

AFTER THE "YES" VOTE

THE TAKE-OVERS SNOWBALL

— AND UNEMPLOYMENT LOOMS

BY G. PALMER

IT didn't take long after the Referendum for the take-overs to start.

Even the fruit importing trade is heading for monopoly.

These are the first steps on the road to the Common Market. The workers are sitting in at Crannac in Navan. The take-overs are going to mean more unemployment (it's over 13,000 higher than last year and we're not in the E.E.C. yet, only in the Free Trade Agreement with Britain).

Nearly four years ago the "Irish Socialist" predicted that the war of the supermarkets would end in the eventual elimination of the weakest.

This is now coming to pass with the news last month of the take-over by Powers of Quinnsworth, one of the largest of supermarkets.

Powers, owned by the Weston family, which controls large busi-

ness interest in Britain, Canada and South Africa, only recently took control of Brown Thomas of Grafton St. They also operate Penneys, a chain of retail drapery stores in Dublin, Cork and Limerick.

* * *

We see here only the beginning of a process that will be greatly accelerated now that we are going

into the Common Market. The foreign-owned retail monopolies, many of which also control the processing of foods, regard the Irish consumer market as profitable and easy to take over within the next couple of years.

Not alone will control of the retail grocery trade pass into their hands, but also the provisioning end, which will mean the virtual close-down of our own food-processing industry with loss of thousands of jobs.

R.G.D.A.T.A.

As the independent retail grocers organisation R.G.D.A.T.A. pointed out when referring to the take-over of Quinnsworth:

"This is the first stage in an invasion of this country by powerful international combines with vast resources who could offer enticing baits to the remaining Irish-owned retail grocery firms."

Word for word what the anti-Common Market campaigners were telling us a few weeks ago!

THE HOUSEWIFE WILL PAY

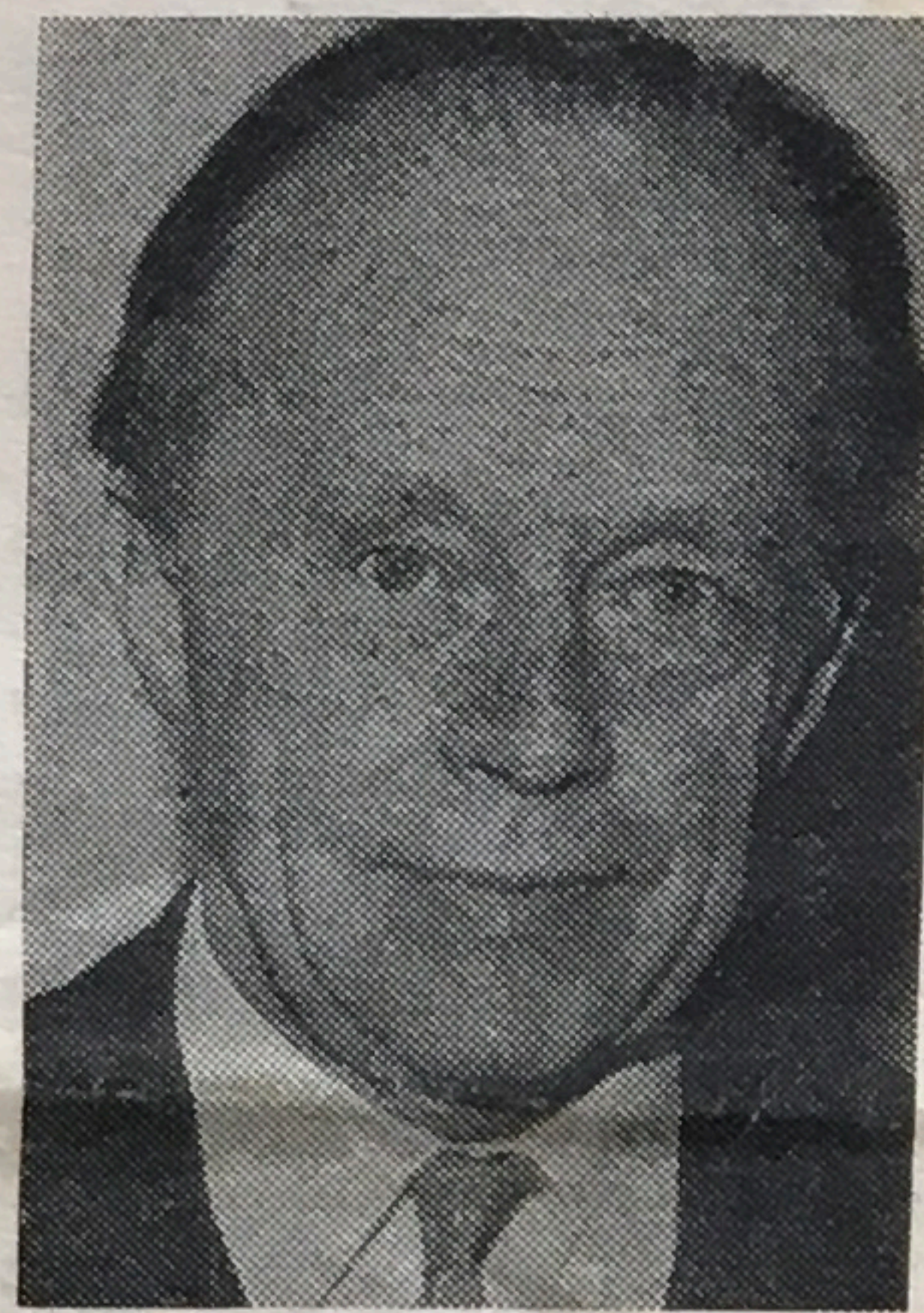
THE "Irish Socialist" also gave warning a few years ago of what the result of this monopoly control of the retail grocery was going to be. It will in the end mean that two or possibly only one giant supermarket will obtain control of every supermarket, big and small, in the country. Such a monopoly will be in a position to fix prices at whatever level it would regard as profitable.

No longer would there be the pull of competition. No longer, either, the need for special offers to attract the housewife. She will no longer have a choice as to where she will do her shopping. The recent example of the increase in the price of baby foods is an illustration of what pressure can do to force up prices.

* * *

How much easier it is going to be to force the housewife to pay higher prices when the whole of

the consumer industry, manufacturing and retail, is in the control of one or two monopolies.



CHILDERS: IS HE GOING TO BE MR. UNEMPLOYMENT?

"NO" TO CIVIL WAR SAYS CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

THE CIVIL WAR that has raged below the surface in this community for some years now is blazing out into the open. In the light of the growing conflagration we can only point out that there is no fire brigade to extinguish the flames. Once again the fires of sectarianism will burn themselves out at the expense of each and every person, Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter in this community.

● With the abolition of its secure power base at Stormont the Unionist Party lacks the will and leadership that would prevent sectarian violence.

● In the absence of any democratic assembly the Vanguard Movement seeks to try conclusions with the British Government by welding together the Tartan gangs to give coherence and direction to the blind forces of sectarianism and factional supremacy.

● Both I.R.A.s seem to welcome the prospect of playing saviour to the minority ghettos in the doomsday situation while doing nothing whatever to prevent that day dawning.

● The British Army will nominally act as fire brigade but will be careful only to arrive in time to hose down the embers and claim first prize for peacekeeping.

● William Whitelaw, Chief Fire Officer Extraordinary, will emerge from the smoke and chaos, with a nervous smile on his face and the hope that reconstruction can be proceeded with without delay. None of the houses, Catholic or Protestant, will have fallen on the honest broker.

* * *

The military geniuses who think that the British Army are

going to get trapped in the middle of a sectarian shoot-out have another think coming to them. When they engage in "aggro" with the end object of luring in the Army they endanger the lives of their own neighbours. Catholic and Protestant. Even allowing for the need of a defensive force in ghetto areas the vast majority of incidents, shooting and stone-throwing expeditions are unnecessary and, in the present situation, inflammatory in the extreme.

It is the forces that make for sectarian retaliation which makes the job of Civil Rights impossible. Civil Rights aims at promoting democratic accord and breaking down sectarian barriers. Civil Rights workers with their non-violent methods are the true revolutionaries in society. And society needs a revolution—not the counter revolution bearing down on us like a juggernaut of destruction and despair.

—From the N.I.C.R.A. Bulletin.

WOLFE TONE

The Marketeers dragged up everything to support their case. One of their most ludicrous attempts was to invoke the name of Wolfe Tone as a "European".

As has been pointed out Ireland could scarcely be said to have ever left Europe. The tradition that Wolfe Tone felt himself in time with was the revolutionary tradition. That it

was French at that time was incidental.

He wanted to "break the connection with England" and to unite the Irish people, irrespective of religion, to do it.

He wanted the opposite of what the Marketeers want. And let their be no mistake, his idea of an independent, egalitarian Ireland will triumph in the end.

DEATH OF HUGH HUNTER

WE deeply regret to announce the death of one of the most consistent and tireless members of the Communist Party in Northern Ireland. A fighter in the International Brigade against Fascism, Hugh Hunter devoted his entire life to the working-class. He will be very much missed.

THE PROFITS OF 106 IRISH PUBLIC COMPANIES ROSE BY 9.4 PER CENT BETWEEN THE 31st MARCH, 1971 AND THE SAME DATE IN 1972. THEY TOTALLED £21,926,373!

BALLAD CORNER

BY JOHN McDONNELL

BIG JOE

(Air: JOE HILL)

I DREAMED I saw Big Joe last night,
Alive as you and me.
Says I, "But Joe, you're long since dead."
"I've never died," says he.
"I've never died," says he.

They shot you in the Markets, Joe,
The Branch they took a hand,
The dirty cowards gave you no chance.

Says Joe, "But I'm not dead."
Says Joe, "But I'm not dead."

The Tory bosses killed you, Joe,
They shot you like a dog.
Takes more than guns to kill a man.

Says Joe, "I didn't die."
Says Joe, "I didn't die."

And standing there as big as life,
And smiling his own smile,
Joe says, "What they forgot to kill
Goes on to organise.
Goes on to organise."

"McCann's not dead," he says to me,

McCann's still on the go,
Where Irishmen claim what's their own

Big Joe is at their side,
Big Joe is at their side."

From Creggan Heights to Lower Falls,

From Turf Lodge to Ardoyne,
Where workers fight and organise,
Says he, "You'll find McCann."
Says he, "You'll find McCann."

'Til Britain's Empire's dead and gone,

And workers own this land,
We'll fight for Irish liberty.
Big Joe will lend a hand.
Big Joe will lend a hand.

I dreamed I saw Big Joe last night,
Alive as you and me.
Says I, "But Joe, you're long since dead."
"I'm still alive," says he.
"I'm still alive," says he.

THIS song was written by D. Fitzgerald (c. 1972 Rev. Music) and is dedicated to Joe McCann. It is the first song written about him but it will probably not be the last. It uses the framework and format of the fine song by Alfred Hayes and Earl Robinson, "Joe Hill".

A poem written in tribute to Joe McCann by "A Belfast Republican" reads in part:

Determined and undaunted,
He worked both night and day
To break the chains that bind us
And lead us on our way.

A disciple of James Connolly,
A comrade true and grand,
A defender of the working-class,
Remember Joe McCann.

(I would be thankful if readers would communicate to me any such songs or poems or indeed suggestions as to what I should include in Ballad Corner.)

A NEW SONG AGAINST THE E.E.C.

By LIAM WELDEN
(Air "Boollavogue")

CITIZENS all of the Irish nation, whatever persuasion that you may be,
Come listen to my peroration, and condemnation of the E.E.C.
Those Fianna Failures, freedom's true jailers, the would-be tailors of our destiny,
With honeyed words, they seek to sweeten the bitter bread of slavery.

You factory workers, fishers, and farmers, from Cork's own city up to Derry town,
Prepare to work, in the bowels of Europe, in a coal mine black in some foreign town.

While these foreign bastards bulldoze the pastures that the hacks and Quislings have signed away,

While Irish Ireland, our blood-won Ireland, will sink like the sun in the Western sea.

Will the sons of heroes be noughts and zeroes, will we sell our birthright to be cozened slaves?

For it's now or never, once and forever, we'll sort the true men out from the knaves.

Sinn Fein we cry in its full true meaning, ourselves alone, as we live or die,

Better Free if poor men, than Europe's sewer men, or mindless pigs in a German sty.

NOTEBOOK BY NORTHSIDER

So where's the 50,000 extra jobs?

THE new Irish stamp issue which appears this month is, we are informed by the G.P.O., to commemorate the patriot dead of the 1922-1925 period.

The design depicts a dove soaring out across the rising moon symbolising, so we are told, the peace and freedom won for the people of Ireland by the patriot dead.

Now we know that the Civil War 1922/1923 was not fought in vain after all. The peace and freedom which the Irish people have been relaxing in for the past fifty years is not dream after all. Military courts, jailing of republicans, executions, internment camps, anti-democratic legislation, mass unemployment and mass emigration were all just the price we've had to pay.

Maybe though the artist who designed those stamps should have chosen a flock of wild geese descending on Brussels rather than the dove of peace flying over the moon!

AFTERMATH

AT the first sitting of the Dáil after the Referendum we heard statements like that of Mr. Colley referring to allegations that foreigners will now be able to come in and buy up land.

"The regulations of the Community as they stood at the moment would not present any problems for this country and," went on Mr. Colley, "there was in existence since 1969 a draft Community directive which would enable people in one E.E.C. country to purchase agricultural land in another such country. But we have received assurances from the Community that this will not be adopted before our accession to the Community. (!) Thereafter," concluded the Minister, "this country will have a full say in any action that might be taken on that directive. We will have the right of veto." Mark that one, "We will have the right of veto."

It is indeed remarkable the amount of lying and misrepresentation that Fianna Fáil can get away with, especially in the Dáil.

The "Daily Express" a few days after the result of the Referendum claimed that the Dublin politicians had sold the electors the idea that the Community was a safe haven where "little people" would exercise influence. Said the "Express": "This is dreamland stuff. Policy in the Market will be dictated by the triumvirate of Britain, France and Germany."

Well, it was one occasion on which I at least could see eye to eye with the "Daily Express".

Kerrygold and all that romantic nonsense about our green, green pastures and Irish colic churning butter is out now.

We are now part of the international business confraternity and after all business is business.

THE RULING IDEAS OF EACH AGE

By MICHAEL FOX

HOW terrible to see the foot-prints of our rulers
On the plastic features of the news man.

He smiles only when we please them
And frowns as he speaks of rebellion.

He calls solid soldiers to condemn our acts of despair
And smooth employers explain the pointlessness of a strike.

Must we then shout and not be heard
Sit and take their smug derision
Accept that all our heroes are cowards

And that all our martyrs are savages?

Switch off the set and their bland lies
Seep through the walls and climb from the page.

We cannot silence them by solitary rage
But let us forge a terrible weapon in sullen quiet

A mass movement of the less than human
That are supposed to wait on their masters' voice.

I went with anger at my heel,

Through Bogside of the bitter zeal",

THOMAS KINSELLA'S GREAT POEM

"Butcher's Dozen"

NEW BOOKS

16A PEARSE STREET,

DUBLIN 2.

10p

BUY FOREIGN

THE B+I Company, a semi-State shipping and transport organisation with direct Government representation on the board of directors, derives a very large share of its revenue from the transport of Irish farmers' products to Britain. The catering end of B+I, and it is no small end either, has, we have been informed, suddenly taken a dislike to the use of Irish butter. New Zealand butter is a better proposition, so B+I are reported to have signed a contract for its supply.

GET YOUR "IRISH SOCIALIST"

REGULARLY BY POST

90p per year — 6 months 45p

SEND YOUR ORDER TO

NEW BOOKS

16A PEARSE STREET,

DUBLIN 2

CORK BRANCH

AT the monthly meeting the branch chairman Mary Sheehan congratulated party members for the tremendous work done in fighting the issue of the E.E.C. despite the terrible odds of being opposed by both conservative parties, big farming organisations and the blatant, unbalanced reporting by the local and national press, who completely shut down on letters which were sent for publication regarding the proposed entry.

This was admitted even by pro E.E.C. people who consider it to be utterly disgraceful and showed the need for the setting up of a Press Council. The branch secretary Jim Savage, commenting on the referendum, said the branch should make a survey on an area such as Blarney which turned up a huge "yes" vote in spite of the fact that they had been hit badly by the last free trade agreement.

During the Referendum production lines on two textile plants, Sunbeam Wolsey and Martin Mahony and Bros. were idle as 1,400 members of the I.T.G.W.U. were in official dispute on the question of rationalisation, which the Chairman of Sunbeam Wolsey said must come with the entry to E.E.C. The company decision was to discontinue the male aspect of work in a section which for years has been a male and female operation. The operation they now propose to become an all-female one.

In both factories the dispute was over a productivity scheme which the management wanted to implement. Now every house in this area was supplied with the I.T.G.W.U. and the I.C.T.U. publications setting out their reasons for opposing entry. The workers contend that the companies action is completely at variance with the written agreement which exists between them and is also contrary to the constitution of the Joint Industrial Council of the hosiery industry.

EDITORIAL

DEMOCRACY GOES

SPECIAL COURTS are back. Jack Lynch feels that the Referendum has given him a blank cheque. These courts are not just empowered to try Republicans. The entire Left-Wing and progressive movement is threatened.

Fine Gael, of course, has been foremost in the "law and order" game. Mr. Liam Cosgrave, his tongue flicking like that of a poisonous snake, doesn't even exclude members of his own party. They are "mongrel foxes" and the "pack will chop them".

This savage and inhuman phraseology shows the viciousness behind the pseudo-democratic front.

The members of the Labour Party who voted to give Fianna Fail Special Powers disgraced

themselves yet again. Every time members of the Labour Party support a clamp-down on democracy they are driving a nail in their own coffin. A society which starts to clamp down on dissent doesn't end the oppression when the chosen victims have been silenced. It goes on to crush all opposition.

The trade union movement will feel the lash, as the British trade union movement is feeling it, unless it starts the fight for democracy now. Special Courts are the first step to Industrial Courts. The upper classes may pick one target at a time but their objective is to wipe out all opposition.

If Labour doesn't wake up now we'll have to fight later under conditions chosen by the employers.

Communist Party of Ireland I WANT TO JOIN

NAME

ADDRESS

To the Secretary, 37 Pembroke Lane, Dublin 4.

COMMON MARKET OR NO COMMON MARKET, THE FIGHT AGAINST MONOPOLY GOES ON

By SEAN NOLAN

MEMBERSHIP of the Common Market first became an issue in Irish politics some 12 years ago. It was finally resolved on May 10 when in a referendum the people voted 1,041,880 for entry with 211,888 against. This result was secured by the propaganda and blatant deception about the benefits of membership put out by the two bourgeois parties — Fianna and Fine Gael — and the big farmer interests. As well, all the agencies of the mass media — TV, Radio, the dailies and weeklies — campaigned for a “yes” vote. Managements used their position to influence the votes of many workers. Government agencies used public funds to sway the votes of the sections of people they were concerned with. The forces of property and privilege were united as seldom before to win a “yes” decision for joining the country with Britain as part of the monopoly-dominated E.E.C. The propaganda was skilfully directed to the different sections of the people. The farmers — all sections of them, the lie was told — would benefit from higher prices. Social welfare services would be upped considerably from the savings on agriculture subsidies and other sources. There was the huge lie of 50,000 new jobs on the way and new outlets in the bigger markets for more exports. Ireland, it was stated, would at last become independent of Britain economically and have a say on an equal footing in the affairs of Europe. All these and many other enticements were put out to win the massive “yes” vote.

SUSTAINED CAMPAIGN

Over a number of years there was a sustained campaign against the risks involved in full membership by a group called the Common Market Study Group, later to function as the Common Market Defence Campaign. A number of pamphlets, leaflets, etc., was issued by this body putting in all aspects of the case against E.E.C. membership, and its spokesmen took part in debates and so on on

TV, Radio and meetings of many kinds. They carried out a fine job and deserve the thanks and appreciation of all who are opposed to the E.E.C. In due course there will be many who voted “yes” who will come to recognise the truth and the weight of the case put forward in the literature and campaigns of all the organisations who asked for a “no” vote. The Northern situation, following the so-called Heath initiative and direct rule, was exploited to the full to influence a “yes” vote. The Heath Government was concerned to say or do nothing to impede a verdict for Lynch and the “yes” lobby. The visit of Dr. Hillery to London to meet Foreign Secretary Sir Douglas Home a few days before the referendum was part of the propaganda exercise to create the impression that important moves about North-South-British relations were impending and a “no” vote would not help. The Northern crisis helped the “yes” campaign more than those who opposed the E.E.C. The build-up of Lynch as the “man of peace” and non-violence and his concern to prevent a spill-over of the Northern crisis to the Twenty-Six Counties brought out a lot of support for the “yes” lobby. Some recent actions in the North by republicans were not helpful in piling up the “no” votes. The criminal blasting of the Co-Op headquarters in Belfast or the punching up of a 15-year-old schoolgirl did not help.

I.C.T.U. INVOLVEMENT

The outstanding feature of the referendum campaign was the involvement of the Labour Party and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. While the combination of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and big farmer interests secured the “yes” vote, there can be no doubt that the contribution of the Labour and Trade Union movement accounted for the greater part of the “no” votes.

It has to be said it was a great weakness in the campaign that not all sections of the trade union

movement supported the I.C.T.U. position; some, in fact, pulled the other way. As well, some of the Labour deputies stayed out of the campaign and in some areas the Labour Party organisations were hardly active.

The I.C.T.U. published some half a million copies of the paper “Economic Freedom,” which covered all aspects of the risks involved in E.E.C. membership. The I.T.G.W.U. issued other propaganda material and called for full support from its various district organisations to mobilise support for a “no” vote.

C.P.I. POLICY STATEMENT

The other organisations which came out for a “no” vote were the Communist Party of Ireland, the Gaelic League, the National Association of Tenants’ Organisations, the Common Market Defence Campaign, the National Anti-E.E.C. Committees, which operated in most areas of Dublin and elsewhere; Sinn Fein (Gardiner Place) contributed a great deal to the publicity against entry and was active in many areas of the country. Sinn Fein (Kevin Street) likewise put out a lot of publicity material and held meetings throughout the country; its position was to favour a form of associate membership.

The C.P.I. in its policy statement put the working class standpoint on the monopoly-dominated E.E.C. and the risks involved in Irish membership. Members of the C.P.I. co-operated with the local groups of the National Anti-E.E.C. Committees.

The common aim of the left-wing forces in the campaign, from the Labour Party, the trade union movement to all the other socialist, radical, republican and communist forces was to oppose the firm determination of the propertied classes to use every means to win a “yes” vote, and the upper classes were unscrupulous in their propaganda and action to achieve their end.

They succeeded on this occasion, but the lesson has to be

learned that it will be only by unity in action and purpose of all the Labour, trade union and the various socialist and radical forces that will, in the long run, overcome the power of the propertied classes and make possible the achievement of the national and social aims of the working people.

UNITY FEARED

The fear of such unity and what it could mean for worthwhile democratic, national and social advance to the detriment of the interests of the propertied elements was forcefully expressed by the ultra-conservative Fine Gael leader Liam Cosgrave at his Cork Ard Fheis last month.

The two sections of the Republican movement in their post-referendum assessments have coincided in their judgment that the working class movement did not contribute as much as they had expected to the “no” vote total. The Kevin Street wing regarded Labour’s effort in the rural areas as most disappointing. It is a fact, as repeatedly shown in elections, that Labour’s support in rural areas is weak, and if there has to be criticism the republicans should make it of themselves because of the voting pattern in those areas, the Border and Western counties in particular, where republican influence would have been expected to rally bigger support than was evident on May 10. Sinn Fein (Gardiner Place) put the opinion that the opposition to the E.E.C. came less from the Labour movement and was “a Republican and Socialist vote combined with a spectrum of opinion crossing all party lines”. A further claim made was that none of its supporters voted “yes”!

NOT HELPFUL

In face of the line-up which obtained in the Labour and trade union movement, with some unions and Labour deputies opting for E.E.C. membership, it was a considerable achievement to have the Labour Party and the I.C.T.U. involved in the public campaign to the extent that they were.

It is not helpful for the republicans to put all the blame on the Labour movement for the “no” vote not being higher.

Also, in the post-referendum situation, such an attitude is not helpful to build the unity of democratic forces which is so much needed to develop the fight in defence of the social and economic interests of the people, safeguard civil and democratic liberties and the nation’s independence against further inroads of the monopolies.

It will not be long after E.E.C. membership becomes effective that it will be found that the policies of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael have brought about a situation where real power of both government and parliament rest more with the faceless men of the Brussels Commission and less with the elected representatives of the Irish people. The Brussels Commission is a supra-national body whose members are not bound by the policy of member countries.

FIGHT GOES ON

The fight against the consequences of E.E.C. membership must go on and every means should be found to continue the work, in the new conditions, of the various local committees that came into existence in the referendum campaign. These committees can become the means for developing the struggles that will be necessary to counter the effects of the new political, economic and social policies that will be put into effect after January 1 next.

The work of these committees could help considerably to influence the Labour and trade union movement to develop the struggle at national level. As well as independence, jobs and livelihoods being in danger, it will also emerge that the control and influence of British imperialism has become more entrenched in the country as a whole.

Given the proper leadership, the Irish working people can and will carry into the E.E.C. their best traditions of struggle and will give battle on all issues against the foreign monopolies and their local henchmen.

FOREIGN NEWS

“WHEN will we stop the madness and killing and destruction?” This statement came from a speaker on the steps of the Capitol in Washington during the moratorium against the war in Vietnam. The speaker blasted Nixon for his ludicrous and arrogant intervention in the affairs of the Vietnamese people.

On the steps above him as he spoke a sea of banners was displayed with such slogans as — “Federal Employees for Peace”, “Virginians for Peace”, “Young Workers Liberation League Washington D.C. for Peace”, and so on. “The people”, he continued, “must join hands in the most powerful coalition, to defeat the war-makers”. He recalled the struggle of Dr. Martin Luther King to end the Indo-China war and pointed out the essence of Dr. King’s message was that only the unity of black, brown, yellow, red and white could defeat reaction in the United States.

The demonstrators had streamed across Pennsylvania Avenue to join in the moratorium against the war. Among the marchers were trade union organisations who carried protesting banners, workers from the Pentagon carried a banner, another contingent consisted mainly of doctors and nurses, clerics and nuns, mothers with

children marched, some of them pushing prams.

Vietnam veterans also joined the demonstration.

The Emergency moratorium against the war took place in more than 1,000 towns and cities across the nation.

Some of the protesters carrying placards demanding an end to the bombing gathered outside Anderson Air Base used by U.S. B.52 pilots as a jumping off point for the air raids.

The campus bell rang out at Kent State University in Ohio as a memorial for the students killed at Kent and Jackson State Universities and for “victims everywhere.”

In co-operation with the people’s demonstrations in America, Britain, Canada, Australia, and all over the world, a protest poster picket organised by the “Irish Voice on Vietnam Campaign”, paraded outside the American Embassy in Dublin for several hours as an expression of solidarity with the heroic people in Vietnam in their struggle for peace and independence.

FIVE thousand dollars and six months in jail. This was the harsh treatment meted out to 41 trade unionists in a Quebec court

by Lily O’Rourke

for having dared to engage in a confrontation with an employer.

They represented the 210,000 public service employees who had successfully led their members in an 11 day strike against the Government. It was a great tribute to the power and capability of working peoples’ unity. The strike was an achievement because of the willingness of the three trade union centres — the Confederation of National Trade Unions, the Quebec Federation of Labour, and Quebec Teachers’ Corporation to set aside all differences so as to build a common front and strategy of unity in action.

A telegram sent by the Unions called on the Quebec Premier to cease persecuting Government employees.

“The courts in Quebec” it mentioned, “are being used to bring vengeance on workers whose only ‘crime’ is to strike for a wage that will put food on the table of their families.”

Thousands of workers have stopped work in sympathy. In Ottawa, the federal capital, the Canadian Congress of Labour passed an emergency resolution calling for an amnesty for all union leaders imprisoned in Quebec province.

THE MURDER OF JOE McCANN

By John McDonnell

JOE McCANN, a 25-year-old Belfast officer in the Official I.R.A. and father of four children, was shot dead by Paratroopers on Saturday, April 15, 1972.

While walking along Hamilton Street in the markets area he was spotted by special branch officers and a military patrol. He was challenged and ordered to stop but made a run for it into Joy Street. He was shot in the leg and fell whereupon a further ten rounds were fired at him.

BIG

Joe McCann was over 6 feet tall, a big man in many ways, he was widely known in Belfast and nicknamed “The Pastry Man”. A sign of the high esteem in which he was held is that 324 death notices in his name were inserted in the “The Irish News”.

McCann had been hunted since before internment when he jumped bail in July 1971 on a charge of making threatening remarks to a special branch man. People in the markets were told by troops “McCann won’t see the inside of

Long Kesh”. The British, despite their yellow card firing instructions never intended to take McCann. He was gunned down unarmed. Joe McCann was laid to rest in Milltown Cemetery on April 18.

ORATION

In his graveside oration Cathal Goulding, Chief of Staff of the I.R.A. said “We come to pay tribute to Joe McCann, to the man, the soldier, the political activist, the revolutionary, to the Irish Republican Socialist who personified the struggle of the people for full political and civil rights in the occupied six counties of our land.

We are here because we loved him, because we honoured his idealism, because we shared his vision of a country, of a people, free from the vicious shackles of Orange capitalism, free from the corrosive influence of imperialism, free from the repression that has been aimed and ever will be aimed at the working-class people of this country, North and South, Catholic, Protestant — at the working people whose defence was Joe McCann’s duty and his pride.”

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PEN FRIENDS WANTED

Dear Sir,

I THINK that you're very surprised, since you get a letter from my country. But I've something to ask of you!

I'm a student in geography and I want to hear more about your country and life there. I want to get pen-pals (boys and girls) from your nice country.

Please, will you publish my name in your newspaper! I'm a young man aged 26 and have my studies in Potsdam, the city of the old German emperors. My hobbies are collecting stamps, postcards and souvenirs, sport (especially Basketball).

The friends may write with me in English, German, Russian or Danish. I hope, that you'll do what I ask. Yours etc.

IEGFRIED HARMEL.

172 Ludwigsfelde,
Donastrasse 7,
D.D.R.

(German Democratic Republic.)

WHAT DID I FIGHT FOR?

24 Colwyn Avenue,
Leeds LS11 6LH
12th May, 1972.

Dear Sir,

THE LIGHTS are going out all over Western Europe and North America. The battle for which British, American and Soviet soldiers gave their lives in the second world war — that fascist laws would never be enacted in their countries — has become meaningless for the war-time Western allies.

This social cancer still has a powerful hold upon West Germany where top Nazis are allowed to retain high office.

The late nazi s.s. general Heinrich Lammerding was twice sentenced to death in his absence by the French for war crimes. He had 99 hostages hanged at Tulle, near Limoges, on June 9th 1944. The next day he had 642 men, women and children burned alive, locked in a church at nearby Oradour. West Germans are immune for extradition under their own laws, so Lammerding was never sent to France. He had a pension, a villa near Dusseldorf and two cars.

It pays to fight the British! Not many people in Britain and Ireland will have heard of Karl-Theodor Molinari, tank major, decorated with the Knight's Cross, the commander of the soldiers who, on June 13th 1944, in the forest of Manises in the Ardennes, shot down 106 people. Seven years later, in April 1951, a military court in Metz sentenced Molinari to death—in absentia.

18 years after the death sentence passed at Metz, the NATO alliance made it incumbent on young Frenchmen to present arms to Molinari!

Encouraged by British and American leniency, the fascists are emerging from their holes in Italy. Leniency? Active encouragement is nearer to the mark.

While beer sodden members of the British Legion are singing "Bless 'em all", and recalling old war experiences, the heirs of Hitler have clinched a deal with their opposite numbers in Britain and the U.S. for the biggest betrayal in history! Spain, Portugal, Greece, Rhodesia and Ulster. Where's it all going to end.

The most insidious aspect of this creeping fascism is its democratic exterior. The Special Powers Act, prohibition of marches and civil rights, and internment without trial—all in the name of law

and order. And now this dictatorship in democratic form is bringing the Industrial Relations Act into use against the working class members of the British legion for going on strike. Perhaps if these beer swilling bully boys had spent less time yawning and singing war songs, and taken more interest in their country's affairs, the "ENEMY" they thought had been defeated in 1945 would not be kicking them in the teeth at the present time.

The choice is becoming uncompromisingly clear, either fight a civil war against the "internal" enemy, with conventional weapons — or face a world war with nuclear weapons.

Capitalism cannot change, it can only be destroyed. If it isn't, then mankind will be destroyed.

I must explain that these views were prompted by "Notebook—by Northsider. Armoured cars to hold us down," published in this month's issue of the "Irish Socialist."

As an English ex-serviceman who served 5½ years in the R.A.F. during the war, I naturally feel bitter to realize that all the bloody slaughter was in vain—the cause betrayed by the spidery manipulations of unscrupulous politicians! Yours, etc.

JIM McCARTHY.

WHITE LAW OR LYNCH-LAW?

PRESS STATEMENT FROM THE NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

2 Marquis Street, Belfast 1
on Friday, 19th May:

THE Civil Rights Association views with great alarm reports it has received on the proceedings of the new Review Board for the release of internees, appointed by Mr. Whitelaw. The new Board met on Friday, 12th May under the Chairmanship of Judge Leonard. Mr. Robert Clarke, an internee from Limavady, attended the Board, accompanied by his solicitor Mr. Collins. This appears to be the only improvement in the new Board, a man is allowed to bring his solicitor.

He is not allowed to know what he is accused of, he is not allowed to cross examine his accusers. In fact Mr. Clarke was not even allowed to know the identity of the two other members of the Board, who would judge whether he should be released, or remain locked up without charge or trial. Mr. Clarke was questioned and then Judge Leonard wrote out the Oath by hand, and asked Mr. Clarke was he prepared to sign it. Mr. Clarke refused to swear that he would not engage in violence, as he considered this would constitute an admission of guilt that he had committed violence in the past. The vast majority of men interned would refuse to sign such an oath. This ended the interview.

Mr. Clarke believes a member of the Special Branch of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, went into the room after him to be questioned. The question is whether the Board is only a formality, complying with the terms of the Special Powers Act, or is it to be a device to keep men in large or small numbers interned without trial. Certainly the Board, and the whole philosophy behind it—Secret Board, Secret Membership, Secret Allegations, Secret Special Branch Testimony, is deeply offensive to British and International Law, and we protest at the whole conception and practice, and appeal to those who recognise the rule of law to do likewise.

CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH OF GEORGI DIMITROV — THE MAN WHO DEFEATED GOERING

WHEN the national-socialists came to power in Germany, the only organised force against the nazi regime was the German Communist Party. To disband it, the nazis needed a pretext, and they created it by setting the Reichstag on fire as a provocation; this they loudly proclaimed to have been a signal for a communist uprising.

In the night of the provocation — February 27, 1933, the new Chancellor Hitler visited the site of the fire at once and declared: "This is an omen from Providence! No one will now be able to prevent us from dealing with the communists with an iron hand!"

Besides their tool Van der Lubbe who, the nazis declared, was a communist, they arrested and accused Torgler, a deputy of the German Communist Party and the Bulgarian communists Dimitrov, Popov and Tanev of having set fire to the Reichstag. They started to torture and kill people on a mass scale. Thousands of tortured and killed German workers, thousands thrown into prison — that was the bloody result of the provocations of Hitler, Goebbels and Goering.

TRUMPED-UP

The blow directed at Georgi Dimitrov and the trumped up charge against him was no accident. Dimitrov was a very prominent figure in the communist movement, one of the chief organizers of the first anti-fascist uprising in the world in September 1923, a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern and an irreconcilable enemy of fascism.

For more than six months the nazis framed the trial which was to deprive the accused communists of their lives.

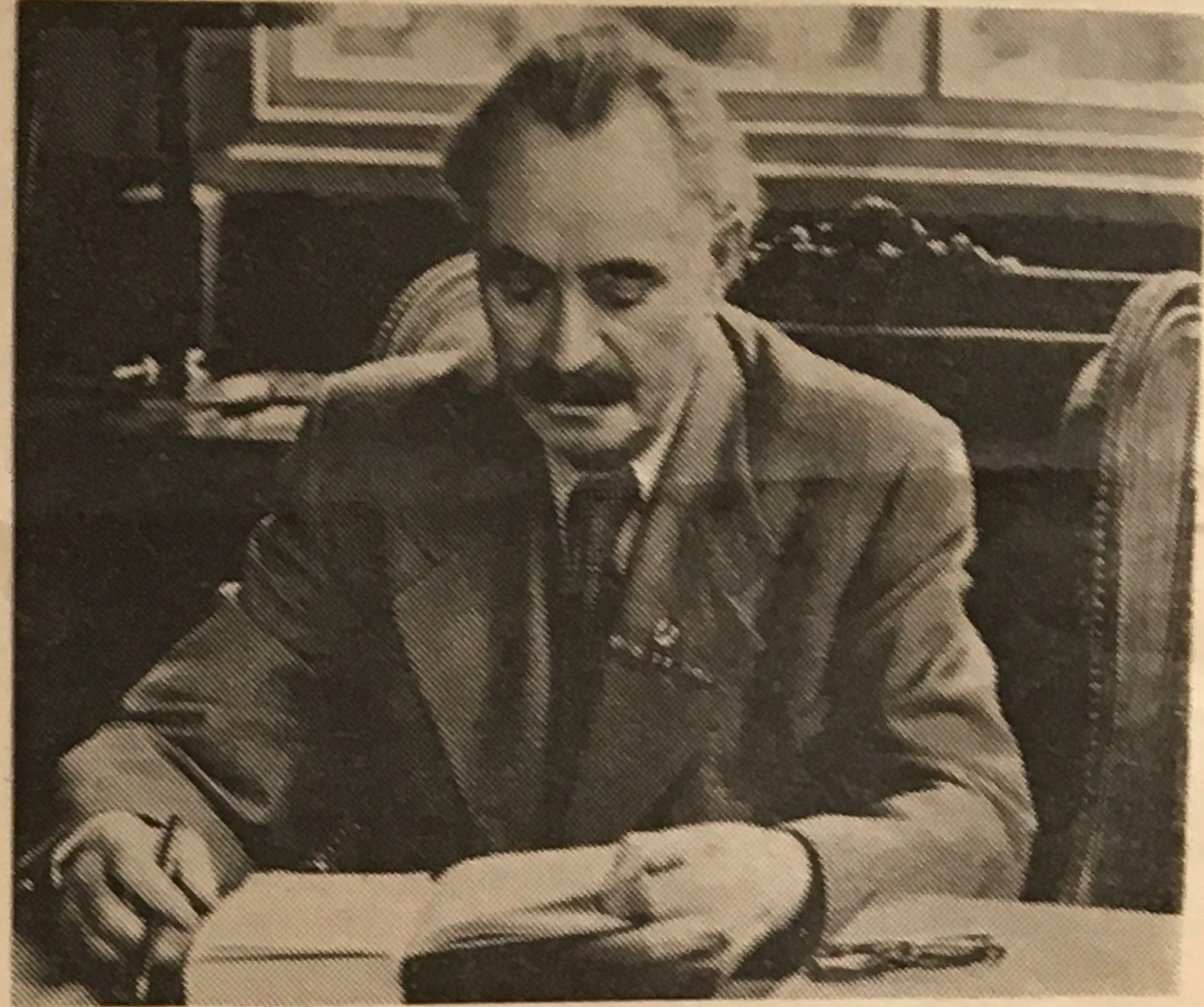
In making a thorough analysis of the general set-up in connection with the trial, Georgi Dimitrov established three obvious truths. 1. The trial was a government provocation. 2. The Reichstag was set on fire by the nazis. 3. The preliminary inquiry and the court hearing would not be concerned with finding the real incendiaries. The enemies of the regime, i.e. the communists, would be held responsible. Proceeding from this, G. Dimitrov determined the main lines of his own plan of action: resolutely to deny the accusation against the communists and to unmask the real incendiaries and the political character of their monstrous provocation.

DENIAL

The stages of the inquiry and the court trial are well known. G. Dimitrov firmly refused to sign the police protocols at the preliminary inquiry and made a declaration in which he resolutely denied the provocative accusation. At the trial, from an accused prisoner G. Dimitrov turned into a merciless accuser, unmasking the real criminals. With great skill he paralyzed the intentions of the nazis and took the initiative into his own hands.

G. Dimitrov's heroic struggle continued for three months: against the judges and the state apparatus, against the public prosecutor and the bribed false witnesses and at the end against the leaders of the nazi government—Goering and Goebbels who came to the rescue of the bankrupt judges. The clash between Dimitrov and Goering before the court — the climax of the duel, which revealed the whole moral and ideological paltriness of the fascist leaders, will remain memorable.

Alongside with all this, at the Reichstag Fire Trial G. Dimitrov



GEORGI DIMITROV

defended with dignity the honour of the Bulgarian people.

The press (the fascist press — author's note) not only vilified me in every possible way, said G. Dimitrov, "to which I was indifferent, but in connection with me they called the Bulgarian people 'savage' and 'barbarous', calling me 'an obscure Balkan person', 'a wild Bulgarian' and I cannot pass this over in silence. It is true that Bulgarian fascism is savage and barbarous. But the Bulgarian working class and the peasants, the Bulgarian people's intelligentsia are no savages and barbarians. The level of material culture in the Balkans is without any doubt not as high as in the other European countries, but culturally and politically our masses are not at a lower level than the masses in the other European countries.

A people, who lived for 500 years under foreign rule without losing their nationality and language, G. Dimitrov pointed out, "our working class and peasants, who fought and continued fighting against Bulgarian fascism and for communism—such people are not savage and barbarous. Uncivilised and barbarous in Bulgaria are only the fascists. But I ask you, Mr. President, in what country are the fascists not savage and barbarous?"

Franco Arrests Irish Teacher

PAMELA O'MALLEY, the Irish teacher at the British Institute School in Madrid has been released from prison and reinstated at her work. She had been arrested by the police and fined £1,500, and then given two months in jail for failure to pay the fine.

According to a report in the "Morning Star" Pamela expressed her gratitude "for the magnificent example of solidarity which so many friends and colleagues in Spain and England have shown me, during my recent arrest and dismissal from my job."

She added "I am fully conscious that I owe my reinstatement to the efforts of fellow teachers in Madrid and to the support and pressure brought to bear in Britain." Dr. Conor Cruise O'Brien was among those who protested.

The exposure of the facts in the "Morning Star" and the subsequent support for her in Britain were "A fine demonstration of international solidarity," she said.

About her arrest she said "the only conclusion I can come to is that I am a teacher, the police may have tried to connect me with a teachers' strike, which was taking place at the time."

ians?"

"Already at the time when the German Emperor Charles V used to say that he spoke German only with his horses, and the German courtiers and intellectuals wrote only in Latin and were ashamed of the German language, in 'barbarous' Bulgaria the apostles Cyril and Methodius had evolved and spread the old Bulgarian alphabet.

"With might and main and very stubbornly the Bulgarian people fought against foreign oppression. That is why, I protest against the accusations against the Bulgarian people. I have no reason to be ashamed of being a Bulgarian, and I am proud of being the son of the Bulgarian working class."

DIGNITY

The London Times wrote: "This Bulgarian seems to have an inborn dignity". In Leipzig G. Dimitrov became, in the eyes of the whole world, an incarnation of Bulgaria, of her past, present and future.

The fame of the great son of the Bulgarian people was carried far and wide. The working people in all countries spoke the name of Georgi Dimitrov with affection and admiration. Even his adversaries spoke of him with respect and admiration.

Article issued by Bulgarian News Agency.

WE HAVE BEEN STAVING OFF A PRICE INCREASE FOR THE "SOCIALIST" BUT WE CAN'T DO IT MUCH LONGER UNLESS WE GET BIGGER AND MORE SUBS. THIS IS URGENT—

SEND TO: THE EDITOR, 16A PEARSE STREET, DUBLIN 2

UNIONISM: THE POLITICS OF DESPERATION

By Betty Sinclair

AT the meeting of the 300-strong Ulster Unionist Council on May 19, the first to be addressed by Brian Faulkner, ex-Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, since the introduction of direct rule by Westminster on March 30, Faulkner revealed that he had not changed. He, and others, want Stormont restored with stronger powers and if this happened he said the Unionists "were more than willing to give Opposition representatives a responsible and dignified role to play." He acknowledged that there must be a certain amount of "give and take" about detailed arrangements for the future, "but when it came to fundamentals of the type of government Northern Ireland was to have, the majority (i.e. Unionist) view must prevail."

Faulkner reveals that he has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. There is no question here, nor was there ever, of the Opposition representatives having the right to a "responsible and dignified role" — that could only be "given" to them by the grace of the Unionists. He would play ball on essentials but on the "fundamentals of government" then the Opposition representatives and people must once again give consent to be governed by the "majority". Faulkner made these loud sounding noises despite the fact that if there ever was an election, in the prevailing political conditions, he and his official party would probably be swept into oblivion.

He spoke this way despite his drubbing at the hand of the Heath Tory Government who allowed him to advance to a position of no retreat and then accepted the resignation of himself and his government — the acceptance was an indication that Faulkner had been found wanting as an instrument in the struggle to preserve British Tory interests either in the North or South of Ireland.

The Sunday Times (May 21, 1972) showed no illusions on this score. The Editor wrote: "Britain's twentieth-century troubles in Northern Ireland arose from an excess of solicitude for the Northern majority: the Heath Government's achievement is to have broken away from that mistake, and there must be no returning to it". (My emphasis).

DUPLICITY

The Editor praises the "patience" of the Protestant majority in the "face of outrageous provocation" and tries to reason with that majority by saying that Whitelaw is neither intent on thrusting them into the arms of the "Catholic South" nor on delivering them into the hand of the terrorist. Nor, states the Editor, is Whitelaw a believer in "ultimate solutions": "part of his deliberate aim is to depress the rate of rising political expectation on the Catholic side." With such a policy of duplicity how could the Heath "initiative" and Whitelaw not fail to satisfy either section of the political divide.

The "initiative" turns out to be a confidence trick on the grand old British imperialist lines and, in defence, the Editor of the "Sunday Times" pleads that Mr. Whitelaw's inability to "pacify the Province overnight" proceeds out of the practical difficulties of the case, not out of any lack of will. The above makes it abundantly clear that Heath had no policy for Northern Ireland, that he was and is driven to take only day to day measures.

NO-GO

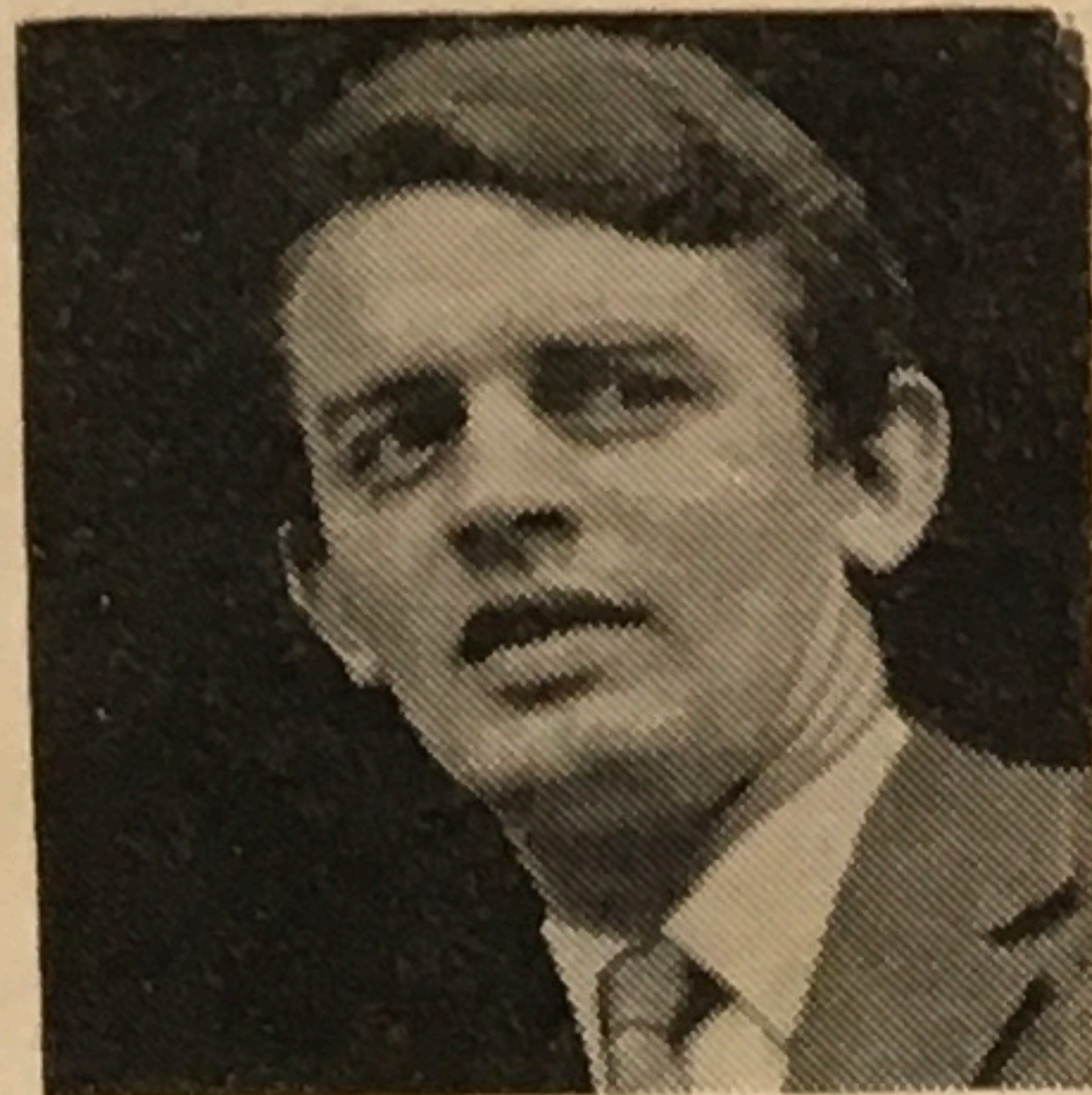
The great cry taken up by Craig and his Vanguard movement is the "clearance of the no-go areas in Belfast and Derry." Otherwise they will resort to "Protestant no-go areas" and already we have had a taste of these in Belfast,

Carrickfergus and Eden on the Antrim Coast. Faulkner, at the Unionist Council meeting, knowing of the sterility of such policies and the dangers when acted upon, deliberately choose to ask Craig to become the first member of his policy committee to work for the return of Stormont. Craig accepted.

Thus was linked the Official Unionist Party, the Vanguard movement, the Loyalist Association of Workers, the Ulster Defence Association and the Tartan Gangs — it appeared to be a triumph for Faulkner. Only Paisley and his followers stood outside and could probably be brought to heel.

But Faulkner's ploys do not deceive the British Tories. The Editor of the "Times" states that Faulkner has, whilst rejecting Whitelaw's proposed Commission, promised that he and his colleagues "will do everything within our power and sphere of influence, to keep the situation from deteriorating." Everything, says, the Editor, except renounce their own ambitions for long enough to give the British Government's new move some chance of establishing a new mood. How to explain this to the Protestant worker who is being stirred up by reactionary ultra Unionist elements? Who, before 1968, only had to listen to the voices of Unionism and the Orange Order and is now being harangued by so many voices that it would appear that a political Pentecost has come upon them?

Faulkner, Craig, Paisley, Hull, et al, strive to win his political soul and allegiance and he is in the process of rejecting them all and taking action that can only lead to a deepening crisis of belief and action.



CURRIE

S.D.L.P.: Back into talks with Heath.

ALL BOOKS FOR
THE LABOUR
AND
REPUBLICAN
MOVEMENT

NEW BOOKS
16A PEARSE STREET
DUBLIN 2

THE Unionists, bereft of their Parliament and all that that means, especially the armed force which they were accustomed to use to maintain their rule, are now demanding that the British Parliament do the job for them. In return they will accept complete integration within the United Kingdom — whatever their followers might think — in order to protect their financial interests. Faulkner, the fourth in line after Brookeborough, O'Neill, Chichester-Clarke, has admitted that he was Prime Minister of a Parliament that had no real power unless the Westminster Parliament supported their actions. And, after January, 1972, there could be no doubt that the British Government found Unionism wanting as an instrument of its policies and the latter was deposed.

Mr. Wm. Whitelaw, Lord President of the British Parliament, was made Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. He moved in with other top ranking British Tories to run the show along with Lord Grey, Governor of Northern Ireland. Power had been removed from the Unionists but the Heath Government did not make any fundamental changes. All the old repressive laws have been retained and the British Attorney-General

got himself fixed up at the Northern Bar so that he can, from London, operate the Special Powers and Official Secrets Acts. Unionist-law Orange-law, White-law — all resolve themselves into Tory law which is now to be administered direct. There is no indication that the latter has any intention of bringing in democratic rule.

CRITICISM

Criticism has come from all sides of the political spectrum. The anti-Unionists have no illusions. They know that democracy has still to be fought for and won. But the Unionists who have been also vigorous in their criticisms appear to have given up the ghost. The Editor of the rabid Unionist "News Letter" made this plea on April 20: "No matter how hurt they (the British Tory Government) may sometimes be by the criticism that is offered, it is also important for those administering Direct Rule, as it is for the country (sic) at large, that *Ulster is left with at least the shadow of democracy.*" (My emphasis). The monied class, the lackeys of the Confederation of British industry, know that direct rule is anathema to the anti-Unionist and great sections of the Unionist forces alike. But they are afraid to call up the latter, mostly the working class, small farmers and businessmen, in case they make common cause with their counterparts on the anti-Unionist

front.

If this happened, the Unionists like Faulkner, etc., stand to lose not only a Parliament but a system that enables them to profit by the peoples' toil and live in the luxury to which they have become accustomed. That is why Faulkner calls Craig's UDI policy "madness" and would rather opt for "the shadow of democracy" and his quarterly returns from his investments from one of the biggest multi-national corporations.

ECONOMIC KNOCKS

In the midst of all the political turmoil, the economy takes ever greater knocks. The Index of Retail Sales for January 1972, published by the now defunct Ministry of Commerce on April 11, showed that sales had decreased by 7 per cent, compared with January, 1971. This is the greatest decrease on record.

Figures released for unemployment on April 20 showed a total of 47,490, or over 9 per cent of the insured population. There were 35,880 men (9.2 per cent) and 12,000 women (5.9 per cent) in the total. The figures represent an increase of 8,000 on the total of April, 1971 and 1,800 higher than one month ago. Each day brings its report of small and medium firms having to close down and of emigration figures which are robbing the Unionists of many thousands of their former supporters.

MILITARY VICTORY IN THE NORTH IS IMPOSSIBLE

WHITELAW'S Commission for Northern Ireland, the composition of which was to be announced in the British House of Commons in Mid-May, would appear to have come up against great difficulties. The Unionists have stated that they will not recognise the Commission and will dub any of their fraternity who takes part in its work as a "traitor" and will make things very hot for them. How can any anti-Unionist take part in such a Commission when they know that Whitelaw is not intent on an "ultimate solution" and wants to "depress" the rate of "rising political expectation" on the Catholic, i.e. anti-Unionist side?

The hesitations of Whitelaw and Heath arise from the very dangerous situation into which they appear to have allowed themselves to be pushed: the British Army is already having to face the probability of struggle on two fronts, against the Unionists and anti-Unionists. The first such battle took place, against the ultra Unionists, on the week ending 20th May and the reaction was swift.

Long parleys took place between the British Army and RUC with the representatives of the Ulster Defence Association to have the latter's barricades removed in East and West Belfast. Similar parleys took place in 1969 in the anti-Unionist areas over barricades but, with the passage of not so much time, the parleying ceased and military action became the order of the day. Who can say how long the security forces will parley, or at what time or in what circumstances, these parleys will cease and more military forces will be used. Whitelaw has stated that he will not allow any barricades to remain in any of the areas of Belfast. Derry he recognises as a "special case". He has stated that there can be no "military victory" and all he wants to do is to "defeat the IRA".

PROVOS

In this serious situation, it must be said that the Provisional wing of the IRA have only helped to

exacerbate the situation with their sectarian bombing and destruction of targets not remotely associated with military objectives. The strategy of bombing carries with it an over-all trend of action against Protestants and includes within it a strong element of religious bigotry. In this way the flames of religious sectarian hatred are fanned and workers are driven further apart. The destruction of the Belfast Co-operative Society's main store has left a stain in the armoury of so-called Republicanism that will be very hard to wipe out.

And all the time, those who direct such activities, appear to care less and less for the tackling of the everyday problems that face all the people. They scorn the efforts made by other opposition political forces and of the trade union movement. They not so much want to bomb the people of the North into their kind of a Republic (we'll think of what sort of a republic it will be when the country is united, they say), as to, by their terror activities bomb the whole of Ireland on their as yet uncharted road "for Ireland". They forget that whilst people detest State terror, they also see in their kind of terror an undoing of all that will help solve the big problems that face us.

IMPERIALISM

There can be no military victory for British imperialism. Nor for

the Provisional forces of the IRA. But this illusion remains among the unenlightened few. General Sir Walter Walker, former commander of NATO land forces in Northern Europe, has just retired. He said, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on May 19, that the British Army should "soften up" the "no-go" areas in Northern Ireland — then move in. He told a press conference: "I have engaged in campaigns against blacks, yellows and slant eyes. Why should we have one rule for the whites and one for the coloureds. We have to decide if Northern Ireland is part of Britain or not — and, if so, to act accordingly." He wants, in the "no-go" areas, to cut off "their petrol, gas electricity and stop food going in, soften them up and then go in; give warning so that they can get their women and children away before we go in, but go in." Sir Walter may, or could be in line to, become military adviser to the Ulster Defence Association — that is if the British War Office would sanction such an appointment and continue to pay his pension or if the former was wealthy enough to indemnify him. Britain may have "lost an Empire" but her Army has not lost the "Empire spirit".

THE EDITOR
WELCOMES ARTICLES,
POEMS, LETTERS,
NEWS ITEMS,
CRITICISMS.
NO CENSORSHIP!

Send to:—

THE EDITOR
39 PEMBROKE LANE,
DUBLIN 4.

KEVIN MURRAY EXPOSES THE REALITY BEHIND THE 'AFFLUENT SOCIETY'

THE OLD

THE best winter we have had for many years has pushed the needs of old people into the background of our thoughts. When active people are not conscious of discomfort from harsh weather they are not as aware of the needs of those 380,000 old people who live on marginal incomes or below the poverty line.

The problems of the old, of course, are not solely the lack of money. Loneliness, illness, boredom, physical or mental incapacity; all form part of their troubles. That these factors would exist independently of suitable financial assistance is undeniable. Their harshness, however, is greatly increased by the sheer deprivation that the majority of old people in this country have to tolerate.

PENSION

The Pension Scheme that exists in Ireland to-day is barbarous. The extra 50p granted in our last Budget is completely unrealistic to the present-day cost of living. Firstly, it only operates for the 70-years-old and up. This is the highest pensionable age in Europe, equalled only by Norway, and the hardships it entails for the man

who retires at 65 are not difficult to envisage. The five years of direct poverty it makes possible may receive alleviation from a variety of sources, State and charitable, but the implicit notion that the retired man of less than 70 should have to seek help to stave off starvation is a remarkable one indeed.

The Government response to the condition of old people is quite patently inadequate. There has been a tradition of indifference, mingled with horror, that old people were starving to death in the year '72. The Minister for Health is on record as saying that he dismissed verdicts on people "who died of cold and prolonged malnutrition" as merely sensational.

That between 70 and 80 old people are found dead each year in Dublin without nursing assist-

ance or any medical care is indeed a terrible indictment of our country. This year the figure could be well over the hundred. To date this year 20 old people have died from "Hypothermia". The word means that the deceased had not enough body heat to stay alive. It happens every winter and will continue to happen every winter until we find every old person and supply the basic human needs of food, shelter, heat and human company.

It will continue to happen that old people will be found dead, and dead for days, before any one finds their bodies, until luck and every one of us stops thinking of the needs of old people in terms of charitable work. It is not charity to look after the old and needy. It is simple justice to those whose lives and work have contributed to our community heritage.

GRAVE ISSUES

At the moment grave issues face our country. The North, the Common Market, interment and with these great issues facing us every day on Press and T.V., we are inclined to forget the grave plight of old people in our community. The bigger the town, the bigger their need, and their need is

greatest in Dublin. How great it is nobody yet knows, simply because all the old heads in Dublin are not yet counted.

In theory practically everybody in Dublin is a member of some religious grouping and as such should be known to the clergy of their group. I am not throwing stones at anybody when I say that old people exist in Dublin who are not known to their clergy. I am simply stating a fact.

Two months ago I attended a meeting of representatives of 20 voluntary groups working in Dublin whose work in some way touched the lives of old people.

Since then this group has been working to bring help to old people in any way possible, but it does not yet know the size of its task. In an attempt to find old people every source which could give statistics or names and addresses was approached, but nobody could fill in the whole picture.

The information just does not exist. The position then was that voluntary workers had to set out to knock on doors to find by inquiry where old people lived and who was in need and how urgent was the need. It is a sad commentary on the efficiency of those whose work it is to know the

needy that voluntary workers have to seek out information which should be available as a matter of routine.

Just in case any reader should think I am hitting out at the Eastern Health Board I am not. The officials of this body whose work it is to look after old people, not alone spend their official time at the work, but to my own knowledge regulations will be bent so far to give help that the rule book is almost unrecognisable.

STARVATION

There are old people in Dublin who are on the verge of starvation not just to-day, but every day. Because they are undernourished—polite word that—they feel cold and damp penetrating their bones. Because they are cold they need warm clothes and a fire, neither of which they can afford. They need changes of clothes as you and I do. They need to change sheets and to wash blankets. How can they do all these things if they have only one set of things—or none at all? When you are old and poor in the city of Dublin, where one in three people own a car of their own, the simple basic needs of our old people have to be done without.

THE VAGRANT

THERE are over 1,000 vagrants sleeping rough in Dublin alone. The plight of the vagrant poor is one of the most desperate of all of our social evils. Due to their way of life they became anti-social—so that the normal means administered by the State do not affect them.

Vagrants differ from itinerants in a number of aspects. Itinerants are social and have maintained an historical identity through several generations. They also have a very strong ethical code. Itinerants are almost completely illiterate.

Vagrancy is an altogether different phenomenon. The majority of vagrants have an education of sorts, most of those I spoke to had attended school up to the age of 16 years. Most of them have opted out of society, due to the fact that they cannot cope with the social and emotional aspects of the situation they find themselves in.

FACTORS

A combination of this inadequacy and bad luck produce the

condition of vagrancy "family trouble" etc. We can discern a number of factors in the formation of vagrancy. The prisoner out of jail, the patient out of hospital or mental asylum, the boy or girl out of remand home, find themselves with nowhere to go, no family to turn to, no money to fall back on. Two nights sleeping rough, and their appearance and records are guarantee enough of constant unemployment.

So begins for them the vicious circle of impoverishment, isolation and probably alcoholism. Unfortunately the inadequacy which led them into jail or mental home is hardly likely to have been remedied there. The position of the female vagrant is far worse than that of the male. Unable to protect

herself against extortion, often ridden with syphilis, she is the perfect example of degradation. There are no official agencies which are of any use to her, for she is incapable of raising herself as she was of preventing her decline.

NO WELFARE BENEFITS

The whole vagrant class are living outside the institutional organisation of society and consequently do not benefit from any of its welfare systems. Hostels such as The Iveagh, The Legion of Mary, Morning Star, St. Vincent de Paul, offer accommodation to vagrants. While these hostels offer warmth, a clean bed, hot water and food, they tend to expose vagrants to tensions that their own emotional deficiencies cannot cope with. Their personal inadequacies are only felt more in an institution where there are restrictions that must be obeyed. A vagrant, not surprisingly, reacts unfavourably

to discipline and order. Their way of life and the sole consolation for it, drink, ensure that they are unable to better their condition.

The availability of cheap wine or meths., make the wine—the alcoholic vagrant insensible to the physical and mental degeneration he is undergoing. Long nights spent in tenement doorways or rat-infested abandoned houses are too destructive of even the strongest constitutions for there to be much hope of integrating the vagrant into society.

SIMON COMMUNITY

The Simon Community is the only organisation which deals extensively with these people. It has as its headquarters two houses on the quays, where vagrants can bed down on an old mattress on the floor and, in addition to this, they have a soup run to hand out food and clothing to the city's vagrants.

I went with them—a visit to Hell. As we stopped at each point of call—there they were, the

winos, the losers—they came stumbling out of the darkness like bit players from a constant nightmare. The walking wounded of our city—the down-and-outs whose pillow is some cold hallway of a Dublin tenement. They came forward out of the Shadow as they always do for the bowl of soup and bread they are sure of every night.

SURVIVE

The group I travelled with brought help to 40 people, men and women spread out over a large area of the city. One of the group, a young doctor, confided to me—"when I first started at this work I had the idea that I could talk some of them round, rehabilitate them—but I have given that up. Now we just try to help them survive another night and another day."

The last call was to an old man who looked over 70. He was standing against an old broken down car too cold to sleep, too tired to move. In his eyes was the look of a man who had been looking at his own scaffold.

THE PRICES RACKET

By MAIRIN MOONEY

IN MY mother's hey-day in Dublin, two papers were in circulation, one called 'Paddy Kelly's Budget' and the other called 'The Eye Opener'. They were short-lived although they enjoyed much popularity. Their contents were mainly amusing political and personal comment and local history.

Now 'The Eye Opener' has re-appeared on the scene. The new publication of the Irish Housewives Association is anything but amusing, but will none-the-less be extremely popular. Its grim contents were described at a press conference as a "further step in the war on prices".

"Prices" has replaced "referendum" and "common market" as topic number one. Yet it is pre-

cisely because of the referendum and the common market that prices as a conversation piece have become increasingly popular, plus concern at the continued unpopular price increases.

Last year the cost of living went up by 9.1% and the cost of food went up by 11%. Workers and the general public are constantly being told that high prices are due to high wages and that if wages could be controlled the cost of living will not increase. Other sections call for price control. But Mr. Guy Jackson, Managing Director of Guinness's, and as such an expert on these matters, said in a moment of truth, "Manufacturing Industry's main objection to the prices control policy was, that it was in effect a policy of profit control. Those who forget the role of profit do so at their own peril".

SACRED COW

Prices control is therefore impossible under capitalism, since the sacred cow profit must not be halted. The only section of the community whose earnings can be controlled without too much difficulty are the workers. Throughout Europe workers are being asked to curb wage demands in the interest of competitiveness. In effect they are being asked to work harder for less in order to make capitalism work.

Hand-in-hand with the attacks on workers living standards go the big mergers. While Pat Quinn, Galen Weston and Bernard Dunne shove millions across the board in their never-ending game of

monopoly, smaller supermarkets screech, "they are pointing the guns at us". This, of course, is only capitalist sour grapes, simply because they are not on the winning side.

UNDERPAID

There is only one thing the workers can do on the capitalist round-a-bout. That is to guard against encroachments on their living standards by organising and fighting the war on wages. The I.H.A. would do well to print in "The Eye Opener" not only the prices being charged in supermarkets, but also the wages being paid to the workers who are grossly overworked and underpaid.

REVIEW

BY A. RAFTERY

NAVAN AND IRISH MINING

Documentation Of An £850 Million Robbery
By The Resources Study Group

THIS is unquestionably one of the best researched and most revealing documents on the way in which the riches of our country are being sold out to the big monopolies.

At school we were always told that Ireland had no natural mineral wealth. Now we find that Ireland is a bonanza for the mining companies and that at Navan we have the world's largest lead/zinc mine.

When this subject was discussed for the first time on television the representatives of the mining companies became hysterical and abusive. On the second occasion they tried to give a different image by putting on the "smoothies" like Nicholas Leonard.

FACTS

No matter what they did they couldn't get away from the facts, and this excellently produced pamphlet gives them all. Its strength is that it uses the mining companies own figures.

The pamphlet proves that the contention that there is any significant Irish control over the operation of these mines is completely false.

The profits from the mines are untaxed. Here are some figures of profits per worker:

Tynagh: Untaxed profit per worker per week: £194.
Silvermines: £125.

Bennetsbridge: £445.
Ballynoe: £1,431!
The miners earn taxed wages of £27 per week!

STARTLING

The wealth generating potential of the known mineral resources of the 26 cos. stand at approx £2,459,600,000.

If the output of the possible zinc smelter were processed completely in Ireland the output would be in the region of £300 million per year!

This pamphlet proves conclusively that the Irish people are being robbed. Not only does it do that but it shows how present Government policy towards the economy is designed on the Lazarus principle. Irish capitalists who are prepared to go along with the rape of the country will get the crumbs from the monopolies table.

The call in this pamphlet for the nationalisation of the mining industry is one that should be immediately taken up by the Labour movement, before it is too late.

With entry into the E.E.C. the drive by the monopolies to take over Ireland will be intensified.

The mines are a good place to start fighting back.

WORLD WAR THREE?

BY GEORGE JEFFARES

RATHER than lose face over Vietnam, Nixon has brought us to the brink of World War 2. The arguments he has used to justify his latest escalation—the protection of the remaining US troops in Vietnam and the release of the US POWS — were described by Shirley Chisholm, the black Democratic presidential candidate, as "hare-brained gibberish in defence of a garishly obscene fantasy".

The fact is, it is Nixon himself who, by playing politics with the POW's, is keeping the key turned on them. Who ever heard of POW's being released before a war was over?

Every tactic the US has used to bring the Vietnamese to their knees has failed — from Eisenhower's original sabotage of the 1954 Geneva Agreements which called for elections to reunite Vietnam, to Kennedy's "special war", to Johnson's bombing of the North, to Nixon's extension of the war to Laos and Cambodia, and now to Nixon's "Vietnamisation" which has ended in a complete debacle.

All the US has to show for it are 13 million tons of explosives dropped since 1965 (including a ton every minute Nixon's been in office), 23 million bomb craters, 1.5 million dead Vietnamese, a seventh of South Vietnam devastated by chemicals and 31 years of her timber needs destroyed in her defoliated or uprooted forests.

And now it has come out that Nixon has known all along that Vietnamisation wouldn't work.

SECRET

A secret memo prepared for him by Kissinger in February 1969, and revealed last month by the Washington Post, tells how the CIA and the Defence Department told Nixon that Vietnamisation hadn't a hope, that saturation bombing of civilian populations was futile, that the South Vietnamese population would never be pacified short of total annihilation carried out over more than a decade, and that the Saigon government was "chancy at best".

Nixon was advised that it would take at least 13.4 years to crush

the opposition. (The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the "optimists" of Nixon's inner circle, claimed it would take "only" 8.5 years!) Civilian experts in the Pentagon told him that "the external supply requirements of the Vietcong/North Vietnamese Army forces are so small . . . that it is unlikely that any air interdiction campaign can reduce them below the required levels".

Despite all this, the memo concluded: "The policy implications of this view are more of the same gradual US pressure and wholesale US support for the war". And Nixon went along with it.

Nixon's face-saving is taking a terrible toll in human lives. Right now he is rejecting the Vietnamese proposal for a coalition government to be set up in Saigon which would include some of his puppets as well as representatives of the liberation forces and others. His motive is suggested by a report in the London "Evening Standard" of May 9th which told of an off-the-record briefing by Kissinger to a select group of correspondents during the early days of the Nixon presidency: "Kissinger was completely open about it; one of his key phrases was the 'acceptable interval', by which he meant that Washington could agree to a coalition Government subject to only one important provision. If the coalition led to a Communist takeover of South Vietnam within 6 months, it would not be acceptable to the Americans. But if the takeover came, say in 6 years, it would be unfortunate, but the U.S. could live with it".

From the Big Smoke

BY JOHN RIDDY

"WHEN IS A BOMBER NOT A BOMBER"

THREE MEN and a woman felt they had to do something to show where they stood. So they decided to blow up a building in London in protest. They armed themselves with two plastic containers, full of petrol, two glass bottles, and a large spanner. The car they used belonged to one of them, but carried false number plates. Their effort at disguise consisted of wearing trilby hats and rubber gloves.

So then off they chugged around London, looking for a suitable building to go b-o-o-M!!! Like most people (in the Six Counties, for instance) they were rank amateurs, beginners in the game of violent protest, and nobody need be surprised that certain errors in planning soon became apparent. First of all, they failed to find an ideal building for their bombs. And then they back-fired the wrong way down the one-way system in New Bond Street.

ARREST

The interest of a policeman was agitated by all this law-breaking, so he stopped the car, saw the deadly equipment on the back seat, took out his pencil and notebook, and said, "Begging your pardon, Sirs and Madam, but I'm afraid I shall have to arrest you!" (In Old Bond Street, where the air one breathes consists of 33% Havana cigar smoke, 33% the rarest perfumes of Araby, and 33% 22-carat gold dust, policemen treat everyone, even criminals, as if they were members of the International Chamber of Commerce. Or even sitting members of the House of Lords.)

When the four defendants came up before his nobby-ship at the Central Criminal Court, it was revealed that the eldest was 23, the youngest, 19. Old enough to be interned by Mr. Willie Whitelaw, or jailed over here for at least seven years at Her Majesty's pleasure. After all, Irish Republicans have been imprisoned by the British upper classes for considerably less than this; for even possessing the materials that go into the making of bombs.

On this occasion, however, everyone was understanding. What if they had made bombs, with the intention of blowing up a building in central London? Surely young people should be allowed free expression in this most democratic of countries, because, if not, were we not sliding down the slippery slope to totalitarianism? Gad, yes! The upshot of all the sweet reasonableness was that the three men were each given a 12-month prison sentence, *suspended* for three years, while the woman was given a six months' sentence, *suspended* for three years.

Does this mean that we should learn to love British "justice"? Well, no-o — the potential bombers in question were not Irish, but Britishers of Ukrainian parentage, and the buildings they wished to bomb were rented by the Soviet Union.

IRATE CROSSMAN

Richard Crossman was very upset when he was sacked from the editorial chair of the NEW STATESMAN, and didn't hesitate to let everyone know his feelings. And it was all so unnecessary. If only people would read this column carefully, the future would become as clear to them as a mountain stream in unpolluted Albania. When Crossman first sat in the editorial chair in Tudor Street, I warned a) that he was

too old, and b), that his brand of *avant garde* Labour Party "socialism", while being ideal for middle-class radicals and liberals of thirty to forty years ago, was largely irrelevant to the middle-class students of today.

I admitted that he was more to the Left than Paul Johnson, the much younger editor he had replaced, but stressed that he could never go as far Left as most students wished. And students, I pointed out, were the life blood of such magazines as the NEW STATESMAN. I concluded that circulation would fall, as the old faithfuls from those wonderful Oxbridge days in the Thirties passed on to their due reward (as a particularly unctuous vicar might say), and failed to be replaced by new, young readers.

Well, circulation *did* fall, by 7,000, and now the editorial chair is occupied by youngish (38) Anthony Howard, so it would seem that the board of the NS has at last decided to lend an eye to my prognostications. But will Mr. Howard be left-wing enough to win new readers in the universities? Not sufficiently so for the zany, ultra-leftists, I daresay, but many moderates may find themselves captivated by his version of righteous left-thinking. In the meantime, Tony Howard should keep a weather eye open for a bolt-hole, for at least one knife is being sharpened in Tudor Street, and the stab in the back may come as early as 1974.

LEFTISH NAIVETY

Two more left-wing magazines, INK and 7 DAYS, have bit the dust of the bankruptcy courts. Each had approximately £20,000 owing to creditors when the final, expensively produced issues hit the streets. Unlike the IRISH SOCIALIST, or any other Communist newspaper in the capitalist world, the ultra-leftish press seems to depend on sponsorship from rich sympathisers and improbable advertising. They live and learn, I suppose. But how naive can you get?!

WITHOUT COMMENT

(Daily Mirror, Friday, May 12, 1972)

PRINCE PHILIP came up with two ways out of Britain's desperate unemployment problem yesterday—join the Army or emigrate to Australia.

He made the suggestions while touring dole queues in Sunderland, Co. Durham, where one man in ten is out of work.

But the Prince got a sharp reply from semi-skilled rope worker Jim Simpson when he mentioned Australia.

"They don't want labourers there," said Jim. "All their adverts are for skilled men."

And later, father-of-four Jim, 39, of Hedworth Square, Sunderland, said: "It's a bit disheartening for blokes on the dole when he says a thing like that."

"I was born and bred in Sunderland and don't want to leave. It's a drastic state of affairs when you can't get a job in your own country."

There was another frosty reply for the Duke when he chatted with ex-paratrooper Ken Burrell, 35.

Ken, of Gladstone Street, Sunderland, said he had been jobless since being discharged from the Army after being wounded in Cyprus ten years ago.

Prince Philip asked: "What are you doing about it?" And Ken

replied: "I've had to start tea-leaving—thieving."

There was no response from the Prince, so Ken told of his injuries from shrapnel in the shoulder, chest, lungs and pelvis, and his £180-a-year pension.

Prince Philip said: "Well, at least they give you a little something."

Passing along the dole queue, the Prince told Herbie Smith, of Knox Square, Sunderland: "The Army—now there's a job for you."

TOLD

Herbie, who had to quit his job as a trainee miner because the dust troubled his chest, said later:

"I told the Prince I went to the recruiting office last week and they told me to come back in a few week's time."

They could tell I wasn't deadly interested. It's not as if the Army's a secure job at the moment."

EAST GERMAN PEACE COUNCIL PROTESTS ON NORTH

PEACE COUNCIL OF THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

108 Berlin, Clara-Zetkin-Strasse 103 STATEMENT

ON the occasion of the anniversary of the assassination of James Connolly, hero of Irish independence struggle, the Peace Council of the German Democratic Republic should like to pronounce its strong concern about the disturbing situation in Northern Ireland, its indignation at British military violence against the progressive forces who are fighting oppression and discrimination, its disgust at the unleashing of hatred and civil war.

British imperialism has resorted to neocolonialist methods and to the policy of "Divide and Rule" in launching a straightforward campaign against the population of Northern Ireland. The brutal steps taken against social equality, the open discrimination pursued against Northern Irish citizens, and the suppression of democratic liberties are rousing anger not only among the people of Northern Ireland.

The democratic world public, the peace forces of all countries, including the Peace Council of the GDR, demand immediate withdrawal from Northern Ireland of all British occupational troops, immediate lifting of any discrimination against Northern Irish citizens, and immediate cessation of any persecution and torture of civil rights fighters.

Peace and security cannot be restored until the people of Northern Ireland are allowed to decide their own destiny.

The Peace Council of the German Democratic Republic conveys to the people of Northern Ireland with whom it is linked by bonds of friendship greetings of solidarity and best wishes for further success in the struggle for freedom and independence.

Please accept our friendly greetings,

PEACE COUNCIL OF THE GDR
Signed: Professor G. Drefahl, President.

THE RENTS STRIKE and MOLLOY'S CONTEMPT

By JOHN MONTGOMERY

FOR some years now Dublin Corporation tenants have heard periodic threats from N.A.T.O. spokesman who said that a rent strike would soon be called.

The Minister for Local Government, Mr. Molloy, must have regarded these threats with some contempt when he refused to reconsider his decision to add 4p per room to the rents of all houses built before 1956. Maybe he's sorry now, maybe he's not. One way, or another, he now has a rent strike on his hands.

The rent strike may have surprised Mr. Molloy and company but it can't have surprised him any more than it surprised some of the associations attached to N.A.T.O. So surprised were some of them that they failed to organise a proper campaign of resistance. Outside of arranging for their members to partake in the protest march to the City Hall placing pickets on local rent offices, nothing else was arranged.

In my own association this was very much the case and confusion reigned for a short time. The authorities took full advantage of this first and natural confusion and added to it by spreading false rumours. The first of these rumours was leaked to the press and was to the effect that most tenants were sending their rents in by post.

DIDN'T WORK

Strangely enough (or maybe not so strangely) when the people in the North of Ireland went on a rent and rates strike, the British Army spread the same rumour hoping to panic the people into

breaking the strike. It didn't work there and it isn't going to work in Ballyfermot.

The people of N.I. overcame the confusion by getting stickers printed saying "I'm on a Rent and Rates strike" and asked the people to display them in their windows. The B.C.A. have asked their members to do the same. Note—The bosses North and South behave in the same way and the workers North and South retaliate in a similar fashion. There must be a lesson there somewhere for all the reformers who think class war is dead.

Confusion had also been caused by a lack of information on why the strike took place and what were the demands being made of the Minister and the Corporation. Some people thought it was only the people who were changed the 4p per room who were on strike and at times it seemed as if everybody believed that everyone else was on strike but they themselves were exempt.

MEETINGS

This confusion was overcome by a series of meetings which ex-

plained that the 4p per room was not the issue but merely the final straw which brought the issue to a head. The issue, it was explained, did not start last month but began back in 1966 when the then Minister for Local Govt., Neil Blaney (that well-known Republican) decided to commemorate 50 years of Irish freedom by sending a directive to all City and County Managers to immediately increase all rents and put all tenants not on differential rents onto that system at once.

Negotiations took place between Blaney and the tenants delegates but Neil stood firm—not an inch—Negotiations dragged on and on and then in October 1967 the tenants lost patience and called a march in protest and the tenants won. Kevin Boland, who took over the Ministry, promised, like his predecessor that in future rents would remain static, only rates would rise.

Now in this year of Jack Lynch 1972 and with the evictor Boland gone the way of all good Republicans, the present Minister robber Molloy, (sorry, I believe that should be Robert), has decided to flex his muscles and take us on.

FIGHT

Now that N.A.T.O. has decided to fight (or has been pushed into fighting by Mr. Molloy) they have decided to go the whole hog and fight for all that should have been fought for years ago. The working class are always slow to anger.

Now the demand is for a com-

plete new system of rent. That rent should be assessed on the earnings of the tenant and not of his whole family. That when a tenant dies the tenancy continues in the family and without changing to a higher scale rent as at present. Demands are that the specified amount of money for maintenance of houses be increased and that amount spent on them and not as now milked off and spent elsewhere.

These and other demands are being made now and merely because Mr. Molloy stirred a nest of sleeping hornets and drive them to fight. He should have had more sense but we have stopped expecting that from Robert and his friends.

MISTAKES

His first mistake was to attack us and his second was to allow us to recover from our initial shock. We weren't ready and we made mistakes but we have learned from them and we will not make those mistakes again. We will make others but we will overcome them too and in the end Robert and his ilk will see that we can not be defeated because defeat is a luxury we cannot afford.

Victory means that not only have we won certain immediate demands but it also means that we have proven that the Tenants Associations are at last strong enough and willing enough to stand up and defend their members.

Defeat means that the many threats of eviction made to Cor-

poration tenants in the past few weeks and the others which are at present being prepared, will be carried out.

Defeat means that we will have displayed to all authorities, both public and private that we are unwilling to fight for our rights and refuse to support those people who are willing to fight.

In fact, if we are defeated we will be showing all our enemies that we are defenceless and when they get that message heaven help us all.

SCALES

Some people may think that only those on rent strike will suffer but this is far from true. The aim of Mr. Molloy, Mr. Macken and all their cronies is to get all Corpo tenants on to the high C scale rent and if we are defeated they will not ask whether or not you supported the strike. All will be regarded as the unprotected spoils of war and the Government and City Hall have shown us many times before that when they are victorious they loot their victims mercilessly.

For these reasons we mustn't be defeated. For these reasons we will not be defeated.

As I said before we were unprepared and confused at the beginning but we have recovered now and I think Robert is on his way to defeat and who knows maybe this time next year when he has been sacked by Tsar Jack he too will be telling us what a great Republican he is.

THE GOVERNMENTS ATTACK ON EDUCATION

— Teachers Fight Back

By DENIS FITZPATRICK

I HAVE not always felt that the A.S.T.I. (Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland) was a particularly progressive body, but after their convention this year it has become clear that a new militancy is developing in their ranks. There are good reasons for this, reasons which to other groups of workers with longer trade union experience (the A.S.T.I. only became a trade union two years ago) might seem astonishingly basic. What trade unionist, after all, would contemplate working longer hours with an increased workload without a corresponding increase in pay? This is what the Minister, Pdraig ("No letters to the papers, please) Faulkner is daring to ask the secondary teachers to do.

Of course, many secondary teachers already teach more than the required minimum and this change in the regulations would not be the most serious aspect of the proposed changes.

A more seriously damaging proposal is that which requires secondary schools actually to reduce the number of teachers they employ. The Government has done this by raising the quota of pupils for every recognised teacher from 15 to 20. The consequence of this is to reduce in most schools the range of subjects available for study, just at a time when the Minister's other face declares the need for greater expansion of the curriculum and more individual attention to pupils' special needs.

Apart from those teachers who will be laid-off because of this development there will be hundreds more who are just finishing their diploma year who will have nowhere to go except the Liverpool boat. As if we did not have too few teachers as it is!

FIGHT

It is heartening to see that the A.S.T.I. has decided to fight this disgracefully retrograde step by strike action. Such a strike would be clearly seen as a blow struck in defence of the rights of all Irish secondary pupils, who are the real victims in the present situation.

Previous teachers' strikes have not always aroused the amount of sympathy from the general public that they should have. Irritated parents who like to feel that there are self-sacrificing, idealistic people in the world, tend to view with superior disapproval strikes by the teaching profession over sordid matters such as wages and differential salary structures.

The present issue, however, is very clearly about educational standards and as such deserves the sympathetic understanding and support of all parents. It may also arouse in the Irish people an awareness of what is being done to them, namely that the services which govern the quality of life

for the mass of the Irish people, such as hospitals, schools and recreation centres, are being drastically pinched, halted or run-down in the interests of those who prefer to see money spent on the enforcement of law and order by the police and army, and on the emergency situation likely to arise if unemployment continues to climb.

SUPPORT

It is the solemn duty of Irish citizens from all sections of our society to take a stand against those forces which by means of our 'Government' are seeking to check the proper development of Irish society. The three main teachers' organisations, the A.S.T.I., V.T.A. and I.N.T.O. are in the best position to defend whatever progress has been made in Irish education over the last two or three decades against the bureaucratic ignorance and destructiveness of the Department of Education.

It is their duty to demand to be consulted on the Department's plans for Irish education. How, for instance, will the ten million pounds that the Government hopes to have by this new move actually be spent? It is the right and duty of these organisations to know this since the livelihoods of their members as well as the well-being of their pupils depend on such decisions.

DETERIORATION

It seems depressingly likely that conditions in Irish schools are likely to deteriorate rather than improve, over the next few years. The massive indifference of the Minister towards the desperate problems of our reform schools and our primary schools suggests as much. At their convention this year, many primary teachers decided to refuse to take classes of forty and over. If they stand by this decision, it would do more to shift the inert weight of the Department than twenty bombs. If these teachers are backed by parents and the school managers, more will be accomplished for primary schools in one year than has been accomplished since the foundation of the State.

Since education is not in Ireland directly related to the profitability of big business, it is unlikely that it will receive much attention from the kind of Government we have in power at the moment. As long as there are the handful of specialists and executive personnel produced by our educational machine each year, business interests will be content that enough is being spent on education.

EMIGRATION

Within the E.E.C. with the increased mobility of labour a new factor in the situation, the educational achievements of the Irish

will be irrelevant since skilled jobs will be increasingly filled by the nationals of those countries such as Britain, Holland, Belgium and Germany with advanced training opportunities, while the Irish will be left to fulfil their traditional rôle of nomadic unskilled labourers.

Our reactionary politicians and their financiers understand that little education is required for this and so I can see the present stagnation in education continuing indefinitely.

Clearly only unity on a broad front is going to impress the forces now ranged against the Irish people and as a first step towards such unity the teachers' organisations, A.S.T.I., V.T.A. and I.N.T.O. should consider how much more closely they might collaborate to defend their jobs and their pupils. Only by such unity and with the alliance of student organisations and parents can the Irish people defend their future.

NEXT MONTH:
THE NATIONAL WAGE
AGREEMENT
By
SAM NOLAN