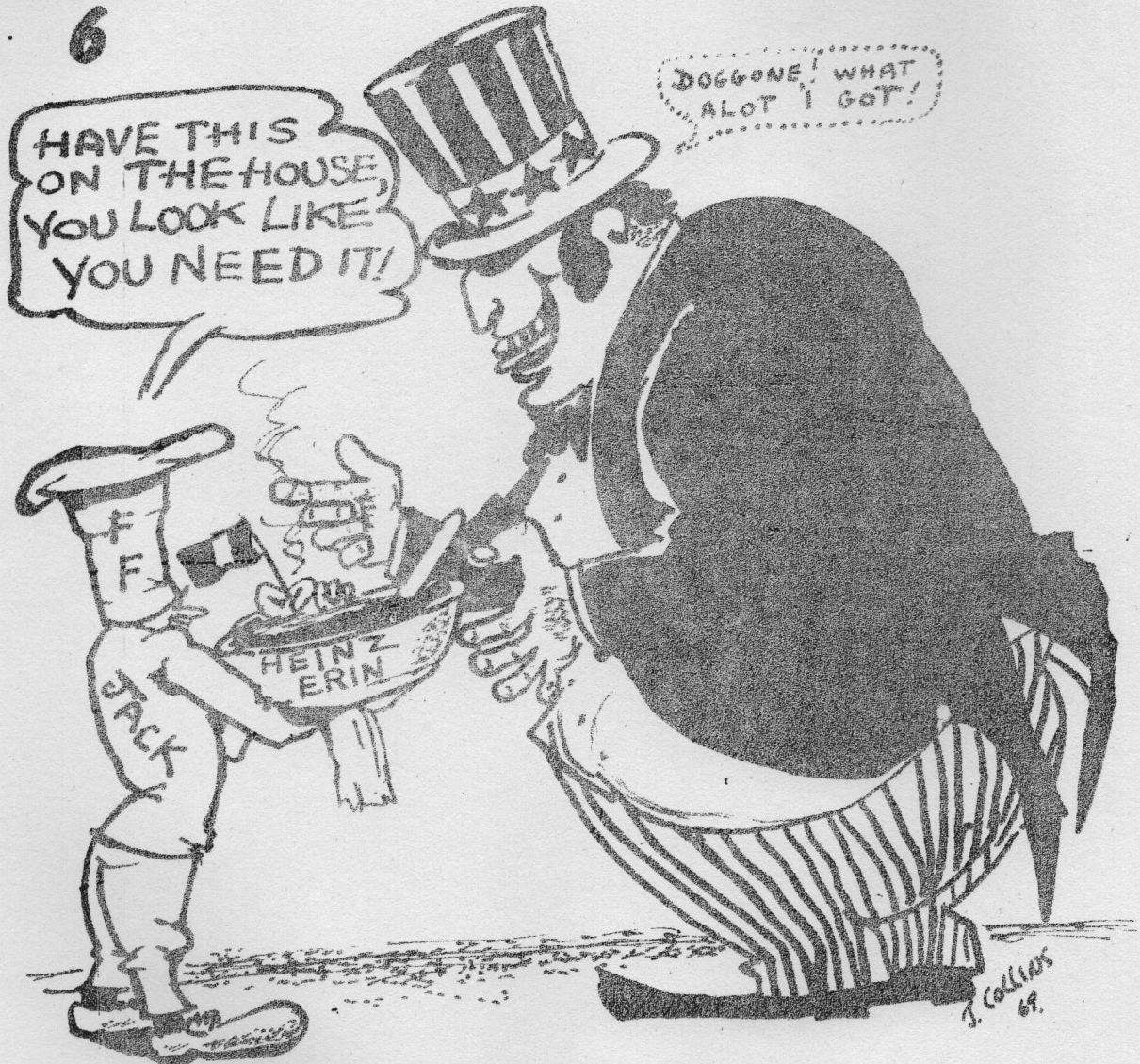


# PEOPLE'S VOICE



NUMBER

6



*erin foods*

# SELL-OUT

# FREE STATE SELL OUT TO FOREIGN CAPITALISM

HEINZ  
ERIN

EVERY NOW AND THEN, when faction fighting within ruling class circles breaks into the open, the public are treated to juicy details on the inner workings of bourgeois rule in this country. The latest disclosures of this sort, made by Lt. General M. J. Costello on Radio Eireann on March 24, are of the utmost importance, since they relate directly to the manner in which imperialism is presently consolidating its hold on the Irish economy, with the aid of the Free State government.

THE ISSUE on which Costello gave forth pertained to the Heinz take-over of Erin Foods; or the Heinz-Erin merger, as it is politely styled in capitalist jargon. Here is an instance where a state industry with considerable export potential was deliberately obstructed in developing external markets, and the true facts on its actual condition suppressed, for the specific purpose of laying the basis of justification for its subsequent sell-out to foreign capitalism.

COSTELLO ELABORATED on the manner in which this was done, by relating to the interviewer how the Board of Erin Foods put forward in 1964 certain proposals with regard to the development of markets in Britain, and had to wait until September 1966 for a reply which "conveyed approval by the Government for the course of action to be followed by the company in 1966, when the year was almost over." He then went on to say that "the suppression of this fact gave the public the impression that Erin Foods had been trying vainly to sell products in England, when, in fact, the company was hamstrung in many of its attempts to sell, and whenever it did get going, its sales performance was spectacularly good."

THE OBJECT of the foregoing manoeuvres on the part of the Government are, of course, easily understood in the context of the subsequent claim that the merger with Heinz was essential for the acquisition of external markets for the products of Erin Foods, in other words a manufacturing industry based primarily on native raw materials, was first established with millions of pounds of the taxpayers money. Once established, it was then deliberately hampered in its development, and the lack of progress arising from this latter act of sabotage was then trotted out as justification for handing a readymade concern over to foreign control. Indeed, not alone was Erin Foods readymade for foreign capitalist exploitation, it was also a going concern despite all the impediments strewn in its path. As Costello said, and since he was directly involved he should know, "In the three months it was ready to get going, its rate of sale was such that it has not yet been surpassed." This was yet another fact which had to be suppressed by the Board of Erin Foods, "at the instance of a Civil Servant from the Department of Finance."

THERE WAS NO justification whatever for the merger said Costello, in fact, it was opposed by people prominent in the running of the company, amongst which Costello can, no doubt, be counted. When asked "What had anyone to gain from it?" he replied: "Nobody had anything to gain in this country, but naturally enough, the people who delivered Heinz had a lot to gain; and everybody who was in favour of Heinz and of foreign domination here would have this point of view". Said he, expanding further: "Heinz was simply like other foreign firms looking for something for nothing, or something for little anyway. In fact, they got something for nothing."

FOREIGN FIRMS looking for something for nothing: no socialist could do better in underscoring the motives behind foreign investment in Ireland, and Costello is far from being a socialist. The Heinz affair is but one in hundreds relating to foreign control of the Irish economy. As an established and prominent member of the ruling class, Costello knows what he is talking about when he exposes the scandal of the Heinz take-over. But by so doing, he inadvertently goes further, and exposed also the base hypocrisy of the Free State Government's allegation that progress in Ireland depends upon such foreign investment. Progress yes! But progress for whom? That's the rub.

COSTELLO BY NO MEANS limited his disclosures to the Heine affair. He also had something to say on the manner in which foreign companies had infiltrated into other areas of government services. Specifically, he mentioned the allocation of dairy subsidies, and the fact that "the board that determines the allocation of this subsidy contains three most influential members who are de facto representatives of foreign interests." Naturally, he did not go so far as to say that those people, whom he named as Messrs. Power, Godsil and O'Neill, were guilty of malfeasance. What he did suggest, was that people who had a direct interest in the disposal of public money by such a board, "should either get off the board or get out of the foreign companies which they were associated with." The present set up, he said, gave rise to a "conflict of interest"!! The inference here is clear enough, while being at the same time sufficiently ambiguous to avoid entanglement with the finer points of the law.

WHEN ASKED if he took the actions of "apostles of imperialism in Ireland", the senior Civil Servants and their ventriloquist's dummies" installed on the boards of state owned companies, to mean that the Free State was in effect nothing more "than a banana republic?" Costello replied: "I didn't compare us to a banana republic. I said that people had a hard neck to take this particular line in Ireland. The only countries in which this had been previously attempted were banana republics". In other words, we are not a banana republic, merely a Potato Republic; the difference being that in a banana republic imperialism not alone functions, but also appears to function, while in a Potato Republic such as ours, imperialism operates without appearing to do so. But give us a little more time, and we'll make the grade yet!

IT IS TO BE greatly lamented that the disclosures of blatant subservience to imperialist exploitation made in the "Costello interview", will all too readily be forgotten and ignored by the mass of the people when they traipse out at the next election and, with their pathetic little "X", put the seal of popular approval on yet another assembly of robber barons. If we made statements similar to those of General Costello, we would be quickly labelled as purveyors of base anti-national propaganda, that had its source in a foreign ideology, and its motives in a subservience to foreign interests. And how many are they who will still lap up such garbage? Socialism operating in Ireland would quickly end all these things which Costello and his likes will never do so despite all their talk; because to eliminate such mis-administration requires not alone the suppression of those who practice it, but also the eradication of its very source, which is of course the very ruling class of which Costello himself is still a part.

THE ANTHETISIS of the Irish bourgeois fear of socialism, which they are pleased to style foreign, is their love for foreign capitalism in the guise of imperialism. And why not? It is no skin off their ass that imperialism exploits both the Irish People and the Nation's resources. To begin with, they get their rake-off; and they are also sufficiently pragmatic to realise that their security as a ruling class is inextricably entwined in this day and age with the fortunes of the multi-national web of imperialism. The era when a national bourgeoisie could function independently of, or in conflict with other bourgeois states has passed; at least insofar as the mini-bourgeois states are concerned. However, it would appear that Costello is one of those antideluvian bourgeois who do not realise this hard fact, or who refuses to accept its consequences. Hence, his open attack on the malpractices of the dominant

section of his own class. But the "Senior Civil Servants", those "apostles of foreign imperialism", as he calls them, know the score, and it is they, and not he, who determine the fate and course of the Irish Free State.

IT IS THIS CONFLICT, the contradiction between a 19th century concept of bourgeois national interests, and the 20th century demands of imperialism which gave rise to Costello's anti-government outburst on March 24th. We can all derive a certain benefit from such intra-class faction fight when it breaks into the open; not alone from what it reveals, but also from what it implies. The demands of imperialism at times create exploitable cracks in the ruling class structure which, under certain conditions, can be effectively used to



Are you going to be guilty of undermining the "free market" or will you accept a wage cut?

sharpen the Peoples' consciousness on the true nature of bourgeois rule, and by so doing, drive a wedge between the ruling class and the working people as a whole. In this sense, the openly expressed anti-government antagonism of people like Costello can serve a useful purpose, not because his middle class values are more compatible to the welfare of the PEOPLE than those of his imperialist orientated class associates, but because they are antiquated, and due to this tend to thwart rather than advance the wellbeing and smooth functioning of that class as the ruling body. It is in this spirit that we now hail the public service rendered by general Costello on March 24th.

## SOISCÉAL DE RÉIR

# CHARLES SHEÁIN BHÚI

Ag deire an leabhair úd, "THE DISTASTEFUL CHALLENGE?" le Charles McCarthy, tá ionnsiú mí-mhacánta ar fhealsúnacht na Gaeilge. Ós rud é nár iarr éinne é fhreagairt, seo anois cuige mar thús linn, go dtí go mbéis tabhairt faoi ina icoinláine:

"There must be few experiments in our modern world so astonishing as the attempt to revive the Irish Language, because in fact there was very much more to it than the language itself; we actually set about creating a new culture. And millions of children in the last thirty years living a life quite different from this romantic Gaelic past, were nevertheless brought up in the schools to believe that their own home culture and street culture was something alien, something to be ashamed of and that the Gaelic culture provided by the school was the only real thing in their lives..." (McCarthy, op. cit. 108/9).

SE croí h-argóna aige ná: go bhfuil cultúr baile is sráide ann in Eirinn (cultúr an bhearla): gur le páistí Tíre é; gur rud saibhir é; gur rud réadúil é; nach rud náireach é; agus nach bhfuil ceangail cultúrtha idir páistí an lae inniu agus na gluanta in Eirinn fadó.

MÁ'S le páistí na tíre é cultúr an bhaile bearlach, cethain ar chaill Sasana é? ná an chuid de Shasana sinn murar chaill? Má's de Eire sinn cethain ar shíolraí Eire an dara chultúr bheo?

NÍOR chaill Sasana cultúr an bhearla: do leathanú sí a smacht cultúrtha, b'shin an meid. Ní de shasana sinn is de CULTUR Shasana sinn faoi léthair. Níor shíolruíoch in Eirinn ach aon chultúr náisiúnta atá beo inniu. Ní linne mar sin an cultúr bhaile bearlach. Iarsma choncais é; concas impiriúil Shasana.

NÍ rud saibhir é; nílagh ach scathán ar shaibhreas chultúrtha an mhaistir-chultúr. Sé is rithim bheatha dó an spleáchas. Is fó-chultúr é, atá ag su críocha strains-eartha, is ag fás bhainne strains-eartha.

NÍ chultúr réadúil é i goáin theacs na tíre seo. Ní réadúlacht go bhfirinne. Is éitheach mar chultúr é 'nár measc: éitheach, mar nach uainn féin urlabhra agus módh saoil an chultúir sin. 'S í an fhirinne í, gur eagsúil sinn o mhuintir Shasana, udar an bhearla; a bhfirinne ná staire leis. Ní saoirse go dtig firinne ar n-éagsúlachta stairúla i bhfeidhín arís orainn, 'nár n-urlabhra agus inar mhódh saoil; i bhfocail 'nár náisiúntacht féin. Is náireach é an cultúr bhaile bearlach coimh maith, do dheasca céanna.

IS náireach do dhuine síor-asthris do dheansmh ar a cháirde; ach is measc fos do dhuine a bhíonn ag sodar in diaidh a nemheid! Is mar seo d'Eire inniu. Níl, ónóir ná an t-saoirse ag an duine go dtí go bhfreagraíonn a shaol do aigne féin is da phearsanacht eagsúil féin. Is náireach do phobal ar bith a mheabhar do chuir i n-daoirse faoi throime mheabhair choncaire: is cumas do phobal saoirse mheoin do choimead fúí chosar bolg pholaitiúil. Is nairí fos do phobal afeach, maireachtaint as a mheabhair féin nuair té an t-saoirse pholaitiúil ann chuige (agus ata sa 26 Co.) ná bealaí le fille ar a shaol is ar a mheabhar iomlán féin.

IS léir ná tuigeann McCarthy an difríocht idir chultúr nua agus an fhorbairt. Ní nuaíocht go preamha nua. Níl preamha ná náisiúntachta marbh. Mar sin is forbairt ar phreainh, ar bheo-chultúr bíocht gur lag é, ata, agus do bhi riamh, mar chuspóir ag lucht na Gaeilge. Is cosúil í le duine ata ag goigilt tine lag d'fhonn é dheansmh ina bhladhm mhór, í iarrecht na h-aithbheochana: an bheatha d'fhorbairt í

dtreo na beochta

MAIRIR le cose McCarthy ar an gceistiu is iniucha: "if the school creates a sharp cultural break from the family, one tends to invite children to cut themselves away from real life as they experience it; and there is no greater harm...to a young mind...than to put in question the very validity of its own experience..(p.109). Is leor a ra anois: Cionnus an eircochadh le sclabhaí e shaoredh on a mhaistir muna gceistiúomn se timpeallacht na sclabhaíochta? Is níd maith e paiste sclabha do shaora fiu le scoilt idir e agus an baile, le "m-rá" fise na saoirse do thaispeaint do. Sclabhaí choncais i Eire.

TA sé riachtanach i goas mar seo. D'reir mar theanns traidisiúin choncais i bhfeidhm sea is mo a spleachas air, agus sea is lu a choinhacht air fein do phobal. Is gnás da leithéid, d'ar leithéidí bheith ag díriú ar an mhaistir-chultúr. 'Si daoirse mheoin duibhe na nduibhe na sclabhaíochta i go mbeimis dall air sin.

# PEOPLES VOICE

During the past month the Cork members of Saor Eire have engaged in a thorough assessment of their activities with respects to the publication of People's Voice, and other organisational matters. As a consequence, it has been decided to rationalise future labours in the light of experience gained over the past year.

One of the decisions emerging from this self-criticism pertains to People's Voice. It has been decided to limit its publication to once every eight weeks for the time being. This was adopted so as to facilitate the development of other activities which, it is hoped, will more readily contribute towards the emergence of a truly dynamic Marxist-Leninist Party in Ireland.

Despite the many changes during the past decade conditions in Ireland are by no means amenable to the ready establishment of an effective Marxist effort. Much groundwork still remains to be done; many skills still require mastering, especially with regards to Marxist-Leninist theory and its relation to practice.

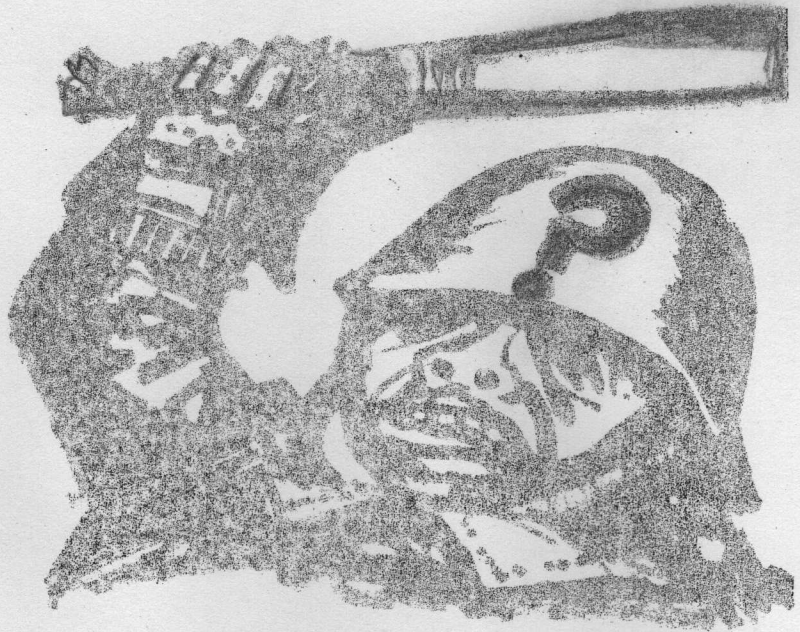
As things now stand, there is a dearth of competent Marxists, with the result that we actually lack the intellectual base upon which to build the necessary organisation to achieve our desired goals. At the present time we would appear to be going through a phase of acquiring such a vital prerequisite, and in the process are experiencing all the frustrations and contradictions that are common to such a period. Small-groupism flourishes under such conditions, as do sectarianism and dogmatism. It is all too easy to become immersed in a morass of such negative trends, and lose sight completely of the one thing that really matters -- the cultivation of an individual and a collective capacity to pursue Marxist objects in a manner complementary to objective and subjective conditions.

On examining our position in the light of experience, we have acquired at least some consciousness as to what must be done if Socialism is to be victorious in Ireland; and we will attempt to regulate our future efforts in a manner which will complement this. It is unfortunate that such a period of reorganisation and redirection will disrupt the frequency with which People's Voice has hitherto appeared. However, it is hoped that this shall, in the end, be for the best. In the meantime, it is hoped that all subscribers will bear with us.

## MARKSIST DISCUSSION GROUP.

Socialists in the Cork area interested in above are asked to contact  
The Sec., SAOR EIRE, 9, St. Nicholas Church Place, off Cove St., Cork.  
Anyone taking part in this discussion group will not be under any  
obligation to SAOR EIRE. Marxism will be discussed as it relates to  
the Irish situation.

# LEST WE FORGET



Six-County Paisleyites, armed by Stormont and called B-specials, have again been unleashed on the people of British Occupied Ireland. The following list of shootings in which this sectarian force was involved during the 1950's, will surely give an indication of what to expect from them in the future, now that they have been called in to assist the R.U.C. in suppressing civil rights demonstrations.

March 5, 1955 - Rathcarbery, between Keady and Darkley, 18 year-old Arthur Leonard shot dead when B-men opened fire on a van he was driving. 16 year-old Clare Mallon was wounded. (I. Independent 7/3/55).

March 6, 1955 - Austin Stinson (23) of Monea, Derrygonnelly, Co. Fermanagh, seriously wounded by patrol of B-men on the Aughnacloy-Augher Road while driving a car, (I. Independent 7/3/55).

October, 1955 - Thomas Corrigan (53), Anne Street, Dungannon, was, in his own words, "brutally attacked" by a party of armed B-Specials on the outskirts of Dungannon. He received medical treatment to his head, arms and legs. (Irish Press, 18/10/55).

October, 1955 - B-Special Constable Daniel Richmond (26) was shot dead while drilling with other Specials at Park Hall, Armoy, Co. Antrim. (I. Independent 22/10/55).

#### MOTORIST HIT

December 26, 1956 - Charles Hilliard (38) of Bracklen, Ederney, Co. Fermanagh, was wounded in the leg by a B-special bullet when driving home early in the morning. (I. Press, 27/12/56).

January 1, 1957. Five young Tyrone people were fired on by B-Specials as they drove home from a New Year's party, near Caledon. Una Buchanan (12) lost the sight of an eye. Maurice Buchanan (19) was seriously wounded in the back. Florence Buchanan (14) and Ruby Buchanan (17) had hand injuries. Merlyn Buchanan was wounded in the arm. (I. Press, 2/1/57).

January 18, 1957 - A B-Special shot his own son in the leg while rushing to set up a road-block on the Dungannon-Coalisland road.

February 1, 1957 - Special Constable Kenneth Elliott of Newtownbutler, Co. Fermanagh, was motor-cycling near his home at 8.15 p.m. He was fired on by a police patrol and received serious abdominal injuries. (I. Press, 2/2/57).

April 8, 1957 - Special Constable Robert Henderson (24) was shot dead in the day-room of Trillick, Co. Tyrone police barracks by another B-special (I. Press 9/4/57).

April, 1957 - Special Constable John MacConnell was shot dead in Newtownards R.U.C. Barracks by an R.U.C. constable (I. Independent, 26/4/57).

#### WOUNDED

June 9, 1957 - Mrs. Margaret Martin (42) Belfast, was wounded in the shoulder when a mixed B-Special/R.U.C. patrol opened fire with Sten Guns on her husband's car near Killeen Customs post, Co. Armagh. (I. Independent, 10/6/57).

(Continued on page 11).

# CLASS LINES IN THE CLASSROOM

NONE OF THE 26 COUNTY GOVERNMENTS, since the treaty, have found it necessary to depart much from the administrative structures set up by the British Crown. Those changes which have been made, have come about due to changes in the economic or social circumstances and not as a result of any desire to build a new democratic order of things. In education the pattern followed is much the same as 60 years ago. The only major departure has been the institution of the Technical School system. The Vocational Education Act of 1930 gave legal standing to the already existing, but embryonic, scheme of technical instruction. At that time it was common for an area to be serviced by, for example, a Woodwork teacher and a Domestic Science instructor who travelled about an area on bicycles and held classes in lofts, barns and anywhere else they were let.

The spread of the 'techs' was a necessary step to make possible the Government's economic and industrial policies. The Cosgrave regime had begun a programme of industrial protectionism to foster the development of native industry. Industry needs skills of many kinds and Ireland was grievously short of them.

THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM has meant that for 40 years the needs of Irish industry for skilled workers have been largely fulfilled. It has provided the children of workers and small farmers with the opportunity to raise their general educational level but has also provided ("the classic capitalist pattern of containment of the most able of the working class",) a means to join the labour aristocracy. The 'techs' was therefore set up to provide Irish industry with a basically skilled corps of workers. They were staffed largely by teachers who were themselves from much the same backgrounds as their students. This system has developed in size for the past 40 years but new changes are now affecting the whole education sector. The 'free' schools scheme has meant that working-class children have increased their chances somewhat for entry into the secondary schools and subsequently into the middle-class. The 'techs' have changed at the same time.

THIS YEAR STUDENTS attending Vocational Schools will take the Intermediate Certificate and facilities will be provided for Vocational students to proceed to Leaving Certificate. The emphasis on practical subjects such as metalwork and woodwork has lessened and a new range of subjects, with an increased emphasis on existing 'general' subjects, has been instituted. The numbers of students attending the Vocational Schools has soared in this decade, so also have the numbers of teachers (35% increase between 1960-66). Under the 'old regime' the numbers of university graduates was small, being confined mostly to teachers of commerce and some general subject teachers. But with the new emphasis, with the introduction of Science, languages etc. to the course in the past few years, the number of graduates has increased to the extent that they now represent 50% of Vocational teachers and that percentage is growing every year. There has been growing friction between the graduate and non-graduate teachers. The graduates, coming mostly from comfortable middle-class backgrounds, have been secondary schooled and have a secondary school, i.e. bourgeois outlook on life. The non-graduate teachers are trained, be they woodwork, metalwork, domestic science, some non-graduate rural science, art teachers all with diplomas. Some may have come through secondary schools but many of the trained practical teachers are products of the same school system in which they teach and on the whole have a greater commitment to the concept and the practice of Vocational Education. The graduate view is more often than not that the degree is 'king', that having made the 'sacrifices' to obtain their degrees they should be given the benefit of some form of recognition, namely cash! Implicit in this argument and made explicitly by the graduate is the view that a great deal of capital was invested in the secondary and university education of the graduate by their families such that he deserves a modest return on the large sums of money invested. This is a class argument, it has its basis in the capitalist view of affairs. Even so this argument is built on quicksand! The university student and indeed the secondary school student has been and is being supported more from the slender pockets of the workers than the

inflated pockets of the large farmer and the shopkeeper who "scrimp and save" to send Johnny to the 'unes'. The taxpayer (in this country that means the spender of money, as well as the income tax-payer) makes a contribution to the universities TWICE that of the fee-paying student. (That does not include capital grants for buildings etc.) The only reason the universities charge fees is to keep out the sons and daughters of those who pay the most of the taxes. The community has made a far greater investment in the university graduate than the graduate's family. (Pray! Where did they get their money).

FOR THE GRADUATES, the economic argument must now be abandoned. The second line of defence concerns the quality of the education offered at a university and how it produces a better educator, whereas the man trained by the Department of Education is not an educator but an instructor!! The first nut to crack here is that a vocational teacher is an educator in the sense in which the graduate means it. The classical and bourgeois ideal of education, building up the critical capacity, developing the individual's awareness of the inter-relationships of things and the ability to maintain an objective view of things, and ideas has in the opinion of the writer long since disappeared from schools and universities. It is no longer the purpose of the university to turn out well rounded gentlemen versed in the arts and ideas of the age, but to fulfil the economic and social requirements of the kind of society in which we live, i.e. capitalism, in all its aspects. This is also the function of the Vocational Schools, if on a different level. The change of emphasis in the school curriculum is due to the fact that industry and commerce require workers who are more adaptable and better equipped to meet the changing demands of technology. Therefore, the student does more English, more Science etc.

GOING BACK to the sectional argument of the graduates; they want a differential between themselves and non-graduate teachers because of (a) the cost of obtaining a university degree, or if that doesn't hold, (b) because the years spent in a university cause the graduate to obtain the academic equivalent of the "COLGATE Ring of Confidence". The graduates want to measure the unmeasurable!! The assumption here is that the production of a well-rounded individual is part and parcel of university education. It is not!! The university is designed to do the direct opposite if anything producing the world-wide revolt within the universities against an oppressive system of "education". In Ireland however the class lines in vocational schools are already drawn. The reactionary graduate elements have organised themselves to maintain and widen the differential introduced by the Ryan Tribunal report on teachers salaries, by setting up the University Graduates Association (Vocational). They have formed an association, ostensibly within the Vocational Teachers Association to pursue a policy directly opposed to that of the V.T.A. as laid down by its Annual Congress. In the face of this reaction the Executive of the V.T.A. have adopted what they call a conciliatory attitude towards these elitists. But there is a growing body of opinion comprising radical graduates and the main body of non-graduate teachers that the union must take strong disciplinary action against members who subscribe to the elitist and selfish views of the graduate group.

THIS REPORT WILL perhaps indicate how class conflict can operate outside the area of industrial production, and is manifest anywhere by those who have benefitted from a privileged position and who seek to maintain and extend their privilege. The beneficial effects of this outbreak of reaction has been to increase the militancy and class consciousness of the general body of teachers. MORE OF IT!

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A WORKERS LIBRARY - WHEN ?

THE CORK CITY Public Library in common with other city and county libraries throughout the country are the property of the Irish people, this, there is no disputing. It follows that as the majority of the people are workers, it is to be expected that these libraries should serve working class interests. To acquire a working knowledge of socialism, the ideology of the working class, workers are required to study the basic works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and other Socialist writers. Like many other publications to-day, more often than not their price is beyond the means of the worker, consequently he has to rely on the public library. How then does our city library serve the student of socialism? A visit to the library left us in no doubt, the lending department has a few dozen books by some erstwhile socialists and "red-baiters", but the reference library really deserves a prize. Consulting the classified file we found the following listed under SOCIALISM (Deweys classification 350) "Fascism, Communism or what," Daniel Cohalan (Bishop of Cork), "Labour, Nationality and Religion" Connolly, "Could Ireland become Communist" Hogan, "Socialism and Nationalism" Connolly, "The Workers Republic" Connolly, "Fabian Tracts 1884 to 1918" and a volume of Marx's "Capital". Is not this a disgrace for a library in a City of 120,000 people, not a volume of Lenin's works and over 40 volumes readily available, nothing by Engels and Marx only got mention with a volume. THINGS WILL HAVE TO CHANGE, we the workers deserve a better service.



# A LACKEY UNION

THE

P.O.W.U.

IN OUR LAST ISSUE we reprinted a statement from the Dublin Postmen's Union, which publicized the plight of militant postmen who experience harrassment and victimization from their departmental bosses in collaboration with the officials of the Post Office Workers' Union, when they endeavour to assert normal worker demands.

IT IS WELL KNOWN within labour circles that working conditions for postmen generally are of early 19th century vintage. It is accepted also that the P.O.W.U. is a union in nothing but name, since it falls clearly within the category of a "pocket union". Under such conditions it is in no way strange that those temporary postmen who were not reduced to the normal condition of civil service zombies, should find themselves belted from all sides when they showed the temerity to demand what are reasonable working conditions.

THIS FIGHT against serf-like conditions in the Post Office is a reoccurring one, of which the efforts of the D.P.U. are but the latest chapter. The D.P.U. was formed in July 1968, for the primary purpose of forwarding the claims of temporary postmen in the Dublin area. Beginning with an initial membership of 30, it quickly expanded to represent 150; a growth which, when associated with militant agitation, had the effect of "awakening" the interest of the P.O.W.U. in temporary postmen --- at least in Dublin. Before this the P.O.W.U. had shown but scant interest in the welfare of temporary postmen, and had made little effort to secure their adhesion to their union. Now, that these men had shown a taste for independent organisation, the tune changed; but under circumstances which made clear that the motivation stemmed more from a wish to maintain the "normal" servility in worker relations with the bosses, than from any new-found inclination to fight for the rights of these workers. Naturally, the militants thumbed their noses at such transparent attempts to side-track their claims; and as was to be expected, they have since suffered the consequences.

AS TEMPORARY STAFF the active members of the D.P.U. were wide open to dismissal without redress. The union's secretary, Bernard Hartnett, was one of those who suffered such a fate last February, on the trumped up charge of an unsatisfactory working record. His reaction to this news was, for want of a better phrase, uncharacteristic of the normal service atmosphere of a post office floor! "He pulled the supervisor's cap down over his eyes." A sacrilege, to be sure, but a mild reaction we would say from a Dublin worker whose predecessors had shown their mettle in the ranks of Citizen Army.

THE ISSUES RAISED by the D.P.U. are of relevance to places other than Dublin. Indeed, throughout rural Ireland, and especially in small post offices, the status of temporary postmen is tragic. Relying merely on a limited personal knowledge, we can readily call to mind six or seven specific locations where but one permanent position exists, while from three to five temporary postmen are employed year in and year out. Such men can, and very often do put in a lifetime of service without ever having the prospects of securing the benefits of a permanent position. It was not too long ago that the Sunday papers covered the retirement of one such man, who had been delivering letters since before 1916!! His time had eventually come to pack in, with nothing, or very little to show for his time other than the usual "thanks Jack, sure you were a great man."

THE LACK OF SUCH THINGS as pension rights and sick benefits by temporary postmen may seem exaggerated when compared to the plight of many industrial workers who suffer similar disabilities. But this is not so in the context of their

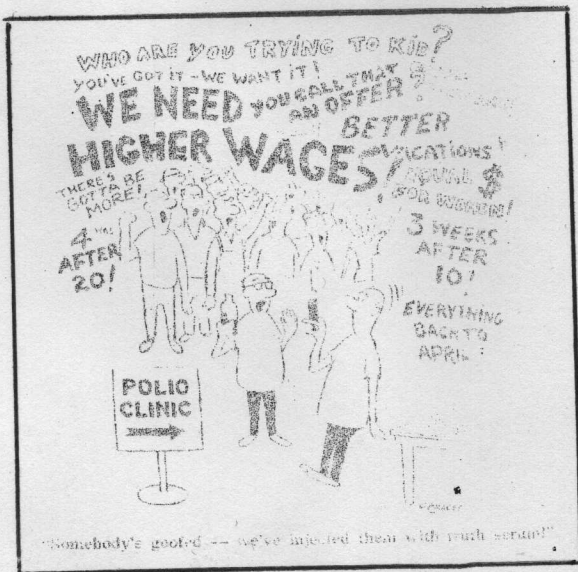
conditions of employment. Temporary postmen work side by side with permanent staff, doing the same work, and quite frequently putting in the same length of service. However, they get paid less every week, £14. 8. 3. as against £16. 13. 0.; they enjoy six weeks sick leave with pay per year, as against six months for the permanent man; and on retirement they get a lump sum of about £700, as against a pension based on length of service plus a lump sum for the permanent employee. The industrial worker who would tolerate such blatant discrimination on a factory floor is a rare bird indeed these days.

PRESUMABLY, one could lay all the blame at the door of the Department of Post & Telegraphs for this discreditable discrimination. But the fact is, that illustrious institution functions as a normal appendage of the capitalist system of which it is a part. Therefore, it will invariably exploit and divide its employees in classic capitalist fashion, and to an extent that reflects the degree of organised worker opposition with which it has to contend. The greater the opposition the more subdued the discrimination, and vice versa. Hence, we get at the root of the problem insofar as it relates to worker-employer relations in the Department of Posts & Telegraphs; it spells P.O.W.U.

WHAT IS THE P.O.W.U.? As a union it is a sick joke; but as an "association" functioning in the guise of a union, it readily facilitates an indirect but highly effective medium for worker manipulation on the part of the bosses. Official appointments in the "association" are restricted to civil servants, who, when elected to a position are still "subject to regulations governing the conduct of Civil Servants." In a word, officials of the P.O.W.U. continue as employees of the boss against whom they are expected to fight on behalf of fellow workers. An appointee is given "special leave" to take up a position as full-time union official, but as the Department so succinctly puts it, "The officer will be treated...as if he had continued to serve in the Department." For instance, such a "union" official "will not be free to engage in political activities," and of course, should he prove overly diligent in pressing the claims of the workers he represents, his own future as an employee is open to subtle but effective retribution. In plain language, officials of the P.O.W.U. remain full-time employees of the Department, and are therefore subject to act in a manner befitting employees in their dealings with the Department as advocates of the workers. Imagination is a thing least required in deducing what this leads to in the broad context of the class struggle.

THOSE UNACQUAINTED with the many inimical features of the P.O.W.U. may consider the foregoing overly exaggerated; they may be inclined to say: "things could'n't be that bad." Hell! we haven't the space to detail just how bad the situation really is. Such a task would require a literary work exceeding in length Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire": and even then there would be critics who would still consider such a treatment superficial. But, if the foregoing points are deemed too grotesque to really apply to a trade union today, we give just one more, and let the politically inclined figure it out.

AS CIVIL SERVANTS, both the officials and members of the P.O.W.U. are not free to participate in meaningful political activities---like putting up posters or canvassing for a contestant in a local election. Yet, the "union" is affiliated to the Labour Party, and sends delegates to its Annual Conference. Here again, of course, the P.O.W.U. is nothing but a paper tiger, because as Senator Jack McQuillan has stated from first-hand knowledge, they are "not entitled to criticise Government Policy, as certain members of that union know to their bitter shame and humiliation." (P.O.O.A. Newsletter, May '68). Talk about Pantomime! Even in it's hey day the "ROYAL" could'n't top that one; delegates denied the right of political involvement by their boss, participating in decisions on the course of a political party. One could'n't be blamed for wondering which is the worst, the P.O.W.U. or the Labour Party.



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ON THIS ISSUE McQuillan poses the question: "Perhaps someone would explain the apparent reluctance of any member of the P.O.W.U. to contest a seat on the Labour Party administrative council. Surely a seat on the Council which governs the Labour Party would be a desirable object for a Union which claims such close associations with the Party. Or would it be accurate to say that they are barred as Civil Servants from so doing? It is a pity therefore, and indeed a matter with serious implications, to find a Union, whose members are debarred from taking part in the humblest and most menial political chores, should so blatantly endeavour to blackmail a political party. The Party of course is worse to tolerate it." (Newsletter, May, 1968).

TO COMPLICATE this farce further you then have the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs collecting P.O.W.U. union dues, part of which go to the Labour Party as a political levy imposed on all its affiliates. As the political line-up in Leinster House now stands, this means that post office workers pay their levy to the Labour Party via a Fianna Fail Minister; while at the same time they are denied the right to get the political worth of their money, by being debarred from meaningful political involvement in the Labour Party. Frankly, we doubt if such a complicated rigmarole would or could be conceived in any place other than Ireland, for the simple purpose of giving workers the run about.

AS WE SAID, to unravel the whole sorry mess that is the P.O.W.U. would require many volumes. But at least this short illustration should suffice to show why the present unrest prevails amongst at least some post office workers, and why endeavours are being made to build a new union to offset the blatant lackeyism that has flourished for all too long under the auspices of the P.O.W.U.

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Contd. from page 6.

June 24, 1957 - After wounding his daughter Elizabeth (24) in the neck and his son Irvine (22) in the left hand, R.U.C. Constable Thomas McK. Holmes, aged 54, Maytown, Bessbrook, Co. Armagh, shot himself dead. (I. Press 25/3/57).

July, 1957 - Special Constable Joseph Ewing (21) Ballylackey, Co. Antrim, received a bullet wound in his left when an automatic weapon was accidentally discharged, while on duty on the Dunganon-Moy Road.

August 14, 1957. Robert Brown (25), Crossgar, Co. Down, was shot dead by a member of the U.S.C. on the Kilmore-Crossgar Road. (I. Times, 16/8/57).

September 31, 1957. - While motoring home at about midnight, Kevin John Mac Manus (35), Lisnaskea, was fired on by a B-Special patrol and received minor injuries. (I. Times, 23/9/57).

October 15, 1957) - Miss Margaret McIlveen, 110 Tavanagh Street, Belfast, was wounded in the arm by a B-Special member of a Belfast police patrol, in Milner Street, Belfast. (I. Press 17/10/57).

November 13, 1957 - John Collins (45), a motorist of Clanrye Avenue, Newry, was wounded about the head after being fired on by a B-Special patrol on the Armagh-Newry road at 9.30 p.m.

February 12, 1958 - Aiden Crossey (18), Derrymacash, Lurgan, Co. Armagh, was admitted to Lurgan Hospital with a bullet wound in his left leg, after he had been fired on by a police patrol near his home. (I. Press, 13/2/58).

March 21, 1958 - Michael Keegan, a 14 year-old schoolboy of Clonalig, Crossmaglen, Co. Armagh, was shot down by a B-Special patrol while cycling home from a local cinema. He sustained gunshot wounds in both legs.

August 24, 1958 - James Crossen (26), Cloneary, Bawnboy, Co. Cavan, an unarmed civilian - was shot dead near Swanlinbar in Co. Cavan by B-Specials and R.U.C. A companion was kidnapped and taken to Belfast Jail where he was held without charge or trial for close on three years.

September 6, 1958 - B-Special Thomas G. Taylor (56) of Holywood Road, Belfast, was found dead in his home with a bullet wound in his chest; a revolver was beside his body. (S. Press, 7/9/58).

#### SHOT DEAD

October 3, 1958 - Constable C. H. Cunningham (19), a native of Cookstown, Co. Tyrone, died in Draperstown R.U.C. Barracks, from a bullet wound caused when he was cleaning a revolver (I. Independent 4/10/58).



## WORKERS OF THE WORLD, AWAKEN!

Workers of the world, awaken!  
Break your chains, demand your rights.  
All the wealth you make is taken  
By exploiting parasites.  
Shall you kneel in deep submission  
From your cradles to your graves?  
Is the height of your ambition  
To be good and willing slaves?

If the workers take a notion,  
They can stop all speeding trains;  
Every ship upon the ocean  
They can tie with mighty chains;  
Every wheel in the creation,  
Every mine and every mill,  
Fleets and armies of the nation  
Will at their command stand still.

Join the union, fellow workers,  
Men and women, side by side;  
We will crush the greedy shirkers  
Like a sweeping, surging tide.  
For united we are standing,  
But divided we will fall;  
Let this be our understanding --  
"All for one and one for all."

Workers of the world, awaken!  
Rise in all your splendid might;  
Take the wealth that you are making,  
It belongs to you by right.  
No one will for bread be crying,  
We'll have freedom, love and health  
When the grand red flag is flying  
In the Workers' Commonwealth.

Joe Hill.

# CHALLENGE THE RULING CLASS

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**Organisation:** Saor Éire

**Date:** 1969

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