

Socialist Worker

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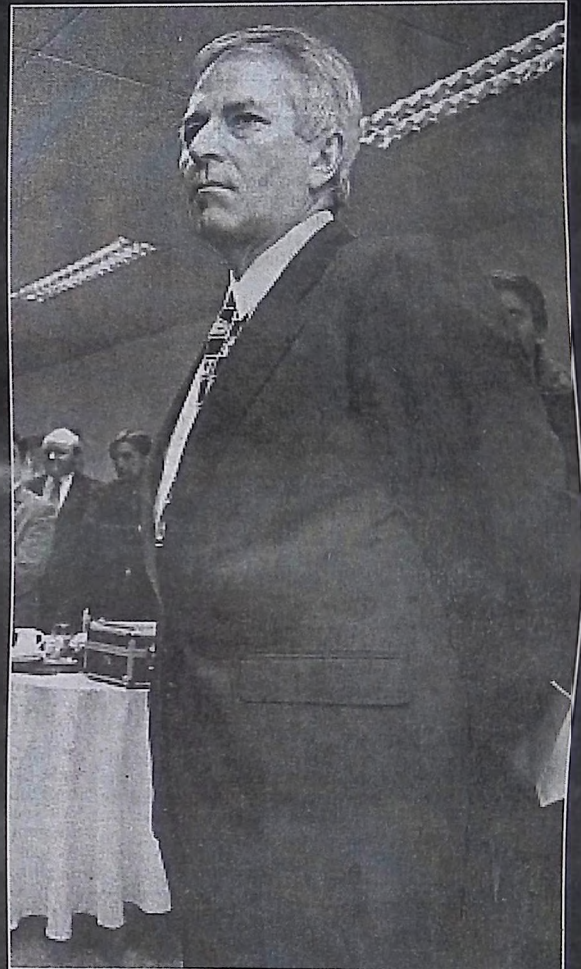
ARE WE SEEING A RETURN TO THE 1930s?

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For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p Solidarity price £1

McCreevy wants £200 extra per week for TDs...

**WE ALL
NEED
A 20%
WAGE
RISE**



McCreevy: 'More money than I know what to do with'

DUBLIN BUS drivers have fired the first shot in a pay revolt that is long overdue. They have submitted a 20% pay claim to halt the deterioration in living standards.

And they mean business. In a letter to their employers, the National Rail and Busworkers Union General Secretary, Peter Bunting states that, "We warn you that any prevarication on your part will be met with the full weight of our industrial power".

This is the type of language that has not been heard from union leaders for years. But it's just what we need.

Here are three good reasons why every worker needs a 20% pay rise.

★ We have been conned about the rate of inflation. The government says inflation is running at just 2 percent a year. But they do not include housing costs which eat up the biggest part of our wages. And they are using a Consumer Price Index that is well out of date.

★ The Gardai and the politicians are due to get big pay rise. After just two days of a 'blue

flu' the police were offered a 13 percent productivity rise. Now even the politicians have the cheek to ask for a £200 a week rise. If these dossers can claim a pay rise, then so can every worker.

★ Big business can well afford to pay up. The US multi-nationals claim they are getting the highest return on profits in Ireland. The banks are making over £2 million a day. The Irish stock market has gone through the roof with huge dividends being paid out for unearned income.

Workers have been conned by the partnership deals which have held back our wages. But these deals are now coming to a close.

The union leaders want them to continue because it gives them a quiet life where they can sit back and collect the union dues. But the rank and file are not having it. This is why every worker should follow the lead of the busworkers and put in a claim for a 20 percent pay rise now. Don't be fobbed off with talk of 'procedures' and 'reviews'. Just tell them all that a pay rise is the least we deserve.

McCreevy's builder attacks workers

SEAN DUNNE is a builder who completed a six bedroom house and stables on a 12 acre site in Clane, Co Kildare for Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy.

Dunne is also a prominent Fianna Fail supporter. He has apparently attended a number of FF fun-raisers, including one held last Christmas for Bertie Ahern.

His company DCD Building Ltd donated two cheques totalling £85,250 to FF.

The chairman of another of his companies, Manorbrook Homes, is Jim Lacey. Lacey recently resigned from his position in National Irish Bank following a controversy surrounding the banks overcharging on customer accounts. Lacey was also a prominent fund-raiser for Bertie Ahern.

Despite all this Dunne has not been called before the tribunal on planning to see if he

benefited in any way from these donations and contacts.

Instead he has been allowed get away with attacking workers who wanted to stand up for trade union rights.

When bricklayers were taken on at St Raphael's site in Celbridge, they asked to be put on PAYE direct employment. After a brief stoppage the developer agreed to this and for one week workers received

pay slips.

They were then told that the site was closing for holidays. But in fact new workers who were paid in cash replaced them.

After the bricklayers protested they were threatened with a High Court injunction and eventually sacked. And Fianna Fail still claim that they represent the 'plain people' of Ireland.

Forced to flee — forced to freeze

THE DEATH of two young boys on the Belgian national airline, Sabena plane that landed in Brussels in August has given an horrific example of why refugees flee their countries.

15 year old Yaguine Koita and Fode Tounkara, aged 16, were stow-aways who clung to the plane's landing gear and froze to death in a temperature of minus 55 degrees centigrade. They had fled from the poor west Africa state of Guinea.

They knew it was highly likely they would die so they left a handwritten note that was wrapped in their clothing. The letter is a plea to the people of Europe. It read, "We appeal to your kindness and soli-

arity to come to the rescue of Africa. "Help us: we are suffering enormously. help us. We have war, disease, not enough to eat. There are schools, but a great lack of education, of teaching.

"If you see that we have sacrificed ourselves and lost our lives, it is because we suffer too much in Africa and need your help to struggle against poverty and war. Please excuse us very much for daring to write this letter".

The letter prompted the Belgian development minister to promise more aid for Africa. Maybe John O'Donoghue should also read it and cut out his attacks 'economic' migrants.

Attacks on CE schemes

What's Harney got against single parents?

Corpo's rubbish profits

THE CORPORATION has been making the most of the 1997 Litter Act.

Not just by persecuting political parties trying to advertise meetings and events.

One Corporation worker speaking on Today FM explained that there are now 20 litter wardens in Dublin, each issuing about 400 fines a week.

The minimum fine is £25. That means that the Corporation are using the Litter Act to issue over £200,000 worth of fines per week!

RENT ALLOWANCE

THE GARDA'S demand for extra pay has thrown light on some interesting allowances they have.

One is an allowance of £2,060 for rent paid in cities.

Which really adds to the argument that there should be a special accommodation allowance for every worker to deal with the housing crisis in the Celtic Tiger.

Back to school benefit rip-off

Thousands of families on low incomes will be pushed further into poverty this autumn if the government has its way.

Due to the nominal increases in the social welfare payments this year many parents are slightly over the £250 income limit and are not entitled to the back-to-school allowance which helps to cover the cost of books, uniforms etc.

Peter, a lone parent with 3 children, who works on a CE scheme in the Loughlinstown Social

MARY HARNEY is pressing ahead with plans to slash the Community Employment Scheme from the start of September. One of reasons for the change is that single parents take up many of the places.

Harney hopes to cut the overall number of CE jobs from 37,500 to 28,000 this year. But this will only be the start of a serious run down.

She also wants to make it harder for people to get on the schemes. Instead of being eligible after six months unemployment, people will have to wait a year.

Harassment

In the meantime they will face harassment from social welfare officers to take up low paid work.

The age limit has been increased from 21 to 25 and Harney has also adopted a 'three strikes and your out'

Welfare office told *Socialist Worker* that "it's going to have an enormous effect on people. It will mean people have to spend a weeks wages on 'free education' that they just don't have."

Peter has come together with workers in other information centres around Dublin to organise protest action.

They plan to clog up the Social Welfare offices for a day in September with 1000's of applications for the allowance. To take part in this protest parents should contact Peter at 2821673 (mon-fri, 9am - 1pm)



Mary Harney

policy of allowing a maximum of three CE schemes in any individual's life.

Ever since the general election of 1997, Harney has made known her prejudice against single parents.

While she has been a Minister an unofficial policy has operated of cutting down the number of CE places given to single parents.

But these new restrictive measures will deal a blow to thousands of women who found that CE places offered flexibility and the prospect of a half decent living standard.

It will also destroy services in many local communities. Shay Ryan, a CE employee, explained, 'I do music therapy with people who are disabled. Percussion instruments

Alliance also expressed outrage at Harney's plans.

"Cutting back on socially necessary work in a booming economy is a real disgrace.

"In the past, many voluntary organisations supported partnership because their representatives were given access to a special forum.

"But what is the point of being on these forums when

the government is attacking the poor.

"We are not going to take these cuts lightly.

"Scheme workers are going to get on the streets and protest.

"The last time they tried to cut the schemes we stopped them through street mobilisations. We can do the same again."

Dail dossers demand a raise

McCREEVY wants politicians to get a 29 percent pay rise. That is equivalent to a £200 a week pay rise.

Yet over a third of workers in this country don't even earn £200 pounds a week.

While McCreevy wants to look after the dossers in the Dail, he has been lecturing workers about the need for pay restraint.

Yet 120 TDs have other sources of income besides their annual salary of £38,000 and extra expenses.

Land

One in five TDs are owners of agricultural land. They include Jackie Healy Rae, who has a 300 acre farm in Kilgarvan.

A few other own or part own pubs which explains why there was a successful revolt over the licensing laws.

They include Jo Jacob who is a Minister of State.

Others such as Alan Shatter and Sean Doherty derive an income from rented property and so have not been to the fore in demanding rent control.

One TD, John Ellis, from Sligo even has an involvement in a bank in Karachi, Pakistan.

Another, Liam Lawlor, is involved with a property developer in the Czech Republic.

Yet these over-worked, stressed out representatives want an extra £12,000 a year.

They even say that if you pay peanuts, you get monkeys to work for you.

Which only shows what they think the rest of us are.

ONE DAY STRIKE AND MARCH ON DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE.

Friday 27th

August, 3pm

Called by Scheme Workers Alliance Ring 87882091 for details

what we think

How McCreevy could use the budget surplus

FINANCE MINISTER Charlie McCreevy is sitting on a budget surplus of £1.7 billion. When the £3.3 billion gained from the sale of Telecom Eireann is added, McCreevy has £5 billion to spend.

This huge surplus means there is no excuse for the government not to spend money on improving public services and ending poverty.

Here are just some of the areas where the money could be used:

★ **FUND THE HEALTH SERVICE:** There are over 30,000 people on waiting lists for hospital treatment. Last year it was revealed that 110 people had died while waiting for heart surgery, from a waiting list of 1,400.

★ **BUILD LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSES:** Over 100,000 people are on the waiting lists for local authority housing. Yet last year Dublin Corporation built only 200 houses - one fifth of what it built a decade ago.

★ **ESTABLISH CHILD CARE FACILITIES:** Irish parents pay on average 20 percent of their taxed income on childcare, compared to a European average of just eight percent. The main reason is that the government provides no crèches.

★ **FUND PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** There are not enough buses in Dublin and the fleet is on average seven years old. The railway net-

work has been condemned as unsafe in many areas.

★ **DRUG TREATMENT:** There are 14,000 heroin users in Dublin but over 10,000 of them have no access to treatment facilities. Extra hospital beds and needle exchange programmes are badly needed.

McCreevy could use some of the money to alleviate the pools of poverty at the heart of the Celtic Tiger.

And the surplus is only the tip of the iceberg.

The £1.7 billion is largely based on increased tax receipts.

If wealthy tax dodgers were forced to pay up and if the rich began to pay a fair rate of tax there would be far more money to spend on improving our quality of life.

Instead McCreevy wants the tax on company profits to be steadily reduced to 12.5 percent.

When the boom runs out we could see even bigger attacks on public services as workers are forced to pay for the recession.

Instead of negotiating a partnership deal to keep wages down our trade unions should be going on the offensive.

They should be demanding that McCreevy spend the cash bonanza on decent public services and reverse the tax cuts for the rich so that these services can be maintained.

THE SAME OLD RUC



RUC members attack residents of the Ormeau Road.

"THEY DROVE their heavy boots into our ankles. They trailed women across the road and beat them out of view of the cameras. This was the RUC doing what it enjoys best - beating Catholic protesters off the streets".

This is how one socialist described his experience of the RUC riot on the Ormeau Road.

The cause of the trouble was a decision to allow an Apprentice Boys march through an area where

they were not wanted.

In previous years, the Apprentice Boys had jeered and used obscene gestures outside Sean Graham's bookie shop where local people had been gunned down by a loyalist assassin. Yet they still insist on crossing the Ormeau on their way to a march in Derry.

Protesters

The RUC never attack the Orange protesters even if they set road blocks and cause mayhem. But the slightest sign of resistance to their bigotry is met by batons and boots.

All of this makes Martin McGuinness' condemnation of the young people who rioted in Derry a bit rich. Someone who was part of a movement that organised "an economic bombing campaign" in the past has no right to condemn people who oppose the RUC with stones and petrol bombs.

The Orange Order does not represent the thousands of working class Protestants who want peace and an accommodation with their Catholic neighbours.

It is a bigoted organisation intent on sowing divisions between workers. That why it, and its armed wing in the RUC, should be opposed.

A blast from the past

HARRY BLANEY has tried to stop Donegal hospitals providing a vasectomy service. Now he is on his high horse again demanding a referendum on abortion.

He has been joined by two other independents, Mildred Fox and Tom Gildea, who barely say anything in parliament but say they are 'pro-life'.

Fianna Fail will probably jump to their request.

They won't want an election if the tribunals start to throw up more dirt about their corruption. They might also try to whip up some right wing fundamentalism when the Celtic Tiger starts to go down.

Socialists are opposed to another referendum on abortion.



Harry Blaney

There already has been a referendum when Youth Defence and SPUC were trounced on the issue of giving abortion information and allowing women to travel for abortion.

At the time people were told that if they did not vote for the government's proposal on the 'substantive issue' abortion would be legalised in Irish hospitals.

The majority voted to oppose the government - but they broke their promise to legalise abortion under certain circumstances.

Instead of another referendum we need to end the terrible situation where working class women have to raise hundreds of pounds to get an abortion in Britain - for no other reason than to protect the hypocrisy of Irish politicians.



join the socialists

If you would like to join the SWP then fill in this slip and return it to a *Socialist Worker* seller or send to Po Box 1648, Dublin 8.

- I would like to join the SWP
- I would like more information
- I would like to take _ copies of *Socialist Worker* to sell

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....Union.....Tel:.....



Turkey

West starves Africa of aid

AFRICAN countries have been starved of aid from the US, Britain and other rich countries.

The NATO alliance spent billions on bombing Serbia and Kosovo.

But the leaders of the NATO countries will not cough up to help some of the poorest countries in Africa.

Crisis

According to the United Nations, the humanitarian situation in Africa has reached "irrevocable crisis proportions".

Yet top UN official Sergio Vieira de Mello said that alarms put out by agencies like the World Food Programme had met with indifference.

"He said that a number of donor countries were experiencing stock market booms, budget surpluses and positive rates of growth, but overseas aid had dropped since the early 1990s from \$63 billion to \$48 billion," reports the Guardian.

In Angola, where the CIA channelled arms to



The west is more interested in sending arms rather than aid to the developing world

the right wing UNITA in the country's bloody civil war, an estimated 600,000 people are in acute need and up to three million more people could be on the edge of starvation.

In Somalia where US troops caused disaster when they invaded in 1992 — 300,000 people face immediate starvation and another one million people are on the brink of starvation.

Iraq

Sanctions kill

CHILDREN IN Iraq are dying at twice the rate of ten years ago because of the murderous effect of Western imposed sanctions.

A report last week by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned of a "humanitarian emergency" in the country.

The report found that in the centre and south of Iraq — where 85 percent of the population live — the mortality rate for under fives increased from 56 deaths per 1,000 in 1984-9 to 131 deaths per 1,000 in 1994-8.

Carol Bellamy, director of UNICEF, said that if health improvements of the 1980s had continued half

a million more Iraqi children would be alive today.

The UNICEF report confirms what campaigners against sanctions have been saying for years—that Western sanctions are killing the children of Iraq, while Saddam Hussein remains in power.

Meanwhile the US and Britain are not only continuing the punishing sanctions, but are also still bombing Iraq in their hidden and unreported war.

According to Robert Fisk in the Independent, the US and Britain have carried out nearly 500 air strikes against Iraq this year which have killed over 100 people.

General strike in Turkey

A GENERAL strike took place in Turkey against the government's plans to introduce devastating welfare and pension reforms.

The government is trying to raise the retirement age to 60 for men and 59 for women.

This is one of the conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund for the government to receive further loans.

Marched

Around 15,000 people marched in Istanbul and 10,000 in Ankara on Friday.

But the strike and demonstrations were much smaller and less effective than they could have been, allowing the government to renege on a promise to sideline the plans.

Two weeks ago the most prominent trade union leader calling for more action, miners' leader Semsi Denizer, was murdered in a killing that has all the hallmarks of being state sponsored.

The potential for a massive fight was shown on 24 July when a monster rally of 300,000 filled the centre of Turkey's capital city, Ankara.

Murder

But now, after Denizer's murder and with trade union leaders constantly delaying and suspending action, the momentum of the fight has begun to wane.

The government coalition, headed by social democrat Bulent Ecevit and including 12 fascist ministers, is intent on pushing through a whole batch of welfare reforms.

There is also still enormous anger at the welfare reforms among workers which could be harnessed to fight privatisations and other welfare attacks.

India and Pakistan

War threatened by desperate rulers

THE PROSPECT of all out war between India and Pakistan grew terrifyingly close after India shot down a Pakistani patrol plane.

Pakistan responded by firing a missile at two Indian fighter jets.

India and Pakistan are both now nuclear powers and have a history of bitter rivalry.

Dispute

The two countries were on the brink of all out war in their dispute over the state of Kashmir in June this year.

The leaders of both states have used the recent plane shootings and the conflict in Kashmir for their own cynical

purposes.

In India a general election is due in the autumn.

The Hindu chauvinist BJP party, which leads the current government coalition, is whipping up hatred against Pakistan to try to gain electoral advantage.

The Pakistani government is equally guilty of inciting a nationalist frenzy and last week called to "stop India in its tracks."

There have already been three wars between India and Pakistan since partition in 1947.

Another war could be even more horrific.

The only victors will be the nationalist warmongers, while the workers and peasants of both countries will pay a horrific price.

Eamonn McCann

Majority rule?

SOMETIMES, the way things are said says as much as what things are said.

Take Alistair Graham's account of why the Parades Commission gave the Apprentice Boys the go-ahead for marches in Derry and Belfast on August 14th.

It was, he explained, a reward for having "engaged in a quality process" with the Lower Ormeau Concerned Community and the Bogside Residents' Group.

And, speaking after the RUC's brutal intervention to clear Lower Ormeau residents from the road and let the Boys' march through, Graham referred to "the dignified and disciplined" demeanour of the marchers, in contrast with the "regrettable indiscipline" of the residents.

The Apprentice Boys' good behaviour wouldn't be forgotten, he promised. But the residents had done themselves no good at all.

The instinctive reaction of many will have been, who does this ridiculous retired British union bureaucrat think he is, talking to working-class people like a pompous teacher scolding the unruly pupils, while patting the good Boys on the head?

But of course, Graham's attitude is in line with the approach of New Labour generally. Blair and Mowlam see all Northerners as divided into two irrational tribes, each with its own distinct "culture" — Orangeism being, to their minds, the age-old authentic culture of the Protestants.

This patronising attitude is not only offensive, it is inaccurate. All the available evidence, as well as our own experience and common sense, suggests that people in the North, on the parades issue as on any other, are as capable as people anywhere of thinking along rational lines.

Challenge

Last year's extensive "Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey" threw up figures which challenge this notion of "two tribes" and point the way towards a non-sectarian approach.

The survey showed that while Catholics and Protestants were not at one on the parades issue, a majority of Catholics and — by 39 percent to 35 percent — a majority of Protestants agreed that marches should not be allowed through areas of "the other tradition" without the agreement of residents. (The Catholic majority — 89 percent to 3 percent — was, of course, much larger.)

This finding, on its own, explodes the notion that every Northern Protestant feels that his or her aspirations and identity are bound up with the question of whether the Orange Order can get down the Garvaghy Road or the Apprentice Boys down the Ormeau.

That 39 percent of Protestants — plus the 26 percent who were either undecided or were "don't knows" — are the key to a solution to the parades issue based on a frontal challenge to the sectarianism of the "loyal orders". But New Labour's approach to the North has no place for people who don't fit into a neat sectarian pattern.

Other figures from the same survey confirm the relevance of the politics of class rather than of community to Northern issues.

Asked whether they believed there is one law for the rich and one for the poor, 70 percent overall said Yes — only 14 percent said No. For Catholics the figures were 71 percent Yes, 14 percent No. For Protestants — 69 percent Yes, 16 percent No.

Asked whether "ordinary working people" get a fair share of wealth, 66 percent of Catholics and 61 percent of Protestants said No. Only 16 percent of Catholics and 21 percent of Protestants said Yes.

In other words, there is a huge overlap in the way Protestants and Catholics think on a broad range of issues — including as sharply "divisive" an issue as parades.

New Labour averts its eyes from this fact for the same reason it averts its eyes from problems of poverty, job insecurity, NHS underfunding etc., etc. It doesn't want to know about the politics of class.

It falls to socialists on the ground to make the argument. This means rejecting entirely the Nationalist perspective of looking to Bertie Ahern (and even Bill Clinton!) for backing, and instead appealing directly to Catholic and Protestant workers on the basis of their common class interests to stand together against bigotry.

Bigots close pregnancy advice centre

THE ULSTER Pregnancy Advisory Association has closed following a campaign of harassment and intimidation by anti-abortion bigots.

Their offices had been constantly picketed by members of Precious Life, the Northern version of Youth Defence.

Most of UPAA's counsellors worked on a voluntary basis from their homes across the North. Precious Life got hold of their addresses and picketed them.

Picketed

One of the first counsellors to be picketed was a 71 year old woman in Coleraine.

But the turning point came in July when a bigot took an axe to the front door of their offices in Belfast, broke into the office, tore up the floor boards and set the office alight.

Precious Life is linked to Human Life International which in turn has connections with anti-abortion groups in the US which bomb abortion clinics and murder doctors.

After the arson attack, the UPAA women were afraid that their houses would be the next target.

The closure of the UPAA leaves a huge gap in non-directive counselling and information services for women in the North.

The most recent available figures, for 1997, show that of the approximately 2,000 women who travel from the North for abortions each year, about 1,300 received counselling from a pro-choice agency.

Three out of four of these had relied on the UPAA, the rest went through the Family Planning Association (FPA).

Stand up to 'pro-life' thugs

The Family Planning Association is now one of the main places where women can get information on abortion.

Audrey Simpson of the FPA told *Socialist Worker*: "We have sent a letter to every GP in Northern Ireland telling them that there is still a non-directive pregnancy counselling service available through the FPA. We also understand that some doctors in family planning clinics will now start to refer women directly to England."

Yet the Belfast offices of the FPA are picketed every week by Precious Life. Audrey says "we insist on the right of women with unplanned pregnancies to access information about all options, including abortion. And we defend our staff's right to work free from intimidation and harassment".

The Brook Advisory Centre opened in 1992 in spite of a campaign of intimidation against it. Paisleyites and Catholic bishops united to oppose the provision of information on sexuality and birth control to young people. Brook

works mainly with 16-24 year olds but its Belfast office is not allowed to do abortion referrals.

Yet Brook faces similar intimidation by the bigots, especially since the arrival of Precious Life. Brook's manager, Mary Crawford, has suffered personal intimidation, causing her to worry about the safety of her young children.

Tactics

But the tactics of the bigots have backfired because both the Brook Centre and the FPA report a huge wave

of messages of support from community groups, women's groups and trade unions.

The ICTU issued a statement condemning the "acts of vandalism and intimidation" which led to the closure of the UPAA and calling for an end to the picketing of Brook and FPA.

Gaye Partridge, chair of the ICTU women's committee, said "every woman should have access to information to allow them to make an informed choice. Any action which denies women this right is to be regretted."

But it is necessary to turn



Fighting for the right to choose — North and South

Extend the Abortion Act

The 1967 Abortion Act has never been extended to Northern Ireland, despite the fact that tens of thousands of women from here have had abortions in England.

Instead, successive British governments have bowed down to Catholic and Protestant bigots who unite to stop women availing of their legal right to abortion.

The effect on working class women in the North is massive. It costs about £350 to get an abortion in one of the non-profit making clinics in England.

Finding that amount, plus the cost of travel, is so difficult for women living on low pay or benefits, that many are far on in their pregnancies before they get the money together.

More than three times as many women

from the North have abortions after 20 weeks than is the norm in Britain.

Some women know they are not going to be able to get the money together and take matters into their own hands. Hospitals regularly see women who have injured themselves with knitting needles or coat hangers to try to cause an abortion.

Extension

In spite of insisting that the North remains in the United Kingdom, none of the Unionist MPs will back the extension of the Act.

The SDLP have a position approved by the Catholic bishops. Sinn Fein, who have no problem calling on the British government to enact equality legislation on all kinds of issues, say they cannot support the extension of "a British law".

these words into action and to stand up against intimidation. This is why an important protest is planned for Sat. 11th Sept in Belfast.

Picket
Department of Health
3pm Saturday
11th Sept.
Back of Castlecourt, Belfast.

Poison, Jim Larkin and the FBI

AN AMERICAN scholar has unearthed evidence of a bizarre plot to poison James Larkin in New York in 1919.

Prof Claire Culleton of Kent State University in Ohio says the FBI did nothing to stop the murder attempt and that Larkin was only saved by being thrown in jail.

The strangest part of the story is the claim that the plotters were acting "for the good of the Irish Republic" and planned to send an impersonator back to Ireland to encourage workers to "line up" with Sinn Fein!

Whoever plotted to kill Larkin - if indeed such a plot existed - it is clear that the FBI and the American establishment wanted Larkin out of the way.

Since his arrival in the US in 1914 "Big Jim" had thrown himself into workers' struggles. He campaigned against the slaughter of the First World War and had championed the Russian Revolution in 1917.

In 1919 Larkin joined the Communist Labour Party which had emerged as a rival organisation to the Communist Party of America. By the time the two parties united in 1921 their combined membership had been decimated by a wave of police repression.

The witch hunt was led by the Attorney General A Mitchell Palmer, assisted by a young FBI agent named J Edgar Hoover.

Between November 1919 and January 1920 ten thousand people were arrested under a little known Criminal Anarchy Statute.

The price for being a revolutionary in post-war America was often either deportation or a spell in Sing Sing prison.

Defence

When Larkin's trial opened on 7 April 1920, he conducted his own defence. His attack on the Irish American establishment at that trial gives a clue as to why some Republicans might have wanted to plot against him.

Larkin exposed the role that Irish American leaders had played in repressing the fledgling Communist movement. He pointed out that the man who had arraigned him, the Chief City Magistrate McAdoo, was a member of Clan na Gael, which was the American wing of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. So too were several other officers of the court.

Jack Carney — an

by **DAVE McDONAGH**

associate of Larkin's since his Liverpool days - said that Larkin "never could believe that Irish American politicians who exploited the workers of America could ever free Ireland".

As Carney put it, "To most of them their idea of a free Ireland was an enlarged conception of Tammany Hall" - the name given to the corrupt system by which Irish-American politicians won a base by promising favours to Irish workers.

These words should ring in the ears of Sinn Fein leaders like Gerry Adams who still put their faith in the conservative "Irish-American lobby".

Victory

Larkin was an enthusiastic backer of the fight against British rule in Ireland but understood that Sinn Fein leaders like Arthur Griffith would keep the fruits of victory out of the hands of Irish workers.

In 1918 he berated William O'Brien and other Irish Labour leaders for allowing Republicanism to dominate the fight against imperialism:

"What are O'Brien and the rest doing in allowing the Griffith gang to monopolise all the credit for the effort?"

The details of the alleged plot by some Republicans to poison Larkin seem far fetched. But he clearly stood in a different tradition to those who came to rule the Free State.

Larkin's biggest effort had always been put into building revolutionary unions which were powerful when workers' struggles were on the rise but which collapsed in periods of retreat.

He appeared as a giant when the working class was on the move but as socialism was eclipsed by nationalism in the new Ireland, he became increasingly isolated.

Larkin's socialist principles were never in doubt but his tragedy was that he lacked a party that could pull together the most militant workers and challenge De Valera's rhetoric that "Labour must wait".

1974 Dublin and Monaghan bombings

COLLUSION COVER

AT 5.30PM on 17 May 1974, three bombs exploded within ninety seconds of each other in Dublin. A fourth exploded in Monaghan town, 88 minutes later.

Thirty-three people were killed and hundreds maimed in the biggest loss of life in any single day of the Troubles.

All the suspects were known members of the mid-Ulster UVF Brigade. Yet the initial forensic investigators concluded that it could not have been the work of paramilitaries alone.

The bombs in the centre of Dublin were so expertly executed that, in the words of one investigator, "it had to be the work of professionals".

Justice for the Forgotten, an organisation of the relatives of those who died in the bombings, has seen documents which identify a British intelligence officer who supplied the explosives.

Evidence

There is also some evidence that an Ulster Defence Regiment member was involved in the attack and the RUC officer whose home was used to prepare the bombs.

Most scandalously there is also some evidence that Garda detectives co-operated with the British intelligence officer who was involved in planning the bombing.

At least two British intelligence officers were brought covertly to Dublin immediately before the bombings by Garda officers.

After the bombing a huge cover up went into place.

There was no British investigation and the Gardaí called off their enquiries after three months.

Crucial forensic evidence was given to the RUC Special Branch on orders from a high level in Dublin.

Later this evidence was passed on to the British military



The aftermath of the 1974 bombing

intelligence agent who was thought to have planned the attack.

The Gardaí had a number of eye witness descriptions of the Dublin and Monaghan car-bomb drivers which matched up with RUC files and photographs.

But nothing was done.

One of the chief suspects was a UVF Major, Horace Boyle who died the following July during an attack on the Miami Showband.

All of these were closely linked to the British intelli-

gence agent Robert Nairic of the 14th Intelligence Unit which operated secretly alongside the British Army.

The British Government now claim that the records of the 14th Intelligence Unit have been destroyed.

However to unravel the sergeant, J. J. was killed in 1977 murder kept 'Will War has sion was w tioned at a

RUBBING SALT IN THE WOUNDS

Relatives of the victims of the Dublin and Monaghan bombings are outraged that the government is only holding a private inquiry into the atrocities.

the wounds" she had suffered along with more than 400 others on May 17th, 1974.

Inquiry

Martesa Kearney who was wounded in the attack on Dublin said that a private inquiry headed by a former Supreme Court judge "only rubbed salt in

Frank Massey, whose daughter, Anna, was killed in the Dublin bomb, said the relatives have "no confidence in any private inquiry". He said he had not "expected much from Mr Wilson because he was

a political appointee". "I've seen 40 TDs, three Ministers for Justice, two party leaders, and all I run into are brick walls. I have lost hope with these people.

"It's leaving very bitter thoughts in my head personally that somebody somewhere is covering up," he added.

One of the first ways of getting at the truth would be to open the Garda Files on the case. Yet the Gardaí

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Why Dublin was bombed

THE DUBLIN bombing was part of a wider strategy of provoking social tension.

In the early seventies there was huge unrest in Britain which eventually led to a miners strike which brought down Edward's Heath's Tory government.

A section of British Intelligence concluded that they had to engage in dirty tricks in order to provoke tough measures that would crack down on 'subversion'.

In Northern Ireland this meant sponsoring loyalist terror groups such as John McKeague's Red Hand Commandos.

MI5 also wanted to take the war to the IRA in the Irish Republic.

heavy gang was established inside the Gardai who used the fact that there were seven day detention periods to beat false confessions out of prisoners.

British intelligence, however, was out of control and they did not stop there.

They hated Harold Wilson's Labour government and according to the journalist, Robert Fisk, and ex MI5 agent, Colin Wallace, they aided and abetted the 1974 loyalist workers to help bring it down.

The Dublin and Monaghan bombing occurred two days after the loyalist strike began.

From the very start that strike had been based on wholesale intimidation as loyalist paramilitaries set up road blocks to prevent people going to work.

Firebombed

They employed two agents, Keith and Kenneth Littlejohn, who subsequently admitted that they had firebombed a Garda station to provoke a crackdown by the Lynch government on republicans.

By 1972, the Fianna Fail government responded by introducing an Offences Against the State Amendment Act which allowed them to hold suspects for seven days and to lock people up on the word of a Garda Superintendent.

But the bill was stalled in the Dail and seemed in danger of defeat.

Then on December 1st two bombs went off in Dublin, killing two people. Within hours of the bombing a special session of the Dail was convened and the repressive law was rushed through.

Within a short period a

Among Weir's allegations are claims that members of the RUC sold machine guns to the UVF in Portadown.

Weir even implicated the then RUC Chief Inspector Harry Breen in this incident.

Weir also claims that a former RUC reservist near Markethill allowed his farm to be used to plan and prepare attacks including the Dublin-Monaghan bombings and the attack on Donnelly's bar in Silverbridge in 1975 in which three people died.

Claimed

He further claimed that a former intelligence officer with the UDR supplied the explosives for the Dublin-Monaghan bombings and other loyalist attacks.

But despite this detailed allegation little has been done to investigate why there was a major cover-up about Ireland's biggest crime.

Ideas and REVOLUTION

Trotsky's permanent revolution

by GRACE LALLY

UNDERSTANDING how and when revolutions come about is very important for socialists.

Capitalism itself came about through revolution. First the English Revolution of the 1640s and then the more thoroughgoing French Revolution swept away the old feudal orders of monarchs, lords, and serfs and created a space for the market to develop.

The development of capitalism, however, created a new revolutionary force in society — the working class, which has the ability to create an even more progressive society based on collective control.

such as the right to vote but would continue to fight in their own interests for a socialist society.

How well did this theory of permanent revolution fare? After the Second World War a number of revolutions occurred, which seemed to contradict Trotsky's theory.

In underdeveloped countries such as China and Cuba revolutions occurred in which the working class played little or no part.

The outcome of these revolts was not socialism but a society where there was a sustained effort by a new ruling elite to break the chains of underdevelopment.

Tony Cliff argued that, although Trotsky had been right to say that the bourgeoisie was cowardly in fighting against the forces which hindered its development, he was not entirely right to assume that the working class would always be confident enough to take up the task.

The strongest ideas in any country are the ideas of the ruling class. In underdeveloped colonial countries it was difficult for a young working class, still partly rooted in the countryside, to develop its own ideas. Lack of experience and illiteracy added to the difficulty.

The role of workers' parties was also decisive and at this time most Communist parties were rotten with Stalinist ideas.

Cliff describes it as a 'trick of history' that in a situation where the working class was not prepared for the task of revolution some other group of people would implement it.

Trappings

Right up until 1917 most socialists believed that in countries like Russia, which still had all the trappings of a feudal state, socialism would have to wait until the bourgeoisie had 'their' revolution.

Trotsky was one of the few socialists to reject this view and instead developed his theory of permanent revolution. He argued that by the twentieth century it was too late for the bourgeoisie in backward countries to have their own revolutions.

The early bourgeois revolutionaries had to mobilise the masses of peasants to overthrow the feudal system but they had also been able to slap them back down again quite easily once they had served their purpose.

But by the early twentieth century in Russia things weren't quite so easy.

The old feudal structures were still there, getting in the way, but within that, elements of capitalism had also begun to gain ground.

The Putilov works in Petrograd, for example, was one of the most advanced industrial complexes in the world at that time with a workforce of over 20,000. These workers represented a much bigger challenge to the Russian bourgeoisie than the peasants of earlier eras.

Trotsky argued that the bourgeoisie had ceased to be a revolutionary class because now they were more afraid of the workers below them than the feudal structures above them.

Trotsky concluded that the working class, no matter how small they were in a country, would have the job of bringing society forward.

He argued that, in taking up this struggle, they would not be content to just fight for more democratic demands

Intellectuals

In Cuba it was the middle class intellectuals like Che Guevara and Castro who led the struggle against Imperialism.

The intelligentsia formed a "professional revolutionary elite" who came to represent the interests of the "nation".

They wanted to make their country efficient and prosperous so they established a state capitalist regime like that in Russia.

This "deflection" of the working class from its historic task of overthrowing capitalism need however only be temporary.

The working class in countries like China now have to organise against their "own" ruling class.

Moreover it is a far more powerful class than ever before even in the most underdeveloped country.

That alone puts Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution firmly back on the agenda

by SIMON BASKETTER

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However, the cover-up began to unravel when a former RUC sergeant, John Weir was convicted in connection with the 1977 murder of Catholic shopkeeper William Strathearn.

Weir has claimed that collusion was widespread and sanctioned at a higher level.

E WOUNDS

... systematically have opposed every attempt to view these files.
Responsible
Belle Abern has stated there is nothing in the files that would have suggested or indicated who was responsible.
But if there is nothing incriminating in the files, there should be no problem opening them after 25 years.
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As slump hits miracle economies...

“OVER THE course of the last two years seven economies - economies that still produce about a quarter of the world's output and that are home to two thirds of a billion people - have experienced an economic slump that bears an eerie resemblance to the Great Depression of the 1930s.”

That is how Paul Krugman describes the economic crisis that has destroyed several economies in his latest book, *The Return of Depression Economics*.

Krugman shot to fame when he predicted the financial chaos that would engulf South East Asia and send a wave of panic through the US bond markets in his 1994 article "The Myth of Asia's Miracle".

Over the course of the last two years, six Asian economies have experienced a slump that bears close resemblance to the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The economies of Asia "went from boom to calamity virtually over night - and the story of their downfall reads as if it were taken straight out of a financial history of the 1930's".

"IF IT CAN HAPPEN TO JAPAN, HOW SURE CAN WE BE THAT THE EUROPEAN ECONOMY OR EVEN THE STILL BOOMING ECONOMY OF THE UNITED STATES WILL NOT FIND ITSELF IN THE SAME TRAP?"

They were not the only ones in trouble. In the autumn of 1998, a Connecticut - based hedge fund firm, Long Term Capital Management, which boasted two Nobel laureates on its payroll and many of their best students, thought they had the market sown up only to find themselves in the middle of a catastrophe that had all the makings of a 1929 style stock market crash.

Krugman describes a meeting of financiers and economists with the US Federal reserve that he attended. One participant asked one of the officials what could be done to resolve things. "Pray" he replied.

"The world economy" Krugman concludes "has turned into a much more dangerous place than we imagined".

In the past, conventional economists poured scorn on Marx by claiming that recessions and slumps were a thing of the past. Modern nations were not supposed to endure "bone crushing recessions for fear of currency speculators."

An advanced country like Japan could never find itself unable to generate enough spending to keep its workers and factories employed.

So why did the Asian 'miracle' economies collapse? Krugman rejects the usual explanation by Western economists who write as if there is a "morality play", where "the economies receive their inevitable punishment for the sins of crony capitalism."

"While cronyism and corruption are very real in Asia", Krugman writes



Dublin unemployed in the 1930's

Are we returning to the 1930s?

"they are nothing new." He argues that there had been close links between governments, banks and family owned corporation during the previous "decades of spectacular economic growth".

At that time the pro-market economists hailed these 'Asian values' as the very secret of the success stories of Japan and South Korea.

But after the slump they turned to these very same 'causes' as the reason for their collapse.

Honest

Although Krugman is not a Marxist he is far more honest about what is happening than most conventional economists.

He notes that until now economic crisis always seemed to have a major corresponding cause. Following the Yom Kippur War of 1973 the price of oil doubled and this was held up as the

reason for the major recession of the seventies.

In the early eighties, the monetarist theories of Milton Friedman, which argued that government spending was the problem, seemed to offer an explanation.

But today like the 1930s, Krugman concludes, there seems to be no major single cause.

Instead, "the crisis has struck out of a clear blue sky, with most pundits predicting a continuing boom even as the slump gathered momentum.

Now as then, the conventional economic medicine has proved ineffective, perhaps even counter-productive.

What happened in Asia he concludes was that there were "real failings" in these economies. And what is most worrying, he writes, is that these economies failed because they had "become better free market economies not worse".

The roots of the current economic

crisis must therefore lie in global free market itself.

Krugman describes how governments across the world have shredded controls on banks financial institutions and speculators as thousands of billions of dollar are traded every day on money markets.

Companies, banks, even governments are caught up in intricate networks of financial speculation in foreign currencies, shares and commodities which have yet to be manufactured.

All of this de-regulation was supposed to produce stability and efficiency. In fact the opposite happened.

Krugman shows how the devaluation of the currency of a small economy like Thailand in 1997 led to specu-

lators pulling their money out and driving banks to the wall. This triggered a chain reaction which spread financial panic across the region.

It sent the crisis from Asia to Russia, then to the US and European stock markets and then to Brazil.

All of this is a devastating critique of how modern capitalism really works. However Krugman's weakness is that he focuses almost entirely on the international financial markets.

He fails to examine how the free market itself create chaos in the real economy- the production of goods and services.

Capitalism is the first society in history to produce a crisis of over production. Previously economic crises had always been a result of under-production — there was never enough to go around.

But under capitalism too many goods are produced. Goods go unsold and profits go down.

People still need goods but as wages are cut and unemployment rises, there is no money to buy goods and the crisis worsens.

All of these happens because, as Marx argued, capitalism is an unplanned system built on a competition where rival companies try to extract the maximum profit from their workers — while expecting workers to buy all the goods they produce.

Most of the world is not yet facing a 1930's style depression. Yet Krugman argues that the kinds of problems that characterised the 1930s have "staged a stunning comeback" and most worryingly the old solutions don't seem to be working.

"Japan is finding that conventional and fiscal policies aren't enough. If it can happen to Japan, how sure can we be that the European economy or even the still booming economy of the United States will not find itself in the same trap?"

The US government did manage to step in last autumn and prevent economic chaos, slashing interest rates and rushing money to the banks to keep lending and spending going.

But all they have succeeded in doing is preventing an immediate collapse. In the long run they made the world even more unstable. Many commentators are now suggesting that US resembles the Asian tiger economies just before they crashed. Companies and consumers are caught up in huge debt.

The dollar is beginning to slump. At the same time as US exports are falling due to the depressed world market, the US trade deficit is heading towards the \$200 billion mark.

Economists are worried that huge foreign holdings in the US stocks and bonds could be dumped at once, particularly if interest rates rise, leading to a meltdown.

Although Krugman understands the contradictions of the market he is not against the free market. He wants to save capitalism rather than fight against it. But boom and slumps are part of the logic of capitalism.

The problem now is that the booms are getting shorter and slumps are becoming more severe and more frequent.

Rather than allowing governments to try one half baked solution after the other, the real solution to the crisis lies in workers fighting for a real alternative to the 'logic' of the free market.

Paul Krugman; *The Return of Depression Economics* £20

in my view

Censoring In Dublin

JAMES RIDGE, Patrick Fitzgerald, John Fanagan, Philomena Donnelly and Kay Ryan are important people. The first two are barristers, the second pair teachers and the last is a journalist. So what?

Well, these fine people decide what you can and cannot read. They are the un-elected members of the Censorship of Publications Board who decided that the magazine *In Dublin* is unsuitable for the corruptible minds of the Irish people.

In Dublin is a sexist rag. It uses pictures of half naked women on the cover to make up for the lack of content. It makes a lot of its cash from adverts for "health studios" which everyone knows are brothels. It is also owned by an anti-union company whose only interest is profit. But it shouldn't be banned.

The Censorship Board said *In Dublin* was banned because several of its editions "have usually or frequently been indecent or obscene".

Brothels are despicable things. The women who sell their bodies as commodities are driven there by poverty.

But censoring advertisements will not remove that poverty or destroy the brothels. One of the highest levels of prostitution existed in Victorian Britain where censorship was strong.

The Censorship of Publications Board acted on foot of a complaint about *In Dublin*. The complainant was offended not only by these advertisements, but also by an advertisement for a condom manufacturer.

This last part reveals the reality of the censorship. They are not offended by sexism, but by sex. The legislation fails to define obscenity and says indecency "includes suggestive of, or inciting to, sexual immorality or unnatural vice or likely in any other similar way to corrupt or deprave".

Until homosexuality was legalised in 1993, this meant any gay writing was likely to be banned.

The Censorship of Publications Board was established by statute in 1929 on recommendations from the aptly titled Government Committee on Evil Literature.

The quest for "unwholesome" literature meant that James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Sean O'Faolain, Edna O'Brien and Brendan Behan were banned.

Offensive

One of the main reasons for the banning of a book was for "advocating the unnatural prevention of conception or the procurement of abortion or miscarriage". This meant such offensive pornography as *The Good Housekeeping Bride's Book* from 1958, *Old Moore's Almanac 1952* and *Collins Family Medical Encyclopaedia* from 1955 all remained banned into the 1990s.

At the same time the church oversaw, ignored and was complicit in wide scale child abuse.

Throughout the eighties a lobby group, the League of Decency, regularly pointed to heathen texts that would deprave the morals of Ireland.

Well-known authors such as *Marriage and Morals* by Bertrand Russell, *Work, Wealth and the Happiness of Mankind* by H.G. Wells and *Birth Control Today*, written by Marie Stopes were all banned for over 60 years.

The founding text of modern feminism *The Nature of the Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir was also on the banned list.

The censorship continued unchecked until the nineties. The board demanded the removal of advertisements from *Cosmopolitan* in 1989 and *Company* magazine in 1990. Madonna's book *Sex* was banned in 1992, the same year the *Guardian* was banned for carrying an advertisement for an abortion clinic.

It is still the case that the board "may prohibit the sale and distribution in the State of any publication which in its opinion is indecent or obscene or advocates abortion".

The moves against *In Dublin* are part of a concerted move by the fundamental Catholic Right to chip away at the changes that have taken place in Ireland.

In recent weeks, there have been two attempts to use the 1868 Blasphemy law against media articles that criticised the church.

Harry Blaney and two other independent TDs are also looking for a new referendum on abortion.

These bigots need to be sent to the back woods where they belong. In 1992, ten thousand people marched to allow a 14 year old rape victim go to Britain for an abortion. One of the effects of that victory was that all the censorship on abortion information was removed.

That sort of action shows how the moral police can be stopped.

by SIMON BASKETTER

TV

Capitalism's deadly weed

BETWEEN NOW and the year 2025, 500 million people will die from the effects of smoking.

How is it possible that nicotine, a drug that is just as addictive as cocaine or heroin and kills infinitely more people, can be sold legally in cigarette form all over the world?

The Tobacco Wars, a recent BBC television series, exposed how tobacco companies lied and covered up the health risks involved in smoking to protect their \$200 billion a year business.

"We don't smoke that shit. We just sell it. We reserve the right to smoke for the young, the poor, the blacks and the stupid."

Up until the 1920s very few women smoked but a massive advertising campaign was launched to persuade women to smoke.

Lucky Strike cigarettes were the most audacious. "Reach for a Lucky instead of sweets" was one advertising slogan. "Smoke Lucky Strike and lose weight" was another.

The market for cigarettes exploded during World War Two.

The British government spent more on cigarettes during the war than it did on planes.

By the end of the war 82 percent of men in Britain smoked. The effects of smoking were devastating. Doctors noticed a fifty fold increase in cases of lung cancer between 1900 and 1950.

Cancer

A number of secret tobacco company documents recently published prove that from as early as 1950 tobacco companies knew that smoking caused cancer and by 1963 they had discovered that nicotine was addictive.

One document from Brown and Williamson Tobacco even admitted, "We are in the business of selling an addictive drug."

The BBC documentary showed how tobacco companies suppressed scientific evidence that confirmed the dangers of smoking.

"Independent" scientific research centres were developed to counter the health warnings and they hired public advisers to say smoking was safe.

When scientists working for Marlboro discovered that nicotine was addictive they were instructed by the company to destroy all their medical files and kill every rat that tests had been carried out on. There is also a long history of tobacco companies being



Sexism is still used to sell cigarettes but the reality isn't glamorous

protected by governments. Unlike food or drug companies the tobacco industry was totally unregulated in the US and Britain.

Today the tobacco companies have new markets in their sights. Bennett LeBow, the head of Liggett Group Tobacco, openly admitted on the BBC programme, "If you don't sell to children, you'll have no customers in 25 years."

Tobacco companies are also opening up new markets

in developing countries. Today more cigarettes are sold in China than in any other country.

Attitude

The cigarette companies' attitude to their customers is best summed up by an interview given by Dave Goerlitz. Goerlitz was the face used to sell Winston cigarettes during the 1980s. Winston is owned by R J Reynolds.

Goerlitz asked Reynolds man why none of the leading company people smoked.

The man replied, "We don't smoke that shit. We just sell it. We reserve the right to smoke for the young, the poor, the blacks and the stupid."

This society creates the stresses and pressures that cause people to smoke and the cigarette companies supply a drug than makes them massive profits out of killing people.

by MARTIN SMITH

book

Understanding the Kurdish question

THE PAMPHLET, *Kurdistan: The West's Dirty War* traces the origins of the Kurdish question. It highlights the brutal oppression suffered by the Kurdish people under the rule of Turkey, Iran and Iraq.

Kurdistan comprises an area the size of France. It is divided into four parts between Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria.

There are a total of 25 million Kurds living in this original homeland with the largest number, around 13 million, in Turkey.

The Kurds make up around a fifth of the Turkish population yet the state denies the very existence of Kurdistan. Political parties which

call for Kurdish independence are banned and even the use of terms like "the Kurds" is treated as a treasonable offence.

The arrest of the Kurdistan Workers Party leader Abdullah Ocalan has brought the issue back into the news.

Ocalan had been hiding in the Greek embassy in Kenya when he was abducted by Turkish forces. He was put on trial and has received the death sentence.

But the trial was completely unfair and Ocalan was only given access to his lawyers for a couple of hours a week.

Since 1984 the Turkish army has conducted a scorched earth policy in Kurdistan.

According to Amnesty International, 26,000 Kurds have been killed by the Turkish army in the south east of the

country and in the so-called safe havens' the West set up for the Kurds in Northern Iraq.

Yet Turkey has been a member of NATO since 1952 and its air bases were used in NATO's recent war against Serbia.

While NATO pounded civilian targets in Serbia, the Turkish air force continued its merciless bombing of the Kurds.

When Marx said that "no nation which oppresses another can be free" he was calling on British workers to embrace the cause of Irish independence.

One hundred and fifty years later, socialists put the same argument to workers in Turkey. Mike Arrowsmith's *Kurdistan: The West's Dirty War* is available from Bookmarks £1

by MARK PEARSON



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.

SWP Branch meetings

ATHLONE:

Contact 01-872 2682 for detail

BRAY:

Meets every Wednesday at the Mayfair Hotel at 8.30pm

BELFAST CENTRAL:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Garrick Bar, Chichester St.

24th Aug: The myth of the Celtic Tiger.
Aug 31st: Why we need a revolutionary party.

BELFAST SOUTH:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Queens Students Union

Aug 25th: The Russian Revolution
Sept 1st: Why we need a revolutionary party

CORK:

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Dennehy's Pub, Cornmarket

Aug 25th: Are we all middle class now?
Sept 1st: Has social partnership caused the boom?

DERRY:

Public meeting

Tues 24th 7.30pm Sandinos bar
30 years on from '69 - the need for a hard left turn

Speaker: Eamonn McCann

Thurs. Sept 2nd, 8.15pm in Badgers Bar upstairs, Orchard St.

Kurdistan - oppressed by four states

DUNDALK:

Contact 01-872 2682 for details

DUN LAOGHAIRE:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Christian Institute

Aug 24th: The drugs crisis - the socialist solution

DUBLIN ARTANE / COOLOCK:

Meets Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane / Beaumont Recreational Centre opp. Artane Castle

Aug 24th: The roots of racism

Aug 31st: The communist manifesto

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways, Parnell St

DUBLIN NORTH WEST:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in the Vietnamese Centre, Hardwicke St (off Parnell Square).

Aug 25th: Capitalism and Drugs
Sept. 1st: Lenin and Russian Revolution

DUBLIN RANELAGH:

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Tom Kelly Flats, Charlemont St. Community Centre

Aug 26th: Socialists and trade unions

DUBLIN RIALTO:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR, Rialto

Aug 24th: The working class under Hitler. Aug 31st: The North, the peace process and class politics

DUBLIN RATHMINES:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond St.

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL:

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St

Aug 26th: Is there an alternative to the market. Sept 2nd: The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx.

DUBLIN TALLAGHT:

Meets every Monday at 8.30pm in Jobstown Community Centre

ENNISKILLEN:

Meets fortnightly on Saturdays at 4pm. Phone 01-872 2682 for details of venue

GALWAY:

Meets every Thursday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square (beside Cuba) 8.30pm

Aug 26th: What's wrong with Irelands education system?

Sept 2nd: Can there be a revolution in Ireland?

LIMERICK:

Meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 8pm. Phone 01-872 2682 for details of venue.

TRALEE

Meets fortnightly on Mondays at 5.50pm in Harty's Bar, Tralee:

Aug 23rd: The socialist answer to the housing crisis.

WATERFORD:

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in the ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

As ICTU pushes 'competitiveness'...

Organise to break from partnership

THE BATTLE is on to get rid of social partnership and to give workers the right to negotiate directly on their own pay and conditions.

Lined up on one side are the leaders of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions who are now pushing joint courses on 'competitiveness' between shop stewards and personnel managers.

A recent discussion document from the ICTU even advocated getting rid of terms like shop steward and trade union movement.

They want to blur the line of division between workers and employers by creating partnership forums at workplace level.

A union activist in RTE explained how these worked, "They ran a big public relations campaign here to get a partnership forum set up here. It's all supposed to be very new and modern. But when it came to introducing breakfast television, management tried telling people that their shifts would change to a 5 am start with no extra pay. For all their talk of partnership there was no real consultation".

On the other side the Rank and File Solidarity Network has emerged as the major campaigning group against another partnership deal. Nearly 150 shop stewards have sponsored a conference organised by the network on the "The Alternative to Social Partnership" which takes place on Saturday 25 September in Dublin.



SIPTU's Partnership forum meets: But for all the talk there is no real consultation

Rank and file conference

THE ALTERNATIVE TO SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

Saturday September 25th, Teachers Club, Parnell Square, Dublin

Ticket £5 from the Rank & File Solidarity Network, 105 O'Hogan Road, Dublin 10, Tel: 878170 for details.

SOCIALIST WORKER spoke to some of the shop stewards who are backing the conference.

JOHN FINNIE is president of the Docks, Transport and Marine branch of SIPTU and in his own workplace has just seen 95 percent of workers vote for strike action over a victimisation issue.

"Partnership has not delivered because the leadership have not got what they said they would.

"There is no automatic right to union recognition. Basic services are falling down and you only have to look at the health service to see what is happening.

Grassroots

"These agreements have had a deplorable effects on the grassroots. Young people are staying away from the union because you don't have to do anything to get what is coming to you, tiny and all as it is.

"The partnership deals were never just about money. They were a way to bring down genuine trade unionism. If we have these deals for another ten or twenty years, the unions will be destroyed. You have to have some conflict to produce leaders.

"That is why Connolly and Larkin said that some aggravation was necessary for strong union organisation.

"Today everything is left to the fellows in Raglan Road, the ICTU headquarters to do all the negotiating.

"The only thing workers have got to sell is our labour, but the ICTU are stopping us getting a half decent price.

"The alternative to partnership is local bargaining. The employers are making massive profits—and we can extract some of them.

"If we do not get what we want when there is a boom, we will be nailed to the wall when the recession hits."

John sees conference as a vital first step in organising the opposition.

"The conference looks every good. There is very impressive level of sponsorship. It is broad based and can pull the different strands of opposition together.

"This time round we have a very good chance of getting rid of partnership. But we have to be organised because the leaders in SIPTU will throw everything at us.

"The rank and file have already moved against partnership but the union officials love it because it gives them a quiet life.

"They will do everything to get it through. This conference will help to get our side ready for the fight".

PETER CONLON played a key role in the recent struggles of the scaffolders which shook the building bosses.

A member of the Alliance of General Construction Operatives in SIPTU he is also sponsoring the conference.

"Building workers have built plenty of fine houses and apartments in Dublin. But they themselves can never afford to buy them.

"We want to have a direct input into negotiations with our employers. That is the only way we are going to see some of the fruits of this boom. It is important that people get to this conference because they will see that they are not alone and there are many others like them. They will meet people who are determined to do whatever is necessary to give workers what is rightfully ours"

MARNIE HOLBOROW was elected President of the Education Branch of SIPTU on an anti-partnership ticket. A well known socialist activist she scored 69 percent of the vote in a resounding victory.

"Last time around the SIPTU leaders would not allow the No to Partnership voice to be heard in union publications.

"They even printed the Yes recommendation on the ballot paper because they were so worried. Despite all that, 42 percent of members voted against the Partnership 2000 deal which was negotiated by incompetent leaders who failed to get wage rises to match the boom or the real rate of inflation.

"This conference will provide a practical alternative to the failed policy of partnership. It will show that if shop stewards were negotiating at local level they could not do worse than the bureaucrats of the ICTU."

Building workers

Militancy growing

A NEW round of union militancy is developing on the building sites as construction operatives walked off sites to attend a mass meeting at 3 pm on Wednesday 18th August.

The push for the organisation of building workers has come out of the successful struggles of crane drivers and scaffolders to win higher pay rises.

Some months ago, scaffolders scored a major victory over the building employers when they won a 65p an hour increase and an extra £1.35 hourly bonus.

At the end of their strike they were also promised a wider wage review to examine all

aspects of pay on the sites.

Since the end of their struggle, the employers have tried to claw back on these gains.

"They try to put new workers on a small consolidated daily rate of between £35 and £40.

"But we are not putting up with this. It is just pushing us to build a tighter and more efficient organisation", one union activist said.

Alliance

Now a Dublin Alliance of General Construction Operatives has been formed as a semi-independent alliance within SIPTU.

Throughout August the alliance leafleted sites to advertise for the 3pm mass meeting.

"The Construction Industry Federation went

bananas. They were ringing up SIPTU claiming this was unofficial action that was in breach of procedures.

"But we are not going to be intimidated by this carry-on. We are not slaves who have to ask permission from the employers before we do anything."

The mass meeting of the Alliance demanded a revision of the pay structure on building sites which has been in existence for 30 years.

"There is the National Joint Industry Committee where the top brass of SIPTU sit and decide our pay levels.

"We want a direct input for the workers who are on the sites.

"We want them to take us seriously on issues like a proper pension and sick pay scheme" a scaffolder said.

NI Post Office

POSTAL workers across Britain are campaigning for a no vote in the ballot on the new pay deal. Labour want to link pay to the partial privatisation of the Post Office.

A vote NO leaflet from Chelmsford CWU in Essex says the deal means "Goodbye seniority, goodbye Saturday premium, goodbye night allowances, hello team working, hello jobs for the blue-eyed boys, hello to total quality management", the pay deal is "one step forward, three steps back."

The CWU union branch in Belfast has also come out against the deal. At an angry union meeting in early August, members argued that the deal was divisive.

The union negotiator who argued for the deal said he wanted to "end the overtime culture" and that "workers need to get out more".

One CWU member who was at the meeting told Socialist Worker, "Why does he think we do overtime? It's the only way most of us can make enough to get by. We're being told this is a painless way of getting a rise in basic pay.

"But any increase will have to be paid from cuts in overtime allowances. That's going to hit part-timers hard. The talk of a new uni-grade is a con. The new deal means people doing the same type of job at different rates. It will divide workers, not improve our pay."

The bigger agenda is to bring in privatisation by the back door. The new deal means Royal Mail can invest in other countries and make even bigger profits on the back of workers.

Millennium pay

Extra pay claims for New year's eve

UNIONS representing public and private sector workers across a wide range of industries are currently involved in negotiations with employers regarding special pay claims for the upcoming millennium period.

IMPACT, for example, has lodged claims on behalf of 15,000 health workers including medical, clerical, administrative and support staff.

Claims

The INO, MANDATE, SIPTU and a range of other smaller unions are also preparing to lodge significant claims in the next few months.

Plans by some employers to roster double shifts to deal with extra business could mean widespread disruption for many workers over the traditional holiday period.

Extra staff commitments are being sought in the essential services and in the tourism and services sector.

The threat of the Y2K computer bug means that many in the computer and telecommunications industry are also being asked to work or go on standby over the New Year.

In Britain a number of deals have already been struck in the private sector.

British Telecom will give staff up to eight times their normal hourly rates for working New Year's Eve and a flat rate of £250 for New Year's Day.

And Yorkshire Water is paying a flat rate of £500 to all staff on standby from 31st December to 3rd of January, with premium payments to any staff called out.

In the public sector the

health union UNISON has claimed a flat rate £500 for a million health staff working New Year's eve and £250 for New Year's Day.

According to Unison that is no more than is being claimed in the private sector and a lot less than many IT workers can expect.

Profits

The huge Irish budget surplus of over five billion pounds recently announced by the Department of Finance together with record profits in the Celtic Tiger means that the money exists for similar or larger claims for Irish workers.

Workers should start putting in claims now and force our Trade Union leaders to fight for them.

Health Service

IRISH NURSES Organisation members have voted unanimously in favour of strike action in their struggle to improve services in Cork University Hospital.

The SIPTU staff have also voted in favour of strike which is due to take place on 23rd August. Afterwards the workers will continue with a work to rule unless management improve conditions.

In recent years the hospital has suffered from severe staff and treatment shortages.

Sometimes up to 30 patients are kept on trolleys in corridors over-night due to bed shortages whilst the accident and emergency

department is at crisis point. A recent increase of £4.3 million in the budget of the Southern Health Board has been deemed paltry in comparison to what is needed.

Last month severe public criticism was launched against hospital management and Health Minister Brian Cowan over the continued failure of the radiotherapy unit.

Breakdown of the service necessitates the movement of patients to one of these units in Dublin with required additional 'booster' treatments.

Junior doctors at the hospital have also staged a one hour stoppage to highlight their plight.

Fulfex

FOR OVER a month, more than a hundred workers at the Fulfex plant in Limerick have been locked out of the plant by management.

The workers were suspended for not complying with new company regulations.

Management tried to extend the system of using swipe cards for clocking in and out to elsewhere in the factory without any consultation with the unions.

The strike involves workers from three unions SIPTU, TEEU and MSE, and the ICTU have sanctioned a picket of the plant.

No unionised workers have passed the picket and the workers are determined to win.

The lockout of workers at the plant is part of a major attack on the unions by

Fulfex, a US multinational who have seen how the majority of other multinationals in Ireland have succeeded in keeping out unions.

SIPTU

The Bray branch of SIPTU have come out strongly against plans to privatise the refuse service of Wicklow County Council. At present about fifty workers are employed in what is generally acknowledged to be a good service.

Council officials claim that privatisation has become an option because they will no longer be able to dump refuse in Ballymurtagh. They argue that a private contractor

may be better able to handle the disposal of refuse.

But this is nonsense. The site has another six months left. And if private contractors can find a landfill site, so too could the Council.

Privatisation would mean a threat to union conditions and a run down of the service. At the moment the people of Bray are paying an £80 charge for refuse which the trade union movement opposed as a form of double taxation.

But if privatisation is pushed through that could jump up to around £200 a year.

Privatisation will also create opportunity for Fianna Fail business people to make a killing. They will grease a few hands like they did in Glen Ding to get their hands on lucrative work.

Before that however they will have to face the power of unionised workers who are determined to resist.

Issues for the labour movement

How workers have been conned over inflation

WAGES increases under Partnership 2000 were supposed to keep up with the rate of inflation. But there is growing evidence that workers have been conned about the real rate of price increases.

Inflation is measured through the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) which is drawn up by the Central Statistics Office.

This is made up of a shopping basket of diverse items which are tracked regularly to see how their prices have risen.

In the twelve months to May 1999, the CPI rose by 1.5 percent and so the employers and the union leaders claim that wage increases kept abreast of inflation.

But official figures are never entirely neutral. They are gathered by a state agency which presides over a class divided society and so these figures should be subject to close scrutiny.

The first problem with the Consumer Price Index is that it does not take adequate account of the costs of accommodation.

An explanatory leaflet from the Central Statistic Office even claims "there is no contradiction between rising house prices and low inflation".

But this is clearly nonsense.

Housing takes up the biggest slice of most workers' budgets but because the CSO regards it as "a capital acquisition or investment" it does not figure on their index.

The index, however, does reflect changes in mortgage interest and this leads to a

bizarre situation. Over the past year interest rates have fallen and so the housing component of the Consumer Price Index has also fallen.

In fact even the official figure for inflation would have been 2.4 percent rather than 1.5 percent were it not for the bizarre fact that the cost of housing is regarded as decreasing in the index.

Figures

In other countries the price of housing figures in the CPI. Denmark, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the US all use an "imputed rent" method to calculate the rise in house prices.

But even though Ireland has the highest rates of home ownership, this is avoided for clearly political reasons.

The Consumer Price Index also underestimates the rise in

rents. It assumes that Ireland has a small rented sector and so gives a low weighting to rent in the overall index.

In the basket of items that make up the CPI, rent only gets an overall weighting of 1.8 out of 100. To put that in perspective, expenditure on newspapers comes closely behind with a weighting of 1.2.

The other major problem with the CPI is that it takes no account of the changing lifestyle patterns of workers.

According to the Central Statistics Offices, the index is "specifically designed not to take into account changes made by households".

Yet the Celtic Tiger has produced important changes in the consumption patterns of households.

To take one obvious example. With the huge increase in the number of women working more households will tend to

rely on relatively expensive prepared meals that are purchased in supermarkets. Or there will be a greater use of take-aways.

But by ignoring these changes the CPI again underestimates the real rate of inflation.

A recent article in the Sunday Business Post noted that the CPI contains items like smoked kippers and Swiss Rolls and remarked, "The last Swiss Roll was surely bought circa 1978. And honestly, tinned pear halves!"

Measures

So what is the real rate of inflation in Ireland? Here we have to be slightly technical for a moment and look at alternative measures.

One such alternative is to contrast the value of the Gross Domestic Product at constant

market prices with the actual value gained in current market prices.

Statisticians sometimes refer to this method as producing an "implied price inflation".

If we use this method on the latest National Income and Expenditure figures for 1997-98, we get an inflation rate of 6.2 percent.

This is nearly three times ahead of the figure of 2.1 percent which was recorded by the Consumer Price Index.

There are some problems with the alternative method but it illustrates an important point — workers have been conned during the decade of social partnership by an inflation measure that most people felt did not match their real experience.

And that is just another reason why we need serious catch-up pay rises.

—Kieran Allen

Socialist Worker

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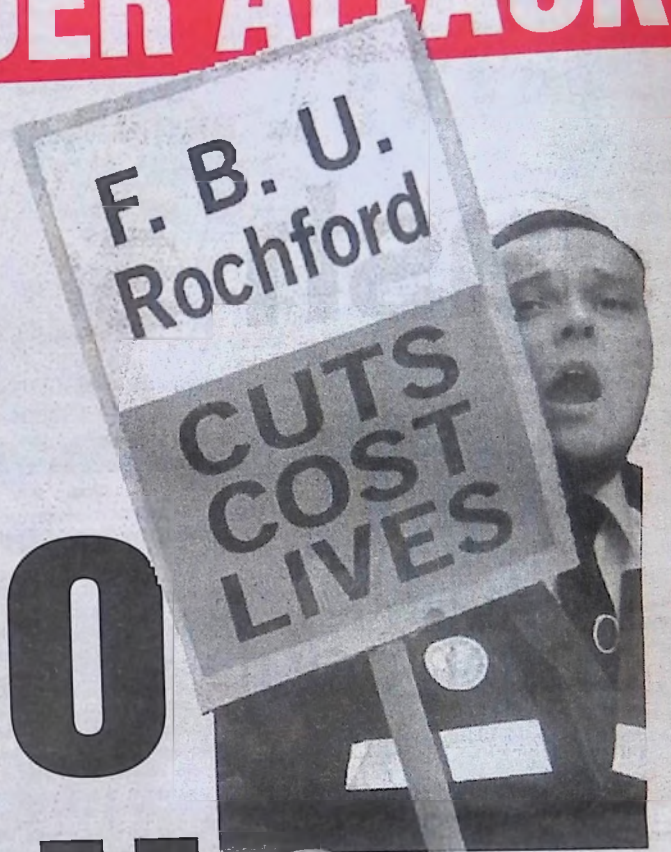
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FIREFIGHTERS UNDER ATTACK

Labour plans to ban strikes



The New Labour government is ready to ban strikes in the fire service.

Firefighters voted at their June conference to ballot for strike action if their national conditions - contained in the Grey Book - are attacked. Fire Authority employers want the rip up the Grey Book so that they can drive down wages and costs. They also want to break the national strength of the FBU, forcing them to accept continued cutbacks in the fire service and local negotiations on pay.

Conditions

Now Labour Minister, George Howarth, has written a confidential letter to employers saying that Grey Book conditions are "out-moded and unjustified" and the threat to strike to defend them was "confrontational". Howarth spelled out how New Labour "fully supports the employers" and was pre-

pared to "take further measures" to prevent strikes. That means banning strikes in the fire service.

Jim Barbour, FBU leader in Northern Ireland, told *Socialist Worker*, "New Labour's attack on the right to strike is disgraceful. Howarth's comments this week were outrageous and provocative. Not even Margaret Thatcher would have been as callous, and this is supposed to be a Labour government."

"Fire fighters have never wanted to strike. This has been forced on us." Jim Barbour said. *"This was never a dispute about pay, it is about preventing the run-down of the fire service."*

"We see our fight as part of what is happening all across the public sector. Just this weekend FBU members have been on the demonstration in Downpatrick against the closure of the hospital there. Firefighters in Northern

Ireland know that our cause is just and are still determined to defend the service."

The employers have drawn back from an all-out assault but now they are testing the ground in London. They plan to recruit new firefighters in January 2000 on worse conditions than the Grey Book.

The employers are trying to provoke a fight. If they get away with undermining any brigade it will be

a stepping stone to a general break up of conditions.

Jim Barbour said, "What people need to know is that London has lost 1,200 firefighters jobs in the last 10 years. That's what the agenda is. We're not going to stand by and see our national bargaining dismantled. We're willing to do whatever we can to support our colleagues in London."

Unfortunately the national leaders of the FBU have delayed acting on the conference vote. Labour's message to the employers will have disgusted thousands of firefighters.

They could push the London region to resist the new attacks and to aim for a national strike ballot. If they did, it would be a rallying point for firefighters elsewhere.

During the strike in Essex last year, brigades across Britain were ready to come out on unofficial strike if any firefighter had been sacked. That is the mood that needs to be tapped now.

Howarth is now in Northern Ireland

MANY firefighters in Northern Ireland have been hoping that the new Assembly would mean a lessening of the attacks on the service.

During the recent negotiations, FBU members joined an ICTU rally at Stormont urging the politicians to implement the Agreement. Until now the FBU, like other public sector unions, have had to negotiate with bureaucrats from the Department of the Environment.

Under the Assembly, they would be dealing with a government minister, which is likely now to be George Howarth, author of the letter calling for a strike ban.

Howarth has just taken over as head of the Health and Social Services Department at Stormont. There could be no clearer example of why trade unionists across the North will have to prepare to fight the same sorts of rotten Tory policies from New Labour even if the Assembly is set up.