in a sex scandal. Time magazine says that five students, four of them men, at Hargis' American Christian College in Tulsa, have come forward and said that the evangelist had sexual relations with them. Billy is quoted as telling Time lawyer:

"I have made more than my share of mistakes. I'm not proud of them".

Amen, Billy, Amen.

Judith Campbell Exner has hired a literary agent to help her prepare and sell a book telling about her sex life with President John F. Kennedy and a Mafia figure. Judith's name surfaced when a Senate committee started an investigation of reported assassination plots against Fidel Castro involving the Mafia and the C.I.A. Her phone calls to her reputed Mafia lover had been monitored by the F.B.I. as well as her calls to the White House. Kennedy is said to have dropped her like a hot cake after the late J. Edgar Hoover warned him of her connection with the underworld.

Meanwhile, a San Francisco woman who is NOT planning to write a book about it says she had an affair with J.F.K. over a three-year-period and described him as "a wonderful guy and a lot of fun". Joan Lundberg Hitchcock said her liaisons with Kennedy occurred infrequently — "whenever he was in the Bay area". Ms. Hitchcock, married four times, said her four children know about the affair and approve.

"They were great, shiny days", she said. "He was a man's man and a ladies' man and I don't think any of the publicity will damage his memory. My attitude about our relationship was that if it wasn't me it would be somebody else".

Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts has taken himself out of the running for the Democratic nomination for President. Yet the polls show he remains a clear favourite of Democrats and independents. The same polls indicate that if Kennedy refuses to be drafted, Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey would be the leading contender. Humphrey is playing coy right now. But he is reported waiting impatiently in the wings for the call and with a 100,000-word acceptance speech that will put everybody at the Convention to sleep. Humphrey, who was LBJ's Vice-president, is no favourite of the Left or of the old antiwar coalition.

In the old 'Bluegrass State' of Kentucky, a justice of the peace in Newport is drawing a lot of flak for "removing the image of dignity and responsibility from the office of magistrate". It seems that the justice officiated at a wedding in which the bride, bridegroom, the best man and flower girl showed up in their birthday suits. The 69-year-old justice was fully clothed. The nude wedding was termed "an embarrassment to the county and its citizens".

**PART
FIFTEEN**

**BY
P. J. FEAN**

THE DEMOCRATIC LADIES

Meaningless but terrifying, the words prurience and concupiscence were hurled from the pulpits in the various churches against a congregation whose week's wages would scarce buy a dictionary. The words were spoken by young clerics fresh from Maynooth who were airing their profundity of thought.

It was the pious practice of some of the Administrators of the city's churches to discover and pursue courting couples in the many lovers' walks in the suburbs, and, by administering some wallops with a shillilagh or a walking stick, to suggest to the frisking lambs the meaning of the words prurience and concupiscence.

When the Sinn Fein courts had replaced the British courts, one of those Reverend Administrators was appointed a Judge of the Sinn Fein court in the city. He sat on the bench lately vacated by the British Judges and Magistrates. His presence on the woolsack of the Judge gave an air of authority to the court whose officers and most of the citizens had never heard of the Spanish Inquisition.

The Sinn Fein courts were held in secret in any room or hall during the British regime, but came into the open following the truce.

With the arrival in the city of the many contingents representing the Republican interests, there also arrived many ladies of democratic views whose numbers when added to the numbers of resident democrats suggested prurience and concupiscence. The ideals of those democrats were repugnant to the pure ideals of Republicanism. Many of those ladies were arrested by the Republican police and brought before the Reverend Magistrate. They were given a month in jail without the option of a fine.

When the National army took over the jail, they were faced with the problem of what to do with the virtuous ladies and other prisoners before nightfall. Some of the prisoners accepted their liberty with pleasure, but others including the ladies rejected the offer of liberty and refused to leave the jail.

With modesty averted eyes and blushes the ladies pointed out that they were safer in jail than out of it. The implications of the ladies preference for the jail was repugnant to the lofty ideals of the National army whose authorised commissariat did not include a harem. The prisoners were forced out of the jail and marched down Mulgrave st. to the Ordinance Barrack into which they were forced at gun point. The commander of the Ordinance Barrack was informed that, as his men had jailed those prisoners, it was up to him to look after their welfare.

BLACK JACK MONDAY

One prisoner alone was permitted to remain in the jail; he was Jack Monday from West Africa. He was a brave black man with a heart of gold. Jack was a fitter on a boat which had arrived at the docks prior to the truce of December 1921.

When a boat is due to leave port it is the custom to hoist the colours of the country from which it is sailing. On the day that Jack's boat was leaving port, the tricolour was hoisted. Several Tans came on board to remove the offending colours. Jack charged with a sailor's knife and stabbed two of them before he was overpowered and removed to the county jail. The truce saved him from the death penalty. As Jack was a British subject, he could have found difficulty in getting a job on another boat, as that time a black man was a curiosity in the city and he might have found himself destitute, without help from any source. He was permitted to remain in jail as a free man, free to come and go as he pleased. Sometime later, he enlisted in the National army as a fitter in the Transport Corps at Gormanstown Camp and left the army in 1928.

Following his attestation, it was suggested to Jack that he

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change his name to the Celtic form Sean de Luin and masquerade as a patriotic Irishman and in the fulness of time aspire to the office of President. Jack rejected the suggestion with black contempt.

REFUGEES – IN MUNGRET COLLEGE

Now that the city was occupied by two warring factions, the citizens were restricted in their movements. Trade came to a halt, as people cannot live on unlimited credit or on eternal "tick".

It became difficult to obtain food even at exorbitant cost. Rather than risk being shot at when going to their employment in the factories and stores, the workers stayed at home. The result of this prudent inaction was that all industrial work ceased. Outside the city, the producers of food would not risk the loss of their lives or liberty or the loss of their goods by entering the city.

Bakeries and grocers alone could continue working as long as stocks lasted. As both bakeries and grocers were small family industries, great credit is due to them for their spirited courage and humanity. The butchers and greengrocers were the patriots and heroes of the day.

Butchers and greengrocers had to journey into the country to buy meat on the hoof and greens in the bag. The trading terms were – cash on the Nail. No credit was asked for, as a refusal often offends. Having purchased their needs the butchers and grocers then faced the risk of loss in transit to armed hoodlums who might pretend an allegiance to staters or diehards; such like creatures gave both sides a bad name.

On arrival in the city, the goods might be siezed by either factions as contraband of war, on the grounds that the goods were destined for the enemy. On account of these things food was scarce in the city. The wealthy families and the thrifty ones had stocks of potatoes, flour, smoked and salted meats, as well as other groceries, in sufficient quantity for a week and more.

The poorer families who lived from hand to mouth, or bought their meagre supplies each day, were first to feel the pangs of hunger. They, not having a stone of flour to bake a cake, could not be told to go and eat cake.

These people trekked out into the countryside to friends or relations. They tested the friendship and proved the relationship by the length of their stay. Through an arrangement by Stephen O'Mara, Mayor of Limerick, many hundreds of friendless and indigent poor, trekked out two miles west of the city to the Jesuit College at Mungret. There they were kindly received and royally fed. The Jesuits always kept a good table. In this austere environment, they learned the practical value of the Christian virtue – obedience or else.

The stone corridor and the wooden corridor scarcely felt the footsteps of children or of the feeble aged. The many rugged roughs and the stalwart youths who daily came for a meal were fed and sent further afield. The robes and collar of parson or priest often conceal a robust physique, most competent to deal with the threat of violence.

Those refugees from hunger spent two weeks in Mungret College, remaining there until after Bonfire Night, living with the cultured minds in cloistral security, surrounded by rolling green fields landscaped with grazing herds and flocks ensuring

meat for dinner; their minds were raised to the contemplation of lofty ideals. The odour of sanctity was sweet to their soul. On Bonfire Night, the rumble of heavily laden lorries moving from the city on the Cork Road a mile away, sounded like the passing of a mighty Hbst. On Bonfire Night, the odour of burning bacon and other foods wafted from the city on the eastern breeze brought to their minds the odour of cooked pigs toes or 'trotters'. Those refugees were living a luxurious life in almost palatial surroundings but, like the poet who wrote "Be it ever so humble", they also longed for home. With shining eyes they faced the dawn. They could hear the crubeen calling a love song to the morn.

THE HOODED TERROR

All the world knows that Brian Boru, King of Thomond and High King of Ireland was slain by Brudar the Dane. The event occurred at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, in which the victorious Irish, commanded by Brian, drove the Danes from the country. The number of Danes slaughtered was great; every dead Dane became a Great Dane and was dumped in the Dodder river near which the battle was fought. The bodies covered the river and were carried out to sea. This was a remarkable export of Danish carcasses from Ireland. It was a fierce day long battle fought on land and water, but as no boats were used it cannot be classed as a naval battle. Many of the dead bodies were carried across the Irish sea to the coast of the neighbouring island of Britain where the astonished natives may have regarded the carcasses as salted bacon. It that time the natives of Britain were naked savages, who painted their bodies blue with woad. *Isatis tinctoris*. The name of Brian Boru has stirred the minds of poets and patriots of every generation and recalls the triumphs and glories of that battleaxe age.

The Diehards in the city revered the name of Brian Boru. The Staters also held the name in high esteem, but neither reverence nor esteem can win a battle. In their own modest way the Diehards were practical men and, knowing the advantage of mobile armour, they created an armour car. It was created in the image and likeness of a battleship on wheels. It was a double turreted yoke made of heavy steel plate. It had heavy iron wheels with solid rubber tyres and was

a Declaration of a Republic in its own right. The Diehards called it the Hooded Terror; it was their secret weapon.

This armour car was used by the Diehards in Limerick. Later in its career it was run off the road and abandoned; the Staters finding it abandoned by the roadside, like some rare botanical specimen fashioned in metal, plucked it from the mire, cleansed it, refurbished it and called it Brian Boru.

The entry of the Staters into the city was comparable to the Entry of the Gladiators, the cheers and applause of the citizens being as moving as that stirring piece of music ever sounded. The Diehards regarded the entry as an invasion of the territory, to be repulsed with a display of strength. Only the pure cleansing flame of the Republic could burn them out of the city. That Declaration of a Republic, the Hooded Terror, left the New Barrack and going down hill moved slowly into Catherine Street and halted near the junction with Thomas Street. It could go no further as the street was barricaded. It was armed with a Hotchkiss anti-aircraft gun which fired incendiary "tracer" bullets at the wood and canvas aeroplanes of that day. The barrel of the Hotchkiss gun was over an inch thick to withstand the heat of automatic fire. A curved vertical clip projecting from the barrel held 20 rounds. The Hotchkiss opened fire in bursts of twenty rounds at a draper's shop in William St., setting the place on fire. The firing continued into each window of the four-storied building until the ammunition was all used when the Hooded Terror returned to the New Barracks.

Next door to the draper's shop was J. & G. Boyd, the largest paint suppliers shop in the city; its ground floor area covered a quarter of an acre. The basement and ground floor was stocked with thousands of gallons of turpentine, paraffin and petrol in wooden barrels, as well as hundreds of drums of paint and explosive chemicals. The upper stories contained other combustible goods. It was well known in the city that a fire in the drapery shop would cause a major fire in the nearby paint shop. Should such a fire go unchecked, the city would be reduced to a mass of smouldering rubble in a matter of hours. The Staters acted with daring promptitude; even while Hooded Terror was firing incendiary bullets, they were preparing fire hoses which were readily available in the paint shop and in the police barrack. In a short time the fire was controlled and extinguished. (To be continued)

TAM AND THADY - SOME COMPARISONS

BY J. WALSH

Sooner or later, the admirer of the poem "Drunken Thady" is bound to be pulled up short by the remark that "of course, it's a straight lift from Burns". Then the heart sinks, while the knowledgeable one tells the story of Tam O'Shanter. He too was a drunken ne'er do well, the despair of wife and neighbours; like Thady, his defiance of powers temporal and spiritual brought him, one dark night, to the verge of destruction by ravening she-devils; and there is reason to suppose that he too took wisdom from the incident to mend his ways.

What of it? you may retort. If there were brave men before Agamemnon, there were blackguards after Tam o'Shanter, and one of them found his poet. Is there any evidence Hogan had Burns in mind when he was writing? Well, I'm afraid there is. Coincidence may explain the similarity of the stories, but coincidences hardly stretch as far as some of the direct echoes you find. Let's take a few examples.

Burns sets his scene like this. "When chapman billies leave the street/And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,/As market days are wearing late,/An' folk begin to tak the gate . . ." Hogan also portrays the close of market-day. "The Tradesman chatted o'er his drop,/The Merchant closed his vacant shop/. . . The Farmer left the noisy mart,/With heavy purse and lighten'd heart".

Tam's failings are recited by his wife. "O Tam! hadst thou

but been sae wise/As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice. . .". She goes on to tell him "That frae November till October/Ae market-day thou was nae sober. . ." and so on. Thady's pedigree is read for him by the Parish Priest. "Ah! Thady! oft the Parish Priest/Call'd thee a wicked, drunken beast. . .". And he declares "That drinking was your sole enjoyment/And breaking doors your whole employment", and so on. "That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,/The smith and thee gat roaring fou on" (Burns). "That, sure as closed each Sunday night in,/You set near half the parish fighting" (Hogan).

Neither can resist a moralising digression. Burns recalls himself. "But to our tale: Ae market night,/Tam had got planted unco right;". So does Hogan. "But, to our story of this queer boy,/Thady, this drunken Devil-may-care boy".

You could go on . . . But what emerges from the comparison, and what eventually restores Drunken Thady to his honoured place, is that if Hogan did look over Burn's shoulder, he stands up remarkably well to comparison with his famous mentor. Perhaps the feature which sets his poem apart is the brand of humour, that puncturing wit which deflates his own pomposity at the tail of a rhyming couplet. Thady himself seems to me an altogether more memorable character than Tam — possibly because he was a greater villain! With his creation, Thomondgate and Michael Hogan may boast to having produced the prince of Limerick blackguards.

THE BUDGET

BY JOHN BOYLE

In examining the latest Coalition Budget it is necessary to understand what a Budget is. It is an attempt to graft a form of corrective economic plan onto the basically unplanned (and unplanable) capitalist economy. Criticism of the Budget in the national press is on a purely empirical level, and does not question the necessity for its existence.

The socialist response to the Budget is one that rejects it out of hand, and poses the alternative of a planned economy, with the means of production centred in the State and with an overall plan directing the activities of all those engaged in productive work. This is in contrast to the capitalist system whereby the means of production are concentrated in the hands of relatively few — the capitalists — and the decisions taken in the productive area are left to the whims of these people. It is in this way that the future of those countries who are part of the capitalist world system lies directly in the hands of those whose sole motivating economic interest is the desire to maximise profits.

It is thus that we see today's situation of chronic unemployment throughout the West as a reflection of the decision taken by a sizeable proportion of the capitalist class to withhold investment to await a time when investment in productive activities will generate a sufficient level of profits to attract their capital. At the present the money markets of the world and the property markets are the focus of much investment activity which, in a planned economy, would be turned towards productive investments.

This, in a word, would serve the greatest good of the greatest number of eliminating the evil of unemployment through creating the jobs which the capitalist system is unable to generate. Seen in this light also and faced with the international world-wide power of organised capital, the puny efforts of small economics such as our own take on their proper perspective.

This understood, the efforts of Finance Minister Ryan can be examined. Insofar as employed workers are concerned, the Minister's speech in itself contained some of the most damning statistics possible regarding the impact of taxation on workers. Here are some extracts:

... in 1960/61 companies bore over 31% of income taxes; last year their share had shrunk to 5%...

When we turn to the other constituents of income taxation, we find that Schedule E (that is, employee) taxpayers, who accounted for 35% of income taxation in 1960/61 contributed 82% in 1975, while Schedule D payers (that is, the self-employed, other than companies) who accounted for 27% in 1960/61 represented only 12% in 1975.

... This is, of course, in part due to our policy of executing free Income Tax profits made from goods manufactured for export, and the freedom from income taxation enjoyed by over 95% of our farmers who, with their families, comprise about 25% of the workforce.

The above requires little comment. Shorn of statistics, what this amounts to is that the employed workers and salary earners are subsidising the criminal tax evasion of big business, farmers and the professional classes, as perpetrated by themselves and their array of legal and accountancy parasitic experts.

Mr. Ryan's reaction to this criminal state of affairs is to claim that by increasing personal allowances by between 7% and 9% in a period when inflation is expected to run at a much higher level he is improving the lot of the PAYE sector. This selfevident contradiction does not need refutation.

The much publicised increases in indirect taxation — in cigarettes, drinks and petrol especially, but in many other articles also due to be increased on March 1st — will make further inroads into the real spending power of working people. Ryan's ridiculous demand that workers accept a pay pause cannot be tolerated in the light of the facts that he has made available.

With regard to the unemployed, it cannot fairly be said that Ryan has done nothing. He has increased capital expenditure by £129 million, which is 27.6% more than last year. This will provide a bit of a boost in the industrial and construction areas, though scarcely enough to have more than a marginal effect.

As Social Welfare increases have risen by only 10%, and as inflation will be higher than this, it can be seen that in common with the employed workers, Ryan is also seeking to cut back on the "living standards" (if they can be dignified under such a heading) of the unemployed.

On the other side of the coin, it was reported that the Stock Markets reacted favourably to the Budget ("Irish Times", Jan. 30):

The Stock Market to Wednesday's Budget proposals by pushing leading Irish share prices to higher levels yesterday. . . The leading bank shares in particular were very firm . . .

The FUE and other employer organisations, while making some debating points for the sake of public relations, indicated their approval by their relative silence. Why should they spoil things? The employers aren't being asked to "tighten their belts".

Fianna Fail made much political capital out of the Budget, but it should be clearly understood that their performance if faced with the same set of figures would have been no better and most likely a lot worse. (Martin O'Donoghue, the F.F. economic advisor, was reported some days before the Budget as advocating cuts in social welfare benefits as one means of reducing Government expenditure).

Such is the reality of present-day capitalist Ireland. The Budget is a class weapon used by the capitalists and their political allies in Government to retain their stranglehold over the working population. Budgets and the necessity for them will not be defeated until the capitalist class itself is defeated.

For the socialist the Budget clarifies the essential conflict in society, and poses the political task that must be accomplished.

THE GREAT COD

What is the connection between greyhounds and pregnant women? Running fast has nothing got to do with it, as the intriguing question is somewhat unfair to the so-called weaker sex. With family planning very much a topical subject in Limerick at the moment, the time is opportune to reveal the secret of the greyhounds and pregnant women.

It seems that in the days of de Valera, when all Irish girls were comely colleens dancing in the evening sunlight at the crossroads, a special cod liver oil allowance was made available to pregnant women in County Clare. The exact purpose of the

cod liver oil is not recorded, but it must not have been vitally essential as very shortly after the introduction of the scheme, a terrible scandal was discovered.

It was found that some pregnant women were not availing of the free cod liver oil, but were in fact selling it to greyhound breeders to rub into the young dogs.

The scandal only came to light recently when the Mid-Western Health Board was asked to make legal the distribution of family planning aids to married couples. One concerned Clareman, Cllr. Paddy Bugler, warned what might

STOPPRESS

REMEMBER LIMERICK!

A group of Limerick workers announced last night that they had arranged a "Workers' Week" to be held in Limerick for the next seven days. It is understood that the event will sharply contrast with the "official" "Civic Week", as one of the organisers said that they wanted to re-introduce some reality into the city.

The Week will be opened by an Unemployed Worker who will formally ask for a job at the Labour Exchange. In fact the Exchange will be the focal point during the Workers' Week and will be the head-quarters of the organising committee. A spokesman said that, unlike Civic Week, the Workers' Week would be involving actual workers. "We will have no bankers, builders, solicitors, or speculators on our Committee". Instead, representatives from the unemployed workers from Danus, Peter Tait, SPS, Clover Meats, Cleeves and Ranks, will be on the committee.

After the official opening of Workers' Week there will be an unique ceremony. Over 100 unemployed workers will take part in a ceremonial "sign-on" at the Labour Exchange. This event has aroused considerable excitement in the city and a spokesman revealed today that it will be televised live by RTE.

"We have invited Government Ministers, T.D.'s, Councillors, clergy, religious, employers, bank managers and trade union officials to be present; it will be the first time any of them will ever have seen the inside of a Labour Exchange", added the spokesman.

A special television programme "Life on the Dole" will be

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featured and the centrepiece of the Week will be the "Workers' Pageant", which will be staged in what was formerly the Danus Factory, Dominick Street.

"The cast of hundreds are certainly experienced for these demanding roles. They have queued in all weathers, rain hail and snow, outside the Labour Exchange", said the spokesman.

He declined to confirm however, that they could not get actors to play the parts of trade union officials in the Pageant. "There is no truth in the rumour that we had to hire scab labour from Cork", he said.

A feature of Workers' Week is the raffle prize which will offer a week's holiday for two in a worker's house, with a worker's pay, and with a worker's job. The raffle will take place at the Workers' Banquet to be held in the Mechanics' Institute where packet and tripe will be served by members of the Trades Council.

A special Workers' Sing Song Tour has also being organised, and bus trips to Angela Conway's, the Galvone Arms, the Black Battery and the Bell Tavern are included.

"We have high hopes that this will prove to be one of the highlights of the Week", said a spokesman. "However, a diligent watch will be kept on passengers, as we don't want any Variety Club women giving us a bad name".

One of the major attractions during the week of colourful and hectic activity will be the Out of Work Parade which begins at 11 a.m. on Sunday. A float with a coffin, surrounded by the names of the industries that have died, will bring up the rear of the parade. Workers dressed in black, will form a Mourning Guard alongside the coffin, and local unemployed workers will intone the litany of deceased firms . . . Danus, remember us . . . Ranks . . . remember us . . . S.P.S. . . . remember us . . . Cleeves . . . remember us . . .

A special rosary with the names of the firms instead of beads are being produced by the Sisters of Charity. A spokesman for Workers' Week denied the suggestion that this particular event could offend the clergy. "Sure, there not unemployed", he remarked.

A special float will contain human examples of a Tax Inspector, a Revenue Commissioner, a Housing Official, a Health Board Officer, and a Corporation Maintenance man. The reason for this, a spokesman explained, was that workers seldom saw such officials.

"Corporation maintenance workers are already a scarce breed and are about to become rarer, so we must do what we can to preserve their memory", said a spokesman.

Another float will be called "Meet the Mayor", and this will contain His Worship, Cllr. Thady Coughlan. "He is the man who said he would get us off the Dole queues and back to work, but he hasn't been seen since he made that statement. "We want the workers to see him, so that he will be recognised when he comes around asking for votes", said an unemployed man.

Another float titled "The City of Broken Promises" will also take part. Workers flanking this float will chant at regular intervals: . . . Chocolate Crumb Factory . . . Steve Coughlan, where are you . . . Non-Skid Device Factory . . . Steve Coughlan where are you . . . Chipboard Factory . . . Donogh O'Malley, where are you . . . Alcan . . . Tom O'Donnell, where are you . . .

happen if French Letters were legalised. He pointed out the cod liver oil caper and expressed his fears that a similar scandal might result in controlling the condoms.

The idea is that the french letters and other family planning devices should be available through the Health Board or the local chemist. Anyone else caught with a condom would feel the full rigours of the law.

The man pushing the idea is Sean Hillery, a chemist in Shannon, and first cousin to Paddy Hillery the EEC chief. The fact that he is a chemist, of course, has nothing to do with his action in trying to get the Mid-Western Health Board to pass his motion relating to family planning proposals.

He wants to see the State grant import licences to agents so that the condoms would be available to married couples only. The possession of family planning aids by unmarried adults

would, according to the system by Hillery, be unlawful.

This poses the question. Would a bachelor chemist find himself hauled before the courts for carressing a condom? What would happen to a deserted wife found with family planning aids? Or to a widow or widower?

These queries are left unanswered. In Sean Hillery's rarified world, there is no consideration given to people who might hold different views. His declaration that "an atrocious situation exists in society", is welcome. It is certainly atrocious that people are being denied the basic human and civil right to plan their families and that a Taoiseach votes against his own party's Bill, and that he is still in Government. The sooner that there is a full and complete family planning service available to all the people of the country, the sooner the present "atrocious situation" will be ended.

Casey's Column by John Casey

WHITHER THE MIDDLE CLASS

The words "working class", "middle class", "establishment", "proletariat" are thrown around so often these days by assorted people of the left, right and centre that one feels apologetic for even using them. There is however a section of society called the middle class, forming a numerous and powerful group. They are also a very varied section and not so easy to define. Is a teacher middle class? Most would say yes. Is a skilled works' manager in a factory, whose salary exceeds that of a teacher's, middle class? But these are academic questions. The first and important point is, that the middle class are important in the development of progressive politics. They will support or oppose socialism and this support or opposition could be the key to victory or defeat.

As already mentioned, the middle class are a mixed bag — varying from professional people and small-capitalists to the teacher in a battered volkswagen and the insurance clerk with his well-pressed but shiny suit. The present capitalist depression offers an opportunity to socialists to convert the middle class and point out to them that they are the dupes and pawns of big money not its representatives. Indeed the failure of socialist movements — the C.P.I. and its precursors — the Republican Congress, Saor Eire, the left in the Labour Party — to win any significant working class or middle class support is the primary cause of their failure. But the socialists haven't learned and there are still those who advocate total rejection of the "bourgeoisie" in the struggle for socialism. The most vociferous of them hold middle class jobs and are often the children of middle class parents, so that one can at least be allowed to speculate about their anti-middle class bias and general hysteria. Hysteria is an excellent guide to maladjusted political activists. Their thesis put simply is that all purity and goodness reposes in the cloth caps of the proletariat. They have not even noted, not to mind learned from contemporary history. A majority of socialist leaders of modern times came from decidedly middle class origins — the Castros (Fidel and Raul), The Guevara, Allende, Regis Debray, Enrico Berlinguet and others.

It is of course a tried and tested mistake to transfer political situations or solutions from one country to another. Even in Uruguay, the Tupamaros can operate safely only in Montevideo: the bourgeoisie of the other towns are solidly conservative, as are the rural rich.

But to come back to our own country: any political movement or political thinker who tries to forward a political philosophy by turning his back on a major section of the population can expect to end his days on the dung hill of his own failure. A white collar radicalization has and is taking place. Professional people, as they liked to be called, are no longer ashamed to belong to a union. Indeed many of them are flocking into unions in these rocky times. One of course would be foolish to believe that the unionization of professional people (so-called) heralds a radical shift in political thought: many of them have seen how useful unions are and will exploit the trade union movement for personal, selfish reasons. That the majority of the middle class support the status quo is not questioned. They have consistently voted for 3 conservative, Christian (Catholic) Democratic parties. But then, they have never been presented with a serious socialist party for which they could vote.

The Trojan horse socialism of the Labour Party in 1969 did arouse support, the percentage vote did go up but the poor overall vote and the loss of seats was caused by headoffice blundering (sticking up candidates in constituencies where labour was mostly associated with childbirth) and not, as we were told subsequently, by the introduction of socialist policies. So instead of dismissing the middle class, the socialist movement should be examining its structure and seeking to draw sections of it with them.

The bourgeoisie, as such in the French or Continental sense do not exist here. The Continental bourgeoisie are the cultured, conservative backbone of their respective countries —

their banks bulging with old money and their tables laden with rich food and drink. Our upper middle class, as John Kelly says, have risen in the past fifty years. They have neither the culture, sophistication nor taste of the bourgeoisie. Boors rather than bourgeoisie. Even their language betrays them — "killing mongrel foxes or kicking people up the transom" is neither very imaginative nor sophisticated. This is worth noting. It explains why Donegan prefers shooting at tinkers to the quiet of a study and why Liam and himself are forever stressing the importance of the Army.

We are not saying that a few pamphlets will have the ladies of Foxrock dying their minks red — what we are saying is that common sense and pragmatism demand that the possibility of winning some of the middle class to socialism should be explored. Are they not workers who, like their blue collar counterparts, find the cream going to the bosses and the "back milk" to them? With free education, the children of the poor can now get secondary and third level education. Some of them will stand with the bosses but others will remain loyal to their class. Then there are the young who are turned off by the corruption of the system. There is no doubt but there are thousands of educated young people thoroughly dissatisfied with the system and the political parties looking for a party and leadership. No one is advocating turning away from the working class: the manual workers, artisans, the blue collar section have of necessity to be the backbone of any progressive movement for change. However to believe, like the lounge bar revolutionaries, that all goodness, idealism and future progress reside solely in their laps is naive.

"The working class can kiss my arse. I've got the foreman's job at last". The Social Democratic Labour parties have built their philosophy around this rhyme and their success is evidence of its truth. Stevie Coughlan recites it nightly in bed. There is a large section of workers whose main ambition is to become middle class: coloured televisions, new cars, night life. To this end it must be said that R.T.E. has been an excellent medium for promoting American capitalist propaganda: churning out endless programmes all of which have propagandist ingredients.

Slogans, programmes, approaches that have been tried and found to work in other countries generally fail on transfer. They should be studied and assessed but their blind application has proven and will prove, disastrous. The people will not be dragged; they must be brought. Willie Gallacher met Lenin and began to question him on street fighting, barricades and revolutionary cells. Lenin told him to return to Scotland and start a socialist paper.

THE PRESS

Amongst the many recent revelations on the C.I.A. was that it channelled millions of dollars to El Mercurio and the right wing media in Chile in order to undermine and destroy Allende's Government. In Ireland, the "Evening Press" and the "Evening Herald" — show a remarkable anti-socialist bias. "Cubans do not know they are losing men" — "Evening Herald" headline. Some time previously the same paper reported that the Cuban people did not know their soldiers were fighting in Angola; this report almost coincided with an article in the "Irish Times" which had Castro saying at an international rally in Havana that the Cubans were not only South Americans but South Africans too. The Cubans must be deaf. "K.G.B. is still very vigilant . . . Muscovites spy on neighbours". ("Evening Press", 23/2/76). This and many of the other "stories" are unsigned, suggesting that they are fed to them by the international wire service — a number of these agencies are C.I.A. controlled. Sometimes a signed article surfaces: "Angola: Big Red Victory", by Winston S. Churchill, M.P. ("Herald" 20/2/76). — a much beloved name. Not only does Churchill deplore the M.P.L.A. victory but attacks the liberation forces in Rhodesia and South Africa.

The evening papers carry on a continuous low key anti-socialist propaganda campaign, which is only what one expects. The only question is how big is the C.I.A. subsidy?