

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

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# 'WE'RE SICK OF OVERCROWDED HOSPITALS'

A SERIOUS crisis is looming in the health services.

Four times in the last two months, nurses have gone on strike because of the appalling conditions in hospitals.

In Dublin's Mater Hospital 25 nurses from the Accident and Emergency services placed pickets in protest at the lack of beds available for patients in emergency care.

The nurses union, the I.N.O. say that patients in casualty can be left lying on trolleys or in wheelchairs for up to 48 hours. Patients in need of ward care are often nursed from mattresses on the floor.

30 nurses in Beaumont hospital are due to strike on April 5th. The same problem exists in St. James and the Meath hospitals.

Most city centre hospitals have been closed down since 1987 with a loss of 700 - 800 beds in Dublin.

The long promised Tallaght hospital was shelved for years by successive governments.

The nurses have to work in overcrowded and unsafe conditions.

The patients are subjected to



degrading and dangerous treatment because of the lack of beds.

Last month 100 nurses in Sligo went on strike because of staff-

ing levels. In Clonmel 100 nurses from a staff of 105 placed pickets to demand that the health board employ more staff and are

continuing to work-to-rule.

A decent health service is a right for everybody.

While this Government can throw tax breaks at banks and at millionaires like Larry Goodman, working class people are suffering as a result.

They have to depend on public health and can't afford the luxury of Blackrock-clinic style care.

This is a sick society that allows people to suffer pain and degradation while the bosses can boast increased profits.

## Change

But it's working class people who pay over 80% of total taxes.

We deserve better and it's time for change.

Health Ministers will continue to turn a blind eye.

Polite lobbying and appeals won't secure the extra beds and staff that are urgently needed.

They will only be forced to wake up by the action that the nurses are taking.

# Jailed for life for stealing a slice of pizza

**Jerry Dewayne, a 27 year old black man, was sentenced to 25 years life imprisonment last month.**

What was Jerry Dewayne's crime? Surely he committed a serious offence like murder, armed robbery or rape?

No, Williams will spend most of the rest of his life in jail for stealing a slice of pepperoni pizza.

Williams was sentenced on the "three-strikes and you're out" rule in America. Under Clinton's new policy anybody who offends three times, gets life -- no matter what they do on the third time.

According to the prosecution's case, Williams and a friend approached four teenagers with an extra large pizza



and asked for some. When the teens refused, the two men each took a slice.

For this crime Williams received a 25-year sentence.

This piece of barbarism is designed to appease the law and order lynch mob in California.

Meanwhile John Bruton is encouraging Bill Clinton to come to Ireland. We are all supposed to honour him as "a man of peace".

If he ever does arrive, socialists will make sure that he does not forget the name of Jerry Dewayne.

# STOP OWEN'S BAIL BILL!

**THE JUSTICE Minister, Nora Owen, does not appear to be too confident about the proposed Bill to change the Bail laws.**

The Bill seems to have been put on the shelf—for now. Under the Constitution, anyone charged with an offence enjoys "the presumption of innocence until proven guilty". Owen wants to change that with a new Bill which will allow judges to refuse Bail.

In effect, anyone with previous convictions could be refused bail and denied their right to "be presumed innocent".

Article 40.4 of the Constitution says "That no citizen should be deprived of their liberty".

This is the same Constitution that Government and Courts hold so precious when it comes to stopping women having a right to choose an abortion.

But they are not too happy about the bit that guarantees our right to liberty. The I.C.C.L. are campaigning against the introduction of the Bill.

One solicitor told *Socialist Worker*, "It seems they want to give the Gardai something to do—there is no justification for this type of legislation. It turns the action of justice on its head".

## Class bias in Third Level Education—Official

**AN INTERNAL UCD report obtained by Socialist Worker shows that access to third-level education in the Republic is extremely limited.**

In March it organised an open day for prospective students and administered questionnaires to 18,000 people.

Students from Dublin were sub-divided by postal district. 2097 students attended from the prosperous South County Dublin area.

However, only 290 students attended from the huge working-class area of Tallaght.

This discrepancy is even more startling when one considers that the population of South County Dublin is only around 30% of the population of Tallaght.

Not one student from the Dublin 17 area attended the Open Day.

Dublin 17 includes the large working-class estates of Darndale and Clonsilla.

These findings come as little surprise to those working in education.

A teacher working in Tallaght told *Socialist Worker*, "I've been teaching for 13 years and I've only seen about a dozen or so kids make it to college.

It's just not an option. Those from unemployed families would get a grant but, to be honest, it would hardly even cover their busfares for the year.

Anyone working is crucified because of the low thresholds for grants. It's so frustrating to see bright kids you've taught signing on."

Neither the Department of Education nor UCD would comment on the findings.

However, they will come as an embarrassment to the government.

It seems that the abolition of fees, although welcome, has had little, if any, effect on the social composition of third-level education.

For education to become a right for all, the government will have to provide more money to tackle unemployment, provide living grants and raise people's expectations.

## COUNCIL HARASSMENT OF TRAVELLERS:

# Dawn raid on family

**MRS MANGAN and eleven of her children were forcibly moved from their caravan at 7.30 on the morning of March 14th.**

Ten council workers, protected by Gardai, lifted the family from their beds into a van. They then strapped the caravan, hoisted it onto a truck and moved it to a new halting site on Kishogue Lane.

This family have been forcibly moved three times in the last six years.

"We were living in a field in Blanchardstown for four years and had to leave because they wanted to build a market. Then we had to leave a field in Clondalkin because they wanted to build a shopping centre. They never built them."

The new halting site in Kishogue has no electricity, two families share one toilet and hundreds of children have to live in an area without a playground or space.

The site gates are locked between 5.30 in the evening and 9.00 in the morning.

The Mangans don't want to live in a big halting site that resembles a shanty town.

"I have 14 children and the kids need space to play and do a bit of scrap."

The vast majority of travellers will not get paid employment and the young men in particular need to carry out their own trading in scrap and machinery parts.

There is nothing else for them.

Travellers living in the Kishogue site have to walk two and a half miles to the nearest shop and there are no phones or bus services in the area.

### Damaged

During the eviction the Council damaged the roof of the Mangan's caravan but the eviction notice carries a disclaimer for any damage caused during the move.

The family now live on the roadside near Clondalkin village.

The Mangans believe



## GLENAMADDY'S REVENGE

**GLENAMADDY in East Galway was the scene of a terrible attack on travellers two years ago.**

Local shopkeepers organised a gang with hurley sticks to beat up travellers coming from the Four Roads pub.

The pub was only one of twelve pubs in the village that served travellers.

Despite this attack, the Gardai blamed the travellers and the pub which served them.

that if they moved into the Kishogue site they would never get out of it.

### 'Shanty Towns'

The "shanty towns" of Cappagh and Mulhuddert

are testimony to the callous policy the council has towards the travelling community.

Mr. Mangan told *Socialist Worker*: "Travellers are moved on everywhere, it's the

same in the North too and many travellers end up emigrating. Mary Robinson is a good woman but she should come down to these big sites and see how travellers have to live."

## Residents unite to clean up racist slogans

**ABUSIVE racist graffiti has been daubed over dozens of houses and shops in Dublin's Blessington Street.**

A number of black families and students live on the street.

Filthy slogans like "Blacks out of Ireland", "Wogs go home" and "Get

out Kaffir" were daubed on the doors of two blocks of flats.

They were immediately removed by Corporation workers.

But just a few days later local people woke up to find the entire street, doors, shops, hoardings covered with the same slimey graffiti.

"Everybody on the street came out to clean it off, not just the Corpo this time", according to one local resident.

### Disgusted

"The low-life that does this are obviously organised and determined to intimidate the few black people who live here."

The Anti Nazi League (ANL) have been petitioning residents in the

Blessington Street area to unite in opposition to these racists.

Local people are disgusted by this behaviour but have no expression for their anger.

The ANL urges everybody who opposes this kind of activity to go into the demonstration in Dublin on April 22nd.

It's crucial we organise now against racism and facism wherever it rears its ugly head.

## Northern Ireland Electricity bills hike while profits soar

**ELECTRICITY prices in Northern Ireland are to jump by another 8%.**

It will make the price of its electricity the highest in the UK.

Northern Ireland Electricity made a £75 million profit last year. Its chairman earned over £180,000.

Meanwhile the Tories are still trying to clamp down on wages.

While they talk about recognising the differences between Catholic and Protestant workers, they make sure that we are treated the same when it comes to making sacrifices.

## Tallaght Two win appeal

**JOSEPH Grogan and Joseph Meleady were wrongly sent to prison because of the actions of the Gardai. Although they served nine years between them, they still have not been awarded compensation.**

They were accused of robbing a car in Firhouse in 1984. The owner, Eamon Gavin, jumped on the bonnet and claimed he could identify them.

But it was a dark night and the car was speeding.

His evidence would not have been enough to convict them—if the Gardai had not helped.

For several years they hid the fact that Gavin had been shown photographs of the accused prior to an identity parade.

Even during the trial Gavin and one

Garda denied having seen photographs.

The Gardai also withheld vital fingerprint evidence that was important for the credibility of a defence witness.

### Quashing

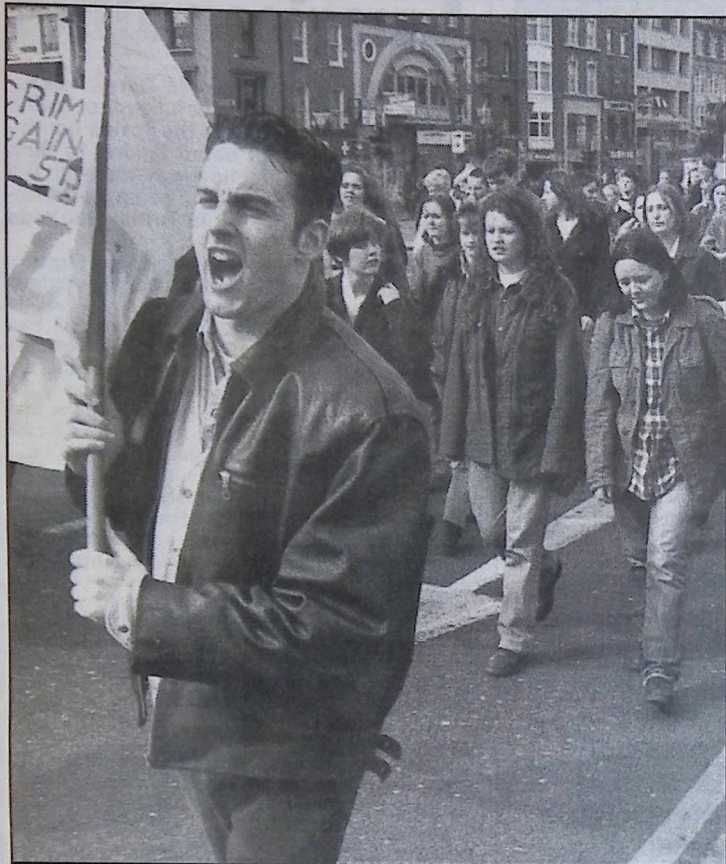
Despite quashing the sentences on the two men, the courts made no order for compensation.

But Eamonn Gavin has already been financially rewarded by the state for the injuries he received during the theft of his car.

## what we think

# Stagg whippers up racism

## PLC students march



EMMET STAGG is a disgrace. When he took part in a *Questions and Answers* programme, he tried to stir up anti-traveller racism.

Stagg claimed that wife beating was part of the traveller way of life. Not only did he support a court decision to order the adoption of a traveller boy by a settled family, he implied that

travellers were not fit parents to adopt children. Stagg was part of a panel which included the arch snob, Helen Lucy Burke. She earns a living by writing about high class

restaurants. But she had the cheek to claim that she came from a "superior culture" to travellers. Stagg did not contradict a word she said—but instead added his own piece of racist bile.

The truth is that domestic violence and child abuse is by no means confined to travellers. In recent survey, for example, one in eight Irish people claimed they suffered some form of physical and sexual abuse as children.

Yet travellers make up only a tiny proportion of the Irish population.

Stagg and Lucy Burke's statements will encourage groups of organised thugs who attack traveller caravans.

They show how anti-traveller racism reaches up to the very top of Irish society.

They help to explain why the evictions we report on page two are happening.

Last year, Stagg claimed that homeless was not problem in this country. It was, of course, a complete lie.

But if he had been doing more to provide decent accommodation for travellers and settled people, some of the frustrations that led to domestic violence might be lessened.

No socialist would argue that children should only be adopted by parents from the same ethnic group or race.

And, to be fair, this is only one view—and is not held by everyone in the Irish Traveller Movement.

But what the court case has revealed is blatant discrimination against considering travellers as suitable parents to adopt.

Stagg has added to this hysteria and that is why he should be removed from office.

## On the Navvie trail

MOST OF the European Union social legislation is full of high aspirations and does not translate into real changes in working conditions.

But even this rhetoric is too much for some governments.

The British Tories have long resisted the Social Charter which is supposed to limit the amount of hours worked.

Now the Irish Coalition government are going down the same road.

They have voted against a measure which would give workers who are posted abroad the standard wages prevailing in those countries.

Eithne Fitzgerald, from the Labour Party was put on the radio to explain this disgraceful decision.

Her answer: "it would add to the costs of Irish employers".

Take the building bosses. These sharks have been sending Irish workers to Germany and paying them a pittance.

They get Irish wages and are expected to pay German prices.

The Irish Labour Party want building workers to be treated like the navvies of old. They throw them out of the country because there are no jobs—then

they deny them even the hope of getting decent wages in European countries.

This is the reality behind Labour's embrace of Irish capitalism.

They should be ashamed of themselves.

## No soccer bans

THE decision to allow only 200 people from Northern Ireland attend the match in Lansdowne Rd with the Republic of Ireland was wrong.

It played into the hands of the Nazis who wrecked the Ireland-England match.

It makes mockery of the Southern government's claim to be seeking "parity of esteem". Far from encouraging greater unity on this island, it gives the idea that there are two tribes who cannot even share a football stadium with each other.

The best way to deal with fascist trouble on the terrace is not to limit the number of genuine fans who want to attend matches.

Instead the players and managers of the football teams in the North and sought should publicly endorse the Keep Racism off the Terraces campaign. They should distribute anti-Nazi literature at all matches. They should encourage their supporters to drown out the chants of sectarian and fascist thugs who want to wreck the game.

The best thing that people who detest the recent BNP activity on the terraces of Lansdowne road can do is to build for the upcoming march of the Anti-Nazi League which has been called under the slogan: Keep Ireland Nazi Free.

250 students from the Post Leaving Cert colleges demonstrated to the Dail on Thursday 23rd March to demand grants from the Government.

Despite the abolition of fees, the Coalition Government has done nothing for the 17,000 PLC students in the country. These students receive no grant aid whatsoever, facilities are poor to non-existent and they don't have third level status.

The Government are quite happy to increase the numbers in these colleges to 20,000 next year and give no extra facilities.

PLC colleges need to get organised and build for bigger and better demonstrations in the months ahead.

# A climate of repression

THE PRESS in Northern Ireland has condemned the gay group Outrage! for sending the former Popular Unionist MP, Jim Kildfедder, a letter urging him to publicly declare his homosexuality.

Sex, they claim, is a private matter and should be left private. This is gross hypocrisy

because, hidden behind the years of troubles in the North, is a climate of repression on sex.

It is precisely the Nationalist and Unionist politicians who try to stop people enjoying sex in their private lives.

All the North's politicians voted against lowering the age of consent for homosexuality in the British House of Commons.

Paisley even set up a Save Ulster from Sod-

omy campaign.

The religious fundamentalists in the RUC have also gone out of their way to make life a misery for gay men.

Almost every month, a handful are dragged before the courts on charges of "gross indecency" in the provincial towns of Northern Ireland.

The RUC lose no opportunity to get these men publicly named in

the courts and known in the local area.

Yet no newspaper has condemned this "outing" of individuals who choose to have sex with other consenting adults.

### Cover Up

The attacks on Outrage! are another attempt to cover up the hypocrisy that is rampant in Northern Ireland.

The attacks don't mean that Outrage! are

using the right tactic.

In fact, their whole campaign of 'outing' is counterproductive.

It is based on the idea people in high places can end prejudice.

But people like Jim Kildfедder who has voted Tory all his life has a vested interest in repression—whatever his own sexual orientation.

The 'revelations' of Outrage! are seized on

eagerly by a right-wing press who want to convey the idea that gays should be ashamed.

This climate in turn does not help working class people to come out and feel confident about their sexuality.

Instead of outing, gays and straight people should fight together to change the two rotten states in Ireland which have given bigots a field day for decades.

## DEATH ON BUILDING SITES

SIX BUILDING workers have been killed on construction sites in the Dublin area in the last 10 months.

Dublin's skyline has become crowded with cranes lately, an indication of the boom in the building industry.

Yet construction work has become increasingly dangerous with workers expected to operate complicated tools and machinery without adequate training.

According to a SIPTU spokesperson,

"Workers are literally taking their lives into their hands turning up for work on some sites."

"Building workers are extremely angry at the lack of concern for their safety."

The unions are demanding that construction bosses be forced to implement the terms of the 1990 Health and Safety Act which sets down standards for employers.

Eric Fleming, secretary for the Building Group of Unions said,

"We've had plenty of meetings but little change in practice....if this happened in any other industry there would be a public outcry with demands for a full scale enquiry."

The rate of fatalities in this industry is an outright disgrace.

Unions should start to take action to make real demands on the building barons before more workers are killed.

# GO FOR GROWTH

SOCIALIST Worker politics are getting a response throughout the country.

The Belfast branches have been working flat out to build support for the nurses.

They covered the town with posters advertising the Day of Action for the Nurses on March 30th.

Street meetings have been held, at which several new members joined up.

In Derry 40 people turned up to an SWM meeting on the attacks on United Technology workers. Two people joined afterwards.

### Branches

In Dublin new branches are being established around the town.

A Ringsend branch was set up last week and local estate sales proved a major success.

When UCD held an open day for secondary students, the Socialist Worker Student Society in the college set up a stall. Over 20 students signed up to join the organisation.

Meanwhile, the SWM is starting to spread its wings. Preparations are being made to establish branches in Donegal and Limerick.

In all 40 people joined the SWM in the last fort-

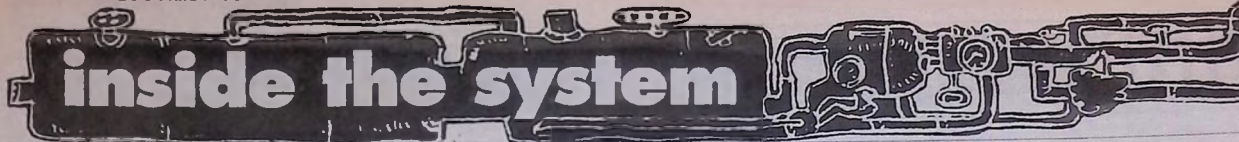
night.

A new pamphlet is being published to introduce ever larger numbers of people to the politics of the SWM.

For the first time in decades there is the prospect of a large and solid revolutionary socialist organisation in Ireland.

If you like the politics in this paper, then why not fill out the form on page 10 and get active.

**KEEP IRELAND NAZI-FREE**  
Anti Nazi League  
March  
Assemble 2.00pm  
Parnell Sq, Dublin  
Sat April 22nd



# inside the system

## THINGS THEY SAY

"[Cantona] kicked a foul-mouthed, racist low-life. He stood up for all players, particularly black, in Britain. He should get a medal."—Paddy Murray, in *The Star*.

"This isn't really about romance. It's strictly business ... about getting back on the front pages of every paper in America and making deals"—Millionaire casino owner Donald Trump who attended the *Cairde Sinn Fein* dinner in the US on why he is getting back together with his ex-wife.

★ **SUPERSTARS** Michael Jackson and Elizabeth Taylor are being chased by workers who haven't been paid for slaving on a celebrity TV party.

The workers claim that the Jacksons owe £1 million in wages and supplies following a lavish party thrown by the family.

"Enough is enough. The bottom line is we'd like to get paid," said workers' rep Gary Smith.

## Fianna Fail fundraising

FIANNA FAIL are proudly keeping up their title as party of the really rich. £1,000 each for the next three years to party funds.

The fundraising drive is being led by Jim Lacey, chair of the Irish Aviation Authority, and himself not unknown to have the odd glass of champers.

## Fight for Korean wages!

THE TORIES were delighted to announce that the South Korean multinational Daewoo was setting up in Antrim.

But now it has been revealed that the women workers at the plant are being paid less than their South Korean counterparts.

According to the Trade Minister Richard Needham "it is an extraordinary feat, this catch up by countries which were once in the Third World". Workers in South Korea have certainly fought for their rights.

Northern Ireland workers should also follow their example and get out of Third World conditions.

★ **NEW figures just released show that industrial pay rates are only rising by 2.3% with inflation at 3%. Workers are also working longer and are averaging 41 hours a week.**

## De Rossa's shame

HAS Prionsias De Rossa betrayed his class or is he just forgetting his lines?

Last year, the DL leader said that the absolute minimum that anyone could live on was at least £70 a week

- and that was before the 3 per cent price increases last year.

So this year Prionsias waltzes into government, proud as punch at getting the job of Minister for Social Welfare. And what

happens? Benefits go up by a miserly 2.5%, when Gross National Product is growing at over 6 per cent.

That leaves the basic social welfare rate at £62.50. Who says Prionsias can't add?

## Arklow Council's US junket

ARKLOW PEOPLE recently got an insight into the workings of their FF/FG controlled Urban Council.

The councillors voted to give £500 to their chairman Vincent McElheron for a trip to America,

while a plea from a 329 pupil national school for a waiver on water charges was turned down.

The waiver would only have cost £313.

And what is oh-so-important

junket does McElheron have to attend?

A two week invite by the Las Vegas Sons of Erin!!

Cllr. Nicky Kelly was the only one to express outrage at the decision.

Socialist Worker welcomes

## letters

PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

## Can we all opt out?

SO, THE new Abortion Information Bill has a clause permitting conscientious objection "by Doctors". Presumably, this means that a worker may refuse to carry out certain work tasks "on moral grounds".

Can we now look forward to the following:

Will legal and court workers be able to refuse to process papers leading to evictions from family homes, which involve babies, toddlers, children, parents and grandparents?

Will workers of companies who scab on strikes be able to refuse to staff the alternative workplace or service used in the scabbing operation?

Will all the above workers, and, indeed, many others, be granted the same immunity as the Doctors? Methinks not!

Politicians should not

get away with such selectivity, and blatant hypocrisy. Inserting "conscientious objection" clauses in legislation referring to foetuses, and not doing so in legislation which affects the life of the foetus from the time s/he is born, shows them up for the hypocrites they are.

MARGARET QUINN, CORK

## Education far from free!

EVERYONE has heard the phrase "Education is Free". But when you think about it, after all the new books and the new uniform, it's far from being free.

At the moment I'm in Transition Year. They say it's a 'year to mature' before the Leaving. Do we have to pay £75 to 'mature'?

Neither of my parents are working. Then there's the health system which is also supposed to be free.

My dad broke his leg around this time last year, and it's still broken now. Whenever he has an appointment to see the doctor, he just looks at his leg and sends him home with more painkillers.

JENNNY BYRNE, CLONDALKIN.

## Why do some women starve themselves?

SOME YOUNG women who should have everything to live for die from anorexia nervosa, the "slimming disease".

These are tragic and totally unnecessary deaths. Anorexia nervosa means the loss of appetite for nervous reasons but really amounts to people, mainly women, starving themselves in societies where there is plenty of food. Sufferers are obsessed with their weight and have a completely distorted view of their body size, imagining they are much larger than they are.

The results are horrendous, as they are with "Bulimia nervosa" - bingeing on food then inducing vomiting. The victims are mainly young women, but men are also affected.

They tend to be women because of the hideous images of how women are supposed to look that dominate our society, a society which judges individuals, especially women, as commodities, not human beings.

Women are assessed according to how far they live up to what the "ideal" is supposed to be - as shown in glossy adverts, images of supermodels, and newspaper "Slimming Specials", while on the next page encouraging us to eat junk food.

These pressures can make people unhappy for all their lives.

But as long as people are healthy and happy, why should they spend all their lives striving to attain some, supposedly perfect size and weight?

Anorexia and bulimia are obscene diseases created by the obscene pressures of the society we live in today. They are one more powerful argument to fight to change it.

KAREN MCLOUGHLIN, DUN LAOGHAIRE

## Killer Gas Off Coast

THE British Government has been dumping sealed containers of deadly gas off the Donegal coast.

The dumps include massive amounts of mustard gas and may also contain sarin, the deadly nerve gas which was used to kill 10 people in the Tokyo underground attack.

The containers are aboard two ships scuttled after the second world war 40 miles off the coast.

Subsequent Irish governments over the years have kept quiet about the containers.

Have you a story for Inside the System? If there is something you think we should all know about, send to **Socialist Worker, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Phone (01) 872 2682 Fax: (01) 872 3838**

# behind the headlines

by EAMONN McCANN

## Gerry Adams' American allies

REPUBLICANS responded to Gerry Adams' US visit last month with gleeful euphoria, and it's easy to see why. While the Tories continued to drag their feet about talking to Sinn Fein, Adams was hail-fellow-well-met with Bill Clinton in the White House. The impotent anger of Major and the rabid British tabloids was a joy to behold.

To Republicans, there were also practical benefits from the US visit. Dollars can be expected to flow into party coffers now that Sinn Fein can fund-raise openly among Irish-Americans. The party's image has been polished and may appeal more to Irish voters as a result of its president being presented as a respectable international figure. Acceptance in Washington has been seen as strengthening their hand in negotiations with the NIO.

All this is on the positive side for people who want to build a conventional, mainstream, pro-capitalist party. But for people in the Republican Movement who regard themselves as socialists, or who see their fight as part of the broad struggle of the dispossessed everywhere against oppression and exploitation, the news pictures from the US should have been deeply disturbing.

The lunch at which Gerry Adams first shook hands with Clinton was hosted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich. He's the leader of the "New Right" which swept the Congressional elections last November on the basis of a "Contract with America" reflecting the moral priorities of fundamentalist bigots. The "contract" includes: throwing women and children off welfare after two years; stopping all payments to any family headed by an unwed mother under 18 or to children whose father is unknown; dropping all the anti-hunger programmes won by mass struggles in the '60s and '70s, including food stamps and free school lunches for poor children; abolition of the minimum wage; the denial of medical treatment and welfare to millions of immigrants and their children.

## Racists

Gingrich's New Right is also determined to dump affirmative-action programmes designed to reverse discrimination against women, blacks and gays.

Gingrich only agreed to have Adams to lunch after an intensive lobbying campaign which involved persuading extremist reactionaries across the country to contact the Speaker's office and urge that an invitation be issued. From New York to California, racists, homophobes, anti-woman zealots and warriors against the poor were enlisted to ensure that the Sinn Fein president was on the guest-list.

It goes without saying

that this gallery of gargoyles includes those who cheer on Indonesia's genocide against the people of East Timor, who were most gung-ho for arming the Contras, who support the blockade against Cuba, who roared their approval for the slaughter of the Gulf War.

Possibly the most remarkable aspect of this operation has been the absence of even a single voice of dissent from within the Republican Movement—or from the "progressives" who cluster around its fringes.

The only argument put forward is along the lines that you sometimes have to "sup with the devil" ... These guys might be evil bastards, but they have power and influence and if we can get them on "our" side, on "our" issue, it makes sense to use them. This doesn't necessarily compromise our politics...

## Appeal

The spurious nature of this argument came across loud and clear in Gerry Adams' response to an appeal for support from the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organisation. The ILGO had been banned from taking part in the St. Patrick's Day march in New York and then refused permission to hold its own protest march two hours before the main parade. They asked Adams to support their right to hold the protest march.

Adams' response, printed in the *Irish Voice* was, in full: "I would hope the Irish-American community would be all-inclusive and all-enveloping on this and that we would look for equality of treatment for everyone". As Maire Crowe commented in the *Sunday Tribune*, this "dusty answer" ... merely underlined the negligible support that the ILGO gets from the wider Irish-American community".

Adams couldn't give explicit support to Irish gays' right to protest because it is precisely the people who were denying them their rights that the Sinn Fein strategy in the US depends on.

What have supporters of gay liberation in and around the Republican Movement in Ireland to say about this?

The SWM isn't anti-American. We are happy to make common cause with American people ... the millions of people fighting against what Gingrich represents.

As many Republicans themselves used to say once upon a time ... One world, one struggle.

# around the world

## Mexico's 'shock therapy'

THE MEXICAN government announced on March 9 a "shock therapy" plan more stringent than anything previously contemplated.

The value-added tax, which hits the poor the hardest, would be increased by 50 percent. Petrol prices are to be raised by 35 percent.

With inflation currently running at 50 percent, a 10 percent minimum wage increase will hardly be noticed by most Mexicans.

The austerity package received backing from U.S. business and financial leaders who sponsored the £30 billion international bailout plan President Clinton engineered in February.

The austerity package is the price ordinary Mexicans are being asked to pay for the crimes of their leaders.

Already, as many as 250,000 workers have lost their jobs in the economic crisis, which came to a head when the peso's value plunged in December.

The economic crisis has sharpened the political crisis at both the top and bottom of Mexican society.

At the top of society, the thieves in the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) are turning on each other.

by LANCE SELFA

On March 2, Mexican authorities arrested the brother of former President Carlos Salinas, Raul.

Prosecutors charged him with masterminding the assassination of Ruiz Masieu, the PRI's deputy leader, last September.

The crisis descended into

farce when Carlos Salinas moved into the house of a supporter in Monterrey and began a hunger strike to protest at attacks on his "reputation."

Many people want Carlos Salinas prosecuted for his role in bringing about Mexico's economic debacle.

In a non-binding Febru-

ary referendum conducted by the Civic Alliance, a coalition of election watchdog groups, more than 80 percent of the 350,000 people who voted said Salinas should be put on trial.

The Mexican Prime Minister, Zedillo is hoping the prosecution of Raul Salinas will win back some public support.



Members of the Zapatista National Liberation Army

## Bosses split on Zapatistas

BUT THE root of the fight in the PRI goes much deeper than Zedillo's electoral standing.

Mexico's bosses are also split on how to respond to the Zapatista uprising and to popular demands for greater democracy.

On March 9, the country's assembly approved a bill granting amnesty to Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) combatants if they surrender their arms.

This followed only a

month after Zedillo unleashed the army to crush the uprising and to arrest its leaders.

Zedillo's hard line brought forth an outpouring of protest throughout Mexico.

### Crush

But while Zedillo backed away from his hard-line rhetoric, the army has continued a "low-intensity" war in Chiapas, attempting to encircle and to crush the EZLN.

Hundreds of cases of

army torture and murder of Indian civilians have been reported.

The government has moved an estimated 7,000 peasants from the pro-government National Confederation of Peasants (CNC) onto lands formerly occupied by peasants sympathetic to the EZLN.

Working hand-in-glove with the reactionary Chiapas landowners, the army expelled thousands of peasants from lands they had occupied after the EZLN's uprising.

Until now, the Zapatistas have refused government "peace" overtures.

The EZLN does not have the military strength to hold out against a sustained offensive that involves the Mexican and Guatemalan armies (and U.S. advisers).

### Secret

But the Zapatistas are hoping—and Mexico's bosses are fearing—that the economic crisis in the rest of Mexico will undermine the government's ability to suppress them.

A secret memo prepared for Chase Manhattan Bank in January, recognised this threat:

"The Mexican monetary crisis...raises the issue of whether or not the Mexican working class will accept a prolonged period of wage losses and diminished living standards"

The memo's author, John Roett, urged the bank to pressure Zedillo to crack down on the EZLN and Mexican workers.

Already, two major unofficial strikes—at the TDK and RCA/Thomson plants

in the Juarez tax free zone for multi-nationals—won wage increases above those negotiated by the pro-government unions.

Employers in nearby plants closed their factory gates to prevent strikers from influencing their own workers.

Mexico today is a tinderbox. As Jesus Navarro, a marcher in a March 8 anti-government protest in Mexico City told Reuters:

"The people are against the government. We want a Zapatista administration led by Marcos and his comrades from Chiapas.

"Chiapas was first to rebel, but all the other states will follow."

## TURKEY'S REIGN OF TERROR



Turkish troops in Kurdistan

ON TUESDAY the 20th of March Turkey launched a massive military invasion of Kurdish areas in Northern Iraq.

35,000 troops poured over the border after they received a nod and wink from the NATO generals who operate in the area.

They bombed villages, smashed up property, arrested and beat villagers and are currently deporting prisoners to Turkey.

Not one member of the Kurdistan Workers Party, the PKK, has been taken alive.

Reporters who have tried to go near the area have been attacked and their films have

been confiscated. That the civilian population would suffer in this invasion was inevitable.

### Suffering

In the past Turkish ministers have claimed that Iraqi Kurdish political groups were actively engaged in guerrilla warfare.

They see the ordinary people as the enemy and do not discriminate between them and members of the PKK who are waging a war.

Kurds living inside Turkey have been suffering similarly for years. Arrests, torture and executions go on apace, villages

are regularly raided by soldiers and crops have been bombed. Two million Kurds living in the conflict zone in Turkey have been forced to flee their homes in the last ten years.

Human rights groups and organisations concerned with the struggle for an independent Kurdistan have detailed lists of atrocities.

Turkey has one of the worst civil rights records in the world. Socialists and other political activists are frequently arrested and jailed. Editors of *Socialist Worker's* sister paper in Turkey have been fined heavily for reporting on the atrocities.

Kurdish MPs in Turkey's Parliament have been arrested

and one of Turkey's best known writers, Yashar Kemal, is on trial for speaking out.

The country's economy is in a shambles with mounting debt and an official unemployment rate of over 20%.

Like many a country in the same situation, its leaders target a minority as a diversionary tactic.

The manner in which they brag about the operation on-going in Iraq is proof in itself that it is a nationalistic attempt to bolster morale as well as a determination to brutally smash any opposition to the state.

The Turkish Prime Minister, Tansu Ciller, is now talking about setting up a "Security belt," along the border. She has given no indication as to how long the Turkish army intends to carry on this savage campaign.

They will try to stay as long as they can. They have no reason to fear any interference from either the EU or the US.

At the end of the Gulf War the US led allies partitioned Iraq because they said they needed "safe havens" to protect the Kurds.

Now these safe havens have been turned into terror zones. US warplanes, which still patrol the skies, have given intelligence information to the Turkish army.

It shows why an imperialist army should never be trusted by anyone who wants national freedom.

For more information and messages of solidarity contact: Kurdistan Information Centre 10 Lower Camden St Dublin.

## Italy: Fascists bomb gypsy children



TWO YOUNG gypsy children were badly injured in mid-March by a bomb in the Italian city of Pisa.

A motorist gave a booby-trapped doll to Sengu Demirowska (13) and her three year old brother, Emran. When the girl opened the package it exploded, injuring her legs and arms. The blast blew off the boys right hand. Doctors have said that he may also lose the sight in his left eye.

A group calling itself *White Brotherhood* subsequently claimed responsibility for the attack. One man, Emanuele Caso (19) has been arrested in connection with the attack. A search of Caso's home unearthed guns, knives, explosives, fascist insignia and a poster of Mussolini.

Reports in the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* have linked Caso to a neo-Nazi group called *Ludwig* which orientates on the soccer team, Fiorentina.

The bomb is part of a growing number of attacks across Italy on immigrants and gypsies. In January, fascists left a booby trapped children's book of fairy-tales outside a gypsy camp in Pisa. A five year old boy lost a hand in the subsequent explosion.

Over 800,000 gypsies died in fascist concentration camps during the Second World War. They were used as a scapegoat for the ills of society.

Today's fascists are trying to stir up anti-gypsy feeling in Italy. But they are meeting with huge opposition.

Shortly after the attack, over 1,000 people shouting 'fascists out, gypsies stay' took part in a protest march through the centre of Pisa.

# Can the courts deal with rape?

by GER TUOHY

**THE DECISION by the Court of Criminal Appeal to reduce the sentence of the rapist in the X case from 14 to four years caused universal outrage and disgust.**

Anyone with an ounce of human feeling sympathised with the horrors experienced by the girl in the X case: from the age of twelve she was sexually abused by a family friend; she became pregnant as a result of rape; she was injuncted from travelling to Britain for an abortion; her personal trauma has become one of the most talked-about issues in Ireland.

**To add final insult to all her injuries, her rape has been trivialised by last month's court decision. With full remission her rapist will be released in two years time.**

Judge O'Flaherty maintained that it was not a case of "out and out rape" because there was "no force or duress used".

In his eyes, in order to be credible a rape victim needs also to have broken bones and bruises.

Instead, the court found him guilty of no more than "a breach of trust".

The judges showed more sympathy and understanding for the rapist than the victim.

They claimed that he had "suffered grievously... had lost his business and therefore his livelihood... he had surfaced from humble origins to a position of some affluence".

**This implies that he would have got a longer sentence if he were a young unemployed man and that the destruction of the girl's normal life counts for nothing.**

The reduction in sentence is an outright insult to women, telling them that rape is less significant than theft of property.

## Abused

Two weeks before this ruling a 22-year old drug user was jailed for five years for his part in a robbery which netted £4,610.

A month earlier, a hand-bag thief was also jailed for five years.

Victims will be scared to report rape or sexual assault because they will be further abused by the legal process.

**Only 5% of confirmed cases of child sexual assault end in prosecution.**

The judges' attitudes shouldn't come as a huge surprise.

Judges come from wealthy, elite families, are

educated in private schools, lead privileged lives removed from the experiences of ordinary people and are political appointees of Fianna Fail or Fine Gael.

In the past Judge O'Flaherty represented SPUC in the abortion information action against a number of students.

*Fergus Flood, one of the other judges in the case allowed Lavinia Kerwick's rapist go scot-free three years ago.*

In the aftermath of the X case judgement numerous women's groups have demanded a review of sentencing policy and a change in court attitudes.

**But this case shows that the courts can never offer any solution to crimes like rape.**

The legal system reflects and reinforces all the inequalities and injustices in wider society.

*Calls for higher sentencing for rapists or any criminal is dangerous because it dove-tails with the right-wing view of crime.*

This view sees crime as the sole responsibility of the individual perpetrator and not the society that breeds it and that continuously portrays women as passive sex objects.

**Under the guise of concern for women, right-wing politicians like Nora Owen and Liz O'Donnell try to whip up a law and order hysteria.**

Nora Owen is currently trying to restrict the right to bail and the right to silence even in petty crimes.

Punitive measures offer no solution to crimes like rape which have their roots deep within the nature of society.

## Racism

This is most obvious in the U.S. where the maximum sentence for rape, the death penalty, does not prevent rape.

**Instead, because punishment is never administered in a neutral way, the racism of U.S. society means that black men are seven times more likely to be executed for rape than white men.**

The justified anger over the X Case judgement reflects the huge change in Irish women's expectations.

It would be disastrous if that anger was deflected into a law and order drive rather than fighting for women's rights.

# LABOUR AND DEMOCRATIC



**When Dick Spring faces the Labour Party conference in Limerick this year he can feel confident that there will be little open opposition to his policies.**

Yet Labour Ministers are despised by many of those who voted for them in 1992 and opinion polls show that the Labour vote is slipping to nearly half of its level at that time.

Labour voters have plenty of reasons to be angry.

■ The first budget of a Labour Minister, Ruairi Quinn, was dubbed "Ruairi's bourgeois budget" by the *Sunday Tribune* because of the number of tax breaks it gave to stockbrokers, big farmers, bankers and the owners of service industry.

■ The Labour Minister for the Environment, Brendan Howlin, is campaigning inside the government for the right to disconnect the water from those who have refused to pay their service charges.

■ The Labour Minister for Education, Niamh Breathnach, is refusing to give grants to the 17,000 PLC students who come from predominantly working class backgrounds.

At the same time, she has done nothing to reduce the subsidies that are given to private schools.

There will be little opposition to these strategies simply because the traditional left wing of the Labour Party has collapsed.

Five years ago figures such as Michael D Higgins and Emmet Stagg spoke against

Coalitions with right wing parties.

## Co-Opt

But in the late 1980s, Spring managed to smash the harder left in the Labour Party.

The Labour Party and Democratic Left are holding annual conferences in 1992, they returned the number of left wing TDs to Dail Eireann. But now that at a time when disillusion is growing among their supporters. Here KIERA looks at their record.

# Will they

# Democratic Left: From Poacher to Gamekeeper

**DEMOCRATIC Left claims to be a more radical party than the Labour Party.**

Its leader Prounsias de Rossa says that "The social democratic (labour) model is in as much crisis in Europe as the communist model". He wants to build a new style left wing party.

But there is little sign of this in the new government. De Rossa, who is the Minister for Social Welfare, gave the lowest all-round increase in benefits in thirty years.

Liz McManus, is the DL Junior Minister for Housing presides over a crisis in Dublin where the Eastern Health Board is spending £500,000 a year in putting families into B+B accommodation.

In Opposition, the party had a long record of attacking hypocritical "Irish solutions to Irish problems". But it failed to criticise Noonan's Regulation of Information Bill which brings in new forms of censorship.

Today Democratic Left is as committed to running Irish capitalism as the Labour Party. For many years the leaders of Democratic left argued that the former USSR and East Germany were "socialist countries" where the planned economy brought benefits to working people.

But after the truth about these countries was revealed in 1989 the party did an about turn and embraced Western capitalism.

This coincided with a sharp

He set out to co-opt the soft left by offering them Ministerial positions in order to shut them up.

However the collapse of the left is also due to their own poverty of ideas.

They see no alternative to the

decrease in involvement in workers' struggles. In 1991, DL leaders supported an all-Party Dail statement denouncing an ESB workers strike. When TEAM workers were fighting to defend their conditions, Eamonn Gilmore urged them to accept management's package.

## Attacking

No wonder one Democratic Left branch has submitted a resolution to its conference attacking the idea that the party should be overly associated with the impoverished!

This shift means that the *Sunday Tribune's* political correspondent Olivia O'Leary could recently claim that "on many economic issues, DL

# RATIC LEFT IN COALITION

## Coalition disasters

The present Coalition is no different to all recent Coalitions.  
**1973-1977: Labour-Fine Gael:** Unemployment shoots up from 71,435 to 115,942. Government tries to postpone equal pay in public sector. Labour Ministers support the establishment of a Garda "Heavy Gang" to wring confessions out of suspects.

**1981-82: Labour-Fine Gael:** Government introduces a major programme of cuts. Falls because it seeks to put a tax on children's shoes. Labour leader Michael O Leary leaves party to join Fine Gael.

**1982-87: Labour-Fine Gael:** Spring sends in Gardai to break ESB workers strike in Cork. Labour health Minister, Desmond, introduce savage cuts into the hospitals. Three major unions threaten to disaffiliate from Labour over its performance.

**1992-1994: Labour-Fianna Fail:** Spring defends the sale of Irish passports to wealthy millionaires. Labour Ministers back up the TEAM management in their attack on workers. Labour accepts a white wash report on the Goodman scandal and then agrees to appoint its author, Liam Hamilton, as Chief Justice.

our Party and  
 left are holding their  
 erences in April. In  
 returned the highest  
 ft wing TDs ever to  
 But now they meet  
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 their record.

# Why have they failed?

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market.

Today all sections of the Labour Party accept the priority is to make Irish capitalism work.

They have no real argument with Ruairi Quinn when he says that government intervention must "foster and develop an en-

terprise culture rather than a dependency culture".

This is code for saying that scarce resources must be channelled to the business class while levels of social welfare must be cut back so that workers are forced to accept lower wages.

In reality this an adaptation to the politics that were promoted by the Tories in Britain in the 1980s.

### Survive

Quinn even claims that there will be no jobs created "unless investors have confidence in the way that government manages its own affairs".

Irish capitalism, however, is weak and has always had to depend on government subsidies.

It has to survive in a world system which is more crisis ridden than ever and where money rapidly switches across the globe in pursuit of the fastest buck.

All Labour Parties try to win a base among workers by expressing concern for poverty and unemployment.

But once they get into office they are forced to turn on their own supporters in order to make their national capitalism competitive.

If the Irish Labour Party is more weak-kneed than its counterparts in Europe, it is only because the national capitalism it champions is weaker.

feels perfectly at home with Fine Gael".

In the past many voted DL because they wanted a more left wing alternative to Labour. But the party's entry into Coalition has removed all pretence of radicalism.

There is now a real question over the future of the party. A grouping around Rabbitte and Gilmore are already hinting that the future lies in a merger with the Labour Party.

Former left wingers in the Labour Party have also tabled a motion at their conference to open up merger talks with DL.

Up to now the party leader, de Rossa, has resisted these moves. He claims that DL was established to combine parliamentary activity with a campaigning strategy which makes it different to Labour.

But it is impossible to campaign for change outside the Dail when the party has Ministers in a government that presses for more attacks on working people.

The reality is that DL offers no distinct alternative in Irish politics. If it survives, it will move further to the right to operate as the conscience of Fine Gael.

## Building an alternative

THE Labour Party and Democratic Left have moved dramatically to the right.

But many of their former supporters are moving to the left.

This means there is a huge vacuum that can be filled by genuine socialists.

The mistake of the left wing of the Labour party and Democratic Left was to seek electoral change. They thought that power lay in parliament. When they found out that big business dictated to parliament, they bowed to its demands.

The new left of the 1990s has to adopt a different road. Instead of concentrating on building an electoral base, it has to be geared towards organising and supporting workers struggles.

Rather than seeking socialism from above, it has to build it from below. This means building the confidence and fighting ability of workers by stressing solidarity and militancy.

It also means declaring openly that revolution—the full uprooting of capitalism rather than piece meal reform—is its goal.

## what do socialists say?

### How can capitalism be ended? by CONOR KOSTICK

**UNLESS workers set out to break the power of big business through a revolt from below, little real change will take place.**

Politicians can make speeches in Dail Eireann and even pass a few progressive laws but these can be undermined.

Money can be withdrawn from the country, capital can be shifted to different sectors of the economy, the press can be used to campaign against changes.

A socialist society would have to rely on the activity of thousands of workers who have taken control of their factories and offices.

First, it would carry through the wholesale redistribution of wealth.

In Ireland, today the top 10% of households have 42% of the wealth.

### Wealthy

Ownership of the banks and big business would be taken out of the hands of the few wealthy individuals.

Parts of overlarge houses would be allocated to the homeless and families living in overcrowded conditions.

The exclusive private clubs, country estates, special private hospitals which the rich now use could be changed to serve general social need.

Luxury restaurants and hotels could be turned into centres for relaxation for the mass of the population.

Second, a socialist society would cut down on the levels of waste, inefficiency and duplication in the capitalist economy.

Resources that were wasted on arms spending would be immediately re-directed to hospitals or education.

The millions spent on advertising and 'marketing' would be cut back to allow a greater emphasis on the quality of products.

Instead of a massive bureaucracy which tries to supervise the activities of ordinary people, a workers government would rely on initiatives from below to expose shop floor levels of waste or ecologically dangerous output.

Third, it would take measures to overcome the basic alienation that most people feel at work.

It could not make the boring humdrum jobs instantly enjoyable but it could ensure that workers committees take on more and more of the organisation of production.

It would ensure that there is a point to work by producing objects that are useful to society.

This in turn would lead to a higher quality of output being produced in fewer hours (so allowing a shorter working week) and less need for external forms of discipline as workers who control production would collectively discipline themselves.

These type of measures make possible a more decisive transition to socialism. Instead of an economy being geared to a relentless drive for profit, it could start to be re-organised to promote the welfare of society as a whole.

This would involve the gradual suppression of the market and its replacement by a form of democratic planning.

Society as a whole, through workers councils would have to be drawn into a discussion on what are the key priorities for production and where resources need to be allocated.

This process offers immense benefits over market mechanisms.

Diseases like AIDs would be cured quicker if research institutions cooperated rather than competed against each other.

Similarly planning could make an immense difference to the preservation (and repair) of the environment.

### Transport

Planning for society as a whole would mean the provision of more free services. There is no reason why people should have to pay for public transport.

It is a form of discrimination against workers who already add an hour or so to their working day by travelling long distances.

Similarly many forms of art and culture should not be restricted to the few because of exorbitant ticket prices.

Society as a whole can pay for these services through its general labour.

Conventional economists scoff at this and claim that it encourages waste.

But look at the situation with water today.

Water is free, yet people don't leave their taps on or keep their baths full to make sure they're getting as much of it as they can.

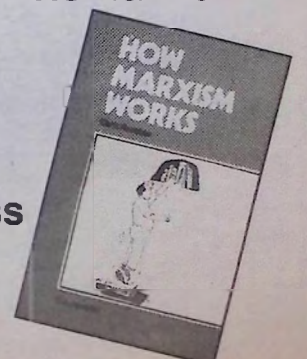
A society which was producing the goods that people wanted would have no difficulty in organising distribution fairly.

## How Marxism Works

by Chris Harman

The best beginners' guide to all the basic ideas of Marxism—economics, history socialism and the class struggle.

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# 75 YEARS SINCE: Irish workers greatest strike

by CONOR  
KOSTICK

**COULD THERE** ever be a revolution in Ireland? The events surrounding a massive general strike seventy five years ago showed just how close this country came to one.

Ireland at the time was in the midst of an enormous upheaval, as the British authorities unleashed the Black and Tans in a desperate attempt to prevent the country gaining its Independence.

The prisons had filled with victims of persecution, many of them socialists and trade union organisers in the front of protests against British rule.

On April 5th, 1920, sixty-six of these prisoners in Mountjoy, Dublin, decided to begin a hunger strike to highlight the fact that some of them were being held without charge.

As word of the hunger strike spread, crowds began to assemble outside the prison to shout their support.

Each day the numbers grew, until 40,000 people were packed on the streets around the prison.

The British deployed hundreds of soldiers and some armoured cars to prevent the crowd breaking in.

Matters were reaching a crisis point. Rank and file trade unionists across the country urged their leaders to act in support of the hunger strikers.

Realising that they had to act, the National Executive of the Irish Labour and Trade Union Congress sent telegrams around the country announcing a stoppage.

An emergency manifesto was sent to the *Evening Telegraph*.

The strike began with rail workers refusing to move a single train after 4.30pm on Monday 13th April, the only exception being for the mail train carrying the instructions from

the National Executive.

As the news arrived, workers in town after town joined the strike with incredible speed and determination. In preparation for an extended stoppage, worker's committees began the organisation of food supply.

Local Town Councils in many towns handed over the use of the municipal buildings to the worker's committees.

Very quickly economic and political issues were raised in the strike.

## Dispersed

Soon reports started to come in to Dublin on the effectiveness of the action. The Cavan secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (forerunner of SIPTU) sent this telegram:

*"Wire received 6pm; meeting held, strike agreed upon. Tuesday—Cattle fair dispersed; shops closed, protest meeting held; resolution of protests passed; Red flags and mottoes. Workers demand release of all Irish prisoners prominently displayed. GPO closed 12 noon, pickets posted, mass meeting, all union decide continue strike; strike committee formed; Town Hall commandeered as headquarters; Permits issued."*

ITGWU secretaries sent similar reports from all over Ireland. In many towns the workers took complete control.

The Russian Revolution, just three years beforehand, made a powerful impact.

One Sinn Fein writer complained



Internees released from jail

that "Never was a country so devoutly Catholic—yet the enthusiasm for Bolshevism was overwhelming."

In several areas strikers announced that a worker's soviet was being established.

In Tralee, for example, an ITGWU secretary reported that the trades council was turned into a worker's council which took full control of everything:

## Suspended

*"We had our own police who kept order and saw that business was suspended, issued permits for*

*everything required. Pickets patrolled streets. In fact workers controlled all"*

Bagnalstown added the following to their report:

*"On the second day of the strike we held a public meeting on the Market square and publicly proclaimed the establishment of a Provisional Soviet government to police this town to keep order and ration out food supplies."*

A journalist was in Killmallock, East Limerick when the strike started:

*"I made a visit to the local Town Hall—commandeered for the pur-*

*pose of issuing permits—and was struck by the absolute recognition of the soviet system—in deed if not in name.*

*"At one table sat a school teacher dispensing bread permits, at another a trade union official controlling the flour supply—at a third a railwayman controlling coal, at a fourth a creamery clerk distributing butter tickets ... all working smoothly"*

Another reporter from the *Manchester Guardian* was shocked by the experience:

*"In most places the police abdicated, and the maintenance of order was taken over by the local Worker's Councils ... In fact, it is no exaggeration to trace a flavour of the proletarian dictatorship about some aspects of the strike."*

## Stunned

The authorities were stunned by the action.

The police and military were helpless to intervene in the face of such a massive movement.

They concentrated on guarding Mountjoy to prevent it being stormed—an action which would have certainly ushered in a very different revolution to that aimed at by Sinn Fein.

Lord French, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was stricken with panic and contacted his top civil servants.

At a hasty meeting they decided to selectively release some prisoners in order to head the movement off.

But after only a few hours, as reports of the militancy flooded in, Lord French did an about-turn.

The British empire, the strongest superpower of the day was on its knees.

They could not crush the general strike and so released all the hunger strikers unconditionally. British authority had been routed and would never recover.

# The aborted revolution

THE EXHILARATION and confidence that came from the strike remained as high as ever. It could be built on—as was proven over the next two years when revolutionary socialists were able to organise further soviets and take-overs of factories.

But the soviets that sprang up during the general strike did not last after the return to work.

The reason is that the people leading the working class movement had no intention of bringing about a revolution along the lines of that of the Russian workers.

Thomas Johnson, William O'Brien and the other leaders of the Irish Labour and Trade Union Congress were good at using left wing rhetoric—and then making abject compromises.

They claimed that they supported the ideals of the Russian revolution but in reality they wanted to play a part in an independent capitalist Ireland.

As the left wing republican leader Peadar O'Donnell later wrote: "They wanted to get on the 'prompter's stool' and act as advisors to Sinn Fein".

Since 1918 they had been conducting close talks with the leaders of Sinn Fein, and indeed had helped draw up the constitution

of the First Dail. The dramatic actions of the workers threatened that arrangement.

Not only were the British authorities challenged, but also the Irish business class.

The labour leaders began to dampen down militancy and spread pessimism about the power of workers.

## Shift

Their paper drew the following conclusions from the struggle:

*"A word of warning is necessary. A general strike in Ireland alone won't bring freedom, won't even bring down a Government.*

*"For an industrial object a general strike in Ireland won't embarrass the British government overmuch."*

This shift away from militancy and towards Sinn Fein meant that the labour leaders had little to say to Protestant workers in

the North.

These were torn in their loyalties. A four week general strike in Belfast the year before had resulted in the city being taken over by a strike committee of both Protestant and Catholic workers.

If the War of Independence had been turned into a fight for a workers republic, thousands of Protestants workers could have been won to the struggle. The radical socialist Sam Kyle stood for councillor in the Shankill area and topped the poll in 1920 on just such a platform.

But the more the movement for Independence was led by Sinn Fein, the more alienated were Protestant workers from it.

The tragedy of the whole stormy period from 1917-1923 is that Ireland had no revolutionary socialist party. With Connolly's death in 1916 the revolutionary left were very small and disorganised.

As a result the largest ever display of Irish working class militancy shook British authority, but did not achieve an even deeper and much needed socialist revolution.



Labour leader Thomas Johnson arrested in a raid on Liberty Hall



## COMMENT

## What is behind the currency crisis?

LIKE MOST people, I reach for the off button on the remote control at the slightest mention of the phrase 'money markets'.

Lately, however, I've begun to take much more of an interest. It's not just my fascination with the fact that a sleazy yuppie like Nick Leeson had access to hundreds of millions of pounds and made hundreds of people unemployed.

No, my interest is due to the fact that through no fault of their own anyone with a mortgage is being crucified by increased interest repayments.

Much of the gobbledygook surrounding the money markets is a deliberate attempt to hide from us mere mortals what is really going on.

So here is the *Socialist Worker* 'all you ever wanted to know about the money markets but couldn't be bothered to ask' guide.

The crisis is due to the fact that the German economy is coming out of recession. At the same time Sterling weakened against the Deutschmark (DM) because of the political uncertainty surrounding John Major.

### Parasites

As a result, the striped-shirted parasites who play the markets were presented with a perfect opportunity to make (even more) money.

They began buying Deutschmarks in volume. They hoped to take so much money out of the Irish economy (among others) and invest it in the DM that the government would be forced to devalue.

Devaluation means that ordinary people can buy less with the pound in their pockets.

This type of shady-dealing, doesn't just go on in London and Wall Street. You can bet your bottom Dollar that every major Irish bank and company availed of this opportunity to make a quick buck.

During the 1992 currency crisis, Irish institutions accounted for nearly half of the speculation against the Punt, one major bank even boasted while advertising its pension plan that it had been the first to begin speculating.

All talk of patriotism and the national interest goes out the window when the bosses can

make a financial killing. You'd almost feel sorry for Ruairi Quinn. There he was, so desperate to show capitalism that he can be trusted that in his first budget he gave £1.50 a week to pensioners and £35 million to the banks, yet his friends in the business community kick him in the teeth at the first opportunity.

The markets had Quinn by the proverbial short and curlies. 40% of Ireland's exports go to Britain, and a similar percentage to Europe.

The speculators gambled that with the price of the punt rising against sterling those industries which rely on Britain and which couldn't sell their goods in Britain as they became more expensive would scream blue murder. It worked in 1992.

### Determined

However, Quinn is so determined that Ireland will be part of a Single European Currency (which will mean huge profits for big business) that he is prepared to turn a blind eye to the threat to jobs caused by parity with sterling.

In 1992 the currency crisis was caused by the recession in Europe. Today it is due to economic recovery. The crisis, and the higher interest rates it produced, will slow economic recovery. And as a result the cycle will emerge again, and again, and again. The market really is the economics of the mad-house.

As we go to press, the currency speculation has eased. This is being portrayed as a vindication of Quinn's policy. It has more to do with luck and the fact that the speculators were content (for the moment) with forcing the Spanish and Portuguese to devalue.

It might be two days, two months or two years but there will be another currency crisis in the near future. As usual it will be ordinary people who will suffer the consequences.

The government has wasted hundreds of millions of pounds in buying its own currency to stop the speculators getting their hands on it, interest rates may increase further and thousands of jobs are on the line.

This madness will go on for as long as the lunatics control the asylum.

— JASON McELLIGOTT

## FILM

# The sham of a celibate priesthood

RUTH O'CONNOR  
review the film  
*Priest*

**PRIEST is an excellent movie. It is provocative and powerful. The script writer Jimmy McGovern and the director Antonia Bird are two socialists who are not afraid to deal with the contradictions and ambiguities of people's lives.**

The film is set in a working class community in Liverpool. A young, well-spoken, conservative priest, called Father Greg (played by Linus Roache) arrives and from the start has difficulties adapting to his new surroundings.

The people of the community don't seem too impressed by this new priest's holier-than-thou approach. He tries to do "home visits" until he's told to "piss off" by the locals often enough.

He also has initial problems with the priest, Father Matthew, with whom he has to share a house. AND he has problems facing up to his own sexuality.

Father Matthew is played by Tom Wilkinson. We warm to his character immediately. He's socially and politically aware, and also seems to be really human!

He's a bolder, more worldly man and a dab-hand at karaoke nights. He doesn't hide the fact that he lives with a woman—his "house-keeper", played by *Mona Lisa* star, Cathy Tyson.

When the locals discover Fr Greg is actually gay, they

reject him and don't want him to take part in their church anymore. Father Greg's fitness coach, Charlie, is incredulous and astounded when he finds out. "You never told me you were queer. We even had a shower together"

### Hypocrite

But it is the Bishop who is the real hypocrite. Any time we actually see "his holi-

ness", he is surrounded by sterling silverware and heavy duty mahogany furniture. He tells Father Greg, "The best thing you can do is piss off out of this community". The only central character who welcomes Father Greg's sexuality is his house-mate priest, Father Matthew.

Antonia Bird produces one of the most convincing portrayals of male homosexual love I've ever seen on screen. She ensures that

nearly all viewers feel the passion and wonderful intensity between the two lovers.

But she also manages to inject just the right amount of humour—and at crucial moments—to literally change a viewer's emotions in a flash from tears to laughter.

Towards the end of the film we see Father Greg banished to an old religious retirement house and he's in the company of one of the

nastiest, crankiest, and repulsive characters we meet in this movie.

He insists on speaking to Father Greg in Latin and chaperoning him anytime there is a male visitor.

So, when good old Father Matthew comes to visit and after they've finished a bottle the finest malt, they pretend to have sex, panting like mad ... and loudly and REALLY shock this nasty old codger.

You actually feel the mischievous delight amongst the audience as they are won to a defence of gay sexuality against the kill joy attitude of the church.

### Exposes

The film exposes the sham of a celibate priesthood. As Fr Mathew explains, celibacy was cleverly created to control land and property owned by the church. By forbidding sex and relationships within the priesthood, the Church avoids the responsibility of making payments to widows or partners of priests.

This entire film puts a spotlight on the institution of the Catholic Church—and about time too. Jimmy McGovern, found it very difficult to actually get a suitable church location for filming. First, he tried Catholic Churches all around the suburbs of Liverpool. He had to submit a copy of the script to the authorities who then refused permission for use of a church.

When he approached other churches in remote parts of the English countryside he discovered that the "offending" parts of the script had already been faxed there. As Jim McGovern himself said, "The Lord may work in mysterious ways, but the Catholic church uses the fax machine".

## The fight of the rubber tappers to save the rainforest

KIERAN ALEEN reviews *Burning Season on the life of Chico Mendez*

THE AMAZON rainforest has been described as the "lungs of the world" and environmentalists from all over the world have rushed to its defence.

But, curiously, they rarely mention the people who live and work under the trees.

A new video *Burning Season* changes all that. It is a brilliant film about the life of Chico Mendez, the leader of the Rubber Tappers Union, who was murdered by the big ranchers clearing

the forest.

Mendez wanted to save the forest from the beef barons in order to protect the livelihoods of his members who gather the rubber resin from the trees.

It is a twentieth century battle against the new clearances.

### Convinced

The film opens with Chico's father bringing a sackful of rubber to a trading store. He is forced to accept that it weighed only 40 ki-

los—although the scales clearly show 70. Later Chico describes how the look in his father's eyes convinced him to become a fighter and a socialist.

The film switches to a church sermon where a union organiser shows how any individual stick can be cracked—but a bundle of sticks is nearly impossible to break.

When the union grows it meets with the shocking brutality of the Brazilian state. The ranchers call on the paramilitary police to murder and torture. Here the film is powerfully accurate.

In the 1980s, the Brazilian police estab-

lished a virtual academy of torture and exported their techniques to other right wing regimes in Latin America.

One of the best scenes in the film is a debate between Mendez and a liberal environmentalist. Chico objects to the idea of being preserved as a relic of the past, "When you are poor, you want development—but development that brings jobs and a livelihood to us".

This film destroys the myth that the best defenders of the environment are the caring middle class.

It pulses with class struggle. Don't miss it.



# where we stand

Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

## FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system.

The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion.

To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

## FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:

The SWM welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class. We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

## FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry. We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

## FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army. Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class. Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states. We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

## FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:

Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism - not to end it. We support the leaders when they fight but oppose them when they betray workers. We stand for independent rank and file action.

## FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:

To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWM aims to build such a party in Ireland.

# news & reports—politics; the unions

## A plan to carve up ESB workers

**TIM HASTINGS, industrial correspondent for Independent Newspapers has just published a study on industrial relations in Ireland's semi-state companies. RICHARD BOYD BARRETT looks at what it reveals about the planned attacks on ESB workers.**

HASTINGS makes it clear that his reason for writing *Semi-States in Crisis* was the shock of the 1991 strike in the ESB and the recent disputes in Irish Steel and TEAM. For him those disputes signal the need to "face down traditional union power."

He believes that large-scale redundancies, the introduction of "flexible" work practices, contract workers and pay-cuts are a necessary and inevitable development.

### Job losses

In the ESB this means that 2,900 jobs are to go. A further 2,000 jobs are to go in Telecom. This is in a country where nearly 300,000 are without jobs already.

The blueprint for cut-backs in the ESB was laid down in the McKinsey proposals which were published in September 1994.

In the McKinsey plan, demarcation between different jobs will be broken down. Instead of the old distinction between craft workers and general operatives, a new grade of utility worker is to be created.

Hastings admits that by getting "craftsmen doing their own cleaning" there will be "major implications

for the number of general workers that will be needed in the future".

But he approves of the shift by the ICTU towards helping management introduce change, rather than fighting to defend the interests of their members.

After the 1991 strike in the ESB, Peter Cassells of the ICTU chaired a committee which proposed new structures to build "partnership and trust". Hastings sees this as an opportunity to undermine union power at the ESB.

But he is concerned about the shop stewards' power to resist the changes. He worries that the shop stewards at the Monypoint plant did not "trust the Participation Council". He hates when shop stewards intervene at these councils only "with an industrial relations agenda".

Hastings believes that the power of the shop stewards will be undermined when they can be persuaded to put their trust in management's

plans.

He also reveals the strategy behind the McKinsey plan of splitting the company into five different parts. He claims that it will decentralise elements of pay bargaining and mean:

"The incentive for workers in one station to take action in support of workers in another station would be significantly reduced in this situation."

In other words the McKinsey plan is to divide workers in order to weaken them all and exploit them all the more easily.

But the book never tells us where all these attacks on workers pay and conditions will end.

### Practices

In reality the more workers have accepted pay cuts, productivity deals and changes in work practices the more bosses have come back looking for other concessions.

Just six months after workers in TEAM were forced to accept draconian changes in their pay and conditions, management are now back demanding more.

If workers accept the management agenda and the priorities of the market, then privatisation becomes more likely. The British experience shows that the more workers make concessions in order to ward off privatisation, the more they fatten up the company's profits for sharks who want to buy into



it.

The only people to gain out of this process will be "the new generation of chief executives", as Hastings calls them.

In Britain this "new generation" of directors in gas and electricity are on salaries of £500,000 plus.

In Ireland this process has already started with the Chief Executive of Telecom reputedly earning £250,000.

However, workers

shouldn't be pessimistic. One thing that comes through again and again in the book is the fear bosses and government have of workers taking action.

### Power

Hastings describes how the 1991 ESB strike shattered the confidence of management and struck fear into the government.

One senior figure in the ESB told him, "The top

management are now adamant in the view that if we have another serious strike involving power cuts, we might as well all resign"

Workers should take heart from this fear. Their shop stewards should start planning resistance to the McKinsey plan. This book, written by a hired scribe of Tony O'Reilly, shows how frightened the Irish establishment are of the workers' power.

## SWM branch meetings—all welcome

**BELFAST CENTRAL**  
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm, contact SW sellers or national address for details

**BELFAST SOUTH**  
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Queens Students Union

**CORK**  
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in the Anchor Inn, Georges Quay

**DERRY**  
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Badgers Bar

**DUBLIN BALLINTEER**  
Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in Ballintheer House

**DUBLIN BLANCHARDSTOWN**  
Meets Tuesdays at 8pm in the Blakestown Community Centre

**DUBLIN CLONDALKIN**  
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in the Lough and Quay, Clondalkin

**DUBLIN DRIMNAGH**  
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in the Half Way House.

**DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL**  
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in the Conways Pub, Parnell Street

**DUBLIN PHIBSBORO**  
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in The Snug, Eccles St.

**DUBLIN RATHMINES**  
Meets every Wednesday, 8pm, in the Junction Pub, Kevin Street/Wexford Street

**DUBLIN RINGSEND**  
Meets every Wednesday, 8pm, in Trinity Inn, Pearse St

**DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL**  
Meets every Thursday, 8pm, Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

**DUBLIN TALLAGHT**  
Contact 8722682 for details of meetings

**DUN LAOGHAIRE**  
Meets every Tuesday in Smiths Pub, Dun Laoghaire at 8.00pm

**MAYNOOTH**  
Meets every Thursday in

Class Hall B at 6pm.

**NEWRY**  
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm - contact national address for venue.

**WATERFORD**  
Meets every Thursday, 8pm ATGWU Hall Keyser St. Thursday 23rd March

There are *Socialist Worker* members in: ENNISKILLEN; COLERAINE; LURGAN; KILKENNY; DUNDALK; LIMERICK; BRAY; ATHLONE; DROGHEDA and GALWAY. If you would like to get in touch, contact our national office at (01) 872 2682, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

Socialist Worker Public Meeting

The Politics of Che Guevara

Wed 5th April 8pm, J O'Connell's Bar 29 South Richmond St Portobello

### Socialist Worker Public Meetings

## Connolly and the fight for Socialism



Belfast: Wed 12 April, Central Hall, Rosemary St  
Blanchardstown: Tues 11th, Blakestown Community Centre  
Clondalkin: Monday 3rd, Clondalkin Leisure Centre;  
Dublin Central: Thurs 6th April, North Star Hotel, Amiens St;  
Dun Laoghaire: Tues 4th, Smiths Pub, Lower Georges St;  
Drumragh: Tues 11th, The Bentley; Drumragh Rd;  
Ringsend: Wed 5th, Slattery's Pub, Bath Road  
Finglas: Wed 5th: see local posters for details  
Ballintheer: Wed 5th, Ballintheer House  
All meetings start at 8.00pm—for more details contact (01) 872 2682

**JOIN THE SOCIALISTS**  
If you want to join *Socialist Worker*, fill in this form and send it to: PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Phone .....

send in your reports telephone: (01) 872 2682

## Cork busworkers strike against victimisation

**HUNDREDS** of busworkers in Cork City staged a one-day unofficial strike on Wednesday 15th March in protest at the suspension of a colleague.

The SIPTU shop steward at the depot had been given one-week's suspension for his part in an unofficial stoppage in 1993 when the company wrote to workers telling them not to support a strike which was taking place in Sligo.

### Protest

The action resulted in his suspension which has been appealed through the Labour Court.

But the Court recently upheld the sentence and the entire Cork City garage stayed out of work in pro-



**Flashback: Gardai attack picketers earlier this year.**

test at the treatment of their steward.

The action received full support from members of

both NRBU and SIPTU.

The workers believe that the punishment for the unofficial stoppage was being

made on a union activist—regardless of what union he belonged to.

As one worker put it "Bus Eireann have a policy of trying to root out the union activists and it doesn't matter to them what union you are in. They seem to want to go after us for being militant in Cork."

The busworkers display of solidarity will help to put manners on the management.

This week the NRBU ballot for industrial action right across the whole transport service in the event of scab labour being used, has received overwhelming support from workers in Dublin Bus, Irish Rail and Bus Eireann.

Workers voted to defend their right to strike against the sort of attacks that the company used to break the one-day strike in Cork, Limerick and Galway last month.

## Derry: United Technologies Automotive workers demand union service

**WORKERS** at the United Technologies Automotive (UTA) plant in Derry are to circulate a petition asking AEEU head office in London to intervene and protect the workers' rights to proper trade union representation.

Many of the forty workers who attended a meeting organised by the local branch of the SWM complained that shop stewards were not doing what they were elected to do.

Workers, especially young women, are being shouted at and humiliated by supervisors while their shop stew-

ards look on and do or say nothing.

At the SWM meeting it was agreed that what the workers at UTA need

is an action group which would campaign for a fighting trade union within the plant.

Management have

been doing its best to exploit divisions between different groups of workers and to imply that they have different

interests.

In fact this is not the case at all. Either workers stand together or they will all lose out.

### STRAND CINEMA CLEANERS STEP UP ACTION

**BOX OFFICE** income at the Strand Multiplex Cinema in Derry has been slashed where cleaners have been picketing to fight for their jobs.

The women lost their jobs when work was contracted out to a Belfast contract cleaning agency.

But last week the

workers stepped up their action.

Eamonn McCann, chairperson of the Derry Trades Council says

"The strikers are having increasing success in persuading people not to go into the cinema".

Last week members of the *Socialist*

*Worker* Dublin branches staged a solidarity picket on the head office of the cinema's distributors, Abbey Films.

The picket was well supported and showed the company that there is a lot of public support for the strike.

The company have

offered the women work elsewhere in Derry at a better rate of pay than they had earned at the cinema, according to one of their bosses.

But the strikers will keep up the pressure for their jobs.

They have the support of the people of Derry.

## TEAM workers' safety stoppage

**WORKERS** at TEAM Aer Lingus staged an unofficial stoppage on Friday 24th March in response to the lack of safety at the plant.

When management tried to address a mass meeting of the workers they were heckled and shouted down by the angry meeting.

The bosses at TEAM tried to threaten and bully people back

to work.

They argued that the stoppage was "just the shop stewards flexing their muscles".

### Damaged

But there is real anger in the plant at the lack of safety, a number of aircraft have been damaged by the low safety standards.

The response of the workers certainly shows that TEAM are not beaten or bowed but are ready to fight back.

## PENSION RIGHTS FOR TEACHERS

**TWO YEARS** ago Education Minister Niamh Breathnach promised the INTO annual conference that she would implement early retire-

ment for teachers. Negotiations with the teachers' unions which should have been completed by last November had not even begun. But talks took place

when the teachers threatened a ballot for industrial action.

So far there is little worthwhile on the table. Teachers are being offered early retirement at 55 years of age with 35 years service.

But most teachers cannot reach this level of service.

Very few will secure permanent jobs by the age of 20, especially with the Department using temporary appointments on an increasing basis.

The unions have recognised that there was no movement until they stepped up the action.

They have promised the Government that they will ballot for action if there is no real offer made to them before their Easter conferences.

Teachers have the right to strike for their pensions.

The unions should be prepared to take on the Education Minister and hold her to her promise.

### ROYAL MAIL:

**JOBS AND** postal services in Derry are under threat in the latest proposed round of Royal Mail cuts.

The proposals would mean the elimination of all night duties, a 5am starting time and the amalgamation of delivery routes.

### Unpaid

In return, the workers will be expected to do unpaid overtime for any

work not completed inside the allotted hours.

But Royal Mail can be stopped.

15,000 London postal workers went on unofficial strike in the middle of January against these kind of changes.

Workers at the NWDO sorting office, came out in solidarity, followed by workers in the giant Mount Pleasant site.

Within a few hours postal workers had shown they could defy the courts, defy their

bosses and organise real effective action.

Postal workers in

Derry and throughout the North could take a leaf from their book.

### QUEENS LIBRARY CRISIS

**SOCIALIST** Worker Student Society at Queens University organised a picket of the library on March 22nd.

The already overstretched resources in Queen's library are set to reach crisis point. The head librarian has described the situation as the "worst case scenario". Several lecturers have urged their students to take more militant action, with one calling for an occupation of the library buildings.

The work being done by Queens SWSS and the success of the picket, will help direct people's anger. The next picket called will be better supported and even more successful.

This is just the beginning of the fightback at Queens, certainly not the end.

### CORPORATION AND HEALTH BOARD WORKERS REJECT DEAL

**WORKERS** throughout the local authorities and health boards have been balloted on a new deal which will link their pay with productivity.

The £6.81 analogue payment is made to workers periodically.

But this time round the bosses are trying to make workers accept

drastic changes in work practices for the small payment which workers believe they are entitled to.

The changes will include craft-workers carrying out work proper to others and will ultimately do away with many jobs.

Members of UCAAT, the building workers union, have rejected the deal by four to one.

The plasterers and bricklayers have also voted down the deal.

The results show that there is a real sense of anger among public service workers.

That anger should be built on in all local councils and health boards to stop the attacks taking place on jobs and conditions.

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

inside

1920: Irish workers' greatest strike

—page 8

Turkey's reign of terror against the Kurds

—page 5

# Pay the nurses!



**THE TORIES** are rattled by the growing anger over nurses pay. Thousands of workers took part in the Fair Pay Day on March 30th to show their disgust at a 1% pay award.

The Tories hope that they can use the dedication the nurses have to the NHS to stop them taking industrial action.

But many nurses now feel that they will have to strike to win their rights.

One nurse told *Socialist Worker* about the reality of the job.

*"When your shift ends it is not just a case of going straight home. There are always odds and ends to do. Usually we work between half an hour and an hour extra. You can't really refuse because you are made feel as if you are letting your colleagues*

*down."*

In Belfast the City Hospital is closing down its nurses homes in an effort to save money and many nurses are forced into sub-standard housing that exists around the hospitals.

### Luxury

With the low wages they earn, nurses cannot afford a decent place to live.

But at the same time in the Russell Court flats, doc-

tors are housed in luxury accommodation at the expense of the NHS. The hospital even picks up the tab for their phone bills.

The crisis in the NHS has not occurred naturally. It is the culmination of 16 years of Tory rule.

They have created levels of poverty which is destroying the nation's health.

At the same time they have reduced the funding to the health service, where doctors choose who they can and will treat.

The NHS have cut nursing staff, denied employees a decent wage and still find the money to pay administrators £90,000 per year to implement their policies.

Vocal public support for the nurses shows that people are telling the Tory gov-

ernment, enough is enough.

An opinion poll carried out by the *Nursing Times* shows that 91% of the public support the nurses' pay claim while 61% would support industrial action by the nurses.

### Meagre

Nurses themselves see the meagre pay award as the tip of the iceberg.

They are constantly drawing attention to the existing conditions which effect patient care.

One sister in Belfast's City Hospital told *Socialist Worker* how five night sisters have been replaced by eight night co-ordinators.

These new posts don't involve "hands-on" nurs-

ing care and yet the wages for the new jobs have been increased to £25,000 from £20,000 for the sister's job.

Nursing posts have been lost at the cost to the NHS of £100,000 per year.

The same nurse drew our attention to the defunct practice of using "bay beds"—this is where patients are left in beds outside wards while waiting for a proper bed to become available.

*"Women patients are often left in bays outside the men's wards for long periods of time. We have nowhere else to put them."*

A junior doctor in Antrim told *Socialist Worker* that in certain wards male and female patients share the same wards not because of choice but because of bed shortages.

*"I have never come across this practice before" she said "I always assumed it was against EC regulations."*

Nurses are in a militant mood and the public are firmly behind them. It's time for the unions to start making real demands.

# Defend the NHS!