

THE BOTTOM DOG

5 PENCE

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A PAPER FOR NORTH MUNSTER WORKERS

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

£700

RISE FOR T.D.'S

Liam Cosgrave's
PAY PAWS

50 MORE LET GO AT S.P.S.

As we go to press, the news reached us of further redundancies in Standard Pressed Steel Ltd, (S.P.S.) on the Shannon Industrial Estate. This was predicted by the Bottom Dog last month and we take no joy in being proved right.

On this occasion, the number being made jobless by this American multi-national is 50. This brings the total number of redundancies in the plant in the past ten months to 190 out of an original workforce of 450

In every sense the company has remained true to its usual boast, "equal to or better than other firms". The whole history of S.P.S. in Ireland is a typical example of such foreign multi-nationals. The next issue of the Dog looks at this history in the form of an interview with a shop steward from the plant.

----- FIGHTING POVERTY ? -----

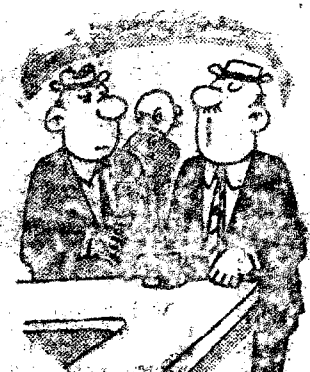
During the general election campaign in 1969 the Labour Party manifesto assured us that "the seventies will be socialist". We waited confidently. This is now the second half of the seventies and a return visit to the Labour Party Conference in 1975 lets us into the secret that the 1976 budget will be the toughest in peacetime. The person who gave us this information is the same Brendan Corish who promised to make for the back benches should Labour go into Coalition. What has happened to the "revolutionary Marxists" in the Labour Party and to the Fine Gael "young tigers" with their promise of a just society? What makes the difference between the Labour Party's stand now and in 1969?

The most obvious thing would seem to be the actual coalition itself between Fine Gael and Labour. However, this is not all that has happened. When the parties of the coalition fought in the last election in 1973 the economic situation was reasonably stable. This is how the coalition could offer a 13 point programme to help bring about the just society of Fine Gael, and Labour could tell us that its policies towards socialism could begin to make headway. The whole situation particularly with regard to the economy has changed since then. How has the Government faced up to these changes?

First of all just to get things in perspective let's look at the division of labour within the Government. The Fine Gael Ministers control most of the real power, they have Defence, Justice, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Agriculture and of course the Taoiseach, Liam Cosgrave is the official spokesman on the North. Take a look at the Ministries controlled by the Labour Party (none of which, of course, can spend any money on whatever ideas they wish to carry out, without the help of the Dept. of Finance). We have Labour, Michael O'Leary, Industry and Commerce, Justin Keating, Tully for Local Government and Health and Social Welfare, Brendan Corish. These are potential flash points where the Government could expect to

(and did) come in conflict with various sections of society, mainly the workers. It was obviously hoped and to some extent these hopes were well founded, that for instance the Trade Unions would be more amenable to persuasion from a "Labour Minister", as the Trade Union movement in general tends to identify more with the Labour Party than with the traditional bosses of Fine Gael. Similarly with Industry and Commerce, Keating can pass off his pathetic attempts at getting control of the resources of the country and hesitation to build a smelter as an excuse that he is implementing reforms but must move slowly because of the economic situation. The excuses for not having a social policy in relation to other such issues come better from Labour as everyone knows whose side Fine Gael is on, but many people have not yet realised that there is little difference between either.

The coalition was elected on a platform of social justice. We were promised better welfare, health services, more control over resources, equality for women, a fair deal for tax payers, workers etc. and what have we got? The present Government has come into conflict with almost every section of society as it has failed utterly to deal with any situation except by trying to bully and gag their opponents. For instance, on one of the main points of its programme, equality for women: for over two years it has been in violent opposition to the wishes of women on a variety of questions. On contraception the Government tried to introduce a completely unworkable (that is without an army of secret snoopers) and undemocratic Bill which was not in the interests of women. It fell flat on its face, not because it was undesirable to women but because the leader of the Government voted against it as being morally wrong! Since then it has antagonised the women's groups in a number of ways up to the point where now its own carefully controlled Womens Commission is condemning it for selling out on equal pay, (see other article).



"The standard of living I'd like is the one I had before my last three rises."

The Government has also taken it upon itself to do open verbal battle with a variety of different Trade Unionists - the truck drivers in April 1975, the Post Office technicians in '75 and now again in 1976 the N.U.J. over the broadcasting o

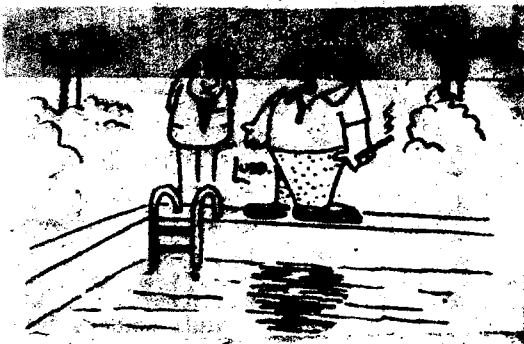
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

on the broadcasting of B.B.C., the Bank officials, Corporation workers and also with other groups such as tenants, people buying private homes, chemists, vets and farmers on all sides. This when combined with its utter failure to solve the unemployment crisis even in the limited ways open to it such as nationalisation (under workers' control) of foreign or native businesses which close down or slow down, putting some proper portion of Government money into keeping jobs alive.

Having completely failed to implement even its moderate social policy, the young paper tigers have now turned into law and order mongrels. The main thrust of its work over the past three years has been aimed at isolating the Catholic minority and facilitating in every possible way the Loyalists from the U.V.F., who have announced at press conferences their murder of Catholics (estimated at over 300 IN THE PAST YEAR), to the moderate kill the Taignes, Craigs. Although they found it impossible to apprehend the British and Loyalist bombers of Dublin, Monaghan and Dundalk, they were very swift in locating scapegoats for the bombing of Donagans pub and have no difficulty in hunting down the escapees from the terror and torture of internment - torture for which the Irish Government has taken the British Government to the European Human Rights Court.

The Coalition Government has used the tragic experience of Northern Ireland to divert attention from its lack of ability to deal with the economic issues. This can be seen when Conor Cruise O'Brien (who is supposed to be solving our telephone problems) is completely preoccupied with putting out pro-British propaganda on what he considers to be his television and radio station. The main enemy has ceased to be poverty as in '69 and '73 and is now subversion. The genuine left wing people within the Labour Party should realise that that purity has completely capitulated to Fine Gael and that we cannot expect social justice from them. These genuine Labourites should act accordingly.

MARY O'DONNELL



"I can't swim but its handy for washing my money...."

There is now an estimated 55,000 school-leavers from 1975 who are looking for work, 2,000 coming from primary schools, 44,500 from secondary and vocational schools and 8,500 from third level institutions. The two main Government agencies which have the responsibility to act in the interests of our youth are: Manpower (the Government employment agency) and AnCo (the Industrial Training Authority). Both of these agencies have failed in what they were set up to do, to secure adequate employment and adequate apprenticeships. There are now 40,000 people registered with the National Manpower Service, the bulk of which are school-leavers. Last year only 15,000 jobs were provided by Manpower and this year there are less jobs available and more unemployed. This gives Manpower a "success" rate of 37%. But what of the other 63% and those who didn't register at all.

The majority of those who leave vocational schools enter apprenticeships. From the official AnCo figures, the training of young apprentices has dropped considerably. In 1969 there were 3,672 registered first year apprentices, in 1974 there were 2,671. The 1975 figure, when published will show a further fall in apprenticeships. Since the last figures were issued 900 apprentices have been made redundant in the construction industry alone. Though it is obvious that Manpower or AnCo cannot provide the jobs needed, there is no initiative coming from the Government on unemployment. The problem of school-leavers trying to find jobs in difficult circumstances is an All-Ireland one. It goes without saying that a large number of unemployed and disillusioned young people walking the streets does nothing to ease the problem of sectarian strife.

In the last issue of THE BOTTOM DOG, we carried an article on the question of housing. In it, the author mentions how the Corporation was completely inadequate in solving this social problem. It was pointed out that 800 NAMES were on the housing list and how the attitude of Councillors reflected their anti-working class solutions, such as high rise flats in unprofitable areas of the city.

During a discussion on housing, all hell broke loose but not because of the urgency of the issue, rather because of the need to get involved in infantile wrangling concerning the the notorious question once raised by Conor Cruise. What happened to the £800,000.

THE MEN WHO CAME TO DINNER

At the recent Annual Dinner of the Limerick and Shannon District Council of the I.T.G.W.U. three well known champions of workers rights were among the guests of honour. They were, Tom Morris, President of the Limerick Chamber of Commerce, James Herriot, Chairman of the Limerick Federation of employers, and John Harty of the Federated Union of Employers.

It is the organisations which these gentlemen represent that are to the fore in attacking workers living standards. They represent companies who are denying workers rightful wage increases under the N.W. A.

One wonders how the Callins workers with their meager £2 increase after a lengthy strike and not even guaranteed full employment afterwards or the thousands who queue weekly at the labour exchange view this further example of brotherly love between Unions and employers

Unlike the I.T.G.W.U. , the Bottom Dog is fully aware of the difference between the exploiter and the exploited. There can be no doubt as to whose side we are on. Can the same be said for the I.T.G.W.U.? !!!

The following was on a slip of paper which came into our possession. Perhaps one of our readers could throw some light on its meaning.

I agree to return to my normal performance and output which was produced by me prior to September 22nd 1975, and I also recognise being bound by all agreements between Ferenka Ltd. and the I.T.G.W.U.

common law bill

HOW do you view the introduction of the Common Law Bill? Do you welcome it because you feel it might bring about a decrease in the violence in the North? Do you feel it is irrelevant to you, a worker in the South or do you see it as a giant step towards a complete police state in which all resistance of workers to the laws made by, and in the interests of the men of property, would be crushed.

Mainly the Bill is directed against the Nationalist Minority in the North. It originated as part of the Sunningdale Agreement - a package deal which was to give the Minority the illusion of some small measure of influence through a power sharing Executive. Well the Loyalists said a definite "NO" to that idea and effectively wrecked the Power Sharing Executive through the medium of the U.W.C. Strike. This was in May 1974. The position of the Minority was very weak. The Loyalists had shown their strength, the British Army had stood by in approving silence. Loyalist terror continued on an escalating scale.

What was the answer of the Free State Government to all this? In November 1974, six months after Sunningdale had been shattered, our guardians of 'Law and Order' decided to dig up the one part of the deal which would conveniently act against the Minority in the North and the Irish

working Class in general.

Few people who have been, even vaguely observant of the Courts of Justice in the North could fail to recognise their viciousness in regard to the minority community. Under the provisions of the Bill any person who escapes from a prison camp in the North and flees south can be charged down here and is liable to get 7 years imprisonment in way of penalty for escaping from "lawful" custody in the North. If this Bill is made law Ireland will be one of the few countries in the world refusing to grant political asylum.

BILL TO PROTECT THE BOSS CLASS
This bill is particularly wide ranging. Not alone is it designed to ensure the continuance of the old undemocratic and grossly unjust system in the North - it is also specifically calculated to protect property. Two sections provide for incredibly heavy (P5)

The article reprinted below is a statement by Irishwomen United on the amendment to the Equal Pay Act (1974) which has been sent to us for publication. We fully support the positions put forward here and are actively involved in gaining support for the petition being distributed by the Equal Pay Ad-Hoc Committee. This has been signed already by leading trade unionists and leaders of womens' groups. If you wish to sign this petition or to take some sheets for distribution, they can be obtained from any sellers of the Bottom Dog or any of the addresses on P2. Remember, however, that completed forms must be returned to the organisers by January 25th.

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Irishwomen United support the initiative of the trade unionists and members of the Council for the Status of Women who have organised the meeting in the Mansion House. We are also giving active support to the Equal Pay Ad Hoc Committee in the redistribution of their petition.

There is growing solidarity among women against the Governments attack on the principle of equal pay through their proposed amendment of the Equal Pay Act. This amendment reflects the interests of employers to the detriment of women workers. It is obvious that the F.U.E. have been successful in their propaganda campaign both in convincing the Government to postpone equal pay and in whipping up an atmosphere of fear and confusion among many people.

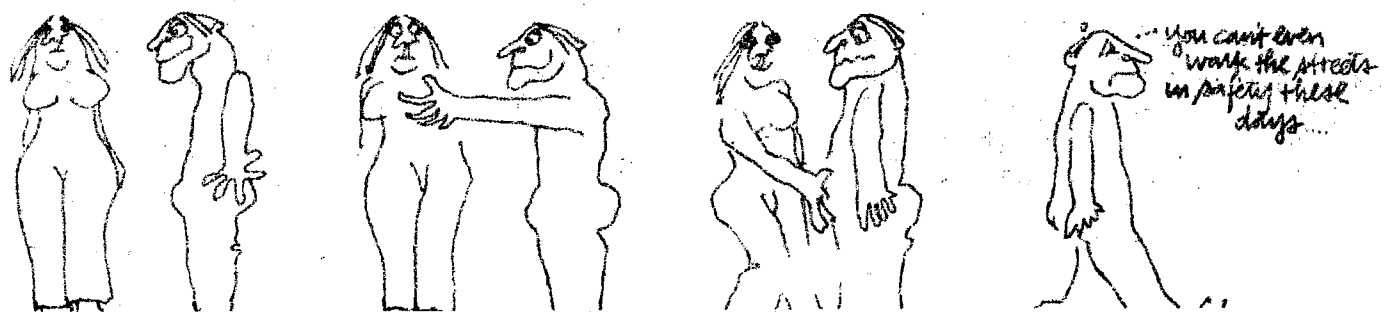
To the argument that equal pay will cause unemployment we say that massive unemployment already exists in a situation of low unequal wages for women. Its cause to date has manifestly not been the payment of equal pay for women. No doubt employers when forced legislatively to implement equal pay will create further unemployment, not because it is their only option but because it is their favourite option, infinitely preferable to a reduction in profits or dividends. The money for equal pay should come from these profits and dividends. Sacrifices are being called for; we say to the employers and shareholders it is time for your sacrifices.

While opposing the deferral of equal pay, we state categorically that the so-called Equal Pay Act benefits only a fraction of women workers. We foresee equal pay for all women only when the demands laid down in our Charter, viz.

- 'The male rate for the job where men and women are working together:
- Where the workforce is wholly female, the job done by these women should be upgraded and a national minimum wage implemented, linked to the cost of living increase. We reject the use of job evaluation techniques for the purpose of negotiating pay claims'

are met.

Equal pay is not the only issue for women workers. Irishwomen United believe that real equality for women at work can only be won when the following demands have been conceded :-



The right of women to have access to all types of employment, including all types of skilled, and promotion regardless of marital status, pregnancy or maternity.

The right to training and re-training for all occupations including apprenticeships, and the present system of apprenticeships to be re-structured. That it be compulsory for all employers to make readily available day release courses, with pay, for all employees.

Working conditions to be, without deterioration of present condition, the same for women as for men: in addition, the institution of worker determined flexible hours. The removal of protective legislation should not be a condition to gaining equal pay, and should be extended to include men.

The right to statutory maternity leave of twenty weeks with full net pay; additional leave with pay in cases of illness connected therewith; the right to attend pre-natal and post-natal clinics as required.

Prohibition of dismissal of women from employment on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity.

Employers to ensure that every effort is made to facilitate employees who are pregnant insofar as the latter's duties are concerned, the guarantee of re-integration into employment without loss of status or service, the right to further training or re-training after statutory or prolonged maternity leave, and the option for equivalent forms of paternity leave.

These demands can be won by organised action on the part of women and men workers. The fact that women are numerically weak in the Trade Unions is no excuse for the unions' lack of activity on women's issues; for example, there has not been a genuine campaign for equal pay. The leadership seems to be responding now but response to pressure is not leadership.

We call on the ICTU

1. to take an active lead in the fight for women's equality at work.
2. to launch an all-out campaign to unionise women workers.
3. to stand solidly against any victimisation of, or discrimination against women workers.

Irish Women United,
12 Lr, Pembroke St., Dublin.

BOO OF THE YEAR

If you have any puff left, this one is for Cosgrave's own regiment. One of Liam's chosen senators to represent Ireland and Fine Gael, Lord Iveagh (Chief of Guinness) is concerned about small farmers would you believe.

Commenting on the sale of the Carton Estate Mansion and 1,000 acres in Co. Meath, Iveagh said: "The pity is too often not only is the Great House lost, but the land broken up too, no longer remaining as a single unit".

So the Squirearchy is worried about the growing awareness of small-farmers. Perhaps with the troubles in the North membership of the hunting club is falling.

— THE BOTTOM DOG —

Anyone wishing to have articles inserted in The Bottom Dog should contact any of the following-

Joe Harrington,
41, Glenview Gardens,
Farranshane, Limerick

Tom Hayes,
36, St. Patricks Villas,
Castleconnell.

Aileen Dillane,
208, Ballinacurra Gdns.
Limerick.

Jim Curtin,
11, Yradaree Court,
Shannon Town,
Co. Clare.

Dave Lee,
Lansdowne House,
Near Union Cross,
Ennis Road,
Limerick



UNEMPLOYMENT

To focus attention on and to help initiate a campaign against unemployment, a Public Meeting is being held on Saturday, the 14th of February at 8pm in Connolly Hall, O'Connell St, Limerick. The meeting is being sponsored by The Bottom Dog (the local working class paper). It will be addressed by Matt Merrigan of the A.T.G.W.U., Frank Prendergast, Branch Sec. Shannon Branch of the I.T.G.W.U. and a local unemployed worker.

On Friday, Jan. 9th the official figure for unemployment was given as over 116,000. This was a dramatic increase of 6,000 on the previous weeks figure. The economics correspondent in R.T.E. gave the reason for this huge increase as the traditional seasonal lay-offs at this time of year. However, on a radio programme earlier in the day Liam Connellan of the F.U.E. stated that another 30,000 would join the unemployed in the coming months if workers did not accept wage cuts and if investment was not increased at the expense of public spending. He also suggested that employers should be freed from paying their part of social welfare contributions.

The Government and employers are determined to place the responsibility for the present recession on the backs of the working class. Workers are being told to accept wage cuts, price increases, and an overall reduction in the standard of living. The tactic of calling on unemployed workers to forego wage claims in the interests, supposedly, of keeping unemployment in check, is obviously intended to divide the working class. We must not fall into this trap. The problem of our economy have been created by those who control it - multi-nationals and native industrialists whose interests are represented by Government policy. It is they who mould the economy they have created. In Britain, we have seen the results of the Labour Governments policy which is also directed at solving unemployment. Workers have accepted a £6 wage increase limit and unemployment has increased to 1¼ millions.

CONNOLLY HALL

LIMERICK FEB. 14TH 8pm.

THE BOTTOM DOG SAYS-

ALL OUT ON FEB. 14

THE BOTTOM DOG SAYS - ALL OUT ON FEB. 14