

## **FIGHT, STARVE, OR EMIGRATE**

When we think of the 1950's in Ireland the first thing that springs to mind is emigration. Some 400,000 people left the country in that decade, Emigration then, just as today, exported Ireland's unemployment problem. Many however did not emigrate and those that stayed swelled the ranks of the unemployed. They were left with two options - starve or fight.

The story of those who fought is told in "*FIGHT, STARVE OR EMIGRATE - a History of the Irish Unemployed Movements in the 1950's*". This short pamphlet, (fifty pages), has been written by Evanne Kilmurray, in conjunction with the Larkin Unemployed Centre, and is published by the Centre. It is well written and, apart from a few typesetting errors, very well produced. It focuses on two organisations, the Dublin Unemployed Association of 1953 and the Unemployed Protest Committee of 1957. Both led campaigns of public protest in which thousands took part, forcing public awareness of the plight of the unemployed and pushing the unemployment crisis up the

political agenda. Public meetings, marches and sit down demonstrations were their stock in trade. In addition the 1957 committee put forward Jack Murphy as a Dail candidate in the General Election of that year. He was elected as a T.D. for the Dublin South Central Constituency.

Both organisations were relatively shortlived. But there is much to be learnt from their experiences - the obstacles they faced, their successes and even their weaknesses. This pamphlet greatly helps us in this task. Recommended reading for all concerned to fight unemployment from the bottom up.

It costs £1.50 from the Larkin Unemployed Centre, 57/58 North Strand Road, Dublin 3. ■

*WORKING NOTES carries information and analysis of the unemployment situation and related issues. We welcome feedback and dialogue on material covered in the bulletin. Use these 'Working Notes' in any way you like, but please acknowledge the source if you are reproducing them.* ■