

THE BOTTOM DOG

5 PENCE

Vol 3 No 60 Fri 19th March '76

A PAPER FOR NORTH MUNSTER WORKERS

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

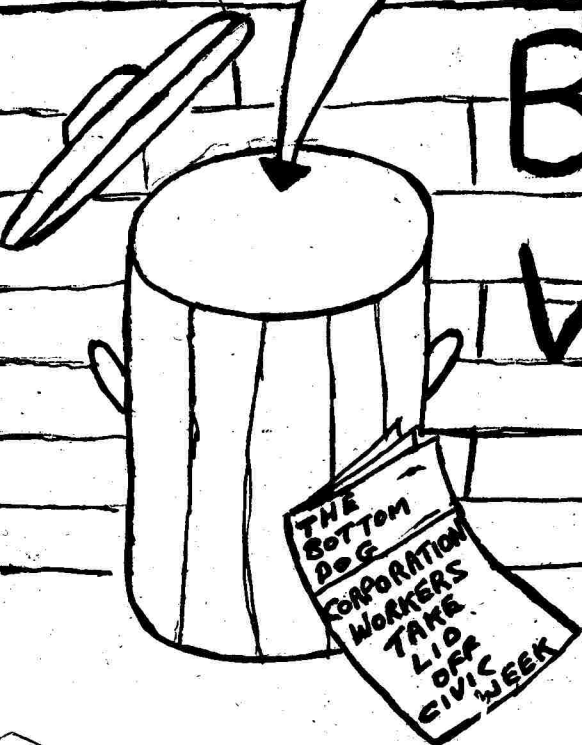
**PUBLIC
MEETING**

PAY FREEZE

**SATURDAY
APRIL 3RD.**

FULL DETAILS SOON

BIN MEN
WORK TO
RULE OK



BIN MEN DISPUTE

Dave Lee.

This year the organisers of Civic Week have put together a comprehensive programme of events which are intended to attract tourists and visitors to Limerick. The whole Festival is a shining example of planning and efficiency dedicated to the greater glory of Limerick and the enrichment of local hoteliers, publicans and the like.

But as we all know the best laid plans of mice and men are apt to go astray. One unscheduled event is causing the Civic Week co-ordinators some embarrassment, that is the Corporation go-slow. The workers involved (the dustmen, streetcleaners etc) by their action are giving the impression to outsiders that Limerick is an untidy city. This is bad for the trade and profits of those sections of the local business community who hope that Civic Week will attract free spending tourists here.

An untidy Limerick is a bad advertisement.

Listening to some politicians in the town you would get the idea that the present go-slow is a deep laid fiendish ^{plot} to mess up Civic Week. Is there any truth in the rumour? Is the dignity of ancient Luimneach being held to ransom by the binmen? To answer these and other questions the Dog went straight to the horse's mouth and spoke to Patrick Kiely who is secretary of the Corporation Section of the I.T.G.W.U. and one of the leaders of the go-slow Corpo men. What follows is based on what he told the Dog.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

Early last year, the Corporation tradesmen (plasterers, carpenters etc) got a pay rise of £6 to £7 pound as part of a productivity deal. By getting this increase the traditional differential between craftsmen and general workers went up by 100% (from £7 pounds to £14 pounds). Naturally the general operatives, members of the ITGWU and the IMETU opened up negotiations with the City Manager in order to bring the differential back to traditional proportions.

A productivity deal was under discussion in Spring '75 and on May 28th the City Manager put £4 quid on the table. This offer could not be accepted by the workers representatives



there and then as they had to hold a general meeting with the membership to discuss the matter. But on June 10th, before a reply could be given to the manager, the Minister of Local Government, Mr Tully placed an embargo on special wage increases in the Public Sector. This wiped the 4 pounds off the table. This didn't please the workers because the manager had made an offer to them before the embargo and they feel that the money should be forthcoming.

GO - SLOW

Since last June the men have spent a very frustrating time trying to communicate with Mr Tully in order to plead their case. However the Minister's Department have not even replied to their letters. During the same period, the Corpo workers have seen the embargo lifted for the fire brigade. Also they are aware that their fellow operatives in the Dublin Corporation got a pay increase (£3 pound tied to a productivity deal) with the threat of strike action.

The patience of the Limerick Corporation employees is bound to wear a bit thin after all this carry-on. No one appears to take a blind bit of notice of them so they have correctly decided to take industrial action to add muscle to their arguments.

Instead of going on an all-out strike at

NO PAY PAUSE

As price increase after price increase is announced, it is matched only by calls from employers and the Government for a wage freeze. This latter of course is coupled with long explanations about the seriousness of the economic situation and how the responsibility for the whole mess is due to the unreasonable demands of workers for more wages. In the press and in the media generally the whole basis of the discussion on the recession is centred on the cost to the economy that wage demands will mean. There is never any mention of the fact that profit-making has to be maintained at all times, no matter what the social consequences may be. To focus on this would not be wise as it would bring some clarity to the minds of those reading it. It is far better to sow confusion as this is more divisive and anyway, the mass media is part of the whole commercial and profit-making apparatus.

CAPITALISM-CAUSE OF ECONOMIC MESS

These then are the 'arguments' which we must refute. Workers DID NOT create the economic mess we find ourselves in. Far from it, we do not control manufacturing industry and we have no say whatsoever in the policies adopted by Govt. departments. This domain is occupied by industrialists, shareholders and policy makers in the higher echelons of the Civil Service who in turn are parroted by the politicians. They have brought the crisis in their efforts to maintain their profit margins. This is quite clearly borne out in the case of Ranks where a Group profit of nearly £2m. was made last year and yet 200 workers face the dole queue, so that they (Ranks) may have it as good again this year. The whole

thinking behind this type of economic system is completely divorced from the majority within society-the workingclass. The purpose of private enterprise is not one of providing employment as 'neutral' commentators and sophisticated business spokesmen would have us believe. When they say that we must increase competitiveness if we are to survive and cut back on unemployment, they are fully aware that this is contradictory. However, it is necessary for them to give token recognition to the social effects of recession. By workers accepting a pay freeze, they are in no way helping their fellow unemployed workers. The money which would accumulate in industry as a result, would find

its way to the coffers of unproductive shareholders, while unemployment either at best stays static or at worst increases by many thousands. Industry is built on the need to make profit, therefore for it to take any other course than this, would entail it going counter to its own reason for existence.

NEED FOR UNITY AND STRENGTH.

By Irish workers "pulling together" to aid the gombeen men of Irish industry by accepting pay cuts and rationalisation they will be undermining both the independence and resilience of their own class. What is being demanded by the employers and the government, with enthusiastic involvement from the Labour ministers, is for the working class to become docile by agreement. This in the form of a pay freeze or in the event of pressure on



... as you can see, the PUBLIC is pressing for tougher labour legislation.

[FROM P 3]

the trade union leadership, to avoid being seen to be blatantly on the employers and government side, a compromise similar to the six pound wage limit strategy in Britain. This of course, would appear as a great "victory" for the trade union "negotiators"

The best way to defend our jobs and to show solidarity with unemployed workers is to resist any redundancies and pay cuts and make the employers pay the cost of THEIR crises. Where workers are threatened with closures and redundancies demands for the opening of the books (to see how "bad" things really are) must be raised. Committees should be organised to keep the community aware of the workers positions and jobs must not be relinquished at any cost. In Limerick the Ranks workers can provide leadership by not falling into the trap of becoming a local politicians "pet" issue to further his own political career. We must depend only on our own strength and unity.

NO PAY FREEZE-BUT A LIVING WAGE!

We have been warned again and again that a pay pause is necessary if we are to overcome the crises. But it is quite clear what is meant by "we" in this case. Who is peddling this idea? None other than the Holy Alliance of employers, government and the media. They want our wages to stay static while price increases continue to rocket. In the three months up to mid-February the cost of living has risen by 7.1% and inflation for the twelve months is expected to be well over 20%. The working class needs to organise and not to de-mobilise in this situation. The unions must be, as Matt Merigan said at a recent public meeting on unemployment in Limerick, "turned into fighting organs of the working class"

Pat O'Connor.

The Bottom Dog is printed by union labour and can be contacted at the following address :-

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Limerick City.

MCNAMARA & the ITGWU.

Frank McNamara owns a printing shop in Smithstown, Shannon. He does not allow his workers to organise into a union on the job. He pays scab rates.

Last year, Brendan Meagan, a member of the National Graphical Assoc. and a member of the unions branch committee was sacked because he tried to force McNamara to pay decent wages. He was being paid over £10 less than the union rate.

When the local union officials arrived at the plant McNamara refused to even discuss the situation. Another member of the N.G.A. in the factory, John McMahon, refused to support his colleague. The N.G.A. has now put the firm on the unfair list and we are sure have also taken the appropriate action against McMahon.

Among McNamara's customers are the following :- Pan Ametrics, Shannon Diamond, Oxy Dry, S.P.S., S.F.A.D.C. and the Airport plus many other firms on the Industrial Estate. By paying scab rates McNamara can undercut work which would normally go to the trade union houses. We would appeal to the workers in the firms that give work to McNamara to use their influence to prevent this work going to a scab shop and to take up the issue within the Shannon Branch of the I.T.G.W.U. Some years ago, the workers in Irish University prevented work going to McNamara. ~~Press~~

McNamara's list of customers does not stop at those listed above but goes on believe it or not to include the ITGWU. It seems incredible that a union should give work to a well known scab shop paying scab rates. Yet this is what the Transport Union is doing (see authorisation slip reproduced on this page) Although the printers name is not given on the form, the Bottom Dog can say beyond doubt that it was printed at McNamaras.

We are sure that now that the fact has been brought out into the open the membership of the Shannon branch ITGWU will be asking their union to account for their actions.

RIGHT TO WORK C'TTE

PRESS RELEASE

On Friday, March 5th, the above Committee with supporters took to the streets. A picket on the Limerick Branch of the Construction Industry Federation annual dinner at the Parkway Motel was very successful and received widespread approval from unemployed building workers.

The action stemmed from the attendance at the function of I.T.G.W.U. and Builders Unions officials, who thereby gave credibility to the past and present activities of these speculators who's get-rich-quick policy is responsible for sub-standard housing through the region.

These union officials should at this time be leading the unemployed through the streets calling for the nationalisation of the building industry.

Drastic action is needed to ease the country's cronic housing, hospital and school shortage, things which will not be achieved by the present antics of our working class leadership. The lip-service of this leadership is designed to boost their own ego, while the workers are threatned with redundancies and the unemployed are driven into total poverty e.g. (present spiralling prices) because they get words instead of action.

The Right to Work Ctte now call on all trade unionists employed and unemployed to organise effectively and swiftly in joint action. Redundancies can be fought effectively

by establishing liaison action groups in every area ready to go into action at a moments notice.

The economy was planned on quick profit for speculators, who controlled successive governments, because of their (governments) greed for personal fame and money. Our natural resources were sold or abused in other ways in the interests of a few at the expense of many, as we are now witnessing. The economy must be replanned in the interest of all our people using our natural resources.

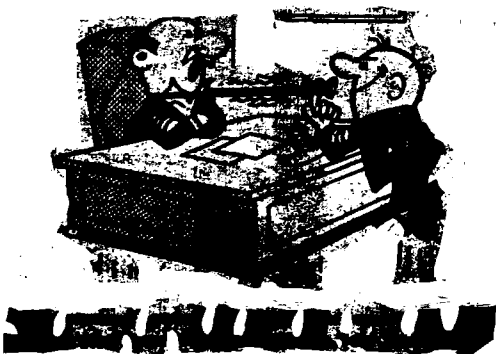
During Civic Week the above ctte. will have a ten minute programme on Radio Luimni at 6pm St Patricks day. We are also entering the industrial parade showing the side of Limerick politicians would like to forget.

At your next union meeting enquire as to the support your official is giving to the above ctte, in organising the unemployed. Delegate two representatives from your branch to attend all further meetings.

Places of employment threatened with redundancies should also send delegates and make use of the Right th Work Bulletin which will be appearing on a regular basis and will be distributed over a wide area. The people threatened with redundancies are seldom given the necessary outlets to air their views. Over 1,000 copies of the Right to Work bulletin issue No 1 were distributed outside the Labour Exchange, Connolly Hall and the Mechanics Institute last Thursday and Friday

Action and swift action is needed to combat the present crisis. It will not just happen, it will have to be organised by genuine people who will not make political football out of the present crisis as we witness in the past by people who refused to involve the unemployed in delegations to Leinster House, etc, etc,

Tom Hayes P.R.O.



SPAIN —

It is now 30 years since the end of the Spanish Civil War when the Republicans and Socialists fought against the fascists. The Spanish working class were supported by international brigades of workers from all over the world including some 150 from this country. They gave freely of their sweat and blood in the fight against the barbarism of the Franco armies and the system they defended. However, on his side Franco had the might of Hitler and Mussolini and the thousands of men and weapons they could provide. I might add that from Ireland he had 700 predecessors of Cosgrave, volunteers from O'Duffys Blueshirts.

The total result of the war was a historic defeat of the Spanish working class. Over one million persons were killed, and in the bitter revenge taken after the war by the right about 500,000 people are estimated to have been executed. Hundred of thousands of the best leaders of the workers were forced to flee the country and all trade unions except the government-controlled C.N.S. (national confederation of syndicates) were made illegal. However, over the years the combativity of the workers has increased and the pace of advancement of the methods of their struggle has been matched only by the amount of repression that has been released against them.

The death of Franco and the rise of Juan Carlos has been heralded by our national press as the end or at least the "way out" of the problem of working class discontent. The papers of the Irish bosses would have us believe that Juan Carlos the hand-picked heir of the bloody Franco, is to be the savior of the workers in Spain. The papers of the bosses in Spain try to tell the people there the same old story.

But the people have rejected the lies of the modern fascists. They can see that the present "democrats" are but a continuation of Franco's politics. All over the country, the illegal "workers commissions" have been organising demonstrations and strikes against the sham reforms of the present government. Their demands are for such real changes as a complete amnesty for all political prisoners, for free elections to a

sovereign parliament, freedom for the national minorities to decide their fate, against the oppression of youth and women etc. etc. And most important of all for the right of the T.U. and workers groups to organise freely. In spite of the ever-present threat of injury or death 300,000 people struck in the Basque region for self-determination, thousands have come out all over the country in support of their demands for the freedom denied the people of Spain, the Basque Nation and so on for so long.

Prince Charming and his thugs have been striking back and have injured hundreds of workers and murdered several. The working class in Spain can see that these so-called reformers will give no part to them in deciding their fate. With this in mind they have reject every false initiative of this dictatorship, foisted upon them.

The Spanish workers may have rejected this government but it is the darling of the capitalists governments all over Europe. They try to build up this government because if it is overthrown it could mean the beginning of the end of their own power. This is because if capitalism and fascism are overthrown in Spain it could trigger off a reaction all across Europe.

Is it any wonder, then, that at the very time when the blood of the toilers was flowing in the streets of Barcelona and Vitoria as they were batoned, shot and water-hosed off the streets, that our own "democrat" Garret Fitzgerald was wining and dining their foreign minister Areilza?? Why would he worry about the rights of Spanish workers when his government are trying to keep the Irish workers on their knees. Why should he worry about the atrocities carried out against the Basque separatists in their just fight for self-determination when he collaborates willingly with those who do the same thing to the Nationalist people of Northern Ireland?? No why, because he rightly sees that his interests lie with those of the Spanish dictators.

It is time also for us to see that our interests are with those of the Spanish and Basque workers.



O'MEARA AND ITINERANTS...

NENAGH
GUARDIAN
MAR 6TH '76

Mr O'Meara hits at itinerants' sympathisers

A man, who allegedly gave a portion of his field to the itinerants, was criticised for doing so by Mr. Ml. O'Meara at last week's meeting of Nenagh Urban Council.

Mr. O'Meara told the meeting that he had a proposal from Thurles Chamber of Commerce about restricting street-side trading which he would submit to the Town Clerk. While he didn't state what the exact proposal was, he urged the Council to follow in the footsteps of the Thurles Chamber.

He added that the Council should make an effort to restrict the itinerants to "certain areas of operation."

Town Clerk, Mr. Tony McCormack, said that this problem should come under the Street Trading Act which the Council discussed at a previous meeting.

Mr. O'Meara—But the trouble is that some people have sympathy with them (itinerants). I know one man who gave a portion of his field to them.

He urged the meeting to follow the Thurles resolution, although he was aware that they had a Charter to contend with and that there were other factors.

Mr. Milo McGee suggested that the itinerants could have open markets in places like Borris-oleigh where there isn't any charter or Urban Council.

Mr. O'Meara—They are welcome to it.

Michael O'Meara is a solicitor in Nenagh who is elected Urban Councillor on an independent ticket. Apart from his sentiments expressed above and the dubious tactics he is known to employ against witnesses in court, O'Meara has a history of public attacks on itinerants. The Thurles resolution to which he refers relates to a proposal at Thurles Urban Council some weeks ago which advocated the town water supply to an itinerant settlement site because the local factory wanted to expand and needed more water.

Antagonism towards itinerants as towards the working class in general has a long history, as long as class divisions themselves. With the growth of traveling road-side traders O'Meara's condemnations of these people have bordered on the hysterical. In September '75 he complained of having seen an itinerant empty £3 on to the counter of a shop (a mere half a days begging) and said the Gardai were not doing their job to remove this menace off the streets.

Just one month later an 18 year old itinerant girl was sentenced to two weeks in prison for begging in Nenagh.

Statements such as, "itinerants should be confined to certain areas of operation" might easily be attributed to Ian Smith of Rhodesia or Voster of South Africa both of whom it is fashionable to criticise at the time of writing. It may seem ironic that O'Meara associates with an organisation called the World Aid Society which professes a concern for the third world. The reality is that O'Meara and his business friends who themselves exploit the workers of Nenagh see trading itinerants as a treat to their business, begging itinerants as a treat to their peace of mind and want the "menace" removed at all costs.

In the final analysis what ever the hypocritical mouthings of our "pillars of society" about aid to people overseas, it is on their treatment of the poor, the itinerants and the working class at home that they must be judged.

Jim McNamara TUI.

THE BOTTOM DOG FIGHTS WAGE FREEZE

FROM P 6

As James Connolly said :

"The socialist of another country is my fellow patriot just as the capitalist of my own country is my natural enemy."



CONTRACEPTION—

8

THE SLOT MACHINE GOVERNMENT

It is only a matter of time now until Contraception is a fact of life in Ireland? The question now to be asked is, what kind of contraception do we want? It is not enough to demand that it be legal. It is not even enough to demand that it be free.

The government legislation on family planning, which did not get through the Dail last year, shows that the government has a slot machine mentality on the issue. It offered to make contraceptives available, at a price, through certain retail outlets.

But there is more to birth control than swallowing a pill, or inserting a device. Contraception is as much a sociological issue as it is medical. It should not be treated like codeine, available only through chemists shops, as though that were the only safeguard required.

This article examines the government bill which will be re-introduced again at some future date, and presents the amendments which ought to be incorporated into it in order to ensure that women have full control, with full knowledge, over their own bodies.

WHAT EXACTLY DOES THIS BILL MEAN?

The most important thing to realize about this Bill is that the control-over the sale/manufacture/importation/advertisement of contraceptives is completely in the hands of the Minister of Health.

SECTION 2 and 3:

The Minister will grant licences for the sale/manufacture/importation of contraceptives 'subject to such conditions as HE specifies in the licence.'

Who would get these 'licences', or what would be the 'conditions' of the licences is not stated in the Bill.

SECTION 4:

All advertisement relating to

contraception and all written material advocating the use of contraceptives is FORBIDDEN unless:

- i) *it is displayed in licensed premises*
- (ii) *it appears in newspapers/periodicals specifying brand names, types and prices*
- (iii) *it is in medical journals, circulated ONLY to the medical profession.*

The Bill, as it stands, is concerned only with the sale, manufacture, importation, and advertisement of contraceptives, as a commodity. It is not concerned with contraception as such.

We believe that any Bill relating to birth control must incorporate:

1. the distribution of contraceptives through premises specifically designed for distribution, education, and all services relating to contraception
2. an educational programme to back up the legalisation of contraceptives
3. the right to publish literature advocating the use of contraception.

Next week we will publish the amendments to the Bill proposed by Irish Women United

(Taken from BANSHEE, journal of Irishwomen United)

FROM P 2

the moment the lads hope to persuade the Minister to change his mind with the aid of a go-slow.

Some say that this action is being deliberately timed to co-incide with Civic Week to cause maximum inconvenience. But this has rightly labelled a smear. The struggle for the workers demands cannot be put off just because Limerick should look nice and pretty for the tourists.

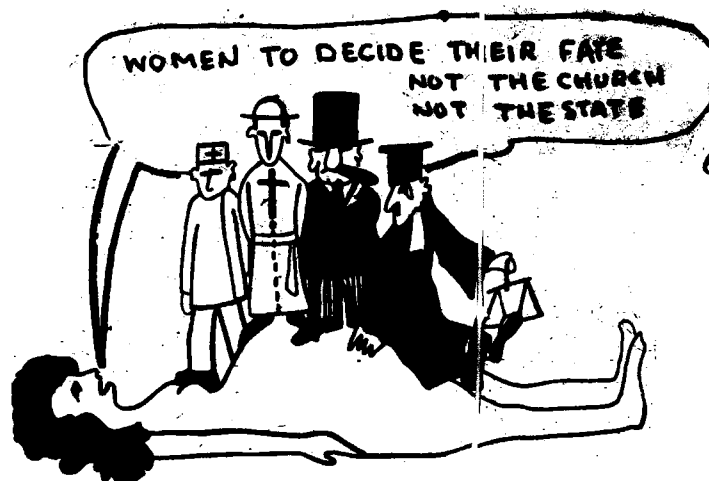
SOLIDARITY

The corporation men, now on the work to rule, are not just in conflict with the City Manager but are in direct struggle with the Fine Gael/Labour Government because it is they who placed the special wage increases in the Public Sector under the embargo.

Because of this it is absolutely essential that workers in the Limerick region should support these Corporation workers. Without support, the men can be easily isolated.

Government policy is to push for a pay freeze for all the working class regardless whether they are in the public or private sectors. If the men in the Corporation defeat Mr Tully's embargo, it will make that much more difficult to impose a freeze. Their struggle is not purely sectional struggle but is part of the fight by workers against pay freezes and against government interference.

There is a possibility that the Corporation go-slow may escalate into a strike. If that happens they will need the active solidarity of their fellow workers.



FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC

6 Cornmarket Row.
Limerick

Tuesday.
6.30 - 8.30pm
Thursday
10am - 12noon
Friday
7.00 - 9.00pm
Saturday
10am - 12noon

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