THE BOTTOM DOG

5 PENCE

Vol. 3 No. 49

A PAPER FOR NORTH MUNSTER WORKERS

"FOR OUR DEMANDS MOST MODERATE ARE .... WE ONLY WANT THE EARTH."

THE STRIKE AT CALLINS

THE STORY SO FAR.

I974 - Last rise towards the end of the year.
I975 - January - Company claim inability to pay I0% cost of living rise.
April- Company claim inability to pay 8% due under National Wage Agreement.
May - Labour Court hands down recommendation in favour of Company.
Aug - Callins workers strike for full implementation of N.W.A. (backdated)
Sept - Meeting between Union and management. New"offer". £2 a week rise under a new bonus scheme which would mean, in reality, harder work. The Company also made it clear that they were interested in retaining only 25 - 30 workers.
This insult was rejected by a vote of 49 to 3.
The workers then preceded to place a mass picket on the factory for the rest of the day, to show the company their unity and determination to continue the struggle.
Sept - Friday 26th. Callins march around Industrial Estate in an effort to publisice and win support for their cause. PAGE 7

inside Expo '75 Womens Struggle

WOMEN:

1975 was declared International Womens Year to highlight the opression of women on a world wide scale, and presumably to do something about it. However sincere were its originators this ideal in Ireland has been smothered in seminars, expensive evening dinners and lip service.

How often do we hear people ryme off -"Since it is International Womens Year this or that ought to be done." But What has been done? Now that the end of the year approaches, let us consider how the lives of women, in the Limerick region in particular, have been effected throughout this "Sacred" year. What has our very vocal government been doing to aleviate the burden which society traditionally places on women? How has the Church reacted?

Two of the main demands of women in Ireland are - The right to work and be paid on an equal level with their male counterparts- The right to plan their family.

The former includes much more than equal pay. Because of a womans biological make-up she has a special place in society She is the bearer of future society. Instead of been given extra consideration, women are penalised by society for carrying out this vital function.

When a working woman becomes pregnant it is considered a nuisance by employers. They are grudgingly given a mimimum of time off, sometimes unpaid , to have their baby. If the woman wishes to continue in employment she must make arrangements for the child to be taken care of. This normally inwolves rising at a very early hour, doing a days house work, hoisting the child off to some care centre, then to face work which may be miles away. In spite of many demands that creches be set up in all places of work, nothing has been done. Women have a right to proper facilities for child care in their places of work in order that they can see their child at least two or three times a day. These facilities should, of courss, be free.

CHAINS OR CHANGE?

Only last week the government announced that it was prepared to "review" the equal pay act which is due to be implemented in full by the end of this year. This means that the government are once again bowing to the wishes of the property classes , by allowing them to continue the oppression of the most oppressed - women workers.

One example from the recent poverty survey of this region, shows a case of a deserted wife whose nine children sleep in one bed. Although various groups in Limerick have made the case for a family planning clinic , . Church and State have united to oppose them.

The oppression of women does not effect just the female section of society. It affects the whole of society. In the employment situation, women, educated to believe they are second class citizens, are used as cheap labour. Sometimes the male worker is confused when employers give preference to females. He feels he is being deprived of a job by a woman. What he may fail to realise is that all employers work soley on a profit basis. Should a female be suitable and accept lower wages then she gets the job. On the other hand , if the employer feels there is a risk (pregnancy in the case of a married woman) then the man is a better bet.

Simuliarly, confusion arises as to womens attitudes to trade unions. Again womens education has been such that trade unions may seem to them irrelewant, something reserved for men. In many places especially where the work force is predominently female, bosses have firmly asserted that employees are not allowed to join trade unions. One of the bosses main weapons is division of the work force. The lack of understanding between male and female workers is much played upon. WORKERS MUST UNITE.

The liberation of women can not be achieved until they get the support of men. There is a concept "He who holds a slave can not himself be free". IF MALE WORKERS CONTINUE TO OPPRESS WOMEN , THEY FOREGO THE POSSIBILITY OF UNITING AGAINST THEIR COMMON ENEMY

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EDITORIAL

THE DOG SHALL SLEEP NO MORE

In the period between October 1917 and November 1918, Limerick was the home of a radical working class paper called 'The Bottom Dog'. The Dog (as it was affectionately known), was brought out by a group of trade unionists who were sympathetic to the views of the recently executed James Connolly. Naturally the paper was wholeheartedly on the side of the oppressed - the bottom dogs - whether of nation class or sex.

During the time of its short, but active stay in Limerick (48 editions in all rolled off the presses), the Dog gave valuable support to the militant working class of the city. Strikes were supported, bad working conditions exposed and the organising campaigns of the I.T.G.W.U. among the exploited, unskilled and semi-skilled workers were given generous support and publicity. Particular attention was paid to the manner in which women workers were under-paid and over-worked.

Since those far off days much has been gained, but so little has changed for the working class under the regime of capitalism. Little has changed in the sense that we are still pawns in a crazy game of economic chess with no real say in the drawing up of the rules. Unemployment, redundancy and factory closures once more bring insecurity to the families of North Munster. Sixty years has produced hardly any advancement in the status of women, despite all the talk Workers' living standards are again being attacked by those who regard the needs of humanity as being of lesser importance than the requirements of the Business Machine.

Redundant Leadership

The present economic difficulties have not only illuminated, once again, the shortcomings of the System but have also exposed the inability of the trade union leadership to combat it. No attempt has been made to develop a strategy against redundancies and plant shut-downs. No effort by the official, full-time, "general staff" to safeguard the livelihood of its rank and file. Instead of a dynamic campaign to nationalise those factories and industries that have collapsed, all we have seen is a pathetic and passive acceptance of redundancy payments. All that this passive acceptance of redundancy bribes has achieved is an increase in the reserve army of the unemployed, an army which can be used to weaken the fighting spirit of the working class.

The response of trade union officialdom to the economic crisis has proved conclusively what many of us have long suspected. They don't want a militant rank and file which is able to defend itself against the employers. All they seem to want is a quiet life, punctuated by polite, ritualistic conferences in smoke-filled rooms, with a docile membership that meekly does what it is told. Lambs thrown to the wolves.

The Cause of Labour

This cowardice in the face of the employers has led to a great deal of frustration among us humble dues-payers. Happily this frustration has taken a constructive form because a group of trade unionists from various unions have decided to resurrect 'The Bottom Dog'. For there is a need once again for a radical, independent trade union paper which serves the Cause of Labour and no other cause.

The Dog which is not a platform for any individual, or political organisation, hopes to carry on the tradition of its noble ancestor. Like its predecessor our paper will give its support to those who find themselves in the battle lines, whether in a strike, occupation or lock-out. Wherever possible we will build active solidarity with those in the struggle. Also the Dog will give prominence to the problems that confront women workers.

Although the paper will place its main emphasis on practical activity, the Dog realises that it is as important to Educate as to Organise. Therefore we will feature articles on topics such as: the Social Services; the Economy and the history of the working class in Munster. To make serious more digestible, we will pepper the paper with humourous articles, ballads and other pieces of light entertainment.

What is the object of the Dog's life? It is simply to develop among the rank and file a real sense of trade union consciousness. A consciousness which is rooted in our militant history and traditions, springs from an awareness of our own strength and flows from a knowledge of Our Rights

CONFRONTATIONS. Ancient & Modern

NO. I. LESSONS OF danus OCCUPATION

Under the headingof 'Confrontations' the Dog will be providing readers with a series of articles dealing with the history of the Labour Movement. Each article will examine a specific struggle. The main aim of these studies is not merely to give an educational course in working class history, but to extract from these real experiences, which will benefit Trade Unionists in similar situations.

In order to defend that most basic of civil rights, the right to work, Irish workers have in the past, and will in the future, use the weapon of the factory occupation in the fight against redundancy.

In the present uncertain economic situation, no worker in Ireland can say "it can't happen to our factory" We are all potential candidates for the chopping block. It is vitally important that all trade union militants become familiar with the mechanics of the factory occupation.

The aim of this article is to give some general pointers as to how an occupation should be carried out, so as to enable worker militants to sidestep hidden pitfalls, and at the same time extract the maximum mileage from their protest.

CHIEFS AND INDIANS

As soon as the workers have decided upon occupying their place of work, it is essential that an occupation committee be formed. The role of this committee being to provide leadership and to see that the occupation is carried out as efficiently as possible.

Where no viable works committee is already in existance, the committee should be elected at a mass meeting of the workers. Since the object of the exercise is to get the best people for the job, it isn't necessary for the representatives to be elected on a sectional basis.

Once the leadership has been elected, it is important that it maintains strong links with the shop floor. All major decisions will have to be discussed and voted upon at general assemblies of the workers. The work of the leadership should be reviewed at these meetings and if people are dissatisfied with certain of their representatives, then the assembly must have the right to replace them with more competent individuals. The authority of the occupation committee comes from the shop floor and to keep this relationship the rank and file has to have its heel on the neck of their leadership.

If the committee becomes a thing apart from the rank and file and it is not accountable to them the workers will quickly lose confidence in it. They may even become suspicious of the motives of the committee members and if this happens then you will be in for a load of trouble.

Besides electing a Chairman, Secretary and a Treasurer the Committee should elect personnel to have overall responsibility for other other key functions.

One of the most important of these posts will be held by the publicity officer. He is "the voice of the occupation forces". His duties include: drafting press statements and general leaflets; making contact with the media and ferreting out sympathetic

journalists; speaking at demonstrations, factory gate meetings etc. making sure that anyone coming to the factory, looking for information is referred to him.

Naturally, your publicity officer needs to be fairly articulate, able to think on his feet and remain unflustered while being "interrogated" by slick and slimy media men. Since the P.R.O. represents your public image, he or she has to be chosen with care.

Another area of responsibility is discipline. For an efficient occupation there will be a need for rules and regulations. To make sure that these rules are adhered to a disciplinary officer is required. Since people may be put off by the word "discipline" I will have to explain briefly what I mean.

When I talk of discipline, I don't mean the unthinking type you normally associate with military institutions, where rules come from the top downwards. No, quite the reverse. The only type of discipline which can be of use to the working class movement in general, and to occupations in particular, is self-discipline, or, to coin a phrase, "democratic discipline".

It is up to the shop floor at general assemblies to devise a simple code of rules whose sole function is to enable the workers achieve their ends without at the same time infringing on their democratic rights.

For instance, the assembly may decide that the factory be manned on a 12 hourly shift basis. Once this is agreed upon the disciplinary officer draws up a shift rota and makes sure that people turn up at the appointed time.

Once the assembly has established a code of conduct by majority vote, it is very easy to enforce discipline as the disciplinary officer is merely carrying out the will of the majority. And if through practice it is found that a law is bad, then it only requires a general meeting to amend the code.

If workers hi-jack a factory and start demanding "nationalisation under workers' control" they will tend to offend the business community and their puppet politicians. They, with the assistance of the media will attempt to build up public opinion against you. Unless you quickly set about weaving a protective cloak around you, the occupation can become isolated, and the morale of the occupiers deteriorate. Now that the "structures of occupation" have been built, the next step is to seek allies for your cause. If your local friendly shop stewards and rank and file committee is doing its job properly, then it should have contacted you by now. The occupation committee and the S.S. committee can jointly develop a solidarity campaign.

If no Shop Stewards Committee exists in the area, then a defence or solidarity committee will have to be set up. Right from the word go it is essential that you gain outside support. When workers first get involved in an occupation they are too cocky, too confident. A feeling of "we can do it all by ourselves". This, of course, is an illusion.

To construct a local solidarity committee the occupation committee should contact those shop

EXPO '75

An exhibition from Oct 8th to IIth sponsored by Shannon Town Centre Co,.Ltd with the backing of the Shannon Free Airport Development Company, did not reflect the reality of Shannon. All the major firms had stands there at the cost of £50 per stand. This exebition was a great publicity stunt for the various firms involved and also a chance for them to extend their markets and so increase their profits.

The industrial and unemployed workers did not gain anything from this farce. There was no stand there to display the unemployment register in Shannon, or the rates of pay in firms like Callins, or the fact that some of these firms do not allow their employees the democratic right to join a trade union.

It was fitting that this great charade came to a close with a "Gala Dress Ball(s)". Guest speaker was Tom O'Donnell T.D. and tickets cost £5 each, which of course priced the event far beyond the reach of unemployed and even many employed workers on who's lobour the bosses had made their fortune. No doubt, during his speach, he did not mention the scab rates of pay in Shannon. But then this exhibition was not held in the interests of the working class.

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CONFRONTATIONS (continued)

stewards etc. who will be symphetic and get them to start the band wagon rolling. Avoid relying upon local gombeen politicians (what ever your demands) and liberal do-gooders. The first catagory will sell you out for peanuts and the second catagory will give you nothing but pious words, or perhaps if you are lucky, a boal of soup.

The basic core of the solidarity committee must be composed of shop stewards and rank and file workers. Of course, the occupation should have reps on the solidarity ctte. to make certain that the solidarity ctte. does'nt do anything against the wishes of the people actually in the front line of the struggle.

Solidarity work can cover a whole number of activities: factory collections, publishing leaflets or a local occupation bulletin, demos, pickets factory gate meetings, indoor meetings. The main thing about solidarity work is to use your imagination, devise some original publicity stunt, catch the attention of the media, and more importantly get the working class on a local and national level actively involved on your behalf.

To maintain general morale, the workers must know exactly what is going on and be given the oppertunity to control their own destiny. remember that once people embark on an occupation, which is a radical break from the normal routine of of their lives under capitalism, their levels of consciousness and initiative develops by leaps and bounds. Therefore, the occupation ctte. should not be cautious as regards allowing the rank and file to make all important decisions. We in Danus were quite impressed by the attitudes and maturity of the workers once the occupation commenced.

One more point. The occupation in Danus mainly revolved around the question of better or worse redundancy payments. We made the mistake of not really challanging the firms right to throw us on the scrap heap. Standing in the dole queue every week makes me realise that all we did was to sell our basic civil right, the right to work, for a higher bid.

For a short time you are cushioned by redundancy money and you don't feel the effects of unemployment immediately, but sooner or later the cushion is pulled from under you. Occupying a factory for improved redundancy money is a short term protest and a long term trap.

The main demand or slogan that workers should advance is 'nationalisation under workers control'. If the Government are at all serious about maintaining employment, then nationalisation is the only logical step they can take, and since the employers are not interested in keeping the factory open, the control of the factory should be given to those who are interested - the workers themselves.

John Cronin I.T.G.W.U.
Vice President.
Danus Workers Committee.

The workers of Callins, a subsidiary of Whitehall (Texas), have now been on strike for two months and this situation has all the appearance of continuing for a long period into the future. Because of a fall off in orders at this time, the company can afford to leave the workers out for months.

LABOUR COURT.

Many of the Callins workers now realise that the decision to strike should have been taken away back in April, if not even before then. There is no clearer case in this country of a company using the Labour Court as a delaying tactic and to shackle the workers. The very existence of Court is an obsticle to workers in taking the most effective (usually immediate) action to win their case. Yet the unions continue to portray the Labour Court as impartial. They do this even against glairing evidence to the contrary.

In the second quarter of '75, the Labour Court handed down 85 recommendations. Of these, only 22% favoured the worker!!! Ten of the cases involved inability to pay. As a result of the Labour Court's entirely predictable decission in favour of the Company, the Callins workers now find themselves in a very unfavourable position from which to fight.

Clearly, without substantial financial and moral support, they have only a slim chance of success.

ORGANISING SOLIDARITY.

At the biggining of the strike, the union, ITGWU, tried to bring international preasure bear on the company through their connection with the International Metal workers Federation. This promising tactic failed because none of the Whitehall plants have agreements with any of the unions affiliated to this international body.

Since then, the workers have been able to contact trade unionists in Toronto, where a Whitehall factory is located, and leaflets explaining the strike and asking for solidarity action have been handed out at that factorys gate.

When the union proved reluctant to organise a picket on the Dublin office of Callins, the National Federation of Shop Stewards and Rank and File Cttee offered to help. On the go-ahead of the Strike Ctte a picket is now in progress there.

THE UNIONS ROLE.

Despite promises of publicity and the organisation of financial support, the union has very little to show in the line of promoting solidarity. Collections on the estate were not made until the 5th week and publicity of any consequence did not materialise until the 6th week. Like many other workers in similar situations, only now are the Callins employees realising that if you want to do something right, you must do it yourself.

SOLIDARITY NEEDED.

One thing is clear, the bosses in the area see the Callins dispute as a test case on the 'inability to pay' clause of the N.W.A. A defeat for the Callins workers would open the floodgates for similar stunts by many other companys. This makes support for the strike most important. Such support, apart from defeating the Callins boss would make otheremployers think twice before trying the same thing. They would hesitate to attack workers who were already healping to oppose similar attacks in the factory down the road. There are two sides to organising solidarity. The Callins workers must publicise their case and trade union militants must mobolise their fellow workers on the issue.

There is no shortage of ideas among the Callins workers about how they should draw attention to their strike. In attempting to win support in a situation like this, one thing is very important, and it is that all actions should have an ongoing perspective. Each action should build towards the next. For example - Wednesday 4.30pm Custom House. A leaflet asking for support is passes out to workers leaving the Estate. Thursday. A march into factorys with the intention of gett ing workers to down tools and participate in the march.

Friday 4.30. Collections boxes at the busses as workers go home.

In this way, financial aid would be far more substancial than collections from workers with no lead up.

What can shop stewards and trade union militants do to help. The lack of urgency on the part of the union in organising solidarity must be taken up within the union - at Branch meetings and at a personal level with union officials. If used, the enormous resorces of the union offers the most effective means of organising support.

The workers of Callins are on strike because no one can live on £20 a week. Neither can anyone live on £10 strike pay. Financial aid is critical. It should not be difficult to get your fellow workers to pledge 10 or 20 pence a week for the duration of the strike.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.

The whole Callins affair has shown one thing wery clearly. The ITGWU has absolutely no stratagy for fighting redundancies.- because that is what is at stake now - the loss of 40 or even all 66 jobs. Vice Pres-

(continued on back page)

Ballads of the Working Class.

Some men, faint-hearted, ever seek
 Our programme to retouch,
And will insist, when'er they speak
 That we demand too much.
'Tis passing strange, yet I declare
 Such statements give me mirth,
For our demands most moderate are,
 We only want the earth.

"Be moderate", the trimmers cry,
 Who dread the tyrants' thunder.
"You ask too much and the people fly
 From you aghast in wonder".
'Tis passing strange, for I declare
Such statements give me mirth,
For our demands most moderate are,
 We only want the earth.

The "labour fakir" full of guile,
 Base doctrine ever preaches,
And while he bleeds the rank and file
 Tame moderation preaches.
Yet, in despite will see the day
 When, with sword in it's girth,
Labour shall march in war array
 To realise it's own, the earth.

For labour long, with sighs and tears
 To it's oppressors knelt.
But never yet, to ought save fears,
 Did the heart of tyrant melt.
We need not kneel, our cause no dearth
 Of loyal soldiers' needs
And our victorious rallying cry
 Shall be we want the earth.

Be Moderate James Connolly.

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CALLINS (continued)

-ident, John Carroll can stand up in Dublin and bladder on about the union giving full support to workers who fight for their jobs, when he knows that his officials down the country will not even pose the question to the workers threatened.
It would seem that right from the start, the unions attitude to the strike was, that it was a lost cause and the less support the workers would get, the sooner they would go back or drift away. And, more than likely, the unions estimation is perfectly correct - if the situation is viewed within the narrow limits of the unions present stratagy.
The union freely admit that they can offer no way forward to the Callins workers except a long drawn out strike, which, in the end, may end in defeat anyway.
Because of the nature of the product manafactured at Callins, the setting up of a co-operative appears to be just not on. This leaves the only logical solution - nationalisation under workers control.
What does this mean.
It means that the union instruct the workers to occupy the factory and start production.
It means that the ITGWU leadership in Dublin would publicly pledge full support for the workers who were trying to save jobs and initiate a campaign through all avenues open to them (mobolisation of the power of their organised membership, in the Senate and through the Labour Party) to force the Government to take the following measures.
Money which would be payed to the workers in unemployment benifits be channelled to finance the factory.
The £I2 a week grant payable to companys who take on new workers be payed to the Callins workers.
Those measures would insure that the workers wages were brought up to date. With production in full swing the ITGWU should have little difficulty in getting Justin Keating to toddle off to the Soviet Union or elsewhere to find markets. He already has done so for company bosses, with some success.
Callins is a test case in many ways and success for the workers almost certainly depends on the ITGWU making it a test case in fighting redundancies.

Joe Harrington ITGWU.

APPEAL FOR SOLIDARITY.

We, the workers of Callins, on the Shannom Industrial Estate, have been on strike for over two months. The company has refused to pay us any round of the N.W.A. this year. The cost of living has increased by almost 30% since our last rise. Our present rates of pay are - Female £20, Male £29. We think the success of our struggle is important for every worker in Shannon. Our defeat would make it easier for your bosses to mess you around. We would like to take this oppertunity to thakk all our fellow workers who have supported us so far and to appeal for your continued and even increased financial and moral support for as long as necessary.
For our part, we are determined to continue rejecting the insulting offers of the Co. and press on until victory. (For strike Ctte Lil Murphy, N McNamara, J Cunningham)