

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

Inside:

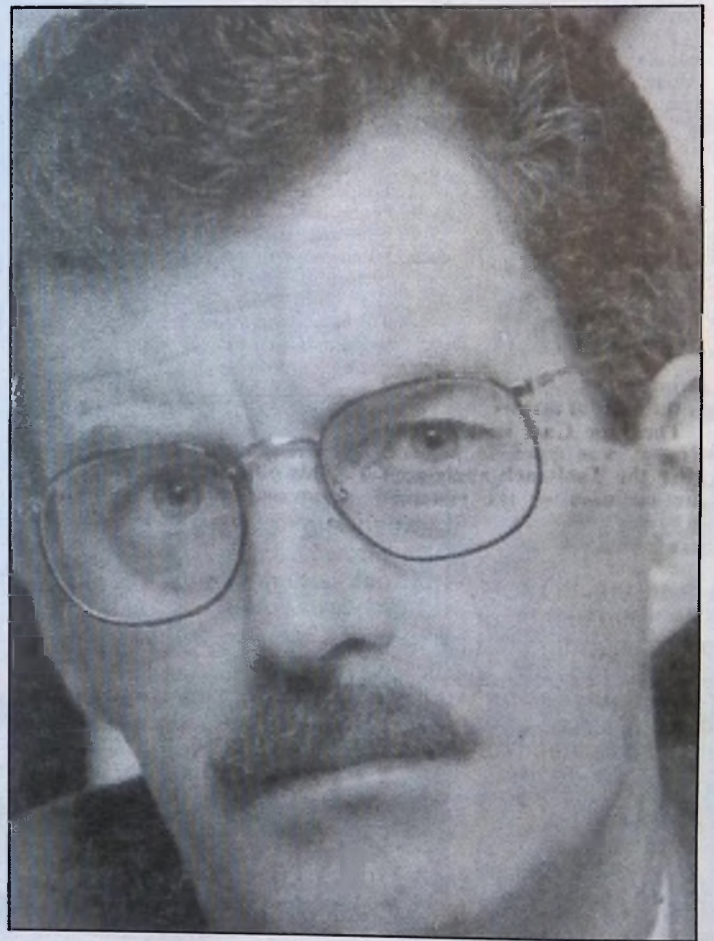
**SWP
election
candidates
speak out**

- Page 10

Belfast
Workers
fight Tory
hospital
cuts -Page 5

As the Labour Party conference plans its election campaign

WANTED



FOR BETRAYAL

TURN TO CENTRE PAGES

Letterkenny Anger as bigots close clinic

THE VASECTOMY clinic in Letterkenny General Hospital was closed when three doctors picketed it for two hours

Among them was Dr Leo McAuley, chief consultant in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology ward of the hospital. Some Letterkenny doctors have become a by-word for fundamentalism and their uncaring attitudes to the reality of womens lives

When she became pregnant for a seventh time she was plunged into despair:

"My husband and I came to the conclusion that an abortion was the only answer, although it was something I'd never imagined myself.

"I don't believe we had any choice. How anybody can say they are defending family life by refusing to allow a vasectomy clinic is beyond me."

Kate, whose four children were born in the hospital, told Socialist Worker, "Women go into Letterkenny Hospital knowing they have to watch what they say, that some issues — like birth control — just can't be raised".

Twenty

Mary gave birth to three children in the hospital, all of them while she was still a teenager. Now just twenty years old, she spoke to Socialist Worker about the regime in the hospital.

After her third child she, "got up the nerve to ask about contraception. One of the top doctors seemed annoyed at me for asking. It was more or less, 'we don't have that sort of talk in here'."

A woman whose husband was refused a vasectomy at Letterkenny hospital told the Sunday Tribune that they were made to feel like aliens, when they asked about the procedure. The couple had sought the vasectomy because, after her sixth child, her GP advised her not to get pregnant again due to a heart condition.

It could happen to a bishop

DR PHILLIP BOYCE, the Catholic Bishop of Raphoe, condemned vasectomies as 'a form of mutilation' and suggested that there was no need for anyone to have one.

Instead he recommended "natural family planning, self-control and discipline" to couples who feel they have had enough children.

Dr Boyce should talk to one of his fellow bishops about the reality of sexual relationships. For many couples, reliance on 'natural family planning' is largely responsible for unwanted pregnancy.

Struggling

For couples struggling to bring up their children as best they can, the fear of another pregnancy can destroy their relationship.

Ask most couples who have chosen vasectomy and they will tell you their relationship blossomed after it.

Many women — and men — enjoy sex for the first time in their lives because of not having the fear of pregnancy.

Regime

Kate says that McAuley's regime is out of date and fundamentalist in every way, not only in relation to contraception.

The hospital still operates like some place from the 1950s, she says, and ignores what women expect from a modern maternity hospital.

Women are allowed no choices under McAuley's regime, even in relation to how they'll give birth: "Thousands of women have gone through that hospital and been made to feel like lumps of meat."

**Socialist Worker
Public Meeting
GIVE THE BIGOTS THE
SNIP - RE-OPEN THE
VASECTOMY CLINIC!
Downtown Bar, Main
Street, Letterkenny
Monday 14 April
9.15pm
ALL WELCOME**

Stop this right wing minority

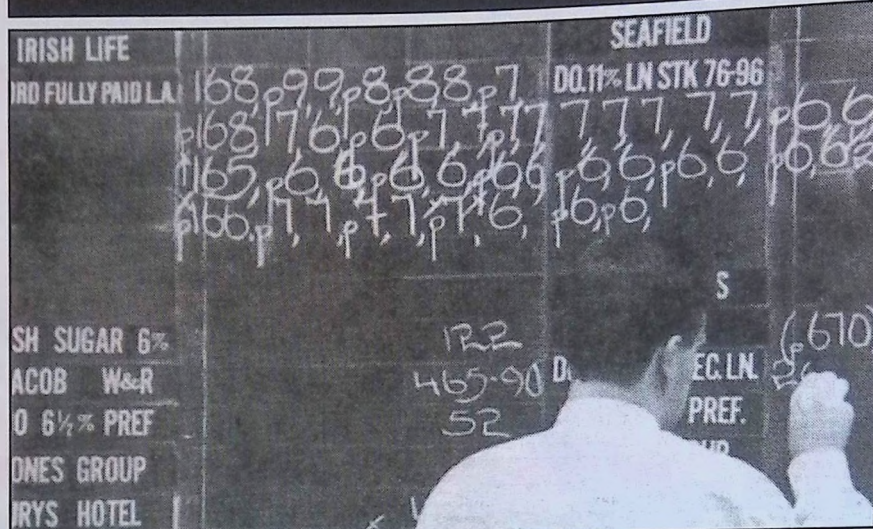
INDEPENDENT Fianna Fail are determined to make the vasectomy clinic an election issue: "The opening of the clinic could be the first step towards the provision of abortion at Letterkenny General Hospital", says Councillor Patrick Kelly.

The Health Board decided to set up the clinic nearly two years ago, in line with the 1992 Family Planning Act.

Independent Fianna Fail didn't object then, although their leader Harry Blaney is chair of the Board.

Under the 1992 Act, vasectomies are supposed to be available in every part of the

Boom in shares makes millionaires



Chalking up another million

Gardai tapped dead phone!

In the 1970s and 1980s there was a magazine called Magill which exposed the activities of politicians and the state, including the brutality of the Garda 'heavy gang'.

Magill was a liberal magazine — by no means revolutionary — yet the state saw fit to tap its phone calls.

Vincent Browne, the magazine's editor, had his home phone number bugged for eight years and his office line

for eight months. Magill's other 14 phones were tapped for almost six months during 1982 and 1983.

The gardai even tapped a dead phone line for eight months, claiming this was 'yielding results in the fight against terrorism'!

Calls were not only recorded but were also transcribed. Of 85 transcripts seen by Vincent Browne, only four involved republicans.

The bulk of the calls were routine professional and per-

sonal calls. Yet the state kept details of these calls on file until 1995.

When Browne finally read the transcripts in 1995, it was on condition that they be immediately shredded.

All of a sudden, the state seemed very anxious to destroy the 'vital evidence' that they had carefully kept for 13 years.

Magill may have been a thorn in the side of the establishment, but it was hardly a threat to capitalism.

If they bug the conversations of liberals like Vincent Browne and like Gene Kerrigan, how would our rulers respond to a real threat?

Player fined for solidarity

Liverpool footballer Robbie Fowler was recently fined £900 by UEFA, the sport's European governing body.

His crime? After scoring a goal in a European Cup Winners Cup game he lifted his jersey to reveal a t-shirt supporting the Liverpool dockers.

It was a marvellous gesture of support to the city's dockers who have been on strike since September 1995 when they were sacked for refusing to pass a picket.

But it was not appreciated by football's bosses, who fined Fowler for wearing a t-shirt with a political message.

Funny enough, these same people never have a problem when Fabrizio Ravenelli wears a t-shirt emblazoned with the Cellnet logo.

Hospitals: "bring your own loo roll"

A MEMBER of the Southern Health Board had a recent first hand experience of the effects of the health cuts.

Paddy Duffy, a chemist, was a patient in Cork's University Hospital and was horrified at the conditions on floor 3A. There were no sink plugs and no toilet seats and

ceiling tiles were missing.

Mr Duffy advised patients to arm themselves with plenty of toilet paper.

This was needed to stuff the gap in two broken windows and to plug the sinks while washing.

"Toilet paper is the most essential material for anybody in 3A," Mr Duffy told a recent health board meeting in Cork.

THE VALUE of Irish shares has grown by 60 percent in the past three years. No wonder economists are describing Ireland as the 'Celtic Tiger'.

Have you wondered where the wealth is going? Workers are certainly not gaining from the boom.

But a small band of people are making a killing.

The boom has created a whole new club of millionaires, according to a survey by the Sunday Tribune newspaper.

Sixteen Chief Executives of Irish companies are part of this club.

Companies

Their names are not as well known as those of politicians and they are unelected, yet they exercise a major influence over our lives.

The best known is Michael Smurfit who holds a whopping £89.5 million worth of shares in the Smurfit Group. Eugene Murtagh of Kingspan is worth £59 million.

Further down the scale, but still doing fine, are Michael Chadwick of Grafton Group with almost £16 million and Noel Smith of Dunloe House with £10.5 million.

Worth

Harry Ennis of Boxmore is worth almost £9 million and Craig McKinney of Woodchester has £7 million in shares.

Some of the top Chief Executives who have become millionaires include Pat Molloy of AIB and Tom Mulcahy of Bank of Ireland.

In all, twelve of the top twenty Chief Executives are worth more than £1 million each.

The other eight could soon join the millionaires' club if they exercise lucrative share options.

If you wondered why you have not yet experienced the 'feelgood factor', don't worry: the millionaire bosses are feeling good on your behalf!

what we think

Zero tolerance for Fianna Fail

FIANNA FAIL and Progressive Democrat candidates in the general election have been instructed to focus on law and order.

The FF party spokesperson, John O Donoghue, has issued a new policy document promising to create 2,000 extra prison places and impose a regime of 'zero tolerance'. As opinion polls show a drop in support for Fianna Fail in Dublin, this is a crude attempt to use crime to increase its votes.

Hypocrisy

But it is riddled with lies and hypocrisy. Fianna Fail's notion of 'zero tolerance' is directed at petty street crime. The party has no interest in the crimes of big business.

When the Garda Fraud Squad examined their top fifty files in 1992, they found they were investigating cases involving sums in excess of £26 million.

According to the criminologist Paul O Mahony these figures suggested that "the extent and seriousness of white collar crime may involve sums which exceed the illicit gain from conventional 'criminal' theft".

Fianna Fail and the Progressive Democrats have nothing to say about this sort of crime because they themselves are funded by big business.

Both have received huge donations from beef barons who committed fraud on a grand scale.

Their proposal for 2,000 extra prison places is also nonsense. Ireland already has the record for:

- the largest fraction of Gross Domestic Product being spent on prison officers in Europe.

- The fastest rate of prison growth with places increasing by 156% between 1970

and 1987.

Labour and Democratic Left have no intention of challenging this nonsense.

Instead they boast that they have constructed more prison places and removed the right to bail.

Crimes

They don't point to the crimes of the rich because they are too busy offering them incentives in the hope that they will create jobs. In their own way, they have helped to stir up the law and order hysteria.

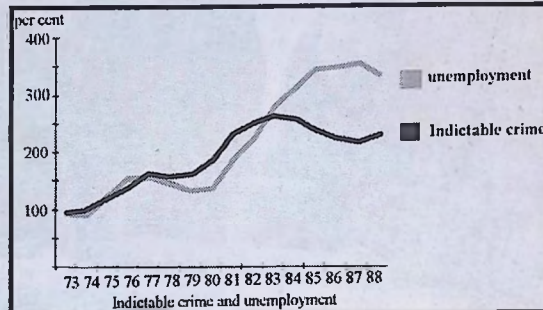
Socialists have to argue that none of the solutions of the main parties will work because they cannot tackle the root of crime: poverty and unemployment.

Instead of spending another £250 million on prison places, the money should be used to set up jobs in the most deprived working class areas.

Crime: the link to unemployment

There is a close link between unemployment and crime. It is connection that the right wing parties want to ignore because they have no answers to poverty.

Paul O Mahony has produced a graph which brings out clearly the association between unemployment and crime.



How do we change the unions?

AS SOCIALIST WORKER goes to press there are indications of a good vote for Carolann Duggan, the rank and file candidate who is running for the office of General President of SIPTU.

The campaign helped to open up a debate on where the union is going.

SIPTU has traditionally been dominated by a right wing Labour Party clique who try to witchhunt socialists. Militants who have become frustrated by this situation often concluded that they were unbeatable.

Campaign

Yet the election campaign has unearthed a massive pool of discontent in the union.

Up to now the union bu-

reaucacy has been able to keep the lid on this discontent through a series of manoeuvring.

In some workplaces during the election campaign, ballot boxes did not appear on shifts where support for Carolann Duggan was high. Union officials were also mobilised to urge a vote for the establishment candidate Jimmy Summers.

Nevertheless in a straight contest between a Socialist Workers Party member and a Labour Party member thousands of workers will vote for an open revolutionary socialist. That is a tremendous pointer for the future.

Throughout her whole campaign, Carolann Duggan argued that even if she won, that alone would not change the situation for workers.

It was necessary, she said 'to build a strong shop steward organisation which is able to make the official apparatus answerable to members on a day to day basis'.

Apparatus

That task will be helped immensely if there are more socialists in the union.

Socialist ideas are vital for opposing the increasingly political arguments of the bosses who talk about 'globalisation' and 'competitiveness' to enforce their rule.

An organised network of socialists is also necessary for building solidarity and providing tactical advice for workers who want to fight.

That is why those who voted for Carolann Duggan should consider taking the next step and joining the Socialist Workers Party.

The Socialist Worker guide to the election

No.1: The PD's

Up to 50 criminals a day walk free without serving their sentence.

WHY?

Because they all donate money to the political parties!

How radical are the Greens?

"The Green Party could find itself in less than two months time holding the balance of power". This was the assessment of the Irish Times after their recent party conference.

On some issues there is common ground between socialists and Greens.

One of their candidates Paula Giles, for example, condemned the disgraceful situation whereby the arable land of Europe has declined by 12% because farmers are paid subsidies for setaside. Socialists are in full agreement.

Campaigned

The Greens have rightly campaigned to protect the environment, often taking on big companies that try to hide their pollution.

But the problem lies with their solutions they advo-

cate. The Greens fail to see class as a key division in society.

As a result the rich and the poor are all held responsible for destroying the world around us.

This has led the Greens to support a form of water charges.

When Mary Harney made her gaffe about making people pay for their water, the only party to support her was the Greens, who called for water meters.

Yet water is a basic necessity for life and public health. A family of six or seven have as much right to water as a rich business man. If the

poor have to pay for water, they will have to do without.

In this instance the Greens want to increase the role of the market.

But for socialists, the key to saving the environment lies in attacking the inefficiency and chaos of the market.

Example

Take transport for example.

Instead of penalising people with a 'green tax' on their energy usage, a decent society would be providing a first class public transport system for free.

In the long run, this would mean savings in terms of hospital beds, pollution, and asthma as car useage dropped.

Or look at the ozone layer.

A green tax in Ireland might discourage the use of CFCs.

But unless the technology for building fridges without CFCs is shared with the mass of people in the Third World, this is a meaningless gesture.

That in turn can only happen by opposing commercial secrecy and untrammelled competition that comes with the market.

For socialists, the environment can be saved by uprooting the anarchy of capitalism.

But judging by the most recent Green conference, the greens prefer to enter coalition with John Bruton, rather than challenge capitalism

£10,000

Appeal

THANKS TO OUR readers who contributed £1,153 to the SW appeal this fortnight. This brings the total to £5165

Our target is £10,000 to cover the cost of a new printer and of standing four candidates in the general election.

We rely on the contributions of our supporters no matter how small. Help spread the ideas of socialism by giving to the appeal this fortnight. Please send cheques or postal orders made out to Socialist Worker Appeal, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

£10,000

£9,000

£8,000

£7,000

£6,000

£5,000

£4,000

£3,000

£2,000

£1,000

SOCIALIST WORKER



news of the world



STRIKING POSTAL workers solid on the picket line

Conflict is spreading everywhere in France

BELGIAN STRIKES SHOW DISCONTENT

SOME 25,000 people marched through the Belgian town of Namur at the weekend against job cuts. Workers heading the march carried a banner saying, "European Union = capitalism, social exclusion, slavery."

The protest was led by steel workers from the Forges de Clabecq plant who have been fighting closure for months.

They were joined by workers from round the country, including car workers from the occupied Renault plant in Vilvoorde.

Namur is the seat of the regional government of

Wallonia, the French speaking half of Belgium. On Friday Renault workers had clashed with riot police outside offices of the other, Flemish, regional government in the capital, Brussels.

Symbol

Renault and Forge de Clabecq have become a symbol in Belgium for wider discontent at unemployment, welfare cuts and corruption. The car workers at Renault's Vilvoorde plant are now in the fifth week of their occupation to save 3,000 jobs.

As well as last week's marches in Belgium there were also protest meetings and token stoppages last Friday at some Renault plants in France and Spain, though the action was not as successful as the first "Euro strike" last month.

The Renault strikers received a boost when courts in France and Belgium last week ruled that Renault had broken the law in the way it has moved to shut down the factory.

Union leaders' response was to say they will recommend workers restart production at the plant, while keeping up the occupation.

They say this means workers will get paid while Renault goes through the "consultation" with unions the legal rulings say must happen.

The union's move is a mistake. Keeping production shut down and fighting for more solidarity is the only way to beat Renault.

Renault is under pressure. A combination of a consumer boycott in Belgium and the thousands of cars held hostage by the Vilvoorde workers has seen Renault sales slump, costing the company more in lost sales than it will save by shutting the factory.

"STRIKES ARE erupting like mushrooms in the storm," said an editorial in the French paper *Libération* last Friday.

"Everywhere in France social conflict is spreading. Barely a day goes by without a new struggle breaking out."

The tone captures a little of the mood that is worrying bosses and politicians across the Channel.

Junior doctors in hospitals around the country have been on strike, with emergency cover, for four weeks now over health cuts.

The doctors are fighting a plan by the Tory government to fine hospitals which overshoot cash limits on medicines.

The doctors have staged a series of untypically militant protests in recent weeks, blocking roads and railway lines and even fighting with riot police.

Last week they were joined on a day of action by other health workers who have their own demands over health cuts.

On Friday bank workers across the country struck against the drive to "flexible labour". The government plans to scrap laws limiting Saturday and shift working.

Airport workers, from mechanics and pilots to cabin crew, have been staging a series of effective stoppages, often without warning, in recent days.

The workers are protesting over attacks on their conditions as Air

inter merges with Air France.

A series of significant postal strikes have been taking place in cities around the country.

In Clermont-Ferrand, where workers have been out for over a month, they last week kidnapped a boss for a while, an increasingly common tactic.

Elsewhere there has been a flurry of local fights, such as in Lannion in western France last Thursday when thousands of workers struck and demonstrated over threatened job cuts at the Alcatel CIT engineering factory.

Meanwhile lorry drivers could be set to take action again, following their massive strike last year.

They are furious that the deal they won then for retirement at 55 has not been properly implemented.

Flurry

The drivers have said they will reimpose road blockades from 5 May unless the issue is resolved.

The flurry of strikes comes at the same time as the wave of protest against the government's new racist immigration laws and a week after the massive demonstration against the Nazi National Front in Strasbourg.

The unrest, along with other concerns, has worried the government sufficiently that it is considering calling a general election next month instead of the date set for next spring.

Euro struggle

"Something is happening and you don't know what it is, do you Mr Jones?"

The young black activists Huey Newton and Bobby Seale played this Bob Dylan track over and over again as they put together the first copy of their *Black Panther* paper in the late Spring of 1967.

It gave expression to their feeling that a new mood of revolt was arising among the most oppressed people in society. No one really knew what was going to happen next or how.

This was before the great events of 1968—the tearing apart of the US war effort in Vietnam by the Tet offensive, the near insurrection in Detroit, the wave of ghetto risings following the murder of Martin Luther King, the Prague Spring and the French May.

But there was a sense that molecular change at the base of society was going to crystallise into something new.

The lyrics should have a resonance right across western Europe today, 30 years on. For changes in people's moods are occurring just as they were in the US in 1967, and again the outcome is still undecided.

The media has barely noticed it, but the mass strike and the mass demonstration have been reborn in the core countries of the European Union over the last couple of years.

Germany was the country least affected by the workers' upturn of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

But in the mid-1990s it has seen growing working class resistance to the attempts by the government and the employers to undermine welfare benefits and cut back on jobs against a background of 4 million unemployed.

In Italy the general strike against pension cuts in October 1994 led to the fall of the right wing Berlusconi government the next year, and although the tempo of strikes and demonstrations has declined under the subsequent centre-left governments, it is much greater than through the 1980s.

Stoppages

In Belgium the series of public sector stoppages and protests last year have been followed by huge support for the Renault occupation this March.

France has seen strike after strike since the great public sector stoppages of December 1995 forced a retreat by Juppé and Chirac.

The highly effective and highly publicised blockade of the country's roads at the end of last year was the high point of a much wider ferment.

But what is occurring is not just a revival of economic struggle. The struggle itself is beginning to throw up slogans with much wider social, if not yet revolutionary socialist, connotations.

Increasingly workers are counterposing a "social Europe" to a "neo-liberal" Thatcherite-Europe.

At the same time, especially in France, the revival of workers' struggle has gone parallel with a growing movement against racism and the fascist right.

February and March saw two huge demonstrations and vast numbers of signatures to petitions against the Debré anti-immigrant law, as well as a rash of increasingly militant demonstrations against Le Pen, with young demonstrators no longer ready to abide by advice from the leaders of the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and SOS-Racisme to march away from

his meetings and rallies.

All this represents a radical change from the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. In the 1980s there were strikes in Europe, but they were defensive—usually against the running down of old industries—and mostly ended in defeat.

Today there are signs within both the workers' movements and the demonstrations of a spontaneous generalisation of ideas, such as we have not seen on any great scale since the mid-1970s.

However, there is an immense confusion of ideas. Nor can we rule out major defeats for one or other struggle breaking the forward momentum.

In France the anti-racist, anti Le Pen agitation and the strikes still constitute two separate movements, with different slogans and ideas, even though both owe much of their inspiration to the strikes and demonstrations of December 1995 and many activists are involved in both.

So many of the leading figures in the anti-racist agitation talk in terms of "citizenship", not class, and pose issues in terms of a moralism which does not expect to win over those outside an intellectual-student milieu.

At the same time, many of the trade union activists involved in the strikes believe they can only relate to their fellow workers in economic terms and fail to raise with them the broader issues of anti-racism and anti-fascism.

These attitudes are encouraged by the two main organising focuses for the movements. The daily paper *Libération*, which printed special supplements with the anti-racist petition signatures, is run by people who accepted all the "new philosopher", "post-modernist" anti-Marxist crap of the 1980s.

They can't conceive of winning workers to their anti-racist struggle and half accept the line of the Socialist Party leadership that it has to fudge on anti-racism for fear of losing next year's parliamentary elections.

The most important focus for workers' struggles remains the Communist Party, through the CGT union over which it exercises considerable influence, and the party's daily, *L'Humanité*. But it too is down playing notions of class, preferring to talk in terms of "citizenship" and trying to form an alliance with the nationalist, anti European Union movement of former Socialist Party defence minister Chevènement.

So there is no guarantee that the new mood of struggle will break through old ideological barriers. But there never can be such a guarantee.

Victory

In the late 1960s genuinely Marxist ideas faced bitter competition from liberal preachers of "participatory democracy", Stalinist worshippers of China and Albania, middle class "student vanguards" and anarchist "anti-authoritarians".

It took much argument and effort to turn a receptiveness to Marxist ideas into a victory for them and it was a victory which was often too little and too late.

Things are not going to be any easier today, and with the rise of the Nazi right, the price of failure will be much costlier.

Nevertheless, a spontaneous growth of struggle is occurring and, with it, a new level of generalisation. There is a massive opening for Marxist ideas—if Marxists know how to take it.

—Chris Harman

Italy prepares for hot summer

A WAVE of strikes is planned in Italy over the next two weeks, against attacks pushed by the country's centre-left coalition government.

Air traffic controllers, bus workers, rail workers and ferry workers are all set to take action against attacks on jobs and conditions.

The unrest comes as the Italian government faces a growing political crisis over its role in Albania.

Some of its key supporters, inside and outside parliament, are opposed to the government's plan to send thousands of "peace-keeping" troops to Albania.

Tories attempt to close hospitals: "The solidarity here is totally behind keeping the hospital open"

THE TORIES decision to close the Royal Maternity and the City Accident and Emergency ward in Belfast is the action of a vindictive and nasty government on its last legs.

Hospital workers at the RVH have already walked out when the closure plan was announced last month.

There is widespread anger at the decision. One woman told Socialist Worker,

"It's an absolute disgrace. My granddaughter was born prematurely at the Royal last year. If she had to be moved across Belfast for emergency care she'd be dead now."

Worker

A worker at the City hospital said, "Closing the accident and emergency will turn this hospital into a shell. We campaigned successfully with workers from the Royal a few years ago to prevent cuts and privatisation, but the government just keeps coming back at us."

The closures will mean that maternity services will be lost in West Belfast but neo-natal emergency services will remain at the Royal.

Royal College of Midwives steward Breda Hughes told Socialist Worker, "This decision has disenfranchised 3000 women. The Tories claim to be about choice but they are leaving women here with none. We have the largest number of deliveries in the North and most of the women live locally and are seen by the midwives from here."

"The City hospital might not seem far away as the crow flies. But this is a poor area. Most people here rely on public transport or taxis."

Reason

"The closures just don't make sense", a shop steward at the Royal said. "The only reason we can see is to fill the two empty floors in the City tower block. But if that's the reason why don't they move the Eastern Health Board offices there! They've got a grand big building in Linenhall Street. The money from that could be used on patients."

Paediatricians across the North are opposed to the closure of the Royal Maternity and plan to meet next month.

But they also see the connection with the closure of the accident and emergency at the City. Professor Halliday explained, "There's no getting away from the fact that we live in a divided city. If there's rioting or some other trouble people will be reluctant to travel to the Royal."

The Tories are attempting to divided workers along sectarian lines.

The Royal is in the predominantly Catholic West Belfast and the City is in the mainly Protestant South Belfast.

A nurse at the Royal said, "For years the Tories have been making hospitals compete with each other for funding. Nurses at the City are being told that they've 'won'. But they know they haven't. Both hospitals are losing out."

Oppose

The mood to oppose the closure is strong. "The solidarity here is total. Obstetricians, ancillary, nursing and clerical workers are all behind keeping the hospital open." Thousands



Unions need to organise protests and strikes to halt the closures

of people have been signing petitions to keep the Royal open.

Support for the Royal has also come the Shankill Womens Group. A campaign against the closures could cut through the sectarian divisions encouraged by politicians in the North.

The closure is believed to be a couple of years away. But there is a danger that action could be put on hold.

Union leaders are pinning their hopes on a legal challenge to the decision and lobbying a new Labour government.

This is a risky strategy. The legal challenge will leave the decision in the hands on an unelected judge.

Unless the judge feels the pressure of mass protest, there is no guarantee they will reverse the closure plans.

Blair's Labour party is committed to the Tories spending

limits in the NHS. Labour is also committed to spending £30 billion on Trident and £15 billion on the Eurofighter aircraft. Labour's Northern Ireland spokesperson Mo Mowlam has only said she will "look at the whole situation again" when they get to power.

Protests

The unions should organise united protests to save the Royal and City, backed up by plans for industrial action aimed at preventing the removal of equipment and patients from the wards targeted.

In 1992 nurses and hospital workers at Univerity College Hospital in London took action to prevent wards being closed.

They occupied the ward and built local protests to save their jobs. The same can be done in Belfast.

Loyalists threaten anti-sectarian activist

A MEMBER of United Against Bigotry in Belfast has received threats from loyalists following the demonstration in Harryville which was organised by the United Against Bigotry campaign last month to oppose the bigoted protest outside a Catholic Church.

He first got a threatening letter to his door and later was verbally abused on the street by the bigots. The following day he contacted the R.U.C and they advised him to leave the area for his own safety.

Later on his windows were smashed and graffiti painted on his house, which is on the Newtonards Road a mixed area of East Belfast.

But the member of the U.A.B and trade unionist said "Harryville was a just cause highlighting sectarianism, we have to overcome this in our society, I won't be intimidated as a member of U.A.B, and I will stand up to all forms of sectarian bigotry"

The crisis in the Orange Order

IAN PAISLEY roared at the crowd in Portadown "the Ulster people will not surrender to nationalists or popery. We will march down the roads of Ulster."

The crowd of 2,000 people on the "civil rights for Loyalists" march was a lot less than the 10,000 the organisers were hoping for.

Paisley and his DUP party are trying to put themselves at the head of opposition to the re-routing of Orange marches. But his belligerence can't cover up for the deepening divisions within Unionism that threaten to split the Orange Order as the marching season begins.

In Dunloy, where an Orange march was stopped by Catholic residents last year, the leaders of the Orange Order have been trying to get the local lodge to accept a compromise which would allow a limited number of marches to go ahead with residents consent.

But the meeting to vote on the compromise was abandoned when the Spirit of Drumcree group called a picket of 300 outside the hall.

Joel Patton, the Spirit of Drumcree leader, demanded the resignation of Orange Order Grand Master Robert Saulters for being "weak" on the issue of parades.

Saulters in return called Patton a "Judas" and the leadership of the Orange Order has been talking about expelling his Spirit of Drumcree faction. The Order claims that it has been inundated with threats of resignation unless Patton is expelled.

Sectarian

The middle class leadership of the Orange Order are fearful of the consequences of another summer of sectarian violence. The moment of unity and triumph as the Orange march was forced down the Garvaghy Road by the RUC had to be measured against the weeks of rioting and disruption and the negative image it gave of Unionism.

Underlying the current tensions within the Orange Order is the deeper crisis of Unionism. It is a myth that Unionism and the Orange Order always had a stanglehold on the loyalty of Protestant people in the North.

Its dominance flowed from its control of the structures of the state in Northern Ireland, which it used to buy the allegiance of ordinary Protestants with jobs and houses. In each decade since the 1920s it has had to whip people back into line by raising the threat of nationalism, which is why anti-Catholic bigotry has always been at its touchstone.

But Unionism no longer has that straightforward control over jobs and housing. The resistance of Catholic communities over the last 30 years has meant that repression is no longer as straightforward as it used to be.

Unionism is left with little to offer Protestant people other

Underlying the current tensions within the Orange Order is the deeper crisis of Unionism. It is a myth that Unionism and the Orange Order always had a stanglehold on the loyalty of Protestant people in the North.

than the empty symbols of Loyalist triumphalism.

Membership of the Orange Order, according to one account has declined from 80,000 to between 40,000 or 50,000 over the last 20 years.

That is why the parades issue has been so important in recent years.

Display

Drumcree last year was an open display of sectarian hatred. It exposed the poisonous heart of Orangeism and how deeply embedded it is in the structures of the Northern Ireland state.

But Drumcree was also a sign of Unionism's weakness and desperation.

The aftermath of Drumcree only added to the problem, with almost 60 percent of Protestants in a recent survey supporting negotiation to resolve the parades issue.

The Orange leaders are stuck with the monster they have created by making Orange marches and "protestant identity" the rallying point for loyalists over the last two summers.

Paisley is trying to exploit that crisis, criticising other Unionist leaders of betrayal. Paisley's willingness to direct the cynicism of ordinary Protestants in an extreme right-wing direction should not be underestimated.

The Portadown rally was leafleted with petitions in support of Loyalist thug Billy Wright and Paisley shared the platform with one of Wright's close associates.

But Paisley's ability to mobilise people is considerably weaker than 20 or even ten years ago. There were only six DUP protestors at the Ormeau Road march on Easter Monday, criticising the Apprentice Boys for agreeing to re-route their parade. Only 300 attended the last "protestant rights" march in Newtownards.

The crisis of Orangeism shows that there is a space to win the thousands of Protestants who despise bigotry. Building a strong socialist party which cuts through its poison by uniting Catholic and Protestant on a class basis is vital in the months ahead.

—Colm Bryce

Socialist Worker Rallies

Come along and hear



Belfast

8pm, Thurs. May 1st
Holiday Inn Garden Court,
Brunswick Street.

Dublin

8pm, Wed. 23rd April, ATGWU
Hall, Middle Abbey Street.

Waterford

8pm, Thurs. 24th April,
ATGWU Hall, Keyser Street.

STRASBOURG ANTI FASCIST MARCH:

Thousands want to stop Le Pen

STRASBOURG's demonstration against the conference of the fascist Front Nationale could well mark a turning point in the struggle against Jean-Marie Le Pen and his cronies.

Since February, when FN second-in-command Bruno Megret made a comeback with his wife's terrifying election victory at Vitrolles, the wave of popular anger has turned into a tide of revolt against the racism of the National Front.

As the countless hundreds of students and workers—the railworkers of the CGT, the German engineering workers behind the IG Metall banner—streamed out of the Place d'Etoile in Strasbourg, the word "fascist" was on everyone's lips.

"A bas le fascisme" (down with fascism) and "Nous sommes tous des étrangers" (We are all foreigners) shouted the school children who had come with their teachers to stand up to Le Pen.

More grimly, the placards of *Ras l'Front*, the main group behind the demonstration, warned protesters: "Sort out the FN, before the FN sorts you out".

Underneath the carnival atmosphere there was a recognition shared by all, perhaps for the first time, that the FN and Fascism were one and the same thing, and that something had to be done.

Struggle

But there was also a recognition that the Socialist and Communist party were doing precious little by way of giving leadership to the struggle.

The headline in French liberal newspaper *Le Monde* summed it up by saying "The left was everywhere and nowhere".

The Communist Party contribution was to produce little stickers with the blue, white and red flag of France.

Which, strangely and unpatriotically, few people seemed to want to wear.

When the drama students of Strasbourg shrilly demanded the right to vote for immigrants, PS leader Lionel Jospin walked quickly past.

The applause the Left leaders received was mixed with boos, whistles and cries of "Go Home".

Young communist party activists urged people to "get involved in politics" to defeat Le Pen.

But the politics of the communist party were ambiguous, to say the least, on the subject of racism and illegal immigration.

For the vast crowds of young people milling through the streets of Strasbourg, the demand for a political alternative was in the air.

People wanted a different sort of politics, a different sort of society.

Few people seemed to believe that simply voting for the PS or PC would stop Le Pen.

Some people were making the connection between the need to fight for a different kind of society and the fight against fascism.

Members of *Ras l'Front* chanted "no to this society, that only gives us unemployment and the likes of Le Pen."

Others were frustrated, wanting to know why, when so many were protesting, so little was

Catherine Curran travelled from Dublin to join the huge demonstration in Strassbourg against the French fascists, the National Front. Here she reports on what happened.

changing.

One woman accused the trade union leadership and politicians of having demobilised the mass strikes of December 1995, of promising superficial changes but making sure that things stayed the same underneath.

The inactivity of the Socialist and Communist party leaders, their vague hope that this wave of revolt can be quietly translated into votes for them without having to take a stand against racism, is pushing many young French further to the left.

But the Strasbourg demonstration ended with the vast majority returning to their coaches, and going home with the question "what next?" still unanswered.

More than ever, a revolutionary alternative is needed, not just in France but across Europe.

Had revolutionaries been present in sufficient numbers on Saturday, we could have convinced the majority of the need to physically confront the National Front, to stop the conference taking place rather than simply marching on the other side of town.

Police

The idiocy of respecting the law and the police was clearly shown in the aftermath of the riots, when four members of the Front National joined with the police in attacking and arresting demonstrators.

The nazis were given suspended sentences.

Some of the demonstrators got three years in prison.

By preventing the FN from marching, by placing mass pickets on their meetings and preventing them from taking place, a mass anti-fascist movement could easily smash the FN.

Socialist Worker's sister organisation, SI, is involved in the attempt to stop Le Pen marching on May Day in Paris.

With the present mood among many French people, Le Pen could be stopped in his tracks.

But rooting out the menace of fascism in the long term means getting rid of the unemployment and despair that is bred in the capitalist system.

THE LABOUR PARTY:

A record of and

AS THE Labour Party holds its annual conference in Limerick, there are few signs of dissent.

The party claims that it has brought about major improvements from its long period in office.

KIERAN ALLEN argues that Labour has presided over a growing gap between the rich and the poor.

THE FIANNA Fail leader Sean Lemass used to taunt Labour about its lack of radicalism.

He said that "so long as they cannot be accused of being even pale they think they have fulfilled their function to the Irish people".

Yet the Labour Party today under the leadership of Dick Spring is far more right wing than even Lemass dreamed.

It is even less radical than when it was led by Brendan Corish, who was a member of the Knights of Columbanus, the secretive right wing Catholic organisation.

Corish and the Labour Party in the 1960s defended investment in the public sector.

He justified entry into Coalition only as because there was a national emergency presented by the arms crisis.

Under Corish, Labour was even bold enough at one stage to claim that 'its objective was fundamental change in society, not a mere reforming programme'.

The Labour Party today no longer talks like that. Instead it has fully embraced capitalism.

Attacking

It now prides itself on attacking public sector workers. When he was seeking election in 1992, Dick Spring pledged to support Aer Lingus workers.

But in the five years he has held office, the workforce has been cut by nearly a thousand jobs.

A similar pattern has emerged throughout the public sector.

While jobs losses and demands for more flexibility increase, the pay of semi-state directors escalate.

Today the director of Telecom, Alfie Kane earns £200,000 a year while he demands more sacrifices from his workforce.

Yet a decade ago, the left wing figures in the Labour Party such as Michael D Higgins and Emmet Stagg argued that capitalism could be reformed by expanding the state sector.

The Labour Party used to claim that it was weak in Coalition because it did not hold key ministries like Finance.

But when Ruairi Quinn took over as Minister for Finance it did not make the slightest bit of difference.

Even the *Sunday Business Post* labelled his first budget, 'Ruairi's Bourgeois Budget' because of the amount of tax concessions it gave to the rich.

Before Quinn took office Corporation Tax on company profits stood at 40%.

Now it has been reduced to 36%. When workers were given a slight concession on PAYE tax rates, Quinn demanded that they take low pay rises in return. But nothing was ever demanded of the employers.

Labour's shift to the right reflects a general pattern across Europe.

In the British General Election, almost every commentator has pointed to the similarity between Labour's programme and that of the Conservatives.

In other countries such as Belgium, Italy and Spain the Labour Party have become a vehicle for corruption and graft.

The shift rightwards reflects the changes in capitalism itself.

Labour Parties pretend that their hold of government office brings reforms. In reality, it depends on the state of the capitalist economy.

Declines

In the 1960s, although Fianna Fail was a right wing party it could grant significant reforms in social welfare, health and free education.

The same thing happened in the post war Britain in the 1950s with the Conservatives.

However, as the rate of profit in the global system declines and recession become more frequent, there is less scope for reform.

Labour Parties who seek to both manage capitalism and grant some benefits to workers are forced to take measures which to raise the level of profit. Invariably this means increasing the rate of exploitation of workers.

Unusually, the Irish Labour Party has been in a Coalition at a time of unprecedented growth. But its record of reform has been meagre.

It can point to no serious attempt

'But we keep the PDs out!'

Labour's efforts to be re-elected rest on only that it can keep the Progressive Democrats out of government.

According to Spring the PDs have an 'uncaring, self centred attitude to any real issues affecting the wider community'.

But Labour itself has adopted many of the policies championed by the PDs on law and order and support for business.

It had no problem sharing Coalition with the PDs partner, Fianna Fail.

It is in government with the PDs main competitor for votes, Fine Gael and gets on with them so well that Joe Clarke claimed he could not find any difference between the PD party and the overall government.

Spring's aim is to conjure up a Thatcherite monster which his own party look slightly better. It is an old trick.

In the late eighties the union leaders argued for social programmes by claiming that they would help to save Labour from going down the PD road. But their hypocrisy was shown when they continued to co-operate with Fianna Fail when it was in government with the PDs.

In the coming election workers should vote for socialist parties who are standing in many constituencies and give their Labour before the PDs.

But they should also recognise that their best defence against free marketeers in every party is strong militant and independent unions.

to re-distribute wealth. Instead it boasts that it has inflicted sacrifices on workers.

As a government spokesperson put it in an interview with a Belgium

newspaper, it has 'the world's most successful policy'.

If Labour cannot do better when the Irish economy is then it never will.

LOOK AFTER THE RICH

Labour Minister for Finance, Ruairi Quinn believes that the plenty of incentives he has:

- Cut corporation tax twice since coming to office
- Reduced the tax on company cars, by saving of £600 a year
- Directors who got valued at over £2m
- Cut the inheritance tax for big farmers
- Cut PRSI payments for employers, giving extra £15,000 for each worker they employ

Civil liberties

In the last five years, civil liberties have been eroded with the active support of the Labour Party.

■ **Public Order Act:** People can be sent to prison for 6 months for using abusive words, occupying a building or failing to disperse on the word of a Garda.

It was supposed to stop nuisance behaviour in working class housing estates. But the first group threatened were TEAM Aer Lingus workers.

■ **Right to Bail:** Labour backed Fine Gael in a referendum to remove bail. 600 innocent people will spend time behind bars each year awaiting trial.

■ **Prison Places:** Labour has backed the campaign to build more prisons—but it never dared to lock up the beef barons who carried out fraud on a massive scale.

The liberal agenda

The Labour Party say that they have helped to create a liberal and pluralist Ireland. But:

- Teachers and nurses can now be sacked if their private lives conflict with the ethos of the Bishops.
- Schools boards continue to be dominated by parish priests who have no experience of education.
- No law has been introduced to give effect to the Supreme Court judgment on the X case.
- Divorce is costly.

of sell-outs betrayals



Ruari Quinn: talking to friends in big business perhaps?

What sort of an alternative do we need to Labour?

In the next election, the Socialist Workers Party will challenge both the right wing parties and the sell-outs of Labour in a number of constituencies. (See Page 10)

But *Socialist Worker* approaches the election in a different way to every other party. We are saying openly that a socialist TD can only offer a voice of anger in the Dail. Even if socialists held the majority of seats they could not use that institution to bring a fundamental change from capitalism. To break the open and hidden power of capital, you have to mobilise the power of workers. Votes alone would not prevent the rich sabotaging attempts to impose a minimum wage or an end to redundancies. Workers will have to go into struggle against the rich and powerful. The SWP offers a revolutionary socialist alternative to Labour—one that is committed to break capitalism rather than managing it.

What do socialists say?

Nato moves eastward

NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, is moving eastwards. At NATO's summit in Madrid this July Bill Clinton proposes to invite up to five East European states to join the alliance. The main candidates are Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Romania.

This move formally to incorporate Moscow's old client states into the Western military bloc has aroused the almost unanimous fury of the Russian establishment.

Boris Berezovsky, the pro Western banker who is now deputy head of the Russian National Security Council, called NATO expansion "a decision which is totally aggressive with regard to Russia".

NATO's eastwards expansion is indeed a policy that only became feasible following the eclipse of Russian power after 1989.

Nevertheless, some of the more thoughtful Western commentators are critical of the move. George Kennan, Washington's leading Russian specialist for much of the 20th century, warned recently that NATO expansion "would be the most fateful error of American policy in the entire post Cold War era".

The basic trouble is that NATO is supposed to be a defensive military alliance under which all member states are bound to treat an attack on one of their number as an attack on them all.

Even during the Cold War the fundamental pledge that this represented—that the United States, would launch the Third World War with Russia if any of its European allies were attacked—lacked credibility.

The introduction of a new generation of so called "theatre nuclear weapons"—cruise missiles and the like—in Europe during the 1980s was originally intended to reassure nervous NATO partners that they really did enjoy Washington's nuclear protection.

But if the rulers of a country as important as West Germany were worried then that the US wouldn't go to war to save them, how plau-

The US administration sees what is a potentially very dangerous move as an opportunity to extend Western, and in particular American, domination eastwards.

sible is the idea that Washington would unleash a nuclear Amageddon to protect Poland or Romania against a revived Russian some time in the future?

Some commentators think that when the US Senate which must ratify NATO expansion by a two thirds majority-wakes up to the implications of the new military obligations Clinton is proposing it will block the move.

Undoubtedly the US administration sees what is a potentially very dangerous diplomatic move as an opportunity to extend Western, and in particular American, domination eastwards.

Devised

This is what NATO has been about since its inception in 1949. Its formal justification was the American and British strategy—originally devised, incidently by George Kennan—of "containing military" power in Eastern Europe with a rival alliance.

In fact, it served as a means of creating a bloc of West European states firmly under American political and military leadership. Ostensibly NATO was supposed to defend democracy.

But in Greece after the Second World War American and British aid allowed a monarchist regime full of former Nazi collaborators to crush the popular movement that had fought the German occupation.

When a giant wave of workers' and students' struggles threatened this regime in the mid-1960s, the army seized power using NATO plans.

In the mid-1970s Washington and its senior NATO part-

ners intervened more discretely to mobilise right wing opposition to the Portuguese Revolution and to block the Italian Communist Party's entry into government.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War deprived NATO of its rationale.

But it was too useful a tool of US power for Washington to allow it to follow the Warsaw Pact into oblivion.

So the US devised the idea of a "new European security architecture" under which NATO would be responsible for maintaining order throughout a continent destabilised by the fall of the Russian empire.

The result has been very direct and detailed intervention by Washington and its allies in individual countries, often with disastrous results.

NATO forces have been responsible for enforcing on Bosnia the Dayton agreement which perpetuates the results of ethnic cleansing.

Albania's "democratic" tyrant, Sali Berisha, benefited from generous Western aid and strong American backing.

Clinton's new secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, has taken responsibility for pushing through NATO expansion on "a very fast track". She is an appropriate instrument of this policy.

As American ambassador to the United Nations she defended the deaths of Iraqi children from malnutrition and disease caused by Western Sanctions as an acceptable price for isolating Saddam Hussein. This is the spirit in which we can expect to see NATO expansion pursued.

— ALEX CALLINICOS

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plenty of incentives.
He has:
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twice since coming to office.
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The life of Alexandra Kollontai:

A recent documentary on RTE brought the life of Alexandra Kollontai to a new audience. The programme showed that the Russian revolution brought huge gains in the struggle for womens' liberation. Unfortunately it also perpetrated some old myths about the Russian revolution. Here Simon Basketter sets the record straight.

Alexandra Kollontai was born in St Petersburg in 1872. Her father was a Tsarist general and she led a privileged existence until the age of 22.

She had some friends who were revolutionaries but it was when she visited a textile factory and was appalled by the conditions of the women workers that her ideas changed. When the workers took part in a city wide textile strike Kollontai became a convinced revolutionary.

She said that "women and their fate occupied my life and concern for their lot brought me to socialism." She believed that the liberation of women would come through the fight to liberate society as a whole.

After the Russian revolution of 1905, she was forced into exile and joined with the German socialist Clara Zetkin in building an international grouping of women socialists. Kollontai and Zetkin attempted to organise women workers, and link the struggle for womens rights to the struggle for socialism.

This brought her into fierce debates with middle class feminists who wanted to unite all women for reforms of the law. Kollontai commented that "They tried to construct an idyllic, mixed union of grand lady employers and domestic servants. They strove to organise domestic servants under the vigilant eye of their mistresses."

Against the idea of all women uniting, Kollontai argued that working women had to fight alongside men to end capitalism.

"There is no independent womans question. The woman question arose as an integrated component of the social problem of our time. The liberation of woman as a member of society a worker, an individual, a mother, and wife, is possible therefore only together with the solution of the general social question, with the fundamental transformation of the present social order."

During the first world war Kollontai moved back to Russia and joined the Bolsheviks because of their implacable opposition to the war.

The conditions of women in Russia were appalling. Russian law stated that a wife's duty was "to obey her husband as the head of the family — to be loving and respectful, to be submissive in every respect and show him every compliance."

In reality, this meant the wife was to follow the husband wherever he went. She was not allowed a passport or take a job without his permission. A husband got control of any property or money a woman had on marriage. In peasant areas women were still sold to the highest bidder.

Intense poverty and the lack of contraception meant that infanticide was common. Unsafe abortions cost almost as many lives as childbirth in the field or at the factory bench. There was no

An inspiration for revolution



The struggle of women workers like those above from 1913 was central to the life of Alexandra Kollontai (inset)

protection for women in industry and casual prostitution was rife.

Kollontai and the Bolsheviks set out to change all this. During the First World War women had taken over mens' work in the factories. They learned new skills and built new forms of organisation.

The upsurge of revolutionary feeling at the end of the war naturally affected these women. As Kollontai put it.

"At the time of unrest and strike actions the proletarian woman, downtrodden and without rights suddenly grows and learns to stand tall and straight... participation in the workers movement brings the woman worker towards her liberation, not only as a seller of her labour power but as a woman."

Women textile workers of Petrograd started the revolution in 1917 when their march on International Womens Day turned into a general strike. The protests eventually brought down the Tsar when soldiers came over to the side of the revolution.

Later, after workers took power in October, the Bolsheviks made huge attempts to carry through the liberation of women. As Lenin put it in 1919

"In the course of two years in one of the most backward countries in Europe, more has been done to emancipate women than has been done in the last 130 years by all the enlightened "democratic republics" of the world taken together".

Equal pay was made compulsory in law. Civil marriage was instituted, whereby any couple could join together freely and separate again as freely. The distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children was abolished. Di-

idealists Kollontai having to battle against the undemocratic Bolsheviks led by Lenin. This couldn't be further from the truth. During the Russian Revolution huge debates took place over all sorts of issues.

"There is no independent womans question. The woman question arose as an integrated component of the social problem of our time. The liberation of woman as a member of society a worker, an individual, a mother, and wife, is possible therefore only together with the solution of the general social question, with the fundamental transformation of the present social order."

orce was made simple and free. Abortion was introduced free in soviet hospitals.

Communal kitchens and laundries were set up to alleviate the burden of childcare and house work. Kollontai described it as follows:

"Communal feeding has established itself with the population, as an inevitable element in life. In Petrograd during 1919-1920 almost 90 per cent of the population was fed communally..."

"The separation of kitchen from marriage is a reform no less important than the separation of Church and state."

Although politicians talk today about a liberal and pluralist Ireland, hardly any of the recent reforms measure up to the changes in backward Russia in 1917.

The RTE documentary could only explain these changes by presenting an

ing the aspiration of the revolutionary legislation a reality.

It organised conferences of thousands to discuss the implementation of the new laws and to deal with the specific issues of women workers. The Zhenotdel at its height had 58,000 delegates representing a huge number of women.

The delegates worked for 2-3 months at a time organising communal institutions for dining, hospitals and schools. They sat as judges in many of the Russian courts. They organised campaigns to mobilise women against the right wing Whites during the civil war.

As well being active in medical aid and work brigades, many women fought side by side with men in regiments at the front and led more than a few.

They organised literacy campaigns and produced a newspaper *Kommunistka*, which Kollontai edited.

Kollontai advocated sexual liberation, arguing for freedom in personal relationships. In her pamphlet, *Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle*, she wrote that the old ideas about sex and the family were based on property relations and the inequality between the sexes.

In a new society new forms of relationships needed to be worked out. Old relationships based on property, want or fear would be replaced by free choice.

However, the liberation of women was tied to the fate of the revolution itself. The sweep of idealism, courage and soaring hopes of the Bolsheviks eventually crashed against the backwardness of Russia and the civil war. Russia emerged from seven years of the civil war after having defeated 14 foreign invading armies with its economy in tatters and the working class dislocated.

Kollontai had always argued that the structure of society shaped its human relationships.

Russia under Stalin became a hideous distortion of the gains of October. Abortion was criminalised and women were awarded medals for having babies. Marriage and motherhood became the highest achievements of women. Relationships were not about liberation but for production.

Ideas of free love and sexuality were attacked. As society became subservient to the interests of the bureaucracy and accumulation, so sexual relations to become subservient to the same goals.

Tragically Kollontai was not isolated from these changes. She managed to avoid the purges that ended the lives of her generation of Bolsheviks by joining the diplomatic core and withdrawing from politics. Her last writings even praised Soviet motherhood and the home.

Despite her eventual capitulation, her early commitment to the potential of ordinary people to overthrow the muck of ages and to liberate themselves and every aspect of their lives should be an inspiration for us today.

sport

Profit and the sporting life

FOR MANY people in the world, sport is one of their main forms of recreation. It provides a sub-culture of escapism, whether that be to escape from the poverty of the slums of South America or a switch-off from the drudgery of work.

But for decades sport and recreational time has been seen by big business as a profitable and marketable commodity. It has used its control over sport to make vast profits from not only human labour but human activity.

Sporting activity has gone through many stages and phases in the past decades, most recently involving the jogging revolution and the keep fit phenomena. All these phases have been directly influenced by how society is operated by capitalism.

The argument for these shifts has been the make up of work practises. When our working week becomes longer and more intense, leisurely pursuits in our "free time" becomes extra important. Thus "free time" that we have off work has become an extension of capitalist production.

Market

Big business has seen the market for such activities become another product to buy and sell at their command.

Probably the best example of how a game and a global pastime has turned into a business is football. Football has always been hailed as the "people's game" but now football and business are inseparable, according to Alan Sugar.

Sugar is a rich businessman and director of the Tottenham football club. "When 3 o'clock comes on Saturday, it's no longer about what's happening on the pitch, it's how is my business doing," he says.

Football clubs are no longer just making headlines on the back pages, but on the financial ones as well. Most Premiership teams are now quoted on the stock exchange. Giant corporations such as Nat West and City of London Firms have taken over clubs.

Huge investments are being pumped into the football renaissance.

Because of the Bosman ruling money is often not made in the players market, but from the spin offs from the game.

The *Guardian* newspaper carried a report on the finances of Britain's richest club, Manchester United, "Of United's £60m turnover last season, £23m came from a surprising source: Merchandising everything from replica shirts to bedside lamps.

"To put the £23m into

Income from Murdoch's television empire, is estimated to be worth £670m to English clubs from 1996 to 2001. When the pay per view system is introduced, this will generate incredible amounts of money for big business.

perspective, we are talking a figure larger than the entire annual turnover of any Premiership club, except Newcastle

The other spin offs is the colossal amounts of money from television rights. Income from Murdoch's television empire, is estimated to be worth £670m to English clubs from 1996 to 2001.

The television revolution has only just begun for coverage of sporting events. When the pay per view system is introduced, this will generate incredible amounts of money for big business.

Investment

The English Premiership is only the tip of the iceberg, when it's come to investment. In regards to advertisement, business sees the cult of sport as a perfect way of endorsing their products.

Drinks companies now invest billions in sport every year. The drinks industry has almost has a monopoly on sporting events.

All the national football leagues in Britain and Ireland are now sponsored by alcohol firms, but the irony is that football violence has always been associated with alcohol consumption.

Sport manufactures like Nike, which had a turnover of £4.7b in the U.S, has always been notorious for employment of child labour in Asia.

Other firms use a system of 'commodity chains' to subcontract out the manufacturing of branded sportswear to countries like Indonesia and then to sell on at highly inflated prices.

Modern sport ideology is all about being extremely competitive, beating records, scores and clocks.

In this way sport has now almost become a mirror image of capitalist society. In the past, physical fitness was seen as an attribute necessary to enter the military.

Now physical fitness is seen as a commodity to further the profits of capitalism.

—GINO KENNY

film

Roisin Cronin looks at the controversial movie "The People versus Larry Flynt"

Liberal hero or sexist villain

IF YOU believed what movie producers say then you'd think *The People versus Larry Flynt* was the story of a real American hero, someone who was prepared to risk everything to defend freedom of speech.

But of course the Larry Flynt at the centre of this film is no hero.

He's a big businessman who has made a fortune out of the pornographic magazine, *Hustler* that puts forward the most disgusting views on women.

Hustler isn't just a nasty magazine that month after month publishes pictures of naked women. It's got a vicious right wing anti-woman, anti-black, anti-gay ideology behind it.

Ideology

One of the best known *Hustler* covers is the one from 1978 which featured a woman being fed through a meat grinder. Written underneath was, "We will no longer hang women up

like pieces of meat". Just to show how sincere they were a "Prime Cuts" feature inside showed naked women sandwiched between burger baps, and covered in bolognese sauce on a plate of spaghetti.

Notorious

In 1983 Flynt published a notorious postcard after a woman had been gang-raped on a pool table in Massachusetts.

The postcard featured a naked woman lying on a pool table. Underneath was written, "Greetings from New Bedford, Mass. The Portugese gang-rape capital of America".

One of the cartoons that has appeared in *Hustler* fea-



Woody Harrelson as pornographer Larry Flynt

ured a black man caught in a mousetrap after going for the bait which was a piece of watermelon.

The People vs Larry Flynt, however, does not set out to tell the story of a pornographer who has

made millions out of the degradation of women and minorities.

Instead, it tells of a boy who came from nothing to end up making \$30 million a year, and committed himself to defending free speech under the first amendment of the US constitution.

The film shows how Flynt has consistently antagonised the Moral Majority in the US.

In 1978 he was shot by a right-winger outside a Georgia courthouse. He is as a result confined to a wheelchair, albeit a 14 carat gold one.

In 1983 Flynt was sued for libel by Jerry Falwell, a leading light of the Moral Majority, following a reference in *Hustler* to Falwell having had sex with his own mother. The jury awarded Falwell damages of \$200,000 but in 1987 the Supreme Court found in Flynt's favour after he appealed it.

Hence his hero-like status as someone who put his spine on the line to defend his principles.

Certainly

But the fact that he is despised by the right in the US certainly doesn't automatically make him a good guy, and this is something what the makers of this film seem to have forgotten.

Certainly the politics of the likes of Falwell deserve to be held up to ridicule, which is what they say they set to do.

This film, however, goes beyond this and attempts to set Flynt up as, in the producer's own words, "the last great crusader".

The People vs Larry Flynt does, however, raise the debate about whether or not magazines like *Hustler* should be banned.

But censorship is no answer. To get rid of pornography we need much more than laws to ban degrading images of women.

It involves tackling the roots of women's oppression that lie deep within class society.

Meanwhile, I think we can do without a film that glorifies someone who has made a fortune out of the degradation of women.

—Des Barrow

journal

The end of the Sandinistas

THE NEW International Socialism Journal, published by the Socialist Workers Party in Britain, is an excellent read with a range of articles on Nicaragua, the crisis in education, the politics of Noam Chomsky and the Internet.

The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua, recently revisited in Ken Loach's film *Carla's Song*, was a beacon of hope for the left internationally throughout the 1980s.

Mike Gonzalez, who provided a powerful left wing critique of the Sandinistas throughout the 1980s, looks back on the Sandinista regime and its aftermath, during which many of the former revolutionary leaders joined the 1990s scramble for wealth known as "La Pinata".

Failure

The failure of the Sandinistas was due not merely to the massive might of the USA ranged against this tiny nation, but to fundamental flaws within the politics of the Sandinistas themselves.

After all, there was massive international support for the new government.

Arguing against pessimism but in favour of a clear and critical analysis, Gonzalez concludes with reference to the newly emergent Movimiento Comunitario, struggling for change from below. He points out: "A revolutionary understanding ... grows out of a critical approach to the real history



of the struggle."

The same themes are dealt with elsewhere in ISJ No. 74. A critical appraisal of the work of Noam Chomsky, the American linguist and fierce critic of US imperialism, points to his strengths in both fields.

Chomsky was involved in the first demonstrations against the Vietnam War and was arrested in 1967.

Celebrated

He was a vocal critic of the Gulf War and celebrated the fall of the Eastern European dictatorships in 1990.

However, his rejection of Marxism leads him to avoid

the question of 'What is to be done', or to answer: "There's no one thing that's the right thing to do." So from writing in the 1960s that the Vietnam War was not a 'tragic mistake' but integral to the USA's position as capitalism's global policeman, he has moved to critical support of US intervention in the Balkans by 1996.

Myths

Elsewhere Colin Wilson challenges the myths about information technology and exposes the history of the development of the Internet and Bill Gates' Microsoft Corporation.

Far from limiting our ability to overthrow society or making class struggle redundant, these developments have simply created new layers of workers and bosses and new arenas for good old-fashioned working class resistance.

The Journal also includes further debate about human evolution and intelligence, a review by Christopher Hill of a new book on the English Civil War and a large article on the assault on education which the British Tories have pushed in the last 18 years and which Labour seems set to continue.

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 SWP 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 SWP aims to build such a party in Ireland.

Election roundup..... Election round up..... Election round

TEAM shop steward stands in Dublin

North Central

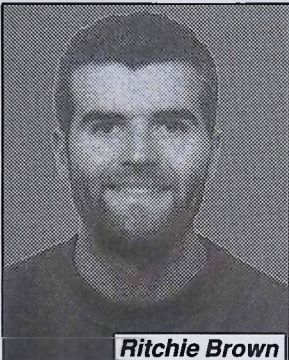
RITCHIE BROWN, a Team Air Lingus shop steward, is the candidate for the Socialist Workers Party in Dublin North Central. He left school at 17 to work as an apprentice painter in CIE before moving to TEAM.

During the 1994 Lock Out Ritchie played an active role in organising workers resistance during the 6 months of struggle.

During the lock-out workers approached TDs in the area to give them support.

"We were treated with contempt by the Fianna Fail TDs Ivor Callely and Sean Haughey. 200 of us put a picket on Callely's advice centre to show our anger.

"One of the things I will be highlighting in my campaign is the fact that Sean Haughey received £10,000 in a donation from Ben Dunne.



Ritchie Brown

In 1992, many TEAM and Aer Lingus workers voted for the Labour party candidate Derek McDowell who got over 10,000 votes in the constituency.

"We have been completely sold out by the Labour Party. Spring turned up in Aer Lingus before the election and made various promises to us -- but they stood aside while the semi-state management crucified us.

"We need an alternative voice for workers. The SWP doesn't just say vote for us and we will solve your problems. My campaign will point to why workers have got to organise to fight"

"There are a few local issues I will also be highlighting. I am totally against the plans to run a motorway tunnel through parts of Marino and East Wall. We need decent public transport and not motor way madness in this city"

Statement

"He has kept completely quiet about this and made no statement. The local SWP have taken up a petition demanding that he reveal the other donations he got from big business. When this campaign gets underway, you can be sure we will be putting him on the spot again".

THE SWP PLEDGE

TDs earn a basic rate of £34,000 a year. On top of that, they get overnight and travel expenses. Despite all their talk of hard work, they live a privileged life that is open to all sorts of corruption.

The Socialist Workers Party is opposed to this gravy train. That is why all its candidates in the forthcoming election have signed the following pledge:

"I pledge if elected to take only the average industrial wage and give the rest to advancing the struggle for socialism"

SWP Election Meetings

Jimmy Kelly campaign launched in Waterford

40 people turned up to the launch of Jimmy Kelly's campaign in Waterford. Jimmy is the chief shop steward in Waterford Crystal and has been an active member of the SWP for a number of years.

"There is a lot of talk about the success of the Celtic Tiger economy but there is a huge class divide in this country-- and it is growing bigger by the day.

"While workers are asked for ever more sacrifices, the rich are having a ball. Sales of expensive wines and house property prices have just rocketed.

"I am looking for the votes of workers who want to fight. I am often told that Waterford is a rural constituency. But I am not after the votes of the big farmers who have taken the bulk of the £722 million in subsidies that was handed out last year.

"In the last election Brian O Shea from Labour hijacked the votes of workers in this area. But Labour has been in Coalition with both main right wing parties. It is time we had an alternative party



Jimmy Kelly (centre) on a protest over job cuts at waterford Glass that stood by workers"

As well as being an active trade unionist Jimmy Kelly has also been involved in helping to fight water charges locally. Waterford was the scene of some of the biggest confrontations took place over water charges.

Canvassing

In Hillview, where canvassing for Jimmy Kelly has already begun, hundreds of people came out onto the streets to block scabs turning off their water supply. It was a turning point because the local corporation backed down afterwards.

"In this campaign I shall be insisting there is an amnesty for all non-payers. The rich have enjoyed three amnesties on their tax bills already. We even have even seen government Ministers like Lowry take advantage of this scheme. Why should working class people who stood up against an unjust tax be victimised now."

Several glass workers have joined Jimmy Kelly's campaign and have been leafleting the city. Despite fake opinion polls run by Fianna Fail and the PDs, all the signs are that there is real support for the campaign.

<p>Dungarvan:</p> <p><i>Why we need an alternative to the Labour Party</i></p> <p>Speaker: Jimmy Kelly (SWP candidate)</p> <p>Wednesday 14th, ATGWU HALL</p>	<p>Dublin South East:</p> <p><i>Why we need an alternative to the Labour Party</i></p> <p>Speaker: Peadar O Grady (SWP candidate)</p> <p>Trinity Inn, Pearse St. Wednesday 16th April.</p>	<p>Dublin South Central:</p> <p><i>Why we need an alternative to the Labour Party</i></p> <p>Speaker: Brid Smith (SWP Candidate)</p> <p>Thurs. 17th St Andrews Hall Rialto</p>
<p>WATERFORD:</p> <p>May Day Election Fundraiser Featuring Butterfly Band and late Disco</p> <p>Thursday May 1st Roxy Theatre Club, O Connell St</p>		

News from the SWP: Step up recruitment

THE SWP WILL have four candidates contesting the general election in the South. We want to win as many votes as possible for revolutionary socialist politics—but we

also want to do far more.

No matter what happens in the election, it is vital that far more people are taking Socialist Worker and are becoming involved in the party.

After the election, no matter what Coalition is in power, there will be increased attacks on workers.

The SWP has to be ready with a larger

organisation with roots in the unions and local areas.

The last few weeks have shown the real potential that exists to build a serious alternative to the Labour Party.

Built

After a number of weeks canvassing, the Drimnagh branch of SWP has now built up a regular door to door sale of fifty papers.

Recruitment to the party has also stepped up significantly.

In some areas, the support has been phenomenal with whole factories voting because of their anger with Partnership 2,000. The campaign has now laid the basis for a good socialist network Ireland's largest union.

SWP members in SIPTU have also been working flat out to win support for Carolann Duggan, the rank and file candidate for the union presidency.

SWP branch meetings

- BELFAST**
Meets every Wed at 8pm Central Hall Rosemary St.
- CORK**
Meets every Weds at 8pm in Dennehy's Pub, Cornmarket St.
- DERRY**
Meets every Tues in Badgers Bar at 8pm
- DUN LAOGHAIRE**
Meets every Tues at 8pm in Smyths Pub.
- DUNDALK**
Meets every Weds at 1pm in Dundalk RTC
- ENNISKILLEN**
Meets every fortnight Contact national address for details
- GALWAY**
Meets every Thursday at 7.30pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square
- LIMERICK**
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Costello's Tavern, Dominick St
- MAYNOOTH**
Contact 8722682 for details
- WATERFORD**
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in ATGWU Hall, Keyser St.
- DUBLIN NORTH-WEST**
Meets every Tuesday at 8:30pm in The Old Brogue, Dorset St.
- DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK**
Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm Contact 8722682 for details
- DUBLIN DRIMNAGH**
Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Black Forge (formerly the Bentley), Drimnagh Rd
- DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL**
Meets every Wed at 8:30pm in Conways, Parnell St.
- DUBLIN RATHMINES**
Meets every Wed at 8pm in O'Connells Pub, Richmond St.
- DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL**
Meets every Thur at 8pm in the Trinity Inn, Pearse St.
- DUBLIN TALLAGHT/CLONDALKIN**
Meets Monday at 8pm in the Steering Wheel, Clondalkin

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

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.....

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Phone.....

news & reports— politics; the unions

send in your reports: telephone (01) 872 2682, fax: (01) 872 3838

Irish Life

SIPTU workers join the fight

THE LOCK-OUT of sales staff in Irish Life has now entered its eleventh week. The three hundred members of MSF have now also been joined on the picket line by 60 colleagues in SIPTU.

The SIPTU sales staff balloted 4:1 in favour of coming out in strike and made the final decision to join the pickets at a mass meeting in Liberty Hall on April 4th.

The decision of SIPTU members to come out followed a mass meeting in Portlaoise of the MSF workers to discuss the latest proposals from the LRC. These were overwhelmingly rejected by the locked out workers.

Workers

As one MSF member said "The fellas are absolutely solid. The LRC proposals were almost exactly the same as those we rejected 10 weeks ago. The company are trying to impose a condition of "minimum standards" on our work and discipline us if we don't achieve them. This means any job security we have is gone and that is unacceptable."

The company even expects staff to set up offices in their homes and buy their own computers and modems.

Irish Life want to boost their already massive profits of £153 million this year by completely destroying the conditions of their workforce, some of whom are working for the company for over twenty years.

However, the action of the workers is starting to make the company waver. And the determination of the workers on the picket line is

growing. They are demanding they should be paid for the period they have been locked out. Ray Gordon of Irish Life has described this demand as "ridiculous". But as the workers pointed out it was the management who started the dispute and locked them out so they should pay people for the time they were suspended.

The decision of SIPTU sales staff to come out is a big step forward for the workers. But now the action should be escalated still further. A firm instruction to the "indoor" staff still working to come out in support of their colleagues should be issued by the union.

The fears of the union officials that they might lose members if they demanded solidarity action from the "indoor" staff should be rejected. The best way to build the union is to win this dispute. Even

pulling out a minority of the indoor staff would massively strengthen the action. SIPTU should also now push to bring out the catering staff.

The first mass picket on Irish Life was a big success and could be repeated. Delegations should also be sent around to MSF and SIPTU workplaces looking for support and collections.

Victory

A victory for the Irish Life workers will be a victory for every worker in the insurance industry. The chief executive of the company Jean Woods, is a hired hatchet person who has already pushed through major attacks in Irish Life in the UK.

Insurance bosses across the industry will be looking at the Irish Life dispute and trying to do the same if the company gets their way. That's why everything that can be done to secure victory for the workers is vital.

Killarney Towers Hotel Strike

17 staff from the Killarney Towers Hotel have been on strike since the end of March in defence of their right to join a trade union.

The owner of the hotel, Donal Ring, has refused to recognise their union SIPTU. This same Donal Ring is the owner of 2 other hotels in the town and the Munster Joinery. All are non unionised workplaces. He doesn't allow staff to eat any of the food. If

there is any extra left over he insists it goes out in the rubbish.

He closed the Killarney Towers after 1 week of the strike, stating he was renovating it. At time of going to press he was intending opening it as a leisure centre. There is a possibility that he will

Support the ambulance drivers

AMBULANCE drivers outside Dublin have voted by 87% to take strike action. They have seen how the nurses were able to turn the heat on the government are determined to follow suit.

The Health Services Employers Association have long sought to keep the ambulance drivers divided.

Now they are trying to tell drivers outside Dublin that they can have parity with workers

in the major city — but they still cannot follow their claim for re-structuring deal.

Over the last few years ambulance drivers have become increasingly skilled, with many are now being trained in cardiac services.

Some years ago the drivers in Dublin won parity with controllers and are supposed to get 92% of the controllers rate.

An offer of an extra £35 a week has been made to ambulance controllers but there are many strings attached. Some controllers, for example are being asked to move their place of work.

Outcome

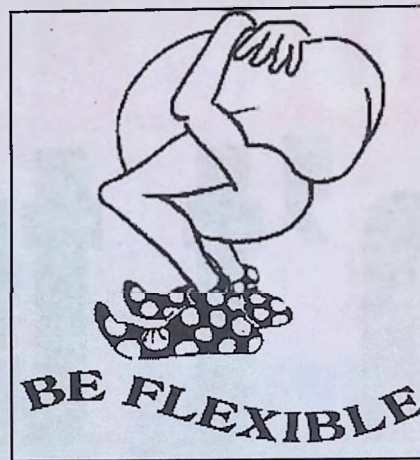
Whatever the outcome of this claim, the Dublin drivers want to follow suit on the pay rise.

Non-Dublin drivers, however, have not even won full parity with their Dublin colleagues and are now determined to do so.

If the strike goes ahead, the media will seek to blame the drivers for the strikes. But the reality is that a policy of divide and rule has been used by management.

The ambulance drivers should now be given full support. Ruairi Quinn should not be allowed to say that 'there is no money' in the country as he tried with nurses.

Nor should he be let say that any increase has to be taken out of the social welfare budget. He should simply pay the drivers what they are entitled to.



Telecom:

Backtrack on Partnership 2000

TELECOM EIREANN is trying to cheat its workers out of the 7.5 percent pay rise due under Partnership 2000.

Management want staff to forego their pay increases in exchange for shares in the company.

Telecom's union leaders are asking their members to swallow the idea of a stakeholding workforce. David Begg of the Communication Workers Union even quoted Karl Marx in defence of share ownership at a management conference last year!

But in a recent issue of bosses' magazine Business & Finance Begg gave the game away.

According to that article, 'If the workers do become shareholders, the CWU leader does not envisage regular interference by the union in the management of the company'.

Instead of shares giving workers influence over the firm, they will be used to make people work harder. Management will argue that job cuts and productivity rises are in the staff's own interest.

New work practices now being demanded will mean a real worsening of conditions.

Remove

Outsourcing will remove jobs from Telecom workers.

Flexible work practices and geographical mobility mean more work for each worker with no extra pay.

Flexible hours will effectively get rid of overtime payments. Moreover, for the first time workers will be asked to pay 2.5 percent of their wages into the company pension fund.

The company bonus scheme will also be scrapped.

The company wants to introduce performance-related pay.

Early retirement and voluntary redundancies will mean a loss of thousands more jobs.

This won't be the end of the story, one Telecom worker told Socialist Worker: "If we accept the cuts now they'll be back for a whole lot more when a real crisis hits."

"The union treats low wages and job losses as inevitable. We should oppose this package because every time we've given an inch management has come back and demanded a mile."

send some of the scabs who stayed working in the hotel to his other hotels. The strikers are determined to picket these hotels. He has also issued the strikers with their P45s. They are, in effect, being locked out.

Solidarity

The strikers held a meeting, which was attended by 80 hotel workers from the locality, in Killarney last week. They all were there in solidarity with the strikers. It was agreed that there should be a mass picket on the hotel.

Hotel strikers in the Royal Dublin won their dispute by holding mass pickets. These strikers can do the same.

The decision to escalate is welcome.

They are a determined bunch. Eileen Mayse, shop steward for the workers, is convinced they can win. "We have 250 years service between us. We are well experienced. We didn't walk out on a trivial matter. We didn't walk out for money" she stated. They just want something that everybody is entitled to.

TUI

Teachers to fight over mistreatment of part-timers

TEACHERS who are members of the TUI displayed their anger at the government during their annual conference in Ennis this year.

One of the main grievances was the treatment of part time teachers. 38% of all teaching is done by non-permanent staff.

One delegate said, "The government has rightly lectured Dunnes Stores on the treatment of casual staff but what is the point lecturing if a publicly funded institute treats casual staff as workers without rights".

Action

Dublin Institute of Technology lecturers are to start strike action in six colleges on April 10th against management refusing to abide by national agreements and legislation.

Boards of management all over the country have been trying to circumvent the Employees Protection Act 1991 by limiting part time staff to under eight hours. Sometimes they split the teaching hours to hire part timers instead of pro-

viding a full time job.

A recent contract at the newly updated Institute of Technology in Cork broke every law in the book. It was a zero hour contract denying sick pay, holiday pay and other rights.

The TUI has voted unanimously for nation-wide action

from May 1st in solidarity with DIT teachers if management do not comply with national agreements.

A solidarity network of lecturers has also been set up to communicate grievances, co-ordinate responses and put pressure on the union executive to carry out the action.

INTO

"Disappointed and angry"

TEACHERS are disappointed, angry and fearful" wrote Andy Pollak in the Irish Times after 800 delegates attended the Irish National Teachers Organisation's annual conference in Killarney.

The Employment Bill and Education Bill dominated the proceedings. Teachers are furious that the Labour Minister

for Equality, Mervyn Taylor, gave the Bishops the right to discriminate when hiring personnel. Under Section 37(1) of the Employment Equality Bill a teacher's private life can now be taken into consideration when applying for a job in a school.

Admit

This has already been happening informally. Teachers will often not admit to being separated, gay, non-Catholic, in a Catholic school for fear of being

discriminated against. According to another teachers union, the ASTI, three teachers have already been sacked because their life style does not conform to the Catholic Church. But Mervyn Taylor, has now made that legal.

The Education Bill was condemned for not taking any control of the Boards of Management away from the Bishops or the local priests. Niamh Breathnach is bringing in this bill and hails it as a huge step in education.

This is the bill that is also pro-

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

Inside:

**Labour Party:
A record
of sell-out
& betrayal**
-Pages 6 & 7

**Belfast
Workers
fight Tory
hospital
cuts** -Page 5

KICK OUT THE TORIES

Don't trust Blair

**BUILD A
SOCIALIST
ALTERNATIVE**

THE BRITISH TORIES look set to be kicked out at the General Election on May 1st.

For eighteen years the Tories launched a war on the poor in order to drive up the profits of the rich. £50 billion a year is now handed out on dividends for the wealthy to squander.

They also wrecked the peace process in a desperate effort to cling onto power.

Millions of people now want real change. But Tony Blair's Labour party is promising to do nothing to reverse the devastation of Tory rule.

Blair refuses to name a figure for the minimum wage or reverse the Job Seekers Allowance.

Refuses

He wants more privatisation, rather than less. He refuses to reverse the Tory laws that weakened the unions.

Today Republican politicians are looking a new Labour government to reopen the peace process.

Martin McGuinness has said that 'New kings, bring new laws', and has predicted that peace talks will open quickly.

But even if the talks started,

what change would they bring?

Labour's election manifesto has already ditched any commitment to supporting the goal of a united Ireland. Blair has said that there is only the width of a cigarette paper between his policies and the Tories on the North.

Alternative

There is an alternative to waiting for Blair to bring change. Workers themselves, Catholic and Protestant, should unite to defend their jobs and services.

If workers, for example, in the City Hospital and Royal Maternity hospitals in Belfast where units are being closed, took joint industrial action against closure, they could win massive solidarity.

But trade unionism alone cannot be enough in Northern Ireland. Everything about this state encourages workers to identify as either nationalist or unionist.

To overcome those divisions, you need socialist politics which see class as the main division in society.

Blair may have ditched socialism a long time ago — but there is a desperate need for these politics to overcome sectarianism in the North.

No party in the North stands for workers

NONE OF THE parties in the election in Northern Ireland stand up for workers.

The Unionist Parties are outright Tories. At a recent teachers conference, one Official Unionist spokesperson admitted that the party backed the 11 plus system of education which discriminates against working class children.

The Unionists Parties and the Tories specialise in trying to divide workers.

In Britain, the Tories try to use race and immigration to divide workers. In the North, the Unionists stood up hatred against Catholics.

Interests

The SDLP look after the interests of the Catholic middle class. These have experienced discrimination — but now they want to join the establishment.

The SDLP encourages workers to accept low wages in the multi-national plants. They don't like discrimination — but they don't mind the weak organisation that comes with a divided working class.

The one party that claims to be radical is Sinn Fein. But its a fake radicalism.

They want all Catholics, rich and poor, to unite. This is why they demand nationalist unity

DURING THE election, the Socialist Workers Party will be on the streets campaigning to build a socialist alternative.

■ In Derry and Belfast, street meetings are being held to put across the socialist politics.

■ Hundreds of posters have been produced saying: Break from sectarian politics; Don't Trust Blair; Build the Socialist Alternative.

■ On Mayday, the Belfast SWP will be holding a Rally for Socialism in the Holiday Inn Garden Court, Brunswick St.

■ Leaflets are also being distributed in a number of housing estates advocating a socialist alternative throughout the North.

The Socialist Workers Party is opposed to the sectarianism of the North state. We think that loyalism has served to divide workers while republican politics offer no way forward.

We are fighting for a united socialist Ireland free, from Orange or clerical bigotry.

If you want to get involved in building the missing socialist alternative, fill in the form below.

Join the Socialist Worker Party

I would like to join the Socialist Workers Party

I would like more information

Name.....

Address.....

.....Phone.....

Cheques/POs payable to Socialist Worker

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or PO Box 354, Tomb St Belfast

Give your name and address to your local seller or phone (01) 872 2682 or return form