

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 40p

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Can there be a socialist alternative?

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WANTED

■ Broken promises on Aer Lingus

■ Social Welfare cuts



■ Jobs for Relatives

■ Collaboration with Fianna Fail

■ 1% levy on PAYE workers

DICK SPRING

FOR

BETRAYAL

St Ita's nurses scapegoated

A number of staff in St Ita's Hospital, Portrane, have been accused of mistreating patients. St Ita's is the largest psychiatric hospital in Ireland.

Management want to scapegoat nurses for the effects of the health cuts.

One psychiatric nurse told Socialist Worker, "We work with very severely disturbed patients and it is one of the most stressful jobs imaginable."

"Often other hospitals won't admit patients who are taken in Portrane. But there has been little or no expenditure on staff training."

Funding for the hospital has been cut in recent years while £22,000 is spent per patient in private hospitals, only half of this figure is available for patients in St Ita's. With 25 patients in each open plan ward, there is severe overcrowding.

Tony Murray of Parents Association of Mental Handicap blames lack of funding, not the nurses, for the problems.

Unemployed driven to suicide

Unemployment drove two young men to suicide in Co. Limerick last month.

Gerard O'Sullivan (19) and Sean Kelly (23) turned a car exhaust on themselves after failing to find work. Gerard had come back

from England in November after losing a job as a machinist.

Morale

Sean had only recently signed on the dole, having been reluctant to do so.

Sean's aunt—Gerard's mother—said that signing on had affected their morale.

Gerard's brother Tom said that Gerard had spent most of his £49 dole looking for work.

He added, "There you are, week after week, driving miles and miles wasting petrol looking for jobs that aren't there, and trying to live on the dole and never a hope of anything better".



Gerard O'Sullivan

"If the government don't open their eyes there's going to be a lot more like Gerard and Sean."

INSIDE THE COALITION

Labour's Employment Minister Ruairi Quinn tried to axe a Community based enterprise scheme funded by the EC.

But Quinn's aim was not to provide real jobs instead he just wanted to cut benefits.

The scheme—agreed in the PESP—involved EC funded "area partnerships" and allowed people to keep certain benefits which they would lose under the SES programme.

Quinn reversed his decision after protests from the ICTU.

Meanwhile Albert Reynolds made a speech in New Ross committing the government to the PESP area partnerships.

He didn't know that Ruairi Quinn was abolishing them.

It seems that Labour are so anxious to attract workers that they are even doing it behind Fianna Fail's back!

Eleven ministers spent St. Patrick's day abroad at a cost of £120,000—and we will have to pay the bill.

Top of the big spenders was Justice Minister Maire Geoghegan Quinn whose trip to Australia cost us almost £30,000.

Labour ministers also took part in the holiday freebies.

Ruairi Quinn's bill for his trip to the US cost £10,996.

And "left wing" Culture Minister Michael D Higgins' trip to Canada cost us almost £7,000.

The figures covered grade A hotels and Business Class flights for the ministers and their hangers-on.

Government departments refused to confirm the figures. But according to a government spokesman, Bart Cronin, "It would take two or three civil servants to calculate it. That takes time and money."

They said:

"We weren't so bad at ditching it out ourselves so we can hardly complain now."—A Labour minister's response to the anger over the party's betrayals.

"I suppose it's an early election and the overall majority now."—Dick Spring to Albert Reynolds, on hearing that Fianna Fail had gained at Labour's expense in the opinion polls.

Stopping sexual harassment

JOE Treacy resigned as boss of the First National Building Society after a woman employee reported him for sexual harassment.

Other workers in the First National have backed the woman's evidence.

Meanwhile, according to a trade union survey, one in eight women civil servants have been sexually harassed at work.

Many women fear that if they report harassment they will be victimised—especially if the culprit is a manager.

But if male and female workers unite against sexual harassment we can get rid of more pests like Joe Treacy.

Irish Permanent scandal shows...

It's one law for the bosses...

Edmund Farrell has been getting some help with his mortgage—unlike the rest of us.

But then Farrell was the boss of the Irish Permanent—the country's biggest building society.

He took out three mortgages on his fancy house in Foxrock, Dublin, for totals of £43,000, £70,000 and £95,000.

Farrell repaid them in 1987, but only after the company agreed to buy the house off him for £275,000.

The Irish Permanent wanted the house for "entertainment purposes".

Guests

So they spent £440,000 doing it up to make it look nice for their VIP guests.

By 1991 the house was worth £600,000 but Farrell bought it

back for £275,000—the same as he had sold it for.

Of course he had been paying £17,500 a year rent on the house. But over four years that still only came to about £70,000—a lot less than the refurbishment costs.

The Irish Permanent also gave Farrell £300,000—known as a "golden handcuff."

This was compensation for his agreeing not to work for a rival society for at least a year if he ever left the Irish Permanent.

Farrell now has an annual salary of £150,000 and his contract continues until 1996.

So even if he has to resign over the scandal he'll still rake it in for another few years.

...and another for workers

Mortgage holders are paying the price of the Irish Permanent scandal

While Edmund Farrell gets special payments, workers face higher mortgages.

The Irish Permanent repossessed 91 houses in 1992—up from 31 the previous year.

And many more people

hand back the keys when they can no longer afford the repayments.

Building societies charge fines when people fall into arrears.

And if a house is repossessed and then sold at a loss, the mortgage holder has to make up the difference.

So it's one law for Farrell and his pals and another for the rest of us.

Never Again!



Anne Frank was one of the six million Jews who died in Nazi concentration camps. At the age of 13 she went into hiding but was captured and sent to Bergen-Belsen camp where she died in 1945—aged only 15. "Anne Frank in the World" is an international exhibition at the Dublin Central Library, ILAC Centre, Henry Street until 14th April.

Goodman reveals Fianna Fail links

At the Beef Tribunal Larry Goodman revealed his relationship with Fianna Fail.

"I did have access, and I did use it to the best advantage for my company any time I could..."

"If I felt it gave our company an advantage, I wasn't worried about the

competition in Ireland," he stated.

This "access" paid rich dividends.

In 1987, less than a month after FF took office they reintroduced export credit insurance for Iraq. Goodman got £6 million of this.

A month later Goodman's insurance

went up to £45 million. It was raised again several times in the following months and years.

Fianna Fail told the ambassador in Iraq to help Goodman's rivals as little as possible.

A jobs clause was dropped from the IDA development plan to make Goodman the main beef

exporter in the state.

Put simply, FF agreed to his every request while impeding his competitors.

Goodman identified the Left as his main opponents, which makes it all the more sickening that the Labour Party is now in government with Fianna Fail.



Larry Goodman

Homeless hounded in North

BETWEEN 1987 and 1991, ninety-one people were prosecuted for begging in Northern Ireland under the Vagrancy Act (1824).

Most people were fined about £10 or £20. In England and Wales three thousand people a year are convicted.

Ten years ago the Vagrancy Act was little used in England, but as homelessness grew so did prosecutions.

Although there are fewer convictions for sleeping rough, it is often used as a way of moving people on and clearing the streets in England.

Sleeping rough should not be a crime. Nor should begging.

And homelessness will increase if house repossessions keep rising.

In 1990 repossession orders were granted for 2,599 houses. Since most cases never come to court this is only the tip of the iceberg.

The "official" reasons for homelessness are young people not getting on with their parents and relationship breakdown. But the root causes are unemployment, low pay and poverty.

The Tories have nothing but contempt for the homeless.

Housing Minister Sir George Young commented that homeless people "are the sort of people you step on when you come out of the opera".

Now the government wants to blame people for having no place to live—but it's the Tories who are to blame. SANDRA DANIEL

Italy: Anger explodes against the government

'They steal our money and our votes'

AFTER just nine months in office the Italian government is near to collapse.

The "Tangentopoli" corruption scandals have forced four ministers to resign in the last month.

And workers have demonstrated against the corruption shouting "this government steals our money and our votes".

Corruption scandals first blew up around the Socialist Party in Milan a year ago.

Since then Tangentopoli has exposed corruption in every area of business and political life.

All the major parties are involved—even the Communists.

Leading industrialists—including senior bosses of the giant Fiat Corporation—are in jail. Seven suspects have committed suicide.

For years Italian industry has systematically bribed politicians for government contracts.

And working class people have paid the price.

Devastated

For instance, the Irpinia region near Naples was devastated by an earthquake in 1980 which killed three thousand people. Since then \$45 billion has been spent on reconstruction, but thousands of people are still living in shanties.

Prime Minister Amato tried to protect his friends with an amnesty which proposed suspended sentences and a limited ban from public office for those convicted.

But this provoked such anger that even President Scalfano refused to sign it.

The Tangentopoli scandal came at a time when workers living standards are under attack. Unemployment leapt to 9.5 percent last year—and savage spending cuts have fuelled the bitterness.

Now both major parties—the Christian Democrats and the Socialists—are losing popularity rapidly. The Socialist Party is referred to as the "dead party"

by the Italian press.

In the recent town council elections both the right and the left gained support.

The right-wing Northern League and the fascist MSI both increased their vote. But so did the anti-Mafia RETE and the ex-Communist parties.

More importantly, a wave of one day general strikes and mass demonstrations has swept the country. This follows the public sector general strike last October.

February saw one day general strikes in many regions—Piacenza, Lombardy, Piedmont, Reggio Emilia, Campania and Sicily.

There were demonstrations of 100,000 in Naples and 300,000 in Rome and miners in Sardinia have been occupying their pits in a fight against job losses.

The anger over unemployment has been directed at the corrupt politicians. As one demonstrating worker put it,

"It is hard enough already. I have had no job for ten years—all we see now is corruption, just corruption. They are using the money they take from us in taxes to feather their own nests."

Last October's strikes saw the re-emergence of the *consigli*—or work place councils—first formed during the 1970s. It was these councils who called the huge Rome demonstration despite the opposition of union leader Bruno Trentin.

One SWM member who has just returned from Italy told *Socialist Worker*:

"A general strike has been



Italian workers could topple the corrupt government

called for 2 April. But they want it to last only four hours.

"Over the last six months unofficial strikes, occupations and protests have gone ahead despite the union bureaucrats. The Italian papers carry a list of strikes and protests every day.

Unity

"But the problem is that there is no cohesion or co-ordination or connection between the protests. Each area is protesting alone and on different days.

"The union bureaucracy who called the general strike will not provide this unity. They only want to regain control over the spontaneous wildcat action.

"The danger is that the only organisations exploiting the anger are the neo-Fascist MSI and the right wing Northern Leagues. The

fascists stand up in parliament with a banner 'Get rid of the Thieves' and 'Stop Immigration'.

"The revolutionary left need to start organising fast. In the 1970s, revolutionary socialist organisations

numbered their members in tens of thousands.

"They need to break from hanging about the Communist party and its splinter groups and build quickly on the anger".

Somalia:

UN: Restoring hope...

THE real face "Operation Restore Hope" was shown in Somalia last month when US troops shot dozens of demonstrators, killing at least twenty.

About a thousand people protested outside the US embassy, chanting "Go home America". They fought with their bare hands, stones and knives against the US forces' machine guns, rocket launchers and grenades.

The US and the UN are bitterly resented in Somalia. Following the overthrow of the brutal dictator Siad Barre in 1991, the Americans abandoned Somalia.

Then President Bush ignored the famine until he wanted an excuse to send in troops, by which time it was largely over.

Now the US is trying to hand-pick new rulers. Last months demonstration was called after American and Belgian troops

allowed General Morgan's gunmen to enter Kismayu city. Morgan is Siad Barre's son in law.

And the troops have not protected aid workers. UN figures show that more have been killed since the invasion than during the whole of 1992.

Every day people are subjected to humiliating searches, treated like criminals and pushed around as if they don't matter, explained one aid worker.

"It's not surprising that even those who cheered the Americans when they first came are now very cynical."

Dr Hangun—a surgeon at Bensaadir hospital in Mogadishu—summed up the situation.

"The US were welcomed here with flowers, but they will leave with blood on their uniforms".

...or defending OIL?

NEWSPAPERS have recently exposed American oil firms interest in Somalia.

Siad Barre granted Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Philips exploration rights during the 1980s.

The Los Angeles Times says

that these companies hope the decision to send US troops to Somalia will help protect their multimillion dollar investments there.

Conoco kept its office open in Mogadishu throughout the civil war and allowed it to be used as a "de facto US Embassy".

India:

Rulers fuel hate

THE horrific bombings in Bombay and Calcutta threaten to revive communal hatred in India.

Over three hundred people died in the Bombay blasts and at least sixty in Calcutta.

The Congress government tried to blame Pakistan, in order to whip up anti-Muslim hysteria.

Last December two thousand people were killed in rioting between Hindus and Muslims after the Hindu chauvinist BJP Party destroyed a Muslim mosque.

The BJP wants to expel Muslims and create a Hindu state in India. They are allied with nazi organisations like the RSS and Shivsena.

During the 1980s the ruling Congress Party encouraged the Hindu extremists by whipping up Hindu nationalism to win votes.

And the state discriminates against Muslims. Just 3 per cent of public employees are Muslim, although they form 12 per cent of the population. In the December riots at least 150 of the two hundred Muslims killed in Bombay were shot by police.

But communal violence is by no means inevitable. When workers are fighting together the chauvinists are marginalised.

This happened, for instance, during the 1981-82 textile strike which involved 225,000 workers and lasted over a year.

Unity can exist when workers join to fight their common enemy—the boss.

Russia:

Democracy under threat

THE Russian government is tearing itself apart as the country's economic crisis deepens.

The Congress of Deputies is bitterly divided between "conservatives" led by Ruslan Khasbulatov and "reformers" led by president Yeltsin.

Both sides support some form of market economy backed by authoritarian rule.

Their disagreement is about how to bring it about.

The infighting came to a head over Yeltsin's call for a referendum on who rules Russia—the president or the Congress.

Congress has the upper hand, stripping Yeltsin of many of his

powers.

This Congress was elected in March 1990 under the old Soviet Union. Eighty-two percent of the deputies elected were Communists.

The key figure is parliamentary speaker Khasbulatov—a former Yeltsin supporter who has allied himself with the conservative farm bosses and industrialists.

The ex-Communist bureaucrats are now making huge profits out of the market.

But they complain that Yeltsin's government can't deliver on their agenda of cracking down on workers.

Army

The "conservatives" want the army to intervene to stop Russia splitting into separate states.

Their model is China, where the market is being introduced under a dictatorship.

Behind the conservatives are groups of extreme nationalists and

fascists. They are supported by former bureaucrats who lost out when the one-party state collapsed.

But Yeltsin too is prepared to use "emergency powers" to strengthen his position.

"I am an advocate of strong presidential authority in Russia," he said.

Even if Yeltsin gets rid of parliament, the US government will still support him. One US official stated,

"If Yeltsin suspends an anti-democratic parliament, it is not necessarily an anti-democratic act."

Two years ago, Yeltsin

As anger grows about sexual abuse...

How do we end the violence?

Prisons No Solution

MANY people were horrified at the recent Kilkenny incest case.

The 27-year-old woman had been repeatedly brutally attacked over a period of sixteen years by her father, leaving her with numerous injuries.

But a solicitor for Dublin Rape Crisis Centre says there are at least four incest cases of equal or worse brutality due before the courts in the coming months.

The number of rapes and sexual assaults reported to both rape crisis centres and the gardai has risen dramatically.

When the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre opened in 1979 it dealt with 76 cases. By 1991 the figure had increased to 1,660.

And the Department of Health's figures for "confirmed" cases of sexual abuse rose from 73 in 1983 to 600 in 1990.

There's evidence that many more cases remained hidden for decades.

The largest group who contact rape crisis centres are adult survivors of child sexual abuse. They made up 62 percent of total Dublin Rape Crisis Centre cases in 1991.

These abuses happened between ten and seventy years ago, and were completely hidden before the 1980s.

Roisin McDermott from Women's Aid says:

"In all of these areas—rape, child abuse and battering—what we're seeing is a break-up of the silence."

The 1980 Report of the Task Force on Child Care Services didn't even mention sexual abuse. The first public discussion on the issue took place in 1983 at a social workers conference.

Deadly

The woman in the Kilkenny case was a victim of the deadly silence surrounding sexual abuse.

The case shows up the reality of life for many working class people—especially women.

We are told that the family is the "ideal" arrangement—and for many people it is a real source of warmth in a harsh world.

But people often find themselves trapped inside the family when things go wrong.

Children are told they must obey their parents—which is why many abused kids feel that they are the "guilty" ones when their parents attack them.

A perverse sense of "loyalty" can stop women and children from looking for help.

And neighbours don't "interfere" because what goes on in another man's house is "his business".

For working class people it's hard



The Kilkenny incest victim

to escape the trap.

Kids can't leave because they are not meant to have a life independent of their parents.

Trapped

And women are trapped because they depend on their husbands' income and because divorce is not an option in Ireland.

But women are now angrier than ever at their treatment.

Women like Lavinia Kerwick and

the woman in the recent case have broken their silence about rape and abuse.

And thousands more have marched to demand abortion rights.

People are sick of the narrow-minded, repressive attitudes that dominated Ireland in the past.

The government claims it wants to improve the lot of Irish women.

But they refuse to spend money to help women who are victims of violence in the home.

There are only six refuges for

women in the South, with fewer total spaces than exist in Belfast alone.

The Eastern Health Board says this accommodation is adequate—but in 1991 the Rathmines refuge had to refer 357 women elsewhere because it was full.

The people who run society don't give a damn about working class women's mental and physical health.

We need a complete change in society to improve the lot of women and children and to end domestic violence.

THE Kilkenny incest case has led to more calls for longer prison sentences for rapists.

The Criminal Justice Bill will allow people to appeal prison sentences that are deemed too lenient.

It also increases the maximum sentence for incest from seven to twenty years.

But it's a mistake to look to the courts and prisons for a solution to rape. The courts have always treated rape victims in a disgusting way, often placing them on trial with questions about their past.

They have continuously ruled against women—denying women access to abortion information and preventing a fourteen-year-old rape victim from going to Britain for an abortion.

And only 11 per cent of reported rapes end in convictions compared to 51 per cent of assaults on the gardai.

Given the trauma of rape, it may seem a short-term solution to lock offenders away. But there is no treatment programme for offenders in prison. Even the judges agree that prison is no answer.

Justice Flood said that "sex offenders are just placed in prison and left to rot, then they are tipped out onto the public again".

Ireland's only rehabilitation programme—at Arbour Hill prison—was dropped in 1990. The scheme had been introduced by prison staff themselves with little or no help from the Department of Justice.

International evidence shows that sex offenders who don't receive treatment are 80 percent more likely to re-offend than those who do.

But the courts are more concerned to protect the rich than to help ordinary people.

They are part of the system which oppresses women so they can't be relied on to offer protection.

THE BIGOTS MAKE IT WORSE

THE right-wing bigots—who claim to be "pro-life"—are now trying to put a halt to a school programme aimed at preventing child abuse.

Four hundred people—mostly members of Family Solidarity and SPUC—attended a "Parents Against Stay Safe" meeting in UCD recently.

The Stay Safe Programme encourages kids to say "no" to any action or attention that makes them feel uncomfortable.

The vast majority of teachers and parents are in favour of the programme.

The programme doesn't even mention sexual abuse once but the bigots are up in arms.

They say that it will encourage children to be disobedient, evade discipline and fabricate stories of sexual abuse.

They insist that the schools shouldn't interfere in "moral" matters.

This isn't the first time bigots

have tried to block efforts to help victims of abuse.

Groups like Family Solidarity and the Responsible Society have opposed the opening of rape crisis centres, accusing them of being "sex-obsessed".

Their members on health board committees have continuously used their positions to block funding of the centres.

When the Limerick refuge, Adapt House, asked SPUC sympathiser Michael Woods for

funding he denied the need for a refuge because "women had access to barring orders".

But barring orders can sometimes take up to a year to get, especially for women dependent on legal aid.

When it comes to domestic violence the bigots are part of the problem.

Their "family values" silence women and children and force them to stay in dangerous situations.

Tories attack single mums

by GORETTI HORGAN

ON APRIL 5th, the Child Support Order becomes law in Northern Ireland.

It is supposed to "encourage absent parents" to take responsibility for their children.

In fact, it's a cynical cost cutting exercise that will benefit no one except the Tories.

A Child Support Agency has been established to implement the new law. It will have the power to take absent parents to court to get them to pay maintenance for their children.

If the payments aren't made the agency has the power to make an attachment order on the absent parent's wages and have the money taken out of their wage packet.

For nearly a year, lone parents in Northern Ireland—95 per cent of them women—have had an opportunity to see how the law will work.

They have got letters threatening to cut them off Income Support unless they help find the absent parent.

One woman received a letter demanding that she tell her ex-partner to get in touch with the agency or SHE would have her benefit cut.

Women who are unwilling to name the child's father can have their benefit reduced by 20 per cent a week. Some of these women have said they don't know who the father is.

Many of these women have arrived to Citizen's Advice Bureaux or Women's Centres in tears. The most intimate details of their lives have been probed.

Anne told the Agency that the child had been conceived on a holiday.

"I couldn't believe my ears" she told *Socialist Worker*. "They asked me to bring in a photo of him and any letters he had written"

When Paula, a teenager who lives in her parents house, said she didn't know who her child's father was, the Agency official asked where her child was conceived.

"Here in Derry" she said.

"I mean in the back of a car, or where" replied the official.

Paula says, "I was treated like a prostitute. I made a mistake, but I want to get on with my life. If I admit who the father is, they'll tie me to him for the rest of my life and I don't want that."

A meeting of 200 women in Belfast last year revealed the level of harassment that goes on.

Most women at the meeting admitted that they received some sort of support from their children's fathers. But it was mainly shoes, winter clothes, school uniforms and toys at Christmas rather than money.

If the Agency started to force their ex-partners to pay a regular amount, these small benefits would be cut off.

This highlights the most disgusting thing about the new law.

Whatever the Child Support Agency collects from absent parents, it won't mean an extra penny for their children.

The parent with the child will get exactly the same amount. The Tory government will pocket the money it got out of the absent father.

The Tories hope to save about £1.5 million in the first year of the Agency's life. This is after they pay for the cost of the massive new bureaucracy involved in the Child Support Agency.

Liz's story proves the point. She was unemployed for nine months and during that time, her ex-partner was hassled on a weekly basis to pay maintenance.

"I told him I preferred that he took the kids at weekends and bought them clothes. I know he has very little money and I need the break from them"

"He was getting nervous" said Liz, "and we were sure that in April, when the law came in, they'd take him to court. The letters were arriving to his flat, to his mother's house and even to my address and they started to phone him"

But in February, Liz got a job. Since she signed off the dole, her ex hasn't heard a peep from the Child Support Agency.

It has no interest in Liz's case now that there is no money that can be saved in benefit from her.

The Tories say that they are trying to shore up "traditional values" and protect the family. But these values can only mean misery for working class people.

Can there be socialist alternatives

The world has hardly ever been in a greater mess.

Wars, famines and unemployment dominate the lives of millions.

In Africa, the average income has fallen by a quarter since the 1980s.

The continent is producing a third less food than it did a quarter of a century ago. From the Sudan to Angola, millions are dying in unreported famines.

But still Africa has to pay back huge loans to the Western banks. Last year Africa spent four times more on servicing its debt than on its health services.

The working class of the developed countries get no benefits from Africa's misery,

The longest recession since the thirties has put 35 million people on the dole in the OECD countries. Wage cuts—which many believed were a thing of the past—have returned.

But the rich are still living it up. Last year imports of caviar went up by 7 per cent in Ireland while champagne increased by 8 per cent.

There is little doubt about the obscenity of capitalism. But could there be a socialist alternative?

What would socialism achieve?

FIRSTLY the inequality of the system would be redressed. Ireland today is one of the most class divided societies in the world.

The top 10 per cent of the population owns half the wealth, with the top 1 per cent owning 20 per cent.

At the same time low pay and poverty are growing. About 27 per cent of full time employees are now earning less than £150 a week.

A recent survey showed that 20 per cent of the population did not have a washing machine, another 20 per cent did not have a colour television, 48 per cent had no phone, and 68 per cent did not take a holiday away from their own home or that of a relative.

The tiny minority at the top of society would lose their privileged position and their wealth would be directed toward the needs of the majority. Put simply, no longer would millionaires own hotel chains, while homeless people are being forced to sleep on the streets.

Secondly there is tremendous wastage in the system. Advertising, distribution and financial speculation account for half the economic activity in the world.

Instead of this useless activity workers could use the resources to build houses and hospitals and make the washing machines, televisions and other goods people lack. The obscene waste of the arms race would be stopped.

Scientists could concentrate on curing AIDS and cancer instead of finding ways to kill other human beings.

Thirdly, recessions which throw millions out of work could be ended. The driving force for new goods being produced now is the race for profits by rival capitalists.

When the system is booming there is a frenzy of unco-ordinated investments until there are is a flood of goods which cannot all be sold.

When demand falls and profits are hit, the burst of activity suddenly halts. Thousands are thrown out of work.

Only after the recession has wiped out their rivals will the surviving firms find it profitable to invest again.

If workers were to take over the running of society, then this madness could be halted. Democratic planning could end the waste and misery capitalism causes.

In a socialist society we would work out how many houses needed to be built or how much food needed to be produced and plan how to allocate resources to these areas.

It is often argued that workers could never control society, because it is too complex. But the way the capitalists organise production makes it seem more difficult than it could be.

Today small groups of privileged people make decisions in board-rooms, on the basis of predictions about the market and profits.

It is because firms all do this separately that the world system seems beyond anyone's control.

Discussion and debate by millions of people directly involved in production would lead to a society where production is much more simple and effective.

For example, the shipyards of Belfast have been run down for years, throwing people with valuable engineering skills onto the dole. Yet at the same time the world's shipping fleet is ageing and half the world's ships are over fifteen years old.

Most oil tankers still do not have double hulls. In a planned world economy those workers' abilities



Karl Marx: Believed in a society based on human need

would find good use—ships would be refitted and new safer ships would be built.

But would anyone want to work without the incentive of money?

IN THIS society you are always told that greed is the only way to motivate people. But when it comes to pay there are double standards.

Directors are given large salaries because they "need an incentive". But workers who look for higher wages are told that they are just lazy and need to give more productivity instead.

The truth is that already many workers give a lot more to their jobs than simply being there to earn money. Hospital workers, teachers, and those who risk their lives in jobs such as firefighting are motivated by concern for other people.

It is capitalism that takes the incentive out of work. When you are turning up to work to be bossed around, there is no reason why you should show an interest in how pro-

duction could be improved.

If anything you have to be careful not to give the bosses an excuse to sack more workers or increase the workload.

Once production was controlled by workers it will be possible to release people's co-operative feelings.

Workers would be producing to meet the needs of society and they would have a say in how it's done.

But would socialism be democratic?

IT IS often argued that because there was a one party dictatorship in Russia, that socialism is against democracy.

But Russia was not a socialist country. It was run by a privileged elite who were engaged in military competition with the USA and who kept their workers down.

Genuine socialism would be far more democratic than the present system

Today you can elect people only every four years. If they lie to you during the elections, as Dick Spring did, there is nothing you can do about it.

You just have to wait until they

...e a ...ternative?

by CONOR
KOSTICK



of eager hands. It tautened. The statue grated and creaked as it bowed slowly to the crowd.

"With a final screech, it fell from its pedestal. There was an ear-splitting roar of hilarious laughter. The whole thing was ludicrous. It was absurd. The plinth now looked even more grotesque. Still firmly planted on the pedestal were Stalin's six-foot-high jack-boots.

"The rest of the statue was taken away by lorry and dumped in front of the National Theatre, where a laughing crowd soon smashed it to pieces"

Workers' revolutions are moments of tremendous liberation from oppression. Every great revolution begins with an festival-like atmosphere like that in Budapest as thousands of workers realise how powerful they are, and how weak are their rulers.

The fact that the capitalist class are such a tiny minority, means that they have to rely upon organising other classes to defend them.

In order to create a sizeable army they have to recruit workers. But this means that in revolution they cannot rely upon the soldiers to defend them.

So long as the revolutionary movement is united and strong, the soldiers will feel confident to mutiny, and the ruling class can be toppled with very little resistance. The best example of this is the Russian revolution of 1917.

From the beginning of the revolution in February the soldiers were united with the workers in sending deputies to the soviets.

By October there was such a majority of soldiers and workers who were determined to carry through the revolution that the Government was overthrown with virtually no opposition.

In fact so delighted were the victorious revolutionaries at their easy victory that they let Generals and Ministers go free on the promise that they would no longer oppose the revolution.

Violence in revolutions is always the result of the old rulers refusing to give way. Because they are such a weak force, the capitalist class need to resort to massive violence to restore order in the face of revolution.

Counter-revolutions such as that which followed the Paris Commune of 1871, through to the suppression of Tiananmen Square in 1989, have always been utterly brutal.

It is for this reason that a pacifist approach will not succeed in transforming society. In fact the more cautious and hesitant the revolution, the greater danger of bloody defeat.

A successful revolution will rely on its strength of numbers, and its support amongst soldiers to transform society. It will not be able to renounce arms until the old rulers are definitely defeated.

But once workers successfully hold power across the world, then the need for arms and prisons will disappear. As Marx and Lenin put it, the need for repression will wither away.

But won't a revolution be violent?

LET'S look at a simple case. In 1956 there was a revolution in Budapest in Hungary. Here is how one participant described the scene:

"Further along the road, a group in the crowd decided to visit the City Park where stood a 26 foot, bronze statue of Stalin, the Man of Steel. Two or three thousand people peeled off from the body of marchers and joined them.

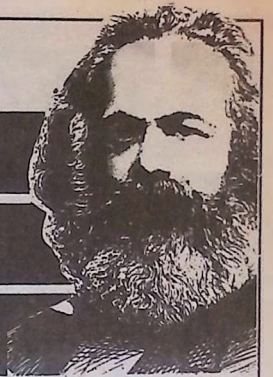
"They were in great spirits, singing and laughing. When they reached the statue, a ladder and a tough rope were put against the pedestal. Up climbed two men. A rope was placed around Stalin's neck. It was grabbed by hundreds

DAVE McDONAGH



Teach
yourself

Marxism



Does 'human nature' prevent change?

Socialists want to create a classless society where everyone is equal.

Most people say that this is all "fine in theory" but can never work in practice.

In other words human nature is seen as a barrier to socialism.

And certainly there are many examples of greed in society.

Who hasn't seen people ruthlessly competing for promotion, or been let down by a friend, or frustrated by people's apathy and selfishness?

The bosses use the idea of human nature to justify the free market.

Capitalist firms compete in the marketplace with one aim—to maximise profits.

The bosses tell us that this competition is "natural" because human beings are inherently competitive.

And certainly the capitalists themselves are extremely competitive.

Their ruthlessness has led to huge business scandals—from Greencore to Robert Maxwell to the recent scandal in Japan.

It has thrown millions on the dole and has led to war and famine.

But "human nature" is not to blame.

If anything, most people remain remarkably humane despite the rottenness of the system.

There are countless examples of self sacrifice, courage and caring.

Some make big headlines—like the protesters in Tiananmen Square in China who bravely faced tanks in 1989.

But there are many every day examples—from parents who devote their lives to caring for handicapped children to fire fighters who take risks to save others.

Human behaviour contains extremes—from aggression and apathy to concern and compassion.

The way people behave depends on their conditions of life and not on human nature.

But Marxists don't deny the existence of human nature. It consists of a number of basic needs and capacities.

Humans need food, clothing and shelter.

We need sex to propagate

the species and some form of ongoing parenting, since humans take longer than other animals to become self sufficient.

Humans have certain unique capacities like the ability to walk upright and a hand that can perform precise tasks.

But human beings are not simply a part of nature like other animals—our unique capacities have allowed us to transform nature to meet our needs.

We developed the art of toolmaking which in turned to machinery and modern technology.

Unlike other species, humans developed complex languages, sciences and culture. This allowed knowledge to be passed on from generation to generation.

All this goes hand in hand with the fact that humans are "social" animals—we exist and survive by working together.

Different methods of production have led to different ways of organising society.

The first humans were hunters and gatherers and lived in small groups.

Slavery

Then agriculture developed—that brought with it the slave societies of ancient Greece and Rome.

When these societies disappeared there was feudalism. Serfs tilled the land and were at the mercy of landlords and all-powerful kings and queens.

Capitalism is only the latest form of social organisation—as such it brought tremendous progress over what had gone before.

But two points prove that capitalism is not the "natural" way of things.

Firstly there was no such thing as capitalism for over two million years of human existence.

Secondly the capitalists had to fight to take control of society—in both Britain and France they had to chop off kings heads in violent revolutions.

If capitalism was part of human nature it would have always existed and humans would have accepted it without a fight.

Far from being an expression of human nature, capitalism takes the most important and distinctive feature of human nature—the capacity for human labour—and distorts it.

People work together to

produce things but they have no control over their work.

Workers sell their labour power to a boss who then decides what is to be produced, how much and when.

Even then you have to be able to pay for the goods in order to have them.

But most people can't afford very much because to make profits the capitalists pay workers as little as possible and deny millions the right to work.

Under capitalism we can produce enough to satisfy human need but human need is never satisfied—look at the grain mountains that exist while millions starve.

Under socialism the majority of people will control production in the interests of the majority.

But isn't there a danger that some people will still want power over others and will rise to the top?

Again we need to look at history.

For ninety-nine percent of human existence people lived in small nomadic bands.

They did not own property and only found enough food to help them survive.

When the supply ran out they moved to somewhere else.

In these hunter-gatherer societies there were no rulers.

Some examples of this type of society still exist—like the !Kung San in the Kalahari Desert in Southern Africa.

When asked by American anthropologist Richard Lee if they had

headmen they answered:

Of course we have headmen. In fact we are all headmen—each one of us is a headman over himself.

This type of egalitarian society is known as "primitive communism".

Of course, socialists don't propose going back to a life style which is entirely dominated by the search for food.

But its existence proves that class society is not "inevitable" or that humans have an innate desire for control over others.

The notion of a minority ruling society only came about with the rise of class society.

A ruling class came to power to control the surplus produced by society. And ruling classes have taken different forms as society developed—from slaveowners to feudal lords to modern capitalists.

Each in its turn helped to break the shackles of the previous "order" and drive society forward. But class society has outlived its role—modern capitalism can't meet human needs.

It is now both necessary and desirable to abolish class rule.

Out Now!
Is Human Nature a Barrier to Socialism
by John Molyneux

50p

from SWM branch bookstalls or
SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

The Teamster Rebellion 1934

The battle to build a union

by VASCO PURSER

"THIS is in support of the labour movement." That is how Jack Nicholson describes his new film *Hoffa*.

The film traces the life of Jimmy Hoffa, leader of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters—the biggest and most powerful union in the United States.

Hoffa began as a militant organiser of the Teamsters—the US truck drivers. They fought huge battles with the police and scabs in the 1930s.

But Hoffa was ambitious and corrupt. By the end of his life he was closely linked with the Mafia.

Eventually he was jailed and disappeared mysteriously after he got out of prison.

But the lessons of the Teamsters' struggles in the 1930s are important for socialists today.

Many workers have suffered defeats during the present recession. Some have even had to take wage cuts.

The present recession is the longest since the 1930s. Some trade unionists believe it will take years of recovery before the labour movement regains its strength.

But the extraordinary events that happened among the Teamsters in Minneapolis, USA in 1934 show why this need not be the case.

Minneapolis was then a town of about half a million people in the middle of an agricultural region.

Like Dublin, it had little heavy industry but there was a large food and transport industry.

Minneapolis was run by the Citizens' Alliance to which all the major employers belonged.

In the 30s recession unemployment was rife and relief was minimal.

Those in work earned ten to eighteen dollars for up to ninety hours and risked being fired if they complained.

F. D. Roosevelt, who became the US President in 1933, launched a New Deal with the unions.

FDR claimed to be a "friend of labour" but behind the reforms the New Deal's main aim was to salvage American big business.

A handful of truck drivers—members of the trotskyst Communist League of America (CLA)—began to argue within the Teamsters Union for a different way out of recession.

The Teamsters were part of the giant American Federation of Labour (AFL), a highly conservative bureaucratic outfit.

The AFL believed in "business unionism" or "social partnership" as it would be called today.

Workers were supposed to accept the idea that they had a vested interest in helping their employers make profits. The union spent its time calling for more productivity.

The AFL was organised along narrow craft lines. In Minneapolis the truckers were organised separately according to what cargo they carried—coal, timber, groceries etc. The rules and procedures were endless.

The trotskysts of the CLA were organised in a Teamsters branch known as Local 574 which first struck in February 1934 to demand higher wages.

Farrell Dobbs, one of the trotskysts



US workers fought back in the 1930s—often in the face of police brutality

involved describes how they organised the strike.

"Each evening a general assembly was held... Reports were made by strike leaders, guest speakers were invited from other unions to help morale through an expression of solidarity and some sort of entertainment usually followed.

"A loudspeaker system was installed so that packed meetings could hear what was said as could the overflow crowds which often numbered two or three thousand."

The union organised food kitchens and set up committees to get cheap food directly from farmers. Committees were also set up to look for donations to support the strike.

All of this happened before the national union officers had sanctioned an official strike.

When the strikers did look for backing the union refused. But two days later they had won the strike!

As the Citizens' Alliance began to back-track on its promises following the strike, Local 574 struck again in May and again in July-August 1934.

The strikers elected a committee to run the July strike, leaving many of the established officials powerless.

Again it was a model of how a strike can be run and won—mass meetings every evening so that strikers were kept informed and active, and effective mass picketing organised by picket captains.

The strikers slogan—*No trucks shall be moved! by Nobody!*—was enforced by cruising pickets who also kept all picket lines in regular contact with each other and with the union HQ. Any truck that did move in Minneapolis had to display a union permit.

The strike HQ soon had a canteen, a

hospital, its own radio station, and a repair yard. Strikers' talents and abilities were all utilised.

A women's auxiliary played a vital role. Working farmers organisations were kept informed and in return supplied the canteen with free food.

The unemployed were encouraged to get involved and were unionised.

A daily newspaper—*The Organiser*—was founded which put the workers' side of the story. Help and information poured in from everywhere.

Nurses offered to help wounded strikers. Construction workers and taxi drivers struck in sympathy.

Students, secretaries and waitresses slipped bits of information to *The Organiser*.

The bosses' Citizens' Alliance was not used to this sort of trade unionism. They pursued a twin strategy to break the strike.

Red Scare

They tried to create a red scare over the fact that most of the rank and file leaders were members of the CLA.

They also tried to use police violence to break the strikers morale. Over forty strikers were shot and two died on 20th July 1934—known as "Bloody Friday".

Both these strategies failed. The strikers saw their strike committee as eminently sensible and honest—not as "alien reds".

The police violence provoked massive outrage. Forty thousand workers turned up to the funerals of strikers murdered on Bloody Friday.

The workers armed themselves with clubs to fight back against the police.

The National Guard was sent in to seize the strike headquarters. Dobbs tells what

happened.

"A series of control points was set up around town mainly in friendly filling stations, where cruising squads could enter and leave without attracting attention.

"Couriers scouting the neighbourhoods were used to report scab trucks to picket dispatchers.

"Cruising squads were then sent to the reported locations to do the necessary and get away in a hurry."

When the key strike leaders were arrested, the missing gaps on the strike committee were easily filled. This was because the democratic running of the strike had given everybody a sense of leadership.

Minneapolis was declared to be in a state of insurrection and put under martial law. But after two weeks individual employers began to crack under the cost, and after some pressure from Washington the Citizens Alliance caved in.

While these events were happening in Minneapolis, two very similar strikes were won—the first, by longshoremen in San Francisco and the second, auto workers in Toledo, Ohio.

Like Minneapolis, both strikes were led by radicals, breaking beyond the notion of a narrow craft union towards the idea of a general industrial union.

In 1933 a series of strikes had emerged across the US, reflecting a growing feeling that workers had had enough. Most however ended in defeat.

The events in Minneapolis and elsewhere in 1934 reinvigorated the unions, paving the way for the formation in 1935 of the Committee of Industrial Organisations (CIO).

The CIO was later to organise six million American workers—transforming the

whole character of the US labour movement in the process.

The revival of US labour after the recession was far "gradual". The bitterness exploded into a mass wave of anger.

In this situation the union bureaucrats could be by-passed. The tactics of revolutionary socialists were shown to work.

The comparisons with Ireland today are worth mentioning.

Here too there is a continuing recession. There is a feeling for change—typified by the vote for Labour in the last general election.

There are a small but significant number of strikes beginning to erupt.

And there is a highly bureaucratized trade union structure involved in deals and agreements like the PESP.

In these circumstances a surge of rank and file militancy is not ruled out.

Revolutionaries can find themselves cutting with the grain, with revolutionary ideas making sense and reaching a far wider and more sympathetic audience than we might think possible.

Out Now

The Teamster Rebellion
by Farrell Dobbs

£6.95 + £1 postage
from SW Books, P.O.
Box 1648, Dublin 8.

COMMENT

Drugs, war and profit

by BRENDAN DONOHOE

DRUG use and abuse is on the rise in Ireland.

The reasons are straightforward enough.

The recession makes the world lousy for the vast majority of people.

Drugs provide temporary personal relief from a life of struggle and alienation.

Those who supply this relief make fabulous profits. And it is not only "illegal" suppliers who benefit.

The "legal" drug industry—alcohol and tranquillisers—in the US can be more profitable than any other legitimate business according to a *Financial Times* report.

A profit of 45 cents for every dollar of sales is possible with a successful drug.

In Ireland drugs have become more popular among working class kids facing a future of unemployment or low paid jobs.

Dropping an "E" and going to a rave is attractive not because the drugs are so good but because the rest of life is so shit.

Rounded-Up

The "solution" from right-wingers—and some Labour politicians—is to call for addicts to be rounded up and imprisoned.

Drug users are scapegoats for society's ills.

Small-time pushers and users are arrested while major suppliers go free.

Working class kids get mandatory sentences for having cannabis while Ben Dunne—caught with a huge amount of cocaine—is showered with sympathy and "understanding".

In fact, our own rulers have long been involved in the supply of drugs—with the "civilised" West leading the way.

In the 1850s Britain went to war with China over the importation of opium from Bengal—which the East India Company owned and controlled.

Britain won the "Opium

Wars" and created fifteen million opium addicts in China.

From Borneo to Burma opium dens were controlled by the colonial authorities. In India—the "Jewel of the Empire"—the administration drew one-sixth of its income from the drug.

The French used drugs to finance war against Vietnam.

The US followed suit. In Laos the US supported Vang Po, a drugs warlord, against his rivals.

He in return supplied mercenaries for the secret war against left-wing Pathet-Lao guerrillas.

Refineries

The CIA flew drugs from the poppy fields to the refineries in Hong Kong and encouraged all arable land to be turned over to opium production.

The US-backed Contras made about \$40 million in drug running operations between Costa Rica and Miami—all supported by the CIA.

The pilot who delivered the mines for the mining of the Nicaraguan ports in 1984 was paid by being allowed to fly on to North Colombia where he picked up 6,000 lbs of marijuana.

Hypocritically, George Bush made the "war on drugs" a key issue while he was US president. He used it to justify invading Panama and to whip up racism against black drug users in the US itself.

Socialists are against the hysteria and hypocrisy about drug use and abuse. It is a myth to say that experimenting with drugs will turn you into a "junkie".

The Surgeon General of the US pointed out that you are as likely to get addicted to tobacco as you are to heroin. Heroin is highly dangerous but still causes far fewer deaths than the legal drug, tobacco.

Socialists don't advocate drug taking—we want to see people fighting the system rather than "escaping" from it.

But we oppose the scapegoating of drug addicts. Real anger should be focused on the system that breeds the abuse.

Blade Runner—the Director's Cut: Reviewed by Richard Boyd Barrett

ALL films bear the hallmark of the time in which they are made and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* is no exception.

Although set in the future, few recent films more accurately portray the enormous contradictions that lie at the heart of the system under which we live.

Rather than presenting the future as a squeaky clean technological utopia, *Blade Runner* shows luxury and splendour existing side by side with urban decay and poverty in 21st century Los Angeles.

The city is controlled by a small elite of rich entrepreneurs and state apparatchniks. The plot centres around the giant Tyrell corporation which produces robots for use as slave labourers and shock troops in the Earth's colonies in outer space.

The "replicants"—orrobots—stage a rebellion in the colonies and return to earth hoping to extend their life-span which is limited to just four years.

Rutger Hauer plays the Replicants' leader while Harrison Ford plays a *Blade Runner*—a professional replicant killer—forced out of retirement to eliminate the replicants.

Despite his intimate relationship with one of the female replicants the "Blade Runner"—afraid to get on the wrong side of the authorities—proceeds to carry out his mission in a quite brutal fashion.

As the plot develops it becomes clear that the "Blade Runner"—far from doing society a favour—is, in fact, the repressive arm of a regime that will brook no opposition to its rule or its drive for profits. "Our only goal is prof-

Rebels and Replicants



Harrison Ford and Sean Young in "Blade Runner—the Director's Cut"

its", says Tyrell to Harrison Ford, although the comment could just as easily have been made by the management at Digital or Aer Lingus.

Similarly, the replicants here could be any group of workers forced on to the scrap heap when they ask for more than the bosses want to give.

The replicants are showing signs of having their own needs and emotions and as workers know to

their cost such things don't figure on the profit and loss account of capitalist concerns.

The strength of the new version of *Blade Runner—the Director's Cut* is its removal of parts of the earlier cut which tended to soften the presentation of the systems brutality.

A clichéd happy ending which obscured the tragedy of the replicants murder has been taken out.

Also an over-dubbed

commentary by Deckard—the *Blade Runner*—has gone. This further shifts the balance of sympathy towards the replicants and away from Deckard—the liberal cop with a conscience!

The one fault with this otherwise brilliant and visually spectacular film is its wholly pessimistic view of the possibilities for the exploited and downtrodden to overthrow their oppression.

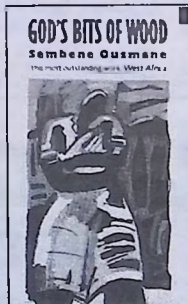
In this respect, *Blade Runner* very much reflects the demoralisation and weakness of much of the left in the 1980's and today.

The recent rebellion of Black, Hispanic and White working class people in Los Angeles where the film is set should therefore remind us of the huge possibilities for mass struggle against a dehumanising system that tries to make Replicants of us all.

Book Review

The Other Africa

PAUL O'BRIEN reviews:
God's Bits of Wood by Sembene Ousmane, £4.75 + £1 postage from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8



SEMBENE Ousmanes visit to Dublin to discuss his films during the recent film festival coincided with the reissue of his greatest book, *Gods Bits of Wood*.

Ousmane was born in Senegal in 1923 and after working as a plumber and bricklayer moved to France after the war.

He became a docker and trade union activist. Out of these experiences he wrote his first book, *Black Docker* in 1956. He became a full time writer and film maker.

In 1947 the railway workers on the Dakar-

Niger line came out on strike. The strike lasted six months and despite starvation, army beatings and lack of water in the intense heat the strike won.

Gods Bits of Wood is the story of that strike.

Most people's horror at famine in Africa leads them to conclude that Western intervention is the only way out.

Gods Bits of Wood completely undercuts this view. It shows an urban working class that is even more dominant and powerful today than in the late 1940s when this book was written.

Even more importantly, it shows African workers as fighters taking control of their own

lives, rather than waiting for "favours" from Western imperialism.

It is also a book that can stand beside any of the great novels of the West. It reminds me of James Plunketts *Strumpet City* and Zolas

Germinal in the way that it draws you into the story.

Though set in Senegal, it has a universality that anyone can identify with.

Although its only available in the African Writers Series, I am constantly amazed at how

often it is mentioned when people get to talking about their favourite books.

I read it again after the miners strike in Britain in 1984/85 and was struck by how similar the story was—the confidence of the rail workers, the camaraderie and mutual support that grows during such momentous times, the transformation of attitudes that happens as workers see the world in reality.

In both strikes we see communities that had traditional attitudes towards women being transformed as wives, daughters and girlfriends are drawn centrally into the strike.

Above all, this is a great story that gives flesh to the idea that working class people can change the world, and in the process change themselves.

Read it and pass it on to your friends.

OUT NOW

Why the Irish Labour Party Fails



by Conor Kostick
A Socialist Worker pamphlet

Why Labour sells out and why we need a genuine socialist alternative £1 from SW paper sellers, SWM branch bookstalls or from PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 40p

Inside:

Can there be a socialist alternative?

see pages 6 & 7

WORKERS UNITY TO BEAT THE TORIES

FIGHT FOR OUR HOSPITALS!

THIS rotten Tory government is out to kill our health service.

And there's no doubt that people are angry at the attacks.

Twenty thousand marched in Downpatrick against the closure of Downe Hospital in September.

Three thousand health workers protested in February against the Royal Hospital opting out of the health service.

Thousands have attended public meetings and demonstrations across Northern Ireland.

Margaret Dunham of the Royal Group of Hospitals Joint Shop Stewards' Committee told *Socialist Worker*:

"People don't know what's going to happen to their jobs. There is a mood of anger in the hospitals. People are determined to fight the cuts tooth and nail."

A City Hospital nurse said: "Everyone's worried about their jobs, from the consultants to the cleaners."

She also described how hospitals are starting to compete with one another:

"Before the talk about trust status everyone worked together. If we were short of supplies we would ring over to the Royal. Now everyone is working against each other, fighting to see who can get the patients."

The Tories want health care to be subject to market greed.

They are creating a two-tier health service.

Those who can pay will get the best health care that money can buy, while those who can't afford treatment will be left to suffer on waiting lists.

Savage

Workers in the Royal and Craigavon Hospitals have overwhelmingly voted against trust status.

And local communities have set up action committees to protest at these savage cuts.

In Belfast an action committee was set up by staff and patients to defend Jubilee Maternity Unit where three thousand children are

born every year.

The Health Board says that these babies will now have to be born in Lagan Valley Hospital, ten miles outside Belfast, or at the Mater Hospital whose Catholic ethos denies women family planning advice.

So much for the Tories' Patients' Charter and its talk of "patient choice".

The kind of anger witnessed over the last few months in Downpatrick, in Armagh and in Belfast must be built on.

The health unions should use the power of health workers to make the Tories back down.

Mass demonstrations, ward occupations, and strike action are the only way to beat the Tories—

and other workers should be involved alongside the health workers.

Tory privatisation plans have already meant job cuts at Northern Ireland airports and the Royal Mail. After they finish the sell-off of electricity in June they will move on to privatising our water.

Workers at Shorts and the Housing Executive know only too well what privatisation means.

Six hundred and fifty-five Shorts workers have just been put on the dole, while seven hundred Housing Executive labouring jobs have been axed because of private tendering.

The Tories want to do the same to health service workers—we need to unite to stop them in their tracks.