

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

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Another sell-out from Labour

QUINN PLANS MORE CUTS

RUAIRI QUINN is planning a new round of cuts which will have a devastating effect on public sector workers.

He has already made a start by attacking the unemployed. One of the few decent schemes in recent years was the VTOS scheme.

This allowed people who were unemployed for six months to take up adult education schemes.

They could study for their Leaving Cert or Junior Cert on courses specially designed for their needs.

But Quinn has ordered that 1,000 places be cut off the scheme.

An activist at the Galway Centre for the Unemployed told *Socialist Worker*, "it has had a devastating effect. People were planning courses and it gave them a bit of hope.

It is really sick that a Labour Minister for Finance and a Labour Minister for Education gang up on the unemployed like this"

Now Quinn is demanding another £900 million drop in government spending.

According to the *Irish Independent* correspondent "the likes of that have not been heard since Ray McSharry's time".

McSharry was Fianna Fail hatchet man in the 1980s. He launched a vicious war against public sector workers.

This time around Fianna Fail are again urging Quinn on. Bertie Ahern has called for job cuts in the public sector.

Quinn's cuts will mean



Quinn: laughing

worse conditions in our schools and more overcrowding in hospitals.

Fraud

And while these cuts are going ahead PAYE workers will still be asked to contribute to a £100 million fine which the EU has imposed on the Irish beef industry.

While the beef barons walk off scott free from their history of fraud, we will be paying with cuts in our services.

This is just the latest in Labour and Democratic Left's sell-outs. It is time to build an alternative.

But plenty of money to spend on EU splash

WHILE Quinn lectures us on the need for cuts, there is no shortage of money when it comes to impressing EU bureaucrats.

£9 million pounds has been set aside by the Department of Foreign Affairs to be used for Ireland's Presidency of the E.U. next year.

This is on top of another £10 million which was spent last year to re-furbish Dublin Castle.

When the bureaucrats descend here next year, they will meet in the most lavish of surroundings.

Garda subsidy

THE Coalition government is giving a £90,000 loan to a Garda trade union.

This is at a time when they claim that they have no money in the kitty to pay for social services.

The money is designed to pay off a legal debt incurred by the Garda Federation who are involved in a wrangle with the rival Garda Representative Association.

But that organisation itself is heavily funded by the

government. Last year it got £116,000 in a state handout to cover accommodation costs for its offices and money towards its telephone bill.

When the SIPTU union was fined heavily for supporting the Nolan's strike in Wexford, there was no money given to help them out with legal bills.

But when two rival Garda groups have a row, money can be found with little difficulty.

Stop this deadly mast

AS PROTESTS mount around the world against France's resumption of nuclear testing in the South Pacific, it seems that the coalition government has its own dirty nuclear connections.

The government are determined to push ahead with the construction of a 720 foot-high radio navigation mast despite opposition from locals and anti-nuclear campaigners.

The mast is proposed for Feear, near Loop-head in Co. Clare. Named Loran C (Long Range Navigation) it is part of a series of navigation posts on the edge of the Atlantic.

It is designed to help ships plot their position by using low

frequency transmissions from Loran C.

The government say it is "for civilian and commercial use".

Financing

All very useful and innocent, you might think—but then why is the French government financing Loran C to the tune of 50 per cent? A quick glance at some facts reveals why:

*The Loran C navigation system was first established in

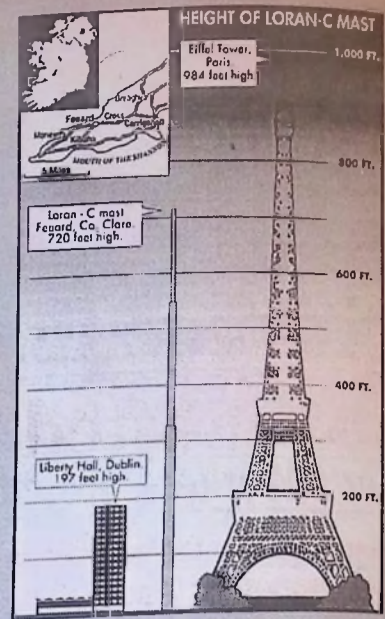
the early 1960's—exactly the same period that the French and British developed their nuclear missile carrying submarines.

*Most of France's nuclear missiles are carried on board its submarine fleet.

*France is currently expanding its navy—it has just completed building four new submarines carrying nuclear missiles.

These submarines can use the Loran C navigation system.

The government's involvement in Loran C is yet another nail in the coffin of Irish neutrality, and yet another betrayal by Democratic Left and the Labour Party.



Who's behind the anti-divorce lobby?

SINISTER right wing forces are jumping in behind Ireland's anti-divorce lobby.

The No Divorce Campaign brings together extreme groupings such as Human Life International and Youth Defence.

Human Life International is the US funded organisation that has plush offices in Mountjoy Square.

It is headed up by Peter Scully.

When he appeared on a radio show two years ago, he claimed that he had never had sex despite lecturing other people on the issue.

In the US, Human Life International is linked to Operation Rescue which has mounted violent attacks on abortion clinics.

The other main grouping

involved is Youth Defence. Scully used to be the Public Relations Officer of Youth Defence.

This organisation formerly had its headquarters in Thomas St.

Attacked

When a picket was placed on it by a number of students, they were physically attacked by thugs carrying big sticks.

Bringing up the respectable end of the campaign is the Christian Principles Party.

One of their main leaders Gerard Casey is a lecturer in philosophy in UCD.

This UCD Philosophy department has established

a reputation of promoting hard line teachings on morality.

At least two other members are linked to Opus Dei.

One student who studied there said:

"What you think and what you put in exam papers are two different things."

"They mark you down if you have the wrong line on Catholic morality."

All of these groups campaign on far wider planks than just divorce.

They tried to mount an unsuccessful campaign against the use of the Stay Safe programme in Irish schools.

This programme set out to alert children to the danger of child abuse.

Far from having a concern for children, these groups are hoping to use the divorce campaign to launch a far right movement that will try to turn the tide against liberalism in Ireland.

If they get a NO vote, it will build their confidence



Youth Defence: Their concern for children is phoney

enormously. This is why the argument in this referendum is not just about divorce—but about

whether or not we defend the small changes that have happened in Irish society in recent years.

No compassion

A PARISH Priest in Cork City has told a local woman she is no longer welcome in his church because she is co-habiting with a man.

The woman originally lived in North Cork with her husband who violently abused her. She stayed with him for her children's sake but eventually had a nervous breakdown and was admitted to a mental hospital in the city.

On leaving the hospital she could not face her brutal husband and stayed in the city where she eventually met and moved in with her new partner.

She became a Minister of the Eucharist in her local church but has now been turned away by the Parish Priest. No doubt he will be preaching against divorce even though it would allow this woman to make a new start.

Remember this story the next time you hear the clergy pleading for compassion over church scandals.

BARRED FOR BEING GAY

The Dublin pub, The Parliament Inn, has changed its name—and its policy towards gay people.

The pub used to be a local for many gay people and functions were often held there.

But since it re-opened under the new name "The Turks Head" bouncers now describe the behaviour of gay people as "disgusting".

The pub proprietor, Tita Briscoe, is demanding that people have "proper dress and proper behaviour".

Gay people are now being refused admission. One gay man who gave his boyfriend a "peck on the cheek" was thrown out. This pub's policy is nothing short of disgusting.

The local branch of the Socialist Workers Party has called a picket on the pub in Parliament St to highlight the bigotry. It will take place on Friday October 6th at 8.00pm.

inside the system

Cancer is linked to poverty - it's official

A new Irish study shows what many have long believed. One in four Irish people will develop some form of cancer, although at least three quarters are preventable if diagnosed early enough.

A new book, "Cancer - the Irish Experience" focused mainly on the Cork/Kerry region.

It shows clearly that people living in Cork city have higher rates of cancer - and that this is due to "socio-economic variances", as the author says.

That is: employment, lifestyle, diet...being working class.

MILLIONAIRE fashion designers like Giorgio Armani could soon be designing prison uniforms.

Armani and other fashion people are going on trial in Italy accused of corruption. He has sickeningly presented himself as a victim, saying it is impossible to be honest if you want to be in business in Italy.

And this from the person who has spent his life getting freebies, discounts, gifts and backhanders.

★ At least 20 of the richest men and women in the world met in Dublin recently for a few nice dinners and what they call networking.

The group, worth a collective £21 billion, were invited by Michael Smurfit to dine in the Arnold Palmer Room in Smurfit's own K-Club in Kildare.

Prince Albert of Monaco was there, as were CBS executives; Don Kehoe, former president of Coca Cola; and bankers galore.

The next day they had a private dinner with Taoiseach John Bruton in Dublin Castle (at who's expense?).

One of the group had two cases of his favourite beer flown to Ireland by private jet because the hotel didn't stock it.

★ Fianna Fail TD Sean Doherty has really flipped it!

He's been looking for a printer for 30,000 prayer cards for a woman he met recently.

She's Christine Gallagher, a lady from

Achill Sound who runs a house of prayer in the area.

She says she receives regular revelations from God.

The former Special Branch man turned TD must be sure of the story—he has probably tapped the conversations.

★ A WOMAN was sacked from a factory in Mayo because she forgot to bring the boss his cup of tea in the afternoon.

Another worker in the same electronic factory in Belmullet was sacked because he asked for a small heater on a cold December day.

The boss, Paddy Hayes, was forced to pay out £5,700 in unfair dismissals.

Another woman in Athlone was sacked from her job in the Prince of Wales hotel because she was pregnant.

what we think

DIVORCE:

Stand up to the Bishops

THE MINISTER for Agriculture, Ivan Yates has denounced the media for their lack of compassion for Bishop Commiskey.

But all the newspapers have done is to reveal a number of major items of public concern.

■ That priests in Bishop Commiskey's area are at the centre of child sex abuse allegations.

■ That there have been such huge financial losses in his diocese that parishioners in Coolafancy have formed an action group to trace a bequest of more than £100,000 which was left to the church.

■ That despite the vows of poverty, Bishop Commiskey was able to take six holidays in Bangkok in two years as a member of Thai's Air's exclusive Orchid plus club.

All of this is relevant because the Bishops have chosen to set themselves

rape?

The reality is that the Bishops have not a leg to stand on when it comes to lecturing us on how we should conduct our relationships.

Socialists are all for compassion.

But where was the compassion shown to Eileen Flynn, a teacher in the Wexford area who was sacked by the nuns because she was pregnant and unmarried?

Denounced

And where was the compassion shown to the 14 year old girl at the centre of the X case when Fr Michael Clery denounced her for making up the story of her

Hypocrisy

Their hypocrisy on the divorce debate should be denounced at every turn.

When they call for a concern for 'children's welfare' they should be asked why they never reported priests like Fr Brendan Smyth to the civil authorities?

They should be reminded that during the last referendum one of their number, Bishop Casey denounced the evil of divorce—while refusing to speak to his own

son for 17 years.

The tragedy is that this government will not campaign for divorce in this fashion.

Instead they have horse-traded with Bertie Ahern to bring in the most restrictive measure in Europe. They think that by denouncing 'quickie divorce' they will swing a majority in favour of a YES vote.

It is an absurd strategy that could badly backfire. This referendum will have to be won *despite* this miserable and cowardly government.

It will be up to socialists to argue that divorce is a basic democratic right.

It should be open to all regardless of financial means. Neither the Bishops nor the State have any right to dictate how we live our lives.



Commiskey: Bangkok holidays

**It's
a
fair
cop**

GARDA WILLIAM Whelan of Clones was, according to his state sergeant, an "efficient member of the force".

Whelan had just pleaded guilty to 18 charges of housebreaking and larceny in Monaghan, Cavan, Meath and Longford.

He was given a suspended sentence on the basis that he carried out the crimes in daylight hours when no one was at home.

Impressed

He also assured the court that when he was carrying out his crimes he did not use any knowledge gained from the Gardaí to help him.

The judge was clearly impressed.

Recently a young man was imprisoned for stealing a packet of rashers. Next time you hear calls for more law and order, remember the likes of Garda Whelan.

Ringsend locals fight Biotech hazard

ON Saturday the 23rd of this month a march and rally were held in Ringsend and Sandymount.

They were called to voice local opposition to the proposed incinerator for Ringsend and to let BioBurn, the company behind the incinerator know that the people who live in these areas are prepared to fight it every inch of the way.

Outrage

Up to a thousand people turned out to express their outrage.

Speakers from Cork and Derry who had been part of similar campaigns in those cities spoke to the crowd and expressed their solidarity with them.

Campaign

If An Bord Pleanála grant permission for the incinerator to go ahead, the campaign on the streets should be escalated.

Local workplaces should also be contacted to get solidarity action from trade unionists.



On the march in Ringsend

Trimble's two faces

SINCE David Trimble became leader of the Ulster Unionists there has been much talk of the party taking up economic and social issues.

But Trimble's intervention in the recent campaign to save Banbridge Hospital shows what a right wing Tory bigot he really is.

On 9th September, 10,000 Catholic and Protestants took to the streets of Banbridge to stop the downgrading of the hospital.

It was the biggest demonstration in the history of the town. One pensioner described the atmosphere as "intoxicating—it outshone the VE celebration of 1945".

David Trimble, who is the local MP, attended the demo and spoke at the rally. He obviously didn't like the idea of a united non-sectarian march.

In his speech he called for a devolved government in Stormont.

Praise

He also used the occasion to praise the arch Thatcherite John Redwood for keeping local hospitals open during his time as Secretary of State for Wales!

In the days following the rally, Trimble made comments supporting the downgrading of the hospital by the closure of its acute services

department.

He supported the idea of a "polyclinic" or "medical mall" on the site of the hospital. Within a week of Trimble's comment, the local Health Trust announced the closure of the acute services department.

The local UNISON branch Secretary, Noel Nelson said "The demonstration was fantastic but now we don't know what will happen next year. But people are determined the campaign will continue".

Trimble's action shows that he is just interested in electioneering.

He has neither the interests of Catholic or Protestant worker at heart.

We did this work for local authorities

SIX MEN who launched a vicious attack on a traveller site admitted that they did such 'work' for local authorities.

Reg Brogan, one of the ringleaders claimed that they were frequently called upon by councils when they wanted travellers moved on.

Awoke

The thugs, Reg and Gay Brogan, Peter McCarthy, Phillip O Shea, Tony O Grady and Patrick Murphy appeared before the court for attacking travellers in Bantry.

The travellers told how they awoke one morning

to find the six wielding baseball bats.

A forklift was used to move a caravan—badly damaging it.

Elizabeth Burke said "the children were terrified and crying."

"We pleaded with them to stop but they said they were paid to do a job and they were going to do it."

No attempt has been made to investigate how the councils were working with these thugs for years.

What Price a worker's life?

ACCORDING to the Belfast Magistrates Court, the going rate is £9,000.

The newly privatised Northern Ireland Electricity Board admitted liability over the death of one of its workers, Victor Boreland, last year.

Low safety standards by the company resulted in Victor's death while he was erecting electricity poles at Poleglass.

British hypocrisy on peace

RECENT remarks by former Northern Ireland Minister Michael Mates have revealed the real thinking among the British establishment about the prospects for peace in Ireland.

Mates argued that it was necessary to call the "bluff" of the republican movement on de-commissioning even if this meant a "brief return to violence".

Mates or his Tory friends wouldn't be caught up in the violence themselves: the working class on all sides would again pay the price.

From the word go the British government has adopted stalling tactics in their response to the IRA ceasefire.

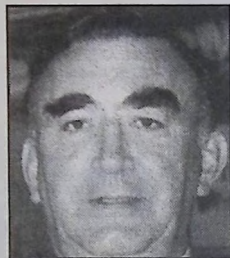
Now almost fourteen months after the IRA ceasefire virtually nothing has changed in The North.

Barracks

The army have been pulled back to barracks. But hardly any troops have been withdrawn.

The numbers of British soldiers in Northern Ireland are exactly the same as they were in 1992.

The RUC is continuing to behave in a blatantly sectarian manner. It has fired three hundred plastic bullets this



Mates: "violence"

year already.

A massive RUC barracks is being planned for the Springfield/Springmartin area of Belfast. It is as just another example of their intention to remain at full strength.

Mark, who works in the East of the city, claims the police are using all sorts of issues to keep their numbers up at a record 13,000. "You can see them hyping up the issue of drugs, making it out to be worse than it is. They're using it to justify their existence these days," he said.

And Dickie from

Lenadoon talks about the RUC continuing to harass people in his area.

The tactics of the Tories has given heart to the most hardline element within Unionism. A year ago, Paisley was being dismissed as a buffoon who was more interested in sectarianism than peace.

Fringe

But the election of Trimble as leader of the Unionist party owed much to his association with Paisley at the Orange march at Garvaghy.

The fringe loyalist parties are daily drifting back to their loyalist rhetoric.

The UDA has signalled that in the event of any attempt to tamper with 'Protestant rights' a terrorist campaign will be mounted in Dublin.

Jim from East Belfast feels that at best the British government saw the peace process as a way of institutionalising sectarianism.

"All they want is to halt the armed struggle and get inter-communal violence down to an acceptable level. Sectarianism would then become economic rather



Back to barracks but not withdrawn

than militaristic if the peace holds."

The danger now is that the present atmosphere can lead to an increase in sec-

tarian feelings.

Catholic and Protestants are being told from all sides that they are in competition with each other.

They are encouraged to jockey for position before a new settlement is reached.

Mark sees signs of this happening already.

"A lot of the people I work with are already pointing the finger at their nearest Catholic neighbours, claiming that they have benefited more than Protestants since the ceasefire."

In this situation it is important that socialist ideas get a hearing.

The real hope lies in workers identifying on a class rather than communal basis.

But this will demand an argument to encourage Protestant workers to break from loyalism and for Catholic workers to turn away from looking to nationalist politicians like the SDLP and the Fianna Fail party.

Sinn Fein: Under pressure

SINN FEIN and the republican movement are now under serious pressure.

After twenty five years of struggle they entered into a process that they hoped would lead to an eventual British withdrawal.

Republican prisoners in Britain are being treated worse than ever. NO prisoners have been released in the North and the longer the peace lasts the more the British Government squeezes them further.

Dickie initially welcomed the ceasefire but now he feels it will yield nothing.

Jim from the Ardoyne says, "Sinn Fein have dropped all the talk of socialism to get new allies. But you look around and it is obvious they have gotten nothing"

Tragedy

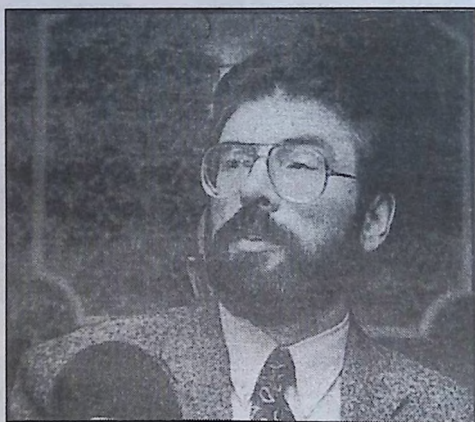
The tragedy is that they are now hoping that Bill Clinton's visit will pull a rabbit out of the hat for them. But Clinton has no interest in ending the oppression of Catholics in Northern Ireland.

In his own country he

has endorsed the increased use of the death penalty—knowing full well that blacks are its chief victims.

Sinn Fein's new "allies" in the SDLP and Fianna Fail have no time for workers or their families on either side of the religious divide.

They see a peaceful Ireland as a chance to make a fast buck and foreign investors intend using it as a launching pad into the European Union.



Adams: Dropped all talk of socialism

we think

THE WAY FORWARD

DESPITE the huge frustration in Catholic working class areas, any return to the armed struggle should be opposed.

It would only lead to intense repression throughout the island and would be a tactic based on despair.

The only road worth taking is one that seeks to cut through the sectarian divide to unite workers against the system which breeds poverty and sectarianism.

The Protestant working class has absolutely nothing to gain in supporting Orange and

Orangelsm.

Even the fringe Loyalist parties have recognised the huge social and economic divisions within the Protestant community.

Rejected

But these parties too should be rejected because they still justify

sectarianism.

Neither has the Catholic working class anything to gain in supporting nationalist and capitalist players.

Only a unified working class will rid this country of British imperialism, green and orange bigotry and social exploitation once and for all.

behind the headlines

Silence over NATO bombing of Bosnia

by DAVE McDONAGH

WHERE HAVE all the cries about ethnic cleansing in Bosnia gone? In the past journalists such as Maggie O'Kane and Mary Holland praised the French President Jacques Chirac because he advocated 'action' in Bosnia.

But now that NATO intervention has happened, there is a strange silence.

The reason is because this time it is Serbs who have been driven from their homes by advancing Croat and Muslim forces.

Fallen

Over 100,000 Serbs have fled from their homes in Western Bosnia.

The *Guardian* newspaper reported that "a quarter of central and western Bosnian towns have effectively fallen to the Croats and Muslims."

"The first towns have gone to the Croats, despite the fact they have never lived there. Drvar to the West was 97 per cent Serb before the war. Four out of five people in Sipovo were Serb."

Croat leader Franjo Tudjman has proved as bloodthirsty as his opponents. After his forces drove Serbs from the Krajina region, he toured Croatia in triumph.

Tudjman told crowds how 150,000 Serbs had "vanished from this area as if they never lived here at all".

In a display of pure ethnic hatred he boasted that fleeing Serbs "didn't even have time to collect their dirty currency and their dirty underwear".

This right wing nationalist is the man with whom Muslim leader Izetbegovic has made an alliance.

Indeed the Muslim forces themselves were involved in the ethnic cleansing of Serbs.

The Muslim forces have proved just as brutal as the Serbs.

UN observers reported soldiers with Bosnian insignias burning villages and in one case dragging disabled people from a home and killing them.

One Irish newspaper, the *Sunday Business Post* was positively gloating. It denounced the 'fat, well fed Serbs' who were getting a taste of their own medicine.

The Western media are now talking as if a

solution to the war in former Yugoslavia is in sight. By and large they have welcomed the NATO bombing of the Serbs in Bosnia as a step towards peace.

Richard Holbrooke, the US assistant secretary of state who brokered the latest peace deal, has been described as 'the Kissinger of the Balkans'.

Kissinger used American air power to devastate Vietnam and try to force a settlement which guaranteed the interests of the US.

Now Holbrooke is using the attack on the Serbs as a lever to force a settlement which leaves US interests intact.

NATO's strategy has been to weaken the Serbs with air attacks in order to make it easier for Croat and Bosnian troops to defeat the Serbs on the ground.

The West wants a peace deal which creates a balance between a stronger Croatian army which is under their influence and the Serbs which looks to Russia. They intend to station 50,000 NATO troops in the area which gives them a new foothold in any future conflicts with Russia.

Bloodshed

They don't care if this settlement is reached by means of further ethnic cleansing and bloodshed as long as it brings 'stability'.

As the *Guardian's* correspondent, Ian Traynor put it, "The cynicism of all parties including the Americans is breathtaking. They have sponsored the concept of ethnically pure states as the solution".

Gone is all the talk of preserving the 'multi-ethnic' character of Bosnia. After so much deaths and murders from all sides, the people of Bosnia will still be ruled by the warmongers who stoked up nationalist hatred.

In reality it is a recipe for continued conflict. Nationalist politics will again try to whip up hatred about lands and houses that were lost to the other side.

Already the alliance between Croatia and the Muslim forces is looking shaky as rows break out about the distribution of the spoils of war.

The only hope of ending the horror lies in workers uniting to kick out the warmongers.

TURKEY:

Huge strikes topple regime

THE TURKISH government collapsed last week in the face of mass strikes by public sector workers.

Conservative Prime Minister Tansu Ciller handed in her government's resignation as 30,000 workers walked out to join 130,000 already on strike.

Workers in sugar factories, state highways and agriculture, together with 100,000 rail workers joined the stoppage in the days after the government resigned.

Moderate

The strikes have been called by the traditionally moderate *Turks* union confederation under massive pressure from rank and file workers fighting a 5.5 percent wage offer when inflation is 100 percent.

The current round of action began in August when a *Turks* demonstration brought 200,000 on the streets of the capital Ankara.

Strikes began immediately afterwards, which have snowballed until at least 300,000 are now taking action, with more set to join them.

Many strikers do jobs legally designated as "crucially important for national security", where industrial action is illegal.

Ciller's government finally cracked after the strikers put massive pressure on her CHP (Labour) coalition partner.

The leaders of *Turks* attended the CHP party congress in early September and told the new leader Deniz Baykal, "You have to decide whether you are the party of the International Monetary Fund or of the workers. You have to leave this government."

The ultimatum was issued as striking agricultural workers demonstrated outside the hall.

Ciller has been asked to form a new administration

but whatever she comes up with—another coalition or a minority government—will be unstable.

The Turkish ruling class is fighting on two fronts and it cannot bear the cost.

Offensive

It faces a generalised offensive by the working class and a full scale war in Kurdistan against the PKK Kurdish Workers Party.

Whatever government emerges in the coming weeks will face the same problems that brought down the old one.

It could take legal action against the strikers and attack workers' demonstrations, but this would only sharpen and extend the struggle.

Alternatively it will have to retreat on at least one front—either reaching a political solution in Kurdistan or granting workers' demands for higher wages, union rights and greater democracy.

PALESTINE

Anger at PLO Peace Accord concessions

THE PEACE accord signed between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat has been hailed round the world.

The deal, sees Israeli troops pull out of six major cities in the occupied West Bank in the run up to Palestinian elections to be held by April 1996.

It will also start the release of almost 6,000 Palestinian prisoners.

The majority of Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank are delighted that at long last they will have elections.

Divided

However their pleasure is mixed with anger at the concessions made by Yasser Arafat and fear for the future.

The West Bank is to be divided into three separate zones.

The six main cities will come under Palestinian control with Israeli troops pulling out from next week.

In 400 towns and villages, Palestinians will control the local councils and police force but Israeli troops will have complete freedom of action.

A third zone of Jewish settlements and rural areas will remain under total Israeli control until at least July 1997.

Yasser Arafat says last week's accord means that within two years Palestinian will control 90 percent of the Israeli occupied territories.

The Israeli government says it is giving up just 30 percent of the occupied territories.

They are refusing to uproot a single settler even in Hebron where 400 fanatics, protected by the army, terrorise an Arab population of 120,000.

The accord denies Palestinians control over external security, foreign policy, borders, immigration, main roads, water or electricity. Final negotiations on the status of the occupied territories will begin next year and are scheduled for completion in 1999.

However, many Palestinians rightly fear they will end up with nothing more than a series of Bantustans—the phoney Black homelands created by apartheid South Africa.

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho have already experienced what the Financial Times calls Arafat's "increasingly thuggish administration".

The Palestine National Authority has banned demonstrations, closed newspapers, harassed journalists and staged mass arrest of alleged political activists.

It has introduced trial by security courts.



Arafat and friends

Last month PNA interrogators strangled and killed a 36 year old Gazan man Tawfiq Sawarka.

Three Gazan journalists who publicised the story were arrested for "communicating malicious information".

Admitted

Despite these arrests, the Palestinian authorities eventually admitted the death but claimed that laws dating back to 1923 when the region was under British rule were still valid.

Hopes of peace and talk of containing "extremist violence" on both sides

cannot hide a simple truth.

Last week's deal means Israel can throttle the Palestinians at will—as it has done repeatedly by closing off Gaza and Jericho since they were granted limited autonomy last year.

It does little to stop the daily, routine violence meted out by the Israeli army and settlers on Palestinians, and it will not stop the desperate Palestinian terror attacks in response.

There can be no real peace until Jews and Arabs live side by side, with equal rights in the whole of Palestine.

NORTH AFRICA

Mass riots rock Sudan

By an eye witness in Khartoum

RIOTS AND demonstrations have shaken the military regime in the Africa state of Sudan.

Student protests were immediately joined by the homeless and others in the capital Khartoum and together they fought the police for days on end.

I was moving in a cloud of tear gas for over two hours on Monday of last week.

I saw several expensive cars torched. The crowd also sought out the motorcycles which the regime supplies to its activists.

There was some firing on the marchers and I heard some were wounded.

But the protesters were not driven from the streets.

Rising food prices and terrible poverty have fuelled hatred of President Bashir's gov-

ernment.

The power behind the regime is Hassan Turabi's Islamic Brotherhood.

But it simply uses Islamism to cover its policy of enriching a tiny section of the population at the expense of the immense majority.

Clashed

The spark for the riots came after anti-government students clashed with Muslim Brothers at Khartoum University.

On Monday of last week widespread arrests led to a march of around 5,000 students, many of them women, from the campus to the capital city.

Almost all the workers of the commercial centre cheered on the demonstration although few joined it.

The urban homeless, the mass of young men who live on the streets

in utter misery, took part more easily.

The first day of rioting was a big defeat for the authorities. The next day the university was saturated with police to prevent further marches.

But students from other campuses, at least 10,000, mobilised and once again started riots in the city.

Two demonstrators were killed that day.

The big new buses owned by the Muslim Brothers were attacked and burnt. The Bank of Khartoum, which sacked 2,000 staff two weeks previously, had its Souq al Arabiyah branch burnt by demonstrators.

The Faisal Bank was damaged.

The next day we heard that demonstrations had begun in other cities including Port Sudan and Wad Madani.

General Bashir's regime came to power

through a coup in 1989 based on the National Islamic Front which has attracted the support of the rich and the bankers.

Repression

The government's only answer to its increasing unpopularity is harsher repression.

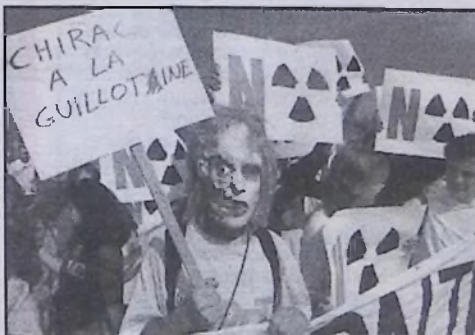
It has harassed, tortured and jailed trade unionists and democracy activists while carrying out a brutal war in the south of the country against non-Muslims.

Bashir is now so isolated that he has recently turned on several more radical Muslim groups.

Sudan's workers have a history of struggle, particularly on the railways.

If the protests continue and spread to workers then Bashir's hold on power looks very fragile.

Chirac plans more N-tests



THE FRENCH government is still planning to detonate more nuclear tests in the South Pacific. The next bomb could be eight times stronger than the first one.

But it has now been revealed that the British and the US governments will get access to the results of the test. They will use the 'experiment' to upgrade their own knowledge of nuclear weaponry.

The US government are furious with Chirac not because they object to nuclear tests—but because he did not know

the US wants 'low yield' nuclear tests to continue while creating the impression that nuclear testing has finally been banned.

Meanwhile France is imposing a vicious crackdown in Tahiti. The leader of the Atia Mua Union has been jailed alongside five other militants.

It was trade unionists who began the protests which sparked off an uprising after the last test.

Impose

Chirac is also facing protests at home. His Prime Minister, Juppe, is involved in a scandal where he got cheap rented accommodation for his family in Paris. An attempt to impose a public sector wage freeze has also sparking off a strike wave that will culminate in a major stoppage on October 10th.

While campaign to boycott French wines has helped to highlight the issue, it is now clear that it will be workers' action in France and elsewhere which will rock Chirac.

Does divorce damage children?

by ROISIN CRONIN

AS THE divorce referendum approaches, anti-divorce groups have been holding public meetings around the country to plan their campaign.

This time round the campaigners plan to present women and children as the victims of divorce, urging a No vote in order to protect them.

They have said that they will in particular be highlighting the negative impact of divorce on children.

But how real is their argument that divorce hurts children?

Anti-divorce campaigners have been using various studies which say that divorce leads to behavioural problems for children in school, and that children of divorced parents tend to be emotionally unstable.

Drink

Their main source is a study carried out by the Council for Research and Development.

This is an advisory body to the Irish Episcopal Conference!

It's hardly surprising that this report found that children of divorced or separated parents were more likely to perform badly in school, and were more likely to smoke or drink excessively.

The other study they quote is the 1994 Exeter Family Study.

But again much of this has been discredited.

Dr Paul O'Mahoney, a former lecturer in research methods in TCD, has dismissed the Exeter study as "almost entirely worthless".

Dr Sheila Greene, senior lecturer in psychology in TCD, looked at nine studies carried out in 1991, and found that each one reached the opposite conclusion to the Exeter study.

Many psychologists have concluded that children are better off in single-parent families than in two-parent families where there are high levels of conflict.

One study by Hetherington, for example, found that parents under stress are rarely capable of parenting in a calm, consistent and sensitive fashion, no matter how good their intentions and how strong their attachment to children.

In fact, what hurts children of divorced and separated parents most is not the absence of a parent but poverty.

A large proportion of lone parents in Ireland, mainly women, are dependant on social welfare.

Worldwide, one-adult households with children are the most likely of all households to be poor.

In the UK, 40 per cent of all

households headed by a woman are classified as poor.

These problems are exacerbated by the attacks on single parents being mounted by the state.

In Britain, the Tories are planning to remove the lone parents' allowance which would mean a loss of over £6 a week.

If we want to ensure that divorce is a real option then we must fight for decent benefits for lone parents, decently paid work and proper childcare facilities so mothers can actually go out to work.

The Anti Divorce Campaign say they want to protect the family. But their view of the family is an idealised image of an idyllic haven where people can find love and happiness.

It is little wonder given the drudgery of work in capitalist society that people cling to the family as a means of escape.

But in reality the family can be very different to the image put forward by the opponents of divorce, the politicians, the bishops and priests.

The individual family cannot meet all the hopes of fulfilment and happiness which people are deprived of in their public lives.

So very often, the family is the place where the loneliness and alienation that people feel under capitalism can express itself in violent and destructive ways.

Abuse

Child abuse and wife beating used to be hidden under the surface—but it has now become obvious that these are major social problems which are not just the result of a few 'bad eggs'.

One of the most violent places to be in is the individual family around the time of Christmas.

The gathering together of extended relatives, the presence of drink, the emotional hype which leads to disappointment can all lead to new levels of frustration.

The family, then, can be the site of neglect and abuse—physical, sexual and emotional.

The two-parent family provides no guarantee of children's well-being, despite what people like Nora Bennis and Des Hanafin might claim.

People who are really concerned about the rights of children will be supporting Stay Safe programmes in schools, and fighting for decent education, healthcare and housing.

RICH AND POOR

A tale of two cities

For the tiny minority who control the wealth, life has never been better. Business is booming, profits are up, and the Irish economy is forecast to grow by 7% this year—the highest in Europe.

But it's clear only a tiny minority is benefiting. The much-hyped boom hasn't made the slightest difference to the number of unemployed.

Like every city and town in the country, Dublin is a tale of two cities.

Wine merchants like Findlaters and Mitchells report a boom in expensive wines.

Restaurants say these wines, at £50 to £60 a bottle, are only being consumed by business people because the meals and drinks can be written off against tax.

And what are the rich eating? Caviar sales continue to rise—an ounce of caviar will set you back £24!

Super-posh restaurants, such as Patrick Guilbauds on Baggot St, have never done better.

And what working class person could afford to pay £22.50 for one course of lobster thermidor?

Estate agents Sherry/Fitzgerald report house prices in prime locations of Dublin have gone up an average of 15% this year.

A three-bedroom terraced house in Sandymount recently went for £155,000!

Top-class hotels are also reporting their best year ever, and elitist health clubs have seen a massive rise in membership.

And the stinking rich are not afraid of showing off their wealth.

They even want to build a massive casino because they don't know what to do with their money.

Another indicator of wealth is the sale of yachts—up in the last two years by 38%!

Shirt

Tailor-for-the-rich Louis Copeland says there has been a sharp increase in sales of £600/700 suits, but that doesn't include the shirt, which costs only £92!

And sales of big cars are booming. The latest fad of the Irish rich is Alfa Romeo's, with a second-hand 164 selling for £72,000. Ego-boosting 4-wheel-drives are also in abundance, such as a Range Rover for £61,000.

The right wing economists who are employed by stockbrokers like Riada or Goodbody justify this opulence by claiming that wealth will always "trickle down".

But there are few signs of even a drop coming down.

Ireland is "awful for earners but lovely for property and profits". This is what the top British bosses magazine, *The Economist* claims.

It is true. Ireland is a nightmare for the poor, with low-pay and unemployment getting worse. Here **Damian McLoughlin** and **Catherine Curran** show that while the Dubs were winning the all-Ireland, the city is more divided than it has ever been.



While the rich are living it up in this new "boom", there are few jobs being created.

Feeble

Economists grope for explanations, making feeble suggestions that perhaps "people who previously had little interest in the jobs market are deciding to look for work for the first time".

But there are more people unemployed this year—277,000—than

there were last year. The reason is simple—over a third of the jobs created last year came from government schemes like the CEP.

The economic research unit, the ESRI estimates that around 2,000 of these scheme jobs have been done away with this year.

Most commentators agree the government has quietly dropped its commitment to creating more jobs—any jobs, even miserable scheme jobs.

The boom has produced a jobless miracle.

Growth tide mis

A NEW report from government GAMMA reports reveal the scarcity in parts of

The report looks at areas where the "partnership projects" off the poverty line.

It showed that economists are being given a tide of economic

Ballymun has a 17,000 people, many

age.

But more than half there left school before 15. Only 1% are going of college education on twentieth birthday.

A staggering 45% of Ballymun residents are unemployed.

Worker,

"You can see the rywhere. The kids schools are thin and dressed.

"In the last few years had a whole number by people throwing from the towers.

"It makes me look at a place like University and how of our children there."

It is a similar situation in Ballyfermot.

Over 20,000 people in Ballyfermot which is the largest Irish town.

Crowd

Two thirds of the school at the age of 10 than 1% are in education the age of 20.

Of all the schools in Ballyfermot with the crowded with the every room.

In parts of Ballyfermot is deteriorating.

Few people outside will have heard of chard.

But this is a Ballyfermot has been fast—and so have deprivation.

Between 1986 and

IN DUBLIN



The Left parties who sold out

DUBLIN has returned the highest number of TDs from left parties. In constituency like Dublin South West, the left vote has overtaken Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

But Labour and Democratic Left are now presiding over the rising level of poverty in the city and elsewhere.

The Finance Minister, Ruairi Quinn demands cuts of £15m in the social welfare budget.

And Welfare Minister Prionsias de Rossa has agreed.

The cutbacks in social welfare will mean, for example, the postponement of a programme to help single parents which was due to be started in October.

Quinn says spending cuts are necessary

numbers out of work in Cherry Orchard rose by a staggering 1050 percent.

Patsy Moran is an active socialist in the area. He told *Socialist Worker*,

"This report only puts figures on what we all know is happening. You can see the deterioration over the years.

"There are whole streets now where the houses are not painted

like they used to be in the past. There are lots of young people hanging about.

"You go to the supermarket and they are always selling stuff that is out of date.

Catch

"The special offers are on Tuesdays and Wednesday to catch people who get the Social Welfare

"because the 1995 budget was so generous".

Generous to whom? But it was only to the banks, businessmen and big farmers that generosity was shown.

Demanded

Ruairi Quinn has also demanded £77m cutbacks to be paid for mainly by a freeze in public sector recruitment.

But this will just make up for the £70m in grants paid out to private foresters and spending on trees in general.

What is urgently needed now is an alternative party to the Labour Party that fights for our class in Dublin and elsewhere.

then".

Homelessness has now become a feature of city life, with Focus Point estimating that 5,000 people are homeless at any given time.

Meanwhile, thanks to inner city "redevelopment" scams, luxury apartments are sprouting up around Dublin, the contractors getting rich from generous tax breaks.

what do socialists say?

Are there innate difference between races?

ROGER BANNISTER, the former four minute miler, claimed recently that as a doctor he had to raise the question of innate differences between "races", even if it seemed "politically incorrect" to do so.

These innate differences, he said, explained why "Africans" rather than "whites" were dominating modern running events.

Writers in papers as diverse as the *Mail* and the *Observer* have praised him since for raising the issue.

But his approach is far from that of genuine science. Instead it relies on everyday, unscientific assumptions about "race".

Genuine science develops only if it is prepared to put everyday notions to the test.

In everyday life we talk of the sun rising in the morning. Science, since the time of Copernicus and Galileo, has insisted that this everyday observation is wrong, and that the earth goes round the sun.

Myths

The need to question established ideas is especially important when it comes to examining human behaviour, since the rulers of any society pump out myths designed to justify themselves.

Wealthy aristocrats, for instance, boast they have "better breeding" than the poor.

In the same way, those who profited from the British empire used to claim black and brown people were intellectually and emotionally inferior—"half devil and half child" as Rudyard Kipling put it.

A lot of would-be scientists simply accepted these popular notions as gospel.

English psychology textbooks printed "intelligence" tables, with north west Europeans at the top and the "Bushmen" Kung of

Southern Africa at the bottom.

In Germany many doctors and psychologists rushed to support the Nazi party, with its contention that the Slavs and Jews of Eastern Europe were "inferior races" whose lands deserved to be seized by the German armies.

Only after the horrors of the Holocaust was there scientifically rigorous examination of the accepted ideas about "racial differences".

Anthropologists who lived among the Kung found "intellects were just as sharp as anyone else's". Psychologists and sociologists discovered that differences between peoples in behaviour were a result of upbringing, not biological make up.

Most importantly, geneticists and biologists discovered that the whole notion of "biological races" was unscientific.

Of course, there are differences between the level of pigmentation in people's skin, with those from some parts of the world tending to be darker than others.

But these differences do not correspond with other differences between people.

So for instance, a map of the world dividing us up on the basis of different blood groups is very different to one doing so on the basis of pigmentation.

A whole range of completely different maps would be obtained if the criterion was head shape, nose length, crinkliness of hair, relative lengths of arms and legs, or any other hereditary difference.

There is no biological reason why just one of these ways of dividing

the human species into groups—skin pigmentation—should be regarded as more likely to be significant than any other.

Skin colour is important in our society for historical and social reasons, not biological ones.

Some 300 years ago the rulers of parts of Western Europe began enslaving Africans and conquering the Indian subcontinent.

They tried to use differences in pigmentation to justify what they did, dressing it up as "the white man's burden".

Boxing

One result today is that discrimination still blights the lives of many young black people in Europe and America, making them look to athletics or boxing as the likeliest way to escape from the ghetto. Society, not biology, is the cause.

No one had ever regarded skin colour as important before the slave trade and colonialism.

How could they when societies in Africa, the Middle East, south Asia and east Asia were much more advanced than those in north west Europe?

If you read texts from Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece or Ancient Rome, you will find no more mention of someone's skin colour than of whether they had straight or curly hair. It was not an issue that people were concerned with.

If Roger Bannister is so concerned with the question, it only shows how easily people accept ideas created by centuries of colonialism and imperialism.

by CHRIS HARMAN

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THE CHARTISTS

by JASON McELLIGOT

Perish the Privileged Orders

ENGLAND IS a green and pleasant land where people drink tea, play cricket and listen to BBC radio. It is a country characterised above all by gradual change; by evolution, not revolution. Or so the story goes.

The reality, as demonstrated by this new book which examines the Chartist movement of the 1840s, is somewhat different.

The idea of the Charter to improve workers' lives was put forward in the late 1830s.

The Charter was launched in early 1839 in London, on the occasion of the first Chartist Convention.

The majority of the delegates wanted the Convention to restrict itself to overseeing the presentation of the petition to Parliament.

Pitted against this "moral force", Chartists were the "physical force" Chartists who, believing that the Convention was about to be broken up, began to consider how best to defend themselves.

They asked the localities to strike and arm themselves if they should be arrested.

While the Convention met, huge mobilisations were occurring. One of the largest saw a 200,000 strong crowd declare for the Charter in Glasgow.

The Home Office was inundated with reports of arming and drilling. General Napier captured the atmosphere of the times when he wrote to his superiors:

"There is among the manufacturing poor a stern look of discontent, of hatred for all who are rich, a total abstinence of merry faces: [their faces] tell of suffering and brooding over change..."

The first petition, carrying 1,280,000 signatures, was presented to Parliament in June 1838.

Rejected

Predictably, it was rejected. The Convention was declared illegal and widespread arrests of Chartists began.

The delegates were not prepared for repression on this scale and the convention broke-up by the end of summer.

Respectable society was jubilant. It appeared that Chartism was dead, but nobody had counted on events in the mining areas of South Wales.

The spark was the arrest of an immensely popular Welsh Chartist, Henry Vincent, for a speech which had ended with the words, 'Perish the privileged orders! Death to the aristocracy!'

Local Chartists hatched a plan to release Vincent from prison in Newport and capture the town in the process. It was designed to be the springboard for a large-scale insurrection. Nearly 20,000 men marched on Newport on the night of 3 November 1839. The well to do of the area were seized by panic. One minister hid himself overnight in an ironworks feeder, up to his chin in murky water.

Over 5,000 men entered the town on November 4th. They met a division of soldiers outside the Westgate hotel. After an

exchange of words, fighting broke out. After a gun battle which lasted half an hour, the bodies of over 30 Chartists lay scattered in the streets. The Chartists fell back in disarray and fled. The insurrection was over. With the defeat of the Newport rising, and the arrests of over 500 leading Chartists other risings planned for the north of England were called off.

Defeat

Despite the defeat of the Newport rising, Chartism continued to increase its influence, membership and organisational coherence.

The National Charter Association (NCA) was founded in July 1840 by Feargus O'Connor. Within two years the NCA had over 50,000 members organised into 400 branches. Its newspa-



per had a readership of 4,001,000—eight times greater than that of *The Times*.

Despite gaining over three million signatures to the second petition for the Charter in 1842, it was rejected by the Commons.

This renewed agitation for the Charter coincided with a recession in the economy.

The mill-owners met and agreed to cut their worker's pay by twelve and a half per cent.

Millowners in two towns outside Manchester went so far as to declare a 25% cut in wages.

This act of supreme over-confidence exploded in their faces. Workers in these towns struck and resolved not to return to work until the Charter was 'the law of the land'.

On the first day of the strike, 14,000 workers marched to the other factories in the area.

As they approached the mills their singing could be heard and the workers inside began to put on their coats.

No argument was required. By two o'clock that day over 40,000 had joined the strike. Next day, they marched on nearby Manchester.

Within two days the whole of



Manchester was at a standstill and the police had been totally overwhelmed. Next the towns around Manchester came out. At Stockport the workhouse was at-

don were accosted by huge crowds trying to prevent them boarding trains for the north. At Chalk Farm the troops fixed bayonets and charged Londoners blocking their way.

In Manchester, the strikers met and elected a Great Delegate Conference. Again and again, the Conference rejected any motion to restrict the struggle to wages, all the delegates were agreed that the aim of the strike was to force political change. This fusion of political and economic demands terrified the ruling class. Quickly the government moved to arrest the leaders, and the leadership of the strike fell back to the localities.

Lacking a national leadership, the character of the strike began to change. While the strikers remained committed to the Charter, it could not be achieved on a local basis. Wages became the primary aim. Many employers conceded wage rises.

This, along with the continuing repression and arrests, meant that the strike began to falter. In the north-west alone 1500 were brought to trial.

The sentences were harsh, over 200 Chartists were deported to Australia. After three weeks

the strike came to an end.

After the defeat of the general strike, the Chartists suffered a period of drift. However, they were reinvigorated in 1846 by the series of revolutions which shook Europe.

They began when a crowd was shot down outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris in February. Barricades were thrown up immediately. Street fighting saw a democratic government installed.

Looted

The Chartists were ecstatic. All around Britain, they held meetings on the dawn of democracy in Europe.

It was clear that the Chartists were in the ascendant once again.

1848 was also a year of recession for British workers.

In March, bakeries and gunsmiths across Glasgow were looted, and troops fired into the crowd.

Similar clashes occurred across Britain, most notably in Trafalgar Square where running battles with the police continued well into the night.

When the Chartists called a

convention for April 4th in London, Lord Campbell wrote to his brother, this may be the last time I write to you before the Republic is established'.

Ruling circles in Britain were now seriously worried about the spectre of revolution. All public buildings were fortified, and plans were drawn up to evacuate the royal family to the Isle of Wight. There were reports of groups of soldiers signing the Charter.

The Chartists decided to present the third petition to Parliament on April 10th. This was widely believed to be the day that the working class would make its bid for power. Eight thousand troops and 150,000 special policemen were drafted into London.

The Government ordered troops to open fire with live rounds if the Chartists approached Westminster.

The Chartists were not prepared for such decisive confrontation. While delegates from Northampton declared that they would enact the Charter 'at the point of a bayonet, if necessary, among the national leadership confusion and vacillation reigned.

On the day over 200,000 men and women joined the London demonstration. Speakers from the platform played down any hint of confrontation.

They insisted that no procession would take place to Parliament. Instead a small delegation would present the petition and the demonstrators would disperse peacefully. This, in the end, was what happened.

After the momentous build-up, and the expectations of revolution amongst workers and the government, the crisis passed quietly.

The petition, with six million signatures, was rejected.

Although Chartist activity continued and, if anything, increased after April 1848, it never again represented a serious threat to the established order.

■ Adapted from *Perish the Privileged Orders: A Socialist History of the Chartist Movement* by Mark O'Brien, published by Redwoods, £4.95

Paddy and Mr Punch

ONE OF the most remarkable aspects of the Chartists was their anti-racism. In 19th century Britain anti-Irish feeling ran high.

The magazine *Punch* ran popular cartoons which portrayed the Irish as violent, ape-like creatures.

The Chartists supported Irish independence.

They understood that an uprising in Ireland would weaken the British state at home, and in doing so would put pressure on the government to concede the Charter. Equally, a successful Chartist movement would bring freedom from English rule closer for the Irish.

Irish workers played a leading role in the Chartist movement.

The two acknowledged leaders of the

movement, Feargus O'Connor and Bronterre O'Brien, were Irishmen.

The Chartists ran stories in their newspapers to educate workers about English mis-rule in Ireland.

Famine

At the height of the famine, one Irish speaker, addressing a Chartist meeting at Oldham, asked his audience if he could go back to Ireland and say that if a charge of cavalry were made along the streets of Dublin ... half a million men in Lancashire had sworn fealty to Ireland ...

The crowd cried back 'Yes!'

One voice, referring to Feargus O'Connor, boomed, "Tell them that an Irishman is our father in England."

reviews

COMMENT

Failing to provide for AIDS sufferers

THE RECENT Dungarvan AIDS scare showed how little is understood about AIDS in Ireland.

It also highlighted the fact that many people have to go to England to get treatment.

Official figures up to 1994 show that 1,458 people have tested positive for HIV in Ireland.

443 people currently have AIDS and 224 people have died from the disease.

Reported HIV infection has increased in Ireland over the past few years at a rate of about 10 per cent per annum.

But it is generally accepted that HIV infection is more widespread than these reported figures suggest. People who work in the area say the real figure is closer to 15,000.

The services to deal with HIV and AIDS in Ireland are underfunded and totally inadequate.

Last week one of the leading AIDS doctors in the Southern Health Board region, Dr Jack Cantillon, resigned over discrimination in the health service against people who are dying with AIDS.

He argues that they should be entitled to the same treatment as people with other terminal illnesses. At present, AIDS patients are denied access to Cork's Marymount Hospice and aren't even entitled to its home care services.

Seeking

Dr Cantillon highlighted the fact that facilities for the care of AIDS patients in Ireland receive insufficient funding from the state.

While numbers seeking care continues to increase substantially there has not been a corresponding increase in the level of funding.

There are only two consultants in infectious diseases who deal with AIDS cases. Both of these are in Dublin hospitals.

One of the features of AIDS care in Ireland is that, while facilities for people with HIV or AIDS are inadequate in urban centres, they are practically non-existent in rural areas.

Those living outside the main cities have no option but to move to urban areas for treatment.

Where treatment is available it often tends to merely reinforce the stigma attached to the disease.

The Irish writer Pat

Tierney, who is himself suffering from AIDS, has talked about the high levels of ignorance with regard to AIDS in Ireland.

But he goes on to say, "I'm finding it in medical institutions rather than with the public generally." He found that special stickers and markers were being placed in his charts to show that he was HIV positive. When he complained to the Beaumont Hospital authorities they found that this was unethical.

Further problems in the treatment of AIDS patients arise from Irish Medical Council guidelines which state that doctors can refuse to treat people suffering from AIDS.

Emigrate

It is little wonder, then, that many Irish people, when they find out they are HIV positive, decide to emigrate, usually to Britain.

Last year, Positive Irish Action on AIDS in London reported that it was dealing with 297 clients from Ireland.

In the area of prevention, services are also grossly inadequate.

There are now three clinics in Dublin which were set up primarily as part of a HIV prevention initiative.

They aimed to deal with intravenous drug users, who make up a high percentage of people who are HIV positive.

However, what has actually happened is that these clinics are being used predominantly for drug treatment.

In other words, rather than providing the resources for drug treatment in its own right, the government has attempted to combine it with HIV prevention. The result is a service that doesn't succeed in tackling either problem.

The government has also failed to educate people about HIV and AIDS. When the Eastern Health Board did issue an education programme for school students last year, it was toned down to such an extent that those involved in writing the first draft disassociated themselves from it.

It should not be up to voluntary organisations to provide these services. It is about time the government made proper provision for people with HIV and AIDS.

by ROISIN CRONIN

FILM

Fly me to the moon

Reviewed by
MICK DOYLE

APOLLO 13 tells the story of the 1970 Apollo 13 mission to the Moon that went disastrously wrong.

Tom Hanks, Bill Paxton and Kevin Bacon play the three astronauts cut adrift in Space when part of their craft explodes.

Oxygen

With their fuel and oxygen supplies fast running out, Mission Control in Houston desperately tries to get them back to Earth alive.



Bill Paxton, who plays astronaut Fred Haise has said 'its one of the greatest human interest stories of modern times, its a story of human triumph against in-

surmountable odds to survive'.

Focus

On the face of it, that's

true. Yet because of the film's focus on its all-American-heroes and the spirit of adventure (repeated references are made to Christopher

Columbus) the background to the Space programme hardly gets a look in.

The Cold War, the driving force behind the space race against Russia is hardly mentioned.

Civil Rights

With the Vietnam war, the student and civil rights marches that swept across the USA in the late 1960s, politicians were searching for some good news, something that all Americans could be patriotic about.

We only get a glimpse of the pressure put on scientists by NASA bosses and politicians.

At over two hours, its a long film, so unless you're into Space jargon and gadgetry there's much better ways to spend your time and money.

PLAY

The business of blood

Reviewed by
COLM O RIAIN

THE *Business of Blood* is a new, refreshing and very political play.

It is about the sale of western arms to Indonesia, which has killed over a third of the East Timorese people.

The play follows the actions of Chris Cole, a man who broke into the premises of British Aerospace and damaged several Hawk jets which were to be sold to the Indonesian government. He was captured, thrown in jail for the unlawful destruction of property, and ordered not to trespass on British Aerospace property again.

He trespassed again and again, making the convincing argument that his actions were justified because he was stopping the much more disgusting crime of the war in East Timor.

Murder

The play shows up the hypocrisy of the law. Chris Cole could rot in jail for what he believed in but British Aerospace, effectively an accomplice in murder, is allowed to continue its trading in the name of profits.

When the company executive tries to explain his actions, it becomes clear that profits are the only important thing: the death of innocent people isn't even an issue for them.

The play shows that an individual couldn't win against a multinational corporation. Chris Cole was brave, but largely powerless in his fight against BAE.

So we are drawn to a conclusion that we need a different strategy, but although the play touches on the idea of looking to the workers, it is not fully clear about what to do.

The play has been rejected



by some theatre critics because it is 'too political'. But serious issues can be dealt with in art. The critics who deny this are part of the elit-

ist art establishment who have dominated Irish theatre for decades.

Ignore them and go and see this play.

EXHIBITION

Potato famine 150 years on

TO COMMEMORATE the 150th anniversary of the potato Famine in Ireland, RDS is currently hosting an exhibition on the Famine its causes and its aftermath.

The exhibition is divided into two parts—an account of the Famine and a look at the potato as a foodstuff then and now.

Famine 150 gives tons of information and tries hard to be accessible to adults and children alike.

A lot of effort is made to explain the Famine to young visitors—with a replica famine cabin—giving an idea of the actual poverty and misery millions suffered.

Promotion

There is an actress in the cabin to answer questions and to give a brief account of Famine-struck life in the 1840s.

Similarly, a young man in a makeshift potato field explains the cultivation of the potato and its importance for the diet.

Half of the exhibition is devoted to the history of the potato as an object of science.

We see how close scientists were to finding a cure for potato blight, but much of *Famine 150* is a promotion of the potato industry.

No wonder—since the exhibition is organised by the Department of Agriculture and Teagasc.

This might also account for the scanty and distorted picture of rural Ireland's recovery from the Famine. The reality was that the recovery was made by the big farmers at the expense of small farmers and labourers.

Nevertheless the exhibition is worth seeing as it provides a good deal of information. *Famine 150* can be visited until October 1st in the RDS Main Hall Annex, Anglesea Road.

MUSIC: BLUR

Posh jobs sneer at angst

by RICHARD
WILLMSSEN

THE NEW album by British pop band Blur has attracted virtually no controversy.

The kids love them, the *Sun* likes them and the *Irish Times* gave them the high-brow seal of approval.

They claim to stand in a tradition of great British pop groups like Madness and the Kinks—patriotic

but not jingoistic songs celebrating what's good about life in dear old England.

This has led to them being involved in various stunts of a pretty unsavoury nature such as posing with pitbull terriers in front of "mod" graffiti reading "British Image No. 1". They have even claimed that the British pop music is "the best in the world" and sneer at the angst of groups like Nirvana.

Blur are also pretty keen

to present themselves as real East End yobs, despite having relatively comfortable backgrounds in Colchester.

Lead singer, ex-drama school student Damon recently told *Face* magazine, "When I was 13 I walked round with a violin, an earring and a Karl Marx book—now I walk round in trainers and a Chelsea top."

The turn away from politics has led them to produce a Benny Hill style

video. However, Blur are not Tories. Their new album does include admittedly rather vague attacks on the National Lottery and sex-scandal Tory MPs as well as a cameo by ex-left-winger Ken Livingstone.

But great pop groups don't resort to cheap stereotypes and sickening gestures purely to win over mass approval.

Oasis are better; they vote Labour too.



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.

news & reports—politics; the unions—

Where is SIPTU going?

IRELAND's largest union SIPTU is holding its conference in Tralee this year.

One of the key issues it will discuss is the operation of the Industrial Relations Act. Several branches and Regional Executives have submitted motions calling for change.

This Act effectively outlaws blacking, bans one person pickets and forces through restrictive ballots before strikes.

In December of 1994, Judge Barron used the Act to ban the two year long Nolan's strike after the bosses claimed that the ballot was rigged.

Witness

He insisted that Patricia Nolan and her brother Seamus were 'more reliable witnesses' than the two union officials involved.

It opened the way to all union ballots being challenged by bosses who could expect a sympathetic hearing from the court.

The tragedy was that the strike had dragged on for so long because the SIPTU leadership tried to comply with the Industrial Relations Act.

They had refused to implement any blacking of Nolan's throughout the country in order to stay within the law.

The Industrial Relations Act was introduced in 1990 with the direct approval of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

It was accepted as a trade off for Fianna Fail pushing through national wage bargaining with the employers.

Top officials' mega-salaries

Billy Attley: £73,891

SIPTU has been spending more on the salaries of its three top officials than it has on strike pay for the whole membership.

This scandalous figure is revealed in the annual report. In 1993 SIPTU spent £112,006 on strike pay and £162,001 the following year. But Billy Attley, Edmund Browne, and Jimmy Somers get £73,891 each from the union.

The salary figures were only revealed after intense pressure was placed on Attley at Regional Conferences last year.

SIPTU officials are now earning more than four times the wages of some of their members.

As one TEAM worker put it to *Socialist Worker*, "These people keep telling us about the value of performance related pay but what sort of performance have they given the members for these astronomical sums?"

Billy Attley now earns more money than the general secretaries of larger British unions.

SIPTU has presently got 170,000 members.

But Bill Morris who is general secretary of the 900,000 British Transport and General Workers Union gets £50,000—and there are many members who are complaining about that.

The union leaders have the nerve to call for an increase in union subs at the moment.

As one SIPTU shop steward put it, "It is not on. Many members are already angry about the scandal of these salaries. I have had to argue against people who do not want to pay union subs. An increase in the subs at this time would only exacerbate the problem."

"We should be demanding that the salaries of these officials are cut. They should be paid the average working wage of the membership. That way they would feel what it is like and maybe starting fighting"



It was designed to strengthen the power of the officials against their own rank and file.

Bertie Ahern, the then Minister for Labour told the Dail,

"Our trade union leadership is very responsible and we don't need to take away power from them."

"In fact what I'm trying to do is to put power in the hands of the leadership so that individual workplaces will not suffer because one or two people are abusing their power as shop stewards."

Favour

Faced with mounting anger over the Act, the SIPTU leaders are playing a double game.

They are now calling for a Constitutional Amendment to 'restore the legal balance' in favour of union

representation.

But they are also using the Act to warn their own members against militancy. In almost every dispute they shelter behind this act to argue against wider solidarity action.

However a number of SIPTU delegates are starting to see through this game.

They are calling for the full scrapping of the Act and are urging the union to adopt a policy of defiance.

One delegate told *Socialist Worker*:

"It is time to take back our unions from the barristers and let the members decide policy."

Dunnes workers defied the Act when they sat down and blocked the doorways of their stores. It is high time that SIPTU adopted the same policy."

Attacking democracy

THE SIPTU leaders are doing their best to cut back on a full discussion of where the union is going.

Policy making conferences now happen only every two years and the number of delegates have been halved.

Even then the conference is being broken up into workshops.

The session on the Industrial Relations Act, for example, is being shoved off to a workshop and being introduced by an "expert".

As the union moves more to a US style 'business union' with huge salaries going out to well paid officials, a virtual war is being conducted against militants.

Key to the SIPTU leaders' operation is the NEC. This body has been trans-

formed into a patronage club where loyalty to the union leaders is rewarded by lavish expenses.

Two National Executive Council members received over £20,000 in expenses.

The average figure of expenses for each NEC member came to £7,017 for attending about 18 meetings.

Vote

A hospital shop steward told *Socialist Worker*, "In our branch Atlee's hack got a huge vote for election to the NEC when word went around that we should support him."

"The game they play is

that people are urged to voted for someone who will represent their section on the NEC. There is no discussion of policy or strategy.

"But then when there was a vote on strike action in the hospitals, there was no urgency about collecting the ballot boxes. One steward kept ringing up Liberty Hall but no one came out to collect his box".

If the union is to be put back into the hands of the members, the gray train which the union leaders have climbed on will have to be stopped.

Big salaries and attacks on union democracy are the price that is being paid for eight years of social partnership. The union leaders see their main task as keeping their members in line.

What is needed is a strong socialist presence that goes all out to recover the traditions upon which the union was first built.

SWP branch meetings—all welcome

BELFAST CENTRAL
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in Penny Farthing Bar, Upper North Street

opposite Beamish Brewery, South Main St

DUBLIN BLANCHARDSTOWN
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in the Blakestown Community Centre, Blakestown Way.

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in Conways, Parnell St.
DUBLIN RATHMINES
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond Street.

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

WATERFORD
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in ATGWU hall, Keyzer Street, Waterford.

BELFAST SOUTH
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Queens Students Union.

DERRY
Meets every Tuesday in Badgers Bar at 8pm

DUBLIN COOLOCK
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the Artans/Beaumont Family Recreation Centre, Kilmore Rd.

DUBLIN PEARSE ST/RINGSEND
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St
DUBLIN TALLAGHT
Meets every Wednesday 8.00pm, Tallaght Welfare Society, Tallaght Village
DUN LAOGHAIRE
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Smyths Pub



A weekend of 29 political meetings organised by the Socialist Workers Party

November 24, 25, 26

Ormond Multi Media Centre, Ormond Quay, Dublin
For more details and full programme contact:
Marxism 95, PO Box 1648 Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

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

Name

Address.....

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There are Socialist Worker members in:

ENNISKILLEN; COLERAINE; LURGAN; CAVAN; DONEGAL; NAAS; LIMERICK; KILKENNY; DUNDALK; BRAY; ATHLONE; DROGHEDA. MAYNOOTH.

If you would like to get in touch, contact our national office at (01) 872 2682, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

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

Guinness strike over 'Plan 2000'

OVER 100 fitters and electricians have been on strike at Guinness Brewery in Dublin since 19th September.

The craftworkers who are members of the TEEU and AEEU are striking for implementation of a pay restructuring deal which they were promised since 1987.

According to one of the strikers, "This strike should have happened a year ago but was postponed twice at the behest of Congress who have done nothing for us."

Guinness are introducing a new plan called "Plan 2000" to the company.

But for the craftworkers this will mean further job cuts and an actual drop in pay due to annualized hours.

Another striker who spoke to *Socialist Worker* told us "Finbar Flood was managing director up to last year.

"Now he has job as deputy chairman of the Labour Court.

"We can't expect impartiality from the Labour Court anyway, but even more so from Flood. He was one of the main players behind the Guinness 2000 plan."

Delivery

SIPTU have told all the general workers to work as normal.

Delivery trucks are going in and out the gates. Some of the outside-Dublin delivery work is carried out by contractors, all of whom are passing pickets.

For over 100 workers it has been a serious step to go on strike. All of these

workers have long service with the company and all are over 35 years old.

But if the craftworkers win, all workers will gain. SIPTU members will benefit from whatever percentage increases the craft workers win.

As one striker put it "If we were all out the strike would be over in 48 hours".

"Once the beer stops flowing the company will have to sit up and take notice of us", according to one of the strikers.

The strikers see themselves as in for a long haul.

Already some machinery is breaking down.

October will see the be-

ginning of the Christmas trade and it is around this time more beer is produced than during the rest of year.

Repair

The machinery will be in a bad way for maintenance and repair.

Guinness have an annual turnover of over £1 billion and profits last year were well up to £150 million. They used to have a workforce of 4,000 which is now down to 800.

This is set to further reduce to around 400 in the next couple of years.

In this situation the workers believe it is morally

wrong and unjustifiable for the company to treat them in this manner.

They have the profits and are gaining from the reduction in numbers of workers.

The key to winning this strike will be absolute solidarity from the SIPTU members inside the plant.

If their union continues to ignore the craftworkers outside the gate, the members inside should be pushing for an all-out.

Everybody should stand fully behind the striking craftworkers and refuse to maintain or mend machinery and most importantly refuse to allow any scab labour into the plant.

Limerick binmen end work to rule

REFUSE collectors in Limerick city have ended their work to rule over unpaid overtime. The dispute had lasted for four weeks.

The Corporation had demanded that workers push up their productivity by increasing the number of bins they load per day from 595 to 860.

But management have now conceded to the demand from the workers to equalise the routes which means that each crew will carry out the same work in any given week.

Both shop stewards and management will

now carry out a study to establish exactly how much work is feasible for each crew each week.

Negotiations to agree a bonus system are to go ahead in four weeks time.

'Awkward'

Meantime Limerick Corporation have told the city's dwellers that they must bring their own wheelie bins to the end of the streets and roads that are "awkward" to collect in.

There has been some resistance to this already this week. But as one of the workers commented, "The Corporation got a reasonably good response

from the public today but for how long will that last. People expect their bins to be collected, not to have to deliver them".

The wheelie bins have been used as an excuse to cut crews, but because of a subsequent shortage of staff and vehicles, workers now have to work overtime in order to finish their routes each day.

According to one of the shop stewards who spoke to *Socialist Worker*, "We will have to wait and see what happens in the next four weeks. It's definitely not sorted out yet and we will have to get our bonus payments at the end of the day."

Socialist Worker trade union conference

THE ONE-day *Socialist Worker* "Building The Resistance" conference was attended by 90 trade unionists from all around the country.

by DAMIEN McLOUGHLIN

All aspects of building a fightback were discussed. It was a modest but very serious look at how to rebuild solidarity and militancy.

A shop steward in the Eastern Health Board kicked off the conference by showing how union organisation was re-built in his hospital.

He told of the experience of recruiting FAS workers to the union and of how full and part time workers can unite and fight.

A trade unionist from Belfast said there is a new anger around, both north and south, over pay, the health services and disgust at politicians.

He spoke of how union officials hold back on taking action even though workers are willing to fight.

Gimmicks

He said surveys show that 70% of people join trade unions to stand up for their rights, not for gimmicks such as discounts on car insurance; and added religious or community differences do not matter when you are on a picket line.

Dave McDonagh a CPSU activist spoke of the massive wages of trade un-

ion bureaucrats and how this contrasts with the spirit of Larkin and Connolly.

He urged for a fightback in the trade unions.

Arguments

As Jimmy Kelly an ATGWU shop steward from Waterford Crystal said "socialist politics are all the more important in the '90's to arm workers with arguments for a fightback and to push their union leaders".

A member of the NUJ warned of the dangers of looking to the Labour Court.

She claimed that the Irish Press workers were stabbed in the back by the decision of the NUJ leaders to order them out of occupation.

Marnie Holborow from the SIPTU Education Branch spoke of how the law is never neutral and how the Industrial Rela-

tions Act of 1990 must be broken.

Eamonn McCann of the Derry Trades Council attacked left wing union leaders who claimed that multi-nationals can never be beaten.

In many cases he argued workers were more powerful because a stoppage in a single plant could hamper production in a number of countries.

The conference agreed to make the selling *Socialist Worker* in the workplaces a priority.

As Brid Smith put it, "The paper reports on struggles which the O Reilly controlled press hardly mentions.

"It links workers together in solidarity. It tries to give ideas on what can be done.

"And it puts all this in a broader political context which is vital for building our unions today."

UNISON:

It's time to build the fightback—Yunus



THE ELECTION campaign for general secretary of Britain's biggest union, UNISON, is on.

Almost 1.5 million members in the NHS, local councils, colleges, as well as water, gas and electricity industries across Britain and in the North have a chance to vote for who will lead their union.

Favourite

The favourite in the election is the union's current associate general secretary, Rodney Bickerstaffe.

But Yunus Bakhs, a Socialist Worker Party member and Newcastle nurse, has been nominated by 47 branches to challenge Bickerstaffe.

Yunus explained to *Socialist Worker* why is

standing.

"At the same time as the election for general secretary, UNISON members in the health service are voting on a pay deal," he says. "The two votes are completely connected. Our union leaders want us to accept a rotten deal - which is not only a pay cut, but accepts local pay.

"Local pay means low pay.

"Health workers are angry and feel betrayed. We have just voted in a national ballot for strikes to win a decent pay rise and to defend national pay. We need to fight to throw out the deal.

"In this election Rodney Bickerstaffe is the candidate who accepts local pay in the NHS.

"I say throw out the deal and let's fight for a decent national pay deal. It's as simple as that.

"It's the same on the minimum wage. Despite all the rhetoric about low pay Bickerstaffe bent to Tony Blair at the TUC and dropped the demand for Labour to name a figure of at least £4.15 an hour.

Minimum wage

"A minimum of £4.15 is UNISON policy but the union leaders didn't even submit a resolution calling for it.

"I say if you want to fight low pay and want the union to stand up for the members, vote for me and build a fightback".

Any UNISON branch, shop stewards committee or activist who wants literature from the campaign should contact Yunus on 0044 191 422 1217 or Jill on 0044 191 460 1927 or write to 100 Wellington Road, Gateshead NE11 9HE.

RTE bosses forced to back down

MANAGEMENT in RTE's newsroom last week backed down completely on a number of issues on which journalists were to vote for industrial action.

There are 120 journalists work in the news area of RTE.

In a ballot over the introduction of independent production units and non-NUJ members working on the "Nationwide" programme, the journalists voted 75 to 12 for industrial action. This was a 6-1 victory on a turn-out of 72%.

Management have been forced to drop all their proposals, which would have been the thin end of the wedge of bringing down pay and increasing the number of people on short-term contracts.

Dublin Port workers to take action

DUE TO Dublin Port management trying to implement new work practices, no permanent staff have been taken on in the engineering department, only temporary contact workers.

This has been going on for the past two years with the result that no talks between unions and management have taken place.

Last week the workers belonging to the maintenance section decided to take action.

They agreed that when one of its member's contract ends of Friday 29th of September, they will go on a work to rule if he is not given a permanent position.

The fitters do not agree with contract workers due to the fact that they get no sick pay or increases in rates of pay.

The man in question has been on temporary employment for the past fourteen months.

Talks are to be held over the next few weeks on the issues.

Journalists have shown they can successfully resist management plans.

The momentum must be

kept up and not an inch given.

What happens in RTE will set the scene for terms on which journalists and others will be hired on the new TV3 next year.

Socialist Worker

inside

Who's behind Anti-divorce campaign in the South?
—page four

Can the PLO-Israel Peace Accord work?
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He gets £2 a minute



Eddie Haughey boss of Glen Dimplex

She gets less than £4 an hour



Catering worker

LOW PAY NO WAY!

NORTHERN IRELAND is becoming the low wage black spot of Europe. The employers are using unemployment and the divisions between workers to pay us peanuts.

■ In Derry, politicians like John Hume are celebrating a 'retail boom'. But conditions for workers are ter-

rible. When Marks and Spencers opened, 80% of the new jobs were part time.

Overtime

Workers at the Foyleside shopping centre are being paid between £2 and £3.60 an hour.

■ In the North Down and Ards Hospital Trust, porters are earning just

over £3 an hour. In the past, they worked overtime to try to get a decent income.

But now their jobs are being contracted out.

They have been forced to go on strike to defend their conditions.

■ Even in white collar jobs, wages are abysmally low.

The Halifax building society only pays its workers £3.60 an hour.

It is no wonder that over 60% of

the population of Northern Ireland are dependent on some form of state support just to exist.

Target

We need a £4.15 minimum wage to live on.

That is the figure that has been set as a target by many trade unionists in Britain. It is no more than we deserve.

Catholic and Protestant workers should be uniting around issues like these.

We should not let a future Labour government led by Tony Blair get away with ignoring this issue.

But we should also start a fight for a living wage now.

To do all this we need to build a socialist organisation that cuts across the sectarian divide.

Demand £4.15 minimum wage