

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

inside

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As mortgages rise...

Bonanza for Building Society Bosses



MEET BUILDING society boss, Roy Douglas. This gent has just pushed his salary up by £100,000. He now earns £6,000 a week.

This is nearly as much as many young workers take home in a year.

Douglas is a great believer in privatisation. It certainly has been good for Roy Douglas.

In the next four years, Roy Douglas stands to make nearly a million pounds—just by selling Irish Permanent shares.

A nurse or a factory worker will work hard to help people or produce useful goods.

They will spend all their lives until they retire on a modest income.

Then again, they are not 'financial wizards' like Roy Douglas.

He knows how to turn paper into

gold.

There used to be a time when the building societies pretended to be non-profit making organisations. But not any more.

Now they are into a "greed is good" philosophy where bosses get inflated salaries while workers are lectured on the need for sacrifices.

Next month tens of thousands of people will get increased mortgage

bills from these same building societies.

They will have to pay between £15 and £20 extra a month—despite the fact that their wages are pegged down under the government and union leaders scheme of "social partnership"

What have they done to deserve these penalties?

Absolutely nothing. But we live

in a world where big business and the banks move vast amounts from country to country in search of quick profits.

Fortunes

Its part of a part of a system which allows people like Roy Douglas to make their fortunes.

The scramble for quick bucks

means that interest rates are on the rise again.

In Ireland, ordinary people will pay out a little more to the sharks who control the money.

In Africa, there will probably be a little more starvation as the western banks screw a little from people.

It is a pretty sick system. Its time for change.

But 2% pay rise for workers

Goodman back in charge of beef empire

Happy as Larry

LARRY Goodman is back in charge of Ireland's biggest meat processing company as a result of a deal struck this week.

His old company, Goodman International, collapsed owing £500m of debts, but Goodman has been allowed to regain the business for just £40m.

He is only able to do so thanks to the contempt with which the top bankers and politicians in Ireland treat the taxpayer.

A crucial aspect of the formation of the new company "Irish Food Processors" is that the businessmen behind it believe that they will get hundreds of millions of pounds from the Irish state.

Confident

Because Albert Reynolds, as Minister for Agriculture, gave Goodman International export credit insurance of £170m, the banks are confident that an out of court settlement will see them get some of this

money paid out to them.

"One way or another the banks are confident that a significant amount will be recoverable at some stage" said the head of Lloyds' Credit Service.

The members of Ireland's Golden Circle set to benefit from the deal include the McCann family of Dundalk, the owners of Fyffes; Brendan McDonald head of Dimpeco and Bernie Cahil who will be the Chairman of the new group.

The Beef Tribunal revealed that Goodman and



top management failed to prevent irregularities and malpractices in the company.

It also said that Larry Goodman had direct knowledge and involvement in what Micheal McDowell called the

"greatest single revenue crime committed and discovered in this state."

It would be an even bigger crime if Goodman were to not only evade paying his taxes, but help himself to another fortune at our expense.

Howlin's U-turn on water cut-offs

ENVIRONMENT minister Brendan Howlin has made a U-turn on the Coalition's promise to end water disconnections.

Howlin now says disconnection should be carried out where someone is 'able to pay' but refuses to do so.

National figures show £18.1 million is outstanding in water charges because people rightly see them as an unjust tax.

Now Democratic Left are complaining about the sell-out. It seems there is a little misunderstanding over what the exact policy on water charges means.

You see the exact wording of the Programme for Government sought to "delimit the power of local authorities" to disconnect water for non-payment.

But the Oxford Dictionary says 'to delimit' means 'to determine the limits of' while Democratic Left say it means that councils' powers of disconnection should be scrapped.

But maybe De Rossa and Co. were too busy in the rush for merces and perks to sort out such trivial matters when the Coalition deal was being done.

Housing disgrace

A YOUNG Wicklow mother has described how she has spent almost all her adult life on the local authority housing list.

Lone-parent Ann Walsh (27) has been waiting for seven and a half years to be housed.

For the last five years, she and her three children have been living in a damp prefab.

The three children, aged two to seven, all suffer from asthma and the dampness in the two bedrooms aggravates their condition.

"They also come down with ear and chest infections regularly," said Anne. They also have no bathroom or hot water and rats are a constant problem.

Wicklow Co. Council have done nothing to help her—and neither have local TDs Liz McManus (Minister for Housing!) and Labour's Liam Kavanagh.

One public representative told her she would be able to be housed—if she had a man in her life!

CANCER SHOCK

EVERY year in Ireland 100 women die needlessly from breast cancer because of lack of funding for the health service.

Dr Peter Daly of St James Hospital in Dublin said the crisis is "a scandal waiting to be opened".

"We're under so much pressure to cope with the workload we are running to keep pace. We are close to being burnt out."

If breast cancer is detected early the chances of being cured are greater. In countries where there is a national screening programme the numbers of women dying from breast cancer declines by around 20%.

The Irish government has been promising this programme but complains about lack of money.

But as one doctor said, "If the £35 million that was spent on the Beef Tribunal was spent on a screening programme, we would cut the death rate from cancer."

FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL THREATENS RESIDENTS

Fighting the dumps

RESIDENTS in two areas of Fingal are campaigning against landfill dumps in their localities.

Community and environmental activists in Finglas are demanding the closure of Dunsink dump.

People in Mulhuddart are also angry at plans for a new 387 acre dump in their area.

Landfill dumping is a major health and safety hazard:

■ People living near dump sites risk disease because of rats and dangerous chemicals.

■ Children's lives are endangered by huge trucks driving to and from the sites.

Some children have been killed playing around open dumping areas.

■ Even when the dumps are closed they leave behind a lethal build-up of gases.

The best alternative is to provide proper recycling facilities.

A recycling centre would not only be safer but would employ more workers.

The proposed dump in Mulhuddart will only employ a handful of low paid security guards.

Profits

But big companies are more interested in the huge profits to be made from landfill dumping.

Over 90 per cent of Irish waste is disposed of in landfill sites compared to 30 per cent in Denmark.

Local authority bosses are backing the private waste companies.

Noel Carroll of Dublin Corporation said campaigners were "naive" to talk about recycling.

The corporation are trying to blackmail people into accepting more dumps by threatening to cut off refuse collection to the people of Dublin. They must be stopped.

DUNSINK

THE DUNSINK dump should have been closed years ago and is now overflowing.

Patients in the nearby Cappagh Hospital have to endure the smell while they try to recuperate.

Locals blockaded the dump for two days last month and turned back hundreds of lorries.

Blame

The tiphead at Dunsink is at full capacity but Fingal County Council are trying to extend it into nearby fields.

The council have tried to shift the blame onto people in Mulhuddart and Kill, Co Kildare for refusing to allow new landfill sites in their areas.

What is needed is unity between people in all the areas affected to demand that local authorities put money into recycling centres.



MULHUDDART

NATIONAL Toll Roads are seeking planning permission for a dump site a mile north of Mulhuddart.

Not content with ripping off motorists at toll bridges they now want to muscle in on the lucrative waste industry.

Students at Riversdale Community College have

petitioned local estates against the proposals. If the dump goes ahead some 700 lorries a day would trundle past the school.

The Dublin 15 Community Councils are campaigning against planning permission being granted to National Toll Roads.

But the company are running their own PR campaign. They promised to build a playground near the

dump as 'compensation' to locals.

And National Toll Roads manager Tom Roche flew a group of residents to Wales to see landfill sites at work there.

But their propaganda has not stopped the widespread anger at the planned dump. More protests like the one which blocked the Westlink toll road last summer are needed to defeat the plans.

Ryanair sack hostess

DUNNES Stores seem to be in the business of "beating them all" these days.

Three weeks ago an air hostess who worked with Ryanair for five years was serving a vodka and coke to a passenger.

She remarked apologetically, "We only have that 'oul Dunnes Stores coke'".

Insisted

Two executives for Dunnes Stores, who were sitting in the row behind overheard the remark. They complained to Ryanair management and insisted that the air hostess be sacked.

Ryanair duly obliged and the woman is now pursuing an unfair dismissal case against her former employer.

The objection to their

"coke" is a bit rich coming from Dunnes management since their former boss Ben has become famous for sticking the other sort of coke up his nose.

Maire O'Shea - Obituary

THE SWM extends its sympathy to the family and friends of Maire O'Shea who died recently.

Maire was a wonderful fighter whom the establishment hated. The British police tried to frame her on a conspiracy charge—but the jury acquitted her after a three week trial.

She was on the streets regularly campaigning against injustice where ever it reared its head.

Maire attended many Socialist Worker public meetings where she sometimes agreed and, at other times, disagreed with us.

But all the time her honesty and hatred of capitalism was evident.

We salute her memory.

GUILTY UNTIL PROVED INNOCENT

THE COALITION is trying to sneak in new attack on civil rights as the same time as the divorce referendum.

Justice Minister, Nora Owen, is trying to change the constitution so that people who are up on charges before the courts can be refused bail.

Owen claims that there is a huge problem with people on bail committing new offences.

This is untrue. The number of people who have had later charges placed against them when they are on bail has fallen by two thirds in the last ten years.

Owen is trying to do away with the assumption of innocence until proved guilty. The removal of the right to bail has led to terrible injustices in Northern Ireland with many spending over a year locked up waiting trial.

One States Counsel told Socialist Worker: "This amounts to preventive detention. It's a sop to the 'lock-em-up' brigade."

If this measure goes through, it will allow the gardai to lock up people for long periods without a trial. That is why it should be opposed.

Professor's racist research exploded

RICHARD LYNN, the racist professor of Psychology, has been dealt another blow. Lynn has not been seen for months around Coleraine after the Anti-Nazi League exposed his fascist connections.

Now a major article in Scientific America has discredited his academic methods.

Richard Lynn was given a half page in the Irish Independent to review and promote a book called The Bell Curve. This book claimed that blacks were less intelligent than whites. Lynn's review did not mention the fact that the book relied heavily on his so-called 'research'!

Now The Bell Curve has been slammed by Leon J. Kamin in the February edition of Scientific American.

Kamin exposes the author's use of IQ tests as flawed. They claimed that "mixed race" people in South Africa scored higher than Zulus because they had inherited "white" genes.

But in one case black Africans were tested in English, a language they could not speak. Lynn's phoney research, ignored results which had black high school students in Soweto score higher than whites.

Kamin also attacks the book's view that lower intelligence is the cause of poverty. Some of the authors' claims are ludicrous. They say that low IQ is common among blue collar workers who leave jobs due to injuries. This is because "the smarter you are, the less likely that you will have accidents"!

Kamin argues that The Bell Curve's real purpose is to attack positive discrimination for blacks which aims to redress racism in the US.

He ends his review by quoting Bob Herbert in the New York Times who said The Bell Curve "is just a genteel way of calling somebody a nigger".

As Kamin puts it: "Herbert is right. The book has nothing to do with science."

what we think

ADAMS IN THE WHITE HOUSE BUT...

Clinton will do nothing for peace

Fighting for abortion rights



Part of the International Women's Day demonstration in March

THERE IS nothing more gratifying than seeing a Tory Minister like Patrick Mayhew humiliated.

This pompous aristocrat went to the US to persuade the government that Gerry Adams was running a terrorist organisation and should be denied a visa.

And he lost completely. The Clinton administration is more interested in stitching up the Irish American vote than in listening to the paranoia of the British establishment.

Gerry Adams, of course, should have every right to travel to any part of the world he wants to. The paymasters of the SAS have little ground for lecturing anyone about the "evils of terrorism".

Bigot

But the real question is: why is the leader of an anti-imperialist organisation seeking entry into the White House and an invite to a party hosted by that odious bigot, Newt Gingrich?

At their last conference, Sinn Fein rightly condemned the continuing US blockade of Cuba. This blockade is designed to humiliate Cuba for daring to nationalise US firms, thirty years ago.

Instead of shaking hands with Clinton, Adams would be better off denouncing this blockade at every turn.

Or he might care to point out to



"Without Peter King's strength I couldn't have made it. As the Irish peace process goes forward, it is important that we continue to have the voice of Congress. I urge all Irish Americans to vote for Peter King."

RE-ELECT CONGRESSMAN PETER KING
Republican, Conservative

Gerry Adams endorsing right-wing Congressman Peter King: "Without Peter King's strength, I couldn't have made it. As the Irish peace process goes forward, it is important that we continue to have his voice in Congress. I urge all Irish Americans to vote for Peter King."

his listeners that the behaviour of US troops in Somalia where they firebombed shanty towns in the name of peacekeeping, was even worse than that of the British army in Northern Ireland.

Of course, there is no possibility of Adams mentioning these crimes of US imperialism. Every nationalist is concerned only with their own struggle. It is far easier to denounce the "old enemy" than attack a system which creates imperialism.

And it is more profitable. The rich Irish Americans who pay \$200 a plate for a meal with Adams will lap up the talk of oppression of Irish Catholics—as long as Gerry dares not mention their own discrimination against US blacks.

The present IRA and Sinn Fein grew out of a massive Civil Rights Movement that rocked the North after 1969. That movement in turn was inspired by a revolt that spread across the world like wildfire. For years, Irish republicans—despite their own rhetoric and crude tactics—were seen as deadly opponents of a system based on greed and injustice.

Adams' entry to the White House is yet another confirmation that this period has ended. Just as Michael Collins and De Valera made a transition from "deadly terrorists" to apologists for capitalism, so too will Gerry Adams.

The return of the Dinosaurs

NOONAN'S Regulation of Information Bill has been pushed through the Dail in the shortest possible time.

In the coming years new scandals on abortion will arise as this Bill gives the Gardai power to raid Family Planning clinics and charge doctors who dare to make decent arrangements for patients who choose to have an abortion.

The extraordinary thing about the whole debate was the influence that the anti-abortion bigots wielded.

They split FF and eventually captured a majority for their viewpoint. Every statement and minor event they organised was reported on in great detail by the media.

The impression was given that the problem with Noonan's Bill was that it was too liberal.

Yet the bigots are far weaker than they have ever been.

Three years ago, a Youth Defence march was an awesome sight.

When they mounted a backlash against the X case decision in 1992, they mobilised several thousand on the streets.

But this time round—when their own spokespersons warned that a Nazi style Holocaust was about to descend on Ireland—they could only pull 200 people onto the streets.

Silent

And instead of younger, more militant thugs—they belonged to the older *Ave Maria* brigade.

In a flat landscape the smallest hill can look like a mountain. The bigots looked stronger than they are because the Labour Party and Democratic Left stayed absolutely silent.

These parties have little interest in any militant workers strug-

gles—but they do claim to stand for a more liberal and pluralist Ireland.

Yet in the Dail they said nothing about the new attacks on civil liberties in Noonan's Bill.

Spring and De Rossa love to lecture about 'transparency and openness' and promise a future Freedom of Information Bill while they do nothing about a Bill that censors anything which could be interpreted as 'promoting' abortion as an option.

No wonder the right wing liberal, Michael McDowell, could expose them as frauds who went along with more repression.

The only attempt to wrest the initiative from the bigots was taken by the Socialist Workers Movement. Its members helped to initiate and build for a 400 strong pro-choice march in Dublin.

On the streets, thousands of petition were taken up defending a woman's right to choose.

The initiative showed that there is a huge audience among young and old who are sick of the bigots and of politicians backsliding on them.

That audience is not yet organised—but it can be.

Organise

The key is the size of a revolutionary socialist party. SWM can take initiatives and help organise marches because it has grown significantly.

But it was still not strong enough to shift the political agenda to the left.

The same situation will arise again and again. This is why it is so urgent to build an alternative to Labour and Democratic Left now.

For those who are sickened with their behaviour we make an open appeal: Get involved, join the socialists by filling out the form below.

BUILDING THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

ACROSS THE country more and more people are looking for socialist politics.

In Derry, *Socialist Worker* members have been giving full backing to workers at United Technologies who have voted against a new shift system—even though they have been told to accept it three times by their union leaders.

Just like in the Packard case in Dublin, the branch is arguing that multi-nationals can be beaten.

In Belfast, the *SW* is organising street meetings to build support for the nurses day of action on April 30th.

On one Saturday, 75 papers were

sold in a short space of time and three new members joined the *SWM*.

In Dublin, *SWM* were the only visible opposition to the Youth Defence bigots who want to drive Irish women back to the 1950s.

Tax Break

130 papers were sold at different stalls throughout the city and several people joined.

The race is on to build a strong socialist alternative to the sell out politics of the Irish Labour Party.

Ruairi Quinn's budget gave tax break to big farmers whose land is

valued at more than £300,000—but he could only manage £1.80 for pensioners.

In the North, many are fed up with being treated as onlookers in the talks about the constitutional issue.

They want to see an organisation that stands for class politics rather than the usual talk about "separate British and Irish identities."

The mood of support for the nurses is the first indication of this.

Thousands want to fight back against hardship and injustice—but they are not yet sure they have the confidence to win or bring real change.

This is where socialist organisation is crucial.

It can help to build up that confidence; it can give ideas of the best way to fight; it can provide solidarity—and it can show that a better society is possible.

In all 33 people joined the *SWM* in the last fortnight.

The key to building now is establishing an active network around a regular socialist paper that puts across an opposing view to the O'Reilly and Murdoch controlled press.

That is why we appeal to our readers to take a few copies of *Socialist Worker* and join the socialists.

Join Us!

- I want to join *Socialist Worker*
 I want more information
 I want to take ___ copies of *Socialist Worker* to sell
 I want to receive a copy of *Socialist Worker* each fortnight

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Return to *Socialist Worker*, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8,
 Tel: (01) 872 2682

inside the system

THINGS THEY SAY

"*THE problem is that there are the pro-choice people and the anti-abortion people outside the Dail and you are supposed to take a side*"—Anne Ferris, from the Democratic Left Women's Committee

"*I AM a hypocrite*"—FF TD, James McDaid on why he voted against abortion information.

★ IAN Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church are threatening to picket the All-Ireland Mr Gay competition to be held in Dublin in the near future.

And of course, they are lining up with their Catholic counterparts in the South who refer to homosexuality as an abomination.

A spokesperson for the Presbyterians claimed: "The Lord's work has no borders. We must convert these misguided heathens."

Are they building a 32 County cross border institution?

UN: Peace keepers or pirates?

IT SEEMS that troops and military hardware are not the only things the UN are pulling out of Somalia.

The organisation that has done little or nothing to establish peace in troubled spots around the world is currently

livid with embarrassment. Two of its officials were recently nabbed attempting to smuggle ivory and other valuable commodities out of the country.

The UN claim they knew nothing about the attempt. They say they will cooperate fully with any investigation into the incident.

But aid agencies involved in the region maintain UN officials have been involved in scams like this for decades.

A palace fit for a Quinn!

LABOUR Minister, Ruairi Quinn is splashing out £200,000 to redecorate the Department of Finance buildings.

He intends creating two dining rooms, one for

hob-nobbing with the rich and famous and the other for "ordinary" staff.

Mad Cap

The corridors are to be decorated with expensive pictures and sculptures.

A mad cap plan drawn up by Quinn himself to build a tennis court on the roof surrounded by huge



tennis was overruled by the Office of Public Works.

All this, even though the offices received a face-lift last year as part of the £17 million spent on the Dail.

£200,000 is the exact amount Ruairi Quinn's government gives to the Simon Community to deal with homelessness every year.

Another housing organisation, Threshold, only receives £80,000 from Quinn and his tennis playing pals.

★ MORE than half of French people consider the extreme right-wing leader, Jean Marie Le Pen, to be a dangerous figure.

The findings were revealed in a recent opinion poll which followed the killing of a

young Frenchman of African origin by three members of Le Pen's National Front party.

55% said they felt Le Pen harmed French political life. Le Pen is running for president of France in elections next month.

His party advocates the expulsion of immigrants.

Bennis bid to black out Glenroe

RECENTLY Nora Bennis and her Solidarity Party attempted to block the opening of a sex shop in Limerick.

But they were not content with interfering in what we do in our own bedrooms.

Now they want to control what we watch on television.

She is raising funds to bring a Supreme Court action against *Fair City* and *Glenroe*.

She claims these RTE soaps are unconstitutional as their plots involve adultery and single motherhood.

In reality, this exposes the real agenda of the conservatives in

Irish society.

They want to keep women locked in violent marriages and to portray sex as a taboo subject.

With the numerous scandals in the Catholic Church, these people are less powerful and on the run—it's time we broke their influence for good

★ ONLY TEN schools in the entire Eastern Health Board area do not want to implement the Stay Safe programme.

This means that only 1.6% of schools are against the programme.

The lies and climate of fear pushed by right-wingers have been rejected by teachers and parents.

Socialist Worker welcomes letters

PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

The thugs of Youth Defence

AFTER READING the posters distributed on D.C.U campus by members of "Youth Defence" and the Pro Life movement about the march against abortion at the Garden of Remembrance on Sat 4th March, I, along with some fellow D.C.U students decided to attend to "demonstrate" our own opinion.

The atmosphere swiftly degenerated into open hostility directed at us by at least 85% of the marchers.

Upon reaching O'Connell Bridge several members of the heavy mob came up to us and started to elbow and push us about the street.

I tried to get Gardai assistance but they just did not want to know. We were threatened with arrest if we did not leave the march

immediately.

From O'Connell Bridge to the Supreme Court, threats of violence and intimidation were rained down upon us with frightening ferocity that to be honest frightened the hell out of the lot of us.

Threats

I had known for some time that these organisations based their teachings on threats and intimidation but to be honest until I was actually at the receiving end I did not fully believe all the stories.

I find it all very sad that so called Christians will resort to such extreme violence in order to gain their objectives.

I was there as were my friends to demonstrate a



Behind the respectable image lurk the hard men of Youth Defence

Pro-Choice opinion. I love children and I very much hope that when I marry I will have many but now when I see such extreme right wing groups such as Youth Defence demonstrating and advocating violence to achieve their goals I feel in my heart that to deny women the right to choose is not only the denial of a physical right but the denial of an implicit constitutional right laid down in the Constitution.

EDWARD O'NEILL, DUBLIN

S.W. right to support abolition of college fees

JOHN SERGE attacks *Socialist Worker* for supporting the abolition of college fees. But he has got it wrong.

He says that the only people who will benefit from free university education is the middle classes.

He forget that thousands of working class families now have two incomes and this sometimes puts them over £20,000 and means that, up to now, they have paid college fees.

He says that if the government has £50 million to spend, they should spend it on grants rather than abolishing fees.

But the government has a lot more than £50 million to spend.

They have agreed to cut taxes to the banks by £35 million.

They are giving more hand-outs to big farmers and stockbrokers.

Instead of socialists debating where our small slice of the cake should be spent, we should be telling this rotten government to tax the rich.

That way there would be plenty to spend on education.

The problem with Niamh Breatuach's move is that it does not go far enough.

Socialist Worker should campaign for free education in the colleges and decent grants so that students can maintain themselves.

CATHERINE REED, DUN LAOGHAIRE

Whizz-kids' Lotto

DUBLIN'S newest derivatives exchange, Finex, has just launched a competition between traders—basically to see who can make the biggest on-paper profit in the shortest possible time.

These so-called "whizz-kids" will, in the words of Finex's managing director, "test their aptitude and ability to take advantage of the seed capital provisions in the Budget".

Ruairi Quinn has raised the tax relief for these sharks from £75,000 to £125,000 for certain dealings

And what's the prize for the most greedy person? A four-night stay at the Fitzpatrick Manhattan Hotel in New York.

Wonder if they'll bring back presents for the increasing numbers of Dublin homeless, some of whom use the doorways of Financial Services buildings for a nights kip.

behind the headlines

by KIERAN ALLEN

Market madness

CURRENCY markets around the world are in a state of turmoil.

The *Irish Times*, for example, reported that one US institution had taken out £100 million in Irish punts and that the authorities were extremely worried that they might start speculating against it.

The present panic has its roots in a financial crisis in Mexico which was once hailed as an "emerging market" for investors. Banks, pensions funds, and multi-national companies had all been convinced that Latin America, and Mexico in particular, offered new opportunities for profit.

Capitalists are now under continuous pressure to get the highest rate of return on investment in the shortest possible time.

With interest rates low in the US in the early 1990s they borrowed vast sums and stuck them into the Mexican market.

Devalued

But in December of last year the bubble burst when the Mexican currency was devalued and the boardrooms of big business panicked.

The International Monetary Fund, managing director Michael Camdessus, warned of a "true world catastrophe" as huge sums of money began to roll back from Latin America.

In the end the US government and the IMF stepped in with a rescue package that was valued at £30 billion.

The US had little choice—catastrophe in Mexico would mean devastation of large chunks of US companies who controlled 60% of the Mexican stock exchange.

There was, however, a major catch in all this: the US is already the world's largest debtor nation.

It borrowed massively in the 1980s to fund its armaments programme and the resulting boom.

Now the US government was seeking to bail out Mexico—while it could not balance its own budget.

Speculators began to move against the dollar and its value has dropped by 10% since the start of the year.

The speculators are by no means lone individuals such as Nick Leeson who was reputed to have lost £860 million in one gamble.

Leeson and his ilk are only small pawns in the global financial markets.

Every major company now engages in "hedging"—speculating on the value of currency in future years.

They seek to make as much money from financial speculation as they

do from manufacturing. The result is a more vicious and volatile capitalism that is well beyond the control of any government.

Great sums of money regularly move out of one currency until such time as interest rates go up or the currency can be bought again at bargain basement prices.

These new developments should be of interest to socialists. In the 1980s Thatcher and Reagan argued for "deregulation" as a way of stimulating their declining economies.

In the City of London the Big Bang, for example, removed all exchange controls and allowed money to travel across the globe at the flick of a switch.

The frenetic financial markets contrasted with a sluggish economy—but laid the basis for the Yuppie boom of the 1980s.

However the capitalist success story of the 1980s has produced a long hangover in the 1990s.

The turbulence in the currency markets spreads uncertainty and panic.

New divisions among the world's rulers are created as one currency strengthens against another.

Doubts

In the European Union, there are now serious doubts about the possibility of establishing a single currency—even though this is vital for the long term future of European capitalism.

The prospect of rising interest rates threatens the fragile recovery that is underway.

Japan has been one of the last countries to move out of recession—but now it is hit by an over-valued yen and rising interest rates.

Meanwhile millions suffer as these giant games of monopoly are played by the world's wealthy.

Children will die from hunger or infected water as their governments cut back in response to rising interest payments on their debts.

Working class householders face mortgage increases.

Many get thrown out of work as currencies shift abruptly.

This is the madness of the capitalist market.

around the world

SOUTH AFRICA: WINNIE MANDELA FACES SACK
Row exposes growing

discontent

WINNIE MANDELA was expected to be sacked as a deputy minister in the South African government this week.

She was set to be fired after allegations of corruption, of refusing to obey government orders and of making a speech angrily denouncing a police raid on her home.

Some of the criticism she faces is pure hypocrisy. The National Party politicians who now get so irate at Winnie Mandela are the same ones who spent 40 years defending a system of racism.

They stole millions, stacked up huge bank accounts and used secret funds to mobilise killers against anti-apartheid activists. The "justice" they dispensed was a killing machine for blacks.

Some of her critics in the African National Congress should be careful of their own records. Some now enjoy lavish salaries and lifestyles utterly divorced from the people who voted for them.

The rooting out of corruption by government ministers has not gone very far when in the area around Johannesburg one in four policemen has been accused of a criminal offence in the last year.

Nevertheless strong evidence has been presented that Winnie Mandela and several of her supporters have used money donated to the anti-apartheid movement for their own projects or even for their own personal gain.

Yet for all the criticism and the allegations of corruption, Winnie Mandela undoubtedly remains very popular among a sizeable section of people who are disillusioned with the slow pace of change since last April's elections.

When she said last week "This is not the South Af-



Winnie Mandela: "This is not the South Africa I ruined my life for"

rica I ruined my life for" she was putting into words what many feel.

Her denunciation of the government for favouring business and the white politicians rather than the black poor echoes the talk you will find in any township.

She can point to her background of facing imprisonment, banning orders and years of repression while her husband was in jail.

Crisis

More recently she has won respect for her high profile visits to those in the most desperate squatter camps which are the most visible indication of the continuing housing crisis.

The rows about Winnie Mandela have revealed both the boiling discontent among millions of black South Africans and the failure of the Communist Party and the left in the trade unions to give it a focus.

More than 7 million black people live in squatter camps with just a few pieces of cardboard or corrugated iron to make their home and live under constant threat of eviction by the police or landowners.

They crave some movement to express their discontent and Winnie Mandela is one of the few to offer it. Over half the black population have no proper job.

The traditional left wing parties tell them to be patient, the unions do not offer a consistent fightback against redundancies so Winnie Mandela's rhetoric can seem very attractive.

Strikers still face brutal treatment from the state. During a strike by Spar workers earlier this month over 300 strikers were arrested on a single day for occupying a store.

They were released only when a number of the prison officers union unlocked their cells and told

them "Leave now"!

So at least some involved in industrial disputes see Winnie Mandela and her supporters as an alternative to the government.

The pace of political killings are rising again with over 100 slaughtered in the Natal area alone last month. When Winnie Mandela calls for armed resistance to Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha rather than relying on the police she strikes a chord.

The African National Congress government elected almost a year ago has tried to work in partnership with private industry and the multinationals.

But such forces are interested only in making money, so almost no new homes have been built, few new water supplies connected. Wages are still at poverty levels.

There is a vast gap between the rightful expectations of the black people who threw off apartheid and the reforms delivered by the government.

Alliances

The mainstream left and the union leaders are too busy cementing their alliances with the ANC to show a distinctively different way forward.

Winnie Mandela has tried to fill that gap. But in truth, she offers no real alternative. She has developed a cult of herself and a few of her inner circle rather than trying to build a movement based on socialist principles.

These events have thrown into stark relief both the need for a real alternative to the ANC and the possibility of building it, however hard it may be.

Support the South
Korean socialists

THE SHOW trial of South Korean socialist Choi-II Bung started on Wednesday 15th March.

He is one of 36 people seized in police raids last October.

Accused

Twenty four face charges under the National Security Law accused of being members of the International Socialist of South Korea. Ten are in jail.



Choi Il-bung: facing show trial

Their only crime was to join in political activi-

ties that are legal in democracies which South Korea claims to be.

The South Korean President claims to have "liberalised" the country after three decades of military rule, but the trial shows that his claims are a sham.

Independent trade unions are banned and the opposition is suppressed.

In February the police stormed the Seoul plant of Daehung Machineries where trade unionists had resolved to go on strike in protest at the arrest of their union leader.

On the following day police in Pusan arrested 15 student activists.

Last Sunday three hundred riot police ended a protest of ten opposition parties who were banned from standing in local elections.

The prosecution in Choi Il bung's trial describes the International Socialists of South Korea as an "enemy benefiting organisation". They mean it supports North Korea.

This is ridiculous. For one thing, Choi made it clear at an earlier trial—he got two years for publishing socialist books in 1992—that the ISSK opposes the undemocratic regime in the North as much as the South.

For another, Kim's government has just given the go ahead to South Korean companies to build two nuclear reactors in the North. The Hyundai corporation has openly admitted business links with the North since 1989.

What the trial and police raids are really about is suppressing working class organisation.

Last year saw the biggest strike wave in South Korea since 1987-9. The government needed tens of thousands of riot police to break strikes at Hyundai.

Write to No 136 Il bung Choi, An-yang Post Office Sasco-ham 25, Gyong gi do Eui wang-si, Republic of Korea 430-600.

WITHDRAW THE CHARGES

THE COMMITTEE to Defend South Korean Socialists placed a page advertisement in the *New York Review of Books* under the headline "free speech under attack in South Korea".

It is a sign of the repression that South Korean papers refused to print the advertisement. But the *New York Review of Books* is widely circulated.

The add was signed by 250 leading academics, writers, parliamentary deputies and trade union leaders from around the world.

Among the signatories are the Irish Labour TDs Mosajee Bhamjee, Joe Costello, Declan Bree, Tommy Broughan; eight Greek Cypriot MPs; the French Trade union Federation CGT; Noam Chomsky; Six Polish MPs; the General Secretary of the Haiti's Confederation Generale du Travail; Tony Benn MP.

German strikes win pay rise

GERMAN engineering workers have won a pay rise without any strings attached.

The bosses had earlier refused to discuss any increases until the union made concessions.

Union leaders in the south German state of Bavaria are claiming the deal is worth a 4% increase.

More than 20,000 engineers at 30 Bavarian factories had been on strike for a week and a half.

Their action pushed the employers to drop demands

for more flexible working and the workers also saved a one hour cut in the working week that is planned for October.

The increases while welcome still leave German workers behind a rising rate of inflation.

Press Home

Their union, IG Metal, had the bosses on the ropes but did not press home the attack.

Workers had voted 80% for strike action—but the union leaders only pulled

out a small number of the total engineering workforce.

Nonetheless, the rise will become a target for other workers throughout Germany.

Bank and public sector workers all say they want the same and are threatening action.

The ICTU claims that Germany is a model country because of its tradition of 'social partnership'.

But the reality is that it is militant action that gets the results.



ASBESTOS: THE KILLER

by MICK DOYLE

THE ROMANS called it the shroud of kings, so awed were they by its indestructible qualities, and they made masks to protect their slaves from the effects of the dust.

It seems the Romans displayed more concern for those who had to work with it than the class that have benefited most from the industrial revolution.

Athy in Co. Kildare is only one example of a town now suffering the consequences of the asbestos industry.

EILEEN: *There was a doctor in this town years ago and he was dead against that factory coming here. He said the men that worked there would end their days spitting cement.*

Although the effects of working with asbestos have been known to big business since at least the nineteenth century, workers didn't become aware of them until the late 1960s and early 70s.

Protection

Until then they spent day-in-day-out in asbestos-related jobs without any protection at all.

DOMINIC: *The men set off everyday like it was any other job. There wasn't a word about it being dangerous then. Everybody used to call it the asbestos factory? Then all that stuff started to come out about it and they changed the name.*

It wasn't just big business that hid the truth: successive governments throughout the industrial world, the legal and medical professions, insurance companies and the trade union movement itself have failed dismally to speak out against it.

It's not difficult to see why.

Such is the abominable history of the industry that an admission of blame would lead to a torrent of compensation claims as crippling to that industry as asbestosis is to its victims.

MAGGIE: *When I think of the way my father went. He could hardly breathe in the end.*

Asbestos was primarily used in engineering and shipbuilding, with electricians, pipe-laggers and joiners among those worst exposed.

Cities like Glasgow and Belfast suffered some of the highest rates of lung

cancer, the crippling disease mesothelioma and other respiratory disorders in Europe, a fact that vested interests attempted to put down to widespread cigarette addiction.

DAMIEN: *I could reel off a list of people that died of cancer and they all had some connection with that place.*

Asbestos is an indestructible natural fibre which fragments on abrasion into millions of tiny particles too small to be seen by the naked eye.

They enter the body through the pores of the skin or by inhalation and just one blue fibre can be lethal.

The disease primarily attacks the lungs but can affect other areas of the body as well.

And it can lie dormant for up to 20-30 years.

JOE: *Look at my old fella now. He's crippled, bent over double, and he can hardly catch his breath.*

Men coming home from work day after day, their clothes powdered with the white dust, exposed their families to disease.

And housing estates built in the shadow of asbestos-related industries were also at risk.

BRIDIE: *The dust used to be all over everything. The windows, I used to have to clean the windows everyday. You'd see it on the cars out on the road and on the roofs of the houses.*

The wider community too was, and continues to be, affected.

Schools

Asbestos products were used in factories, schools and hospitals and in items as common and diverse as brake pads, ironing boards, paper and chalk.

The fact that many of the buildings asbestos was used in remain a serious health hazard today, and the mounting number of those falling ill and dying because of it must be one of the starkest examples of the indifference to suffering, the callous dishonesty and the insatiable greed of capitalism the world has ever had.

PLC student basic rights

by CATHERINE CURRAN

SCORES OF Post Leaving Cert colleges have sprung up around Ireland in the last few years. There are now over 17,000 students in these colleges and they come predominantly from working class backgrounds.

Since March 94, PLC students have been fighting to have three basic demands met. These demands are:

- Maintenance grants
- Improved conditions in the schools
- Recognition of PLCs as third level institutions

So far, the government has refused to grant maintenance payments to students who opt to do a PLC course after their Leaving Cert.

But grants are available to RTC students, even though the courses, and qualifications offered, are frequently the same.

This discrimination is leading to real hardship.

Some students have to move away from home in order to attend the PLCs.

Qualify

Recent estimates show that the cost of living away from home for an average student is over £4,000 a year for maintenance alone.

But students who would qualify for full maintenance grants if they were attending a university receive nothing when they do a PLC course.

At least five people in the Cert College of Commerce alone have had to abandon their studies this year because they could not afford to keep themselves.

Nationally it is believed that 400 students drop out each year for basic financial reasons.

Students have to purchase materials and books, which can often be very costly.

As one person put it "We have a library, but it's crap".

The problems are aggravated by poor facilities and lack of amenities.

In the words of a Cork student, "They trowl you off the streets and bring you into a college that has four walls and little else".

Women hoping to get a "second chance" at education are badly affected by the lack of creche facilities.

Without any kind of maintenance they can't hope to cover the fees for private childcare, while few PLCs offer any kind of subsidised creche.

The class bias

THE IRISH education system has always been based on class—providing opportunities for the children of the middle classes while acting as a barrier to exclude children from working-class backgrounds.

A study carried out last year by a government appointed steering committee came to the conclusion that "Young Dubliners from affluent areas are up to 15 times more likely to go to university than their colleagues from disadvantaged parts of the city".

The study found "enormous disparities" between different districts of Dublin in terms of access to higher education.

It claimed that the inequalities in this area were as great as they were 15 years ago.

Two-Track

The analysis portrayed education as a "two-track" system.

Nearly 45% of the relevant age group in the affluent area of Dublin 4 get to college—while tiny numbers from working class areas on Dublin's and Cork's Northsides go.

Affluent students were more likely to sit the Leaving Cert, to apply for third level and to be accepted on degree courses but less likely to accept places on diploma courses.

In a 1988 study "Who Goes to College", it was shown that 55% of all

entrants came from the higher/professional classes—even though they represented only 30% of the relevant population.

One report concluded that, "It is almost easier for a rich man to get to heaven than for the child of a poor family to get into the most sought-after courses—medicine, dentistry and veterinary".

Between 1990 and 1992 only 8 students whose parents were unskilled manual labourers managed to make it to UCD out of a total intake of 2,665.

On this basis, the son or daughter of a doctor or a barrister is twelve times more likely to attend university than the child of a labourer.

The situation has also been getting worse in recent years.

Unskilled

Ten years ago one university student in every hundred came from an unskilled manual working class background.

Today it is just one in every two hundred.

The reality is that Irish third level education is elitist and directly discriminates against the working class.

Canteens, where they exist, are frequently privately run and offer no subsidy to hard-pressed students often trying to get through an 8-hour day on little more than a sandwich.

The only group to get any support are VTOS students.

These are people who have, for example, been on long term unemployment.

One woman mentioned a figure of 60 pence a day, which would barely buy a cup of coffee in a privatised canteen.

While VTOS students are allowed to keep the dole when attending PLCs, they are as badly affected as the other students by the poor conditions in the schools.

Angry

A recent delegation of students representatives from the PLCs met with Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach and put their demands before her.

They found her "extremely condescending" and left "angry and frustrated".

The Minister insisted that



Niamh Bhreathnach the colleges were second level—nothing more and nothing less.

When the students argued back the Minister grandly replied that "A few demonstrations outside my window makes my job a whole lot easier".

In fact, a few demonstrations could be just the thing to make her change her mind. Fianna Fail politicians are

no better. When Seamus Brennan was Minister for Education he gave a measly £30 a month to PLC students.

The present coalition government has made much of the abolition of third-level fees, but seems to imagine that this in itself will produce equal opportunities within the education system.

Welcome

While socialists welcome the abolition of fees as a necessary step only militant action will get the government to pay out the kind of money needed to make the system open to everyone.

This government has plenty of money to give big farmers and to give the banks tax breaks. But when it comes to the education of working class youth they don't give a damn.

A massive and militant campaign where PLC students take to the streets and start to occupy some of their colleges is the only way this government will be made to see sense.

its demand

what do socialists say?

Is the market inevitable?

by CONOR KOSTICK

EVER SINCE Marx wrote that production should be organised on the principle of meeting peoples needs, writers have tried to dismiss the idea as impractical.

One of the most articulate defenders of capitalism was an economist called Hayek. He argued that society is too complex for anyone to be able to form a picture of it all.

Instead he claimed that if people are free to choose what they want to buy, they send out a "price signal" which shows capitalists what products need to be supplied.

However, there is nothing particularly effective about the market. Instead of responding to human need goods are only produced when it looks like a profit can be made.

Food production shows why the free market does not work effectively.

If there is bad weather one year and a crop, such as wheat suffers, then the price goes up. But this does not mean that there is more production in that year.

In the real world the big farmers have to wait until the next spring to sow their crop.

Many of them will be tempted by the high prices to sow more acres than previously. But unless there is a second year of a bad harvest, the only result will be to produce more grain than the consumers use.

The Irish famine of 1845-47 shows precisely how the market cannot answer human need in an efficient fashion.

The government of Lord John Russell believed that the relief of distress had to be left to private capitalism rather than the government.

He said: "It is not by breaking the laws of commerce, which are the laws of nature, and consequently the laws of God that we are... to remove any calamity we suffer"

But the laws of commerce meant that the potato blight increased the demand for other foods. Even the Indian corn which the government imported rose in price and relief committees were not able to distribute it in sufficient quantities. One million people did not die in Ireland because of the lack of food—but because the price of food became too high due to market conditions.

Respond

Even when the capitalists claim to respond to market demand, they do not necessarily produce the quality of goods which people require.

One hundred and twenty years ago, Marx complained about the adulteration of food that was produced for the working class. Today the same adulteration is done in more sophisticated ways.

There is mass production of cereals that are nutritionally useless. A veil of secrecy surrounds diseases like BSE in cattle.

They cut bread production costs by removing much of nutritional value from the flour. No wonder that one British study found that the diet of the working class and upper class differed to such an extent that it produced a 10 year gap in life expectancy.

The 'free' market also leads to a considerable waste of resources. The giant companies spend more and more on advertising to create images about their products in order to beat those of other firms. They try to establish

a tight grip over distribution outlets to cut out their rivals.

Increasingly they move vast sums out of direct production into financial speculation—buying property, gambling on share prices, 'hedging' on changes in currency. One economist, Mike Kidron, did a detailed sectoral breakdown of the US economy and concluded that waste (advertising, arms and luxury consumption of the rich) amounted to "three fifths of the work actually undertaken in 1970".

Even where there is a profit to be made, capitalism is not as smooth a system as Hayek implies. Capitalists are bitter rivals of one another. When a profitable opening does appear many companies, independent of one another, will race to produce the required goods.

They will reorganise their factories, take on staff, rush their products out—only to find other rival businesses are doing the same. Suddenly the market is flooded with goods, everyone's calculations are upset. The projected profits disappear and the weakest companies are made bankrupt. From boom the system turns into bust.

This unplanned competition is the cause of the cycles that the world economy goes through.

In the upswing, new investments are made, jobs are created and output increases—only for the situation to change, competition becomes more severe and the collapse of companies turns the system down again.

So to defend the market and free enterprise is not to defend freedom and choice. A socialist alternative is needed to this decaying system.



Organise to win

THE NUMBER of PLC students is expected to rise again next year, from 17,000 to 20,000—but any improvements in conditions will depend on the students organising themselves to fight back.

Eugene Kenny, President of the Student Council in the Liberties PLC said that "We need to keep fighting—militant action is the only way forward".

Pressure

Student councils should be set up in every college.

These can be used to put pressure on the administration for immediate demands—for example, in Cert's Colaiste Stiofain Naofa, they didn't have a photocopier for students until the council fought for it—and won.



Secondly, the student council can organise the student body itself for protests against the lack of maintenance grants. The success of the National

Demo on March 23rd depends on students getting active themselves—and getting organised.

In the words of one activist—"The situation at the moment is like a dripping tap—the changes we need are coming so slowly that unless we act, we'll never get them. We have to go out there and say 'here are our demands ...'"

Already this year hundreds of students from Cork's, three PLCs took to the streets to make their voices heard. The PLC campaign has the support of the Parents Association and the Teachers Union of Ireland.

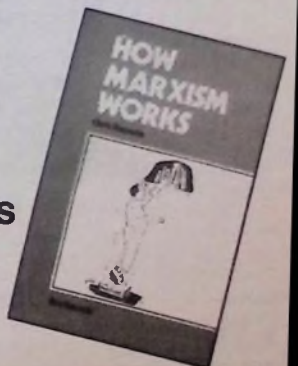
This type of support can be built on to make this government fund PLC education properly.

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Why we need abortion rights in Ireland

The big debate on abortion in Dail Eireann is over. But every week nearly a hundred Irish women travel for an abortion in Britain. One in eleven Irish pregnancies end in abortion. This is the reality that does not go away. **Brid Smith** investigates.

MARGARET lives just outside Donegal town.

She has three young children. She is separated from her husband after an abusive and loveless marriage.

She became pregnant last summer, just before her marriage broke up.

Her story shows the real need for women to have complete access to abortion information.

"I just couldn't face having another child. My baby is still very young. I have no money and can hardly cope with the three I have."

Margaret had no idea how she could find out about getting an abortion. She confided in a neighbour who had recently moved to Donegal from Dublin.

The neighbour had a friend who is a member of *Socialist Worker* and she put Margaret in touch with the Dublin Abortion Helpline.

Travelled

All the arrangements were made through the Helpline and Margaret travelled to London for her abortion.

Three weeks later the *Socialist Worker* comrade received a letter from Margaret: *"I don't know what I would have done. I was going out of my mind. Everything worked out great and I'm getting on with my life"*.

How many more like Margaret are out there? The secrecy surrounding abortion is a disgraceful way to treat women.

While Cura and Life can advertise widely on buses and trains, in shops, libraries and magazines, abortion information is censored and reduced to a "dirty secret".

Most Irish women who travel to Britain for an abortion have to make a lonely and expensive journey.

Barbara who lives in Fatima Mansions in Dublin is a single mother with two children.

Two years ago when she became pregnant for the third time she and her boyfriend scraped together the money she needed to get an abortion, mostly through borrowing. But they could only afford the cost of one fare.

So Barbara had to make the journey alone and stay in a B & B in London, where she knew nobody.

After the operation she had to make the long journey by bus and boat back to Dublin.

"Pat wanted to come with me and



Protesting against the anti-abortion amendment at the time of the X case

Northern bigots united

RIGHT WING politicians from both sides of the sectarian divide in the North have jumped on the abortion issue.

Reverend Martin Smyth from the Official Unionists and Joe Hendron of the SDLP have claimed that there is total opposition from all communities in Northern Ireland to abortion.

It's a lie. A recent *Social Attitude* survey shows that one third of people in Northern Ireland favour a woman's right to choose while over half the population were for abortion in some circumstances.

600 women in Northern Ireland have abortions on the health service each year.

Abortion is allowed if the health of the women is in immediate danger or if there is a possibility of gross handicap.

But the law in Northern Ireland is much more restrictive than in the rest of the UK.

The right wing bigots who dominate Northern politics have kept it that way.

On the day before the Framework Document was published, Mallon from the SDLP, Robinson from the DUP and Smyth from the Official Unionists got an assurance from British Ministers that the law would not be liberalised.

Screaming

The next day they were screaming blue murder at each other.

On every other issue, they stir up hatred between Catholics and Protestants. But when it comes to anything to do with sex, they unite.

Two years ago Hendron and Smyth joined forces to oppose the opening of a Brooke Centre because it gave advice on sex to teenagers.

The Unionist politicians who say they are "British" oppose extension of British laws on abortion and homosexuality to Northern Ireland.

The Nationalist politicians pretend that every advance for women's rights is an attack on their culture.

Their hypocrisy shows why a united socialist workers party is needed in the North.

Behind Cura's caring mask

THE GOVERNMENT pretend that they are sympathetic to women who have a crisis pregnancy.

They have given an extra £500,000 to CURA and LIFE who are directly connected with the anti-abortion movement.

Cura, whose sympathetic advertising can be seen on buses and trains everywhere, ask women who are "pregnant and worried" to contact their help-line.

They say they can offer support and advice but *Socialist Worker* spoke to a young woman who tells a different tale.

Four months ago,

Jean who is 17 years old, went to her family GP because she was pregnant, worried and frightened.

Her doctor referred her to Cura where she was met by an elderly woman with "a sympathetic ear".

Horrific

But instead Jean had a horrific experience. "I was sitting for over an hour in a locked office with this woman.

"She gave me a long lecture on the evils of abortion. She even compared abortion to mechanical rape".

After listening to the anti-abortionist

rant Jean got up to leave.

But the Cura counsellor pushed her back down into the seat and warned her: "I'm not finished yet. You'll stay and hear me out!"

Jean told *Socialist Worker*, "I was held prisoner in there. They only care about putting women off abortion and not about how you are feeling. I was even more frightened leaving the place".

Later her brother paid for independent counselling for her. "It was so different. They were completely honest with me and treated me

with respect.

"I made my own decision to have an abortion. The hardest part was finding the money to go to England".

Last year the Rape Crisis Centre and CAIRDE (a support group for people living with AIDS) were almost forced to close their doors in Dublin due to the lack of Government funding.

These organisations try to provide badly needed services.

Who really needs the type of harassment and intimidation that the Cura bigot gave Jean?

It's a class issue

WORKING CLASS women suffer most from the hypocrisy about abortion in Britain.

Under Noonan's new Bill doctors will be allowed to give women lectures on why they should not have an abortion and deny them information.

A woman on the medical card will not be able to change

her doctor.

But a woman with more money can look around for other doctors.

The cost of travelling to Britain for an abortion affects working class women most.

An Irish Family Planning Report claims that British abortions can cost up to £800 with travel and accommodation.

This could mean five weeks

wages for working women.

The Bishops have tried to hide the reality of abortion in Ireland.

They want to give moral lectures about sex—while they cover for their own priests who abuse children.

It is time the labour movement faced up to the reality and demanded abortion facilities in Ireland.

**Abortion
Information
Helpline:**

(01) 679 4700

COMMENT

Can the Irish language be revived?

JOE O'TOOLE, the head of the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO), is a man under fire.

The INTO have proposed that the government remove the Irish language test which disqualifies teachers from Northern Ireland and Britain from finding employment in this state.

Incidentally, teachers from the South are welcome in the North and Britain but are expected to work as "subs" for £20 a week less than their Southern colleagues.

A modest, but progressive proposal, I hear you say. Indeed. However, listening to the squeals of horror from Fianna Failers, you would think that the INTO were asking for the Paras to be sent in to "ethnically cleanse" the Gaeltachts.

According to the Constitution, Irish is the first language of the state. Which just goes to show that its not only on the question of women's rights that Dev's constitution is hopelessly outdated.

Attempt

It is time to face up to the fact that the attempt to revive Irish through the schools has been an unmitigated disaster. In 1934 the FF education minister, Tomas Deirg, decreed that the standard of other subjects should be reduced to permit even greater emphasis on Irish.

Even today primary teachers are obliged to spend more time teaching Irish than they do English. It is even "suggested" by the Department that Irish be taught early in the morning when kids are more attentive.

However, the decline of the Gaeltachts and Irish speaking generally has continued, and even accelerated.

Nearly every adult in the South associates Irish with their worst memories of school.

My father left an all-Irish school one week after enrolling because Department rules forbade the explanation of anything in English.

He had been turned off Irish years before he ever got to Peig.

Remember her? Did anyone ever actually enjoy the book? I doubt it. Apparently, Peig is no longer compulsory for the Leaving Cert. Perhaps there is a glimmer of hope for Irish after all.

Socialism is about diversity. I am in favour of people speaking Irish where or whenever they want. But

Irish has always been associated in southern schools with rural, Catholic values.

Peig might not have been such a mind-numbingly tedious read if the Department of Education had not deleted the reference, by the *sean bean bocht* herself, to the practice on the Blasket Islands of using bees-wax to make contraceptives.

Padraic O'Conaire's short story, *Nora Mharcais Bhig*, written in the 1920s, describes a young woman's experiences of prostitution in England. O'Conaire couldn't be explicit, but when you read closely it is clear that Nora became pregnant and had an abortion in England.

O'Conaire, one of the founding members of the Irish Communist Party, viewed her family, (who asked no questions about the money she sent home, but turned their backs on her in her hour of need) as nauseating hypocrites.

In school, our teacher skipped this particular story, even though it was on the course for the Leaving. Typical.

Successive Irish governments have paid only lip-service to the language. They saw the "cupla focail culture" as good enough for us plebs.

Loyalty

You could be forgiven for suspecting that their only interest in Irish was its usefulness as a badge of loyalty to the state.

The INTO's proposals do not endanger the language, any more than the removal of the requirement to pass Irish in the Leaving Cert did in the 1970s.

The future of Irish will not be decided in the classrooms, but in workplaces. If Irish is to survive as a living language, young people must be able to secure work in the Gaeltachts.

Udara na Gaeltachta has been a disaster in attracting employment into the Gaeltachts. The jobs available are generally low-paid, with bad conditions.

Only a society in which there are more important things than profit, and loss accounts could possibly hope to provide the secure, well-paid jobs that people in these areas (and everywhere else deserve).

The provision of decent jobs must be the priority for those who want to reverse the decline in Irish. Only when Irish is seen to be a living language will schools have a positive role to play.

— JASON McELLIGOTT

FILM

Disclosing an anti-feminist backlash

NIAMH KAVANAGH reviews the film *Disclosure*

DISCLOSURE features the high-tech world of American big business.

Michael Douglas plays the part of Tom Sanders a high flying executive whose chance of promotion is thwarted when Meredith Johnson (Demi Moore) comes to town.

The two go back a long time and when Sanders is invited to Johnson's office to discuss old times with a bit of business, things take a rapid change.

Forget about flirtation or a few subtle sexual overtures just seize the moment.

Johnson slams Sanders to the desk and proceeds to initiate sex.

This scene is quite ambiguous as Sanders is attracted to Johnson and highly aroused but eventually manages to rebut her.

He races out of the office with her nail marks imprinted in his chest.

There then follows a maze of legal wrangling as Sanders attempts to salvage what little dignity remains and to correct this injustice.

But unfortunately it is very difficult to feel sorry for Michael Douglas wish-



ing to escape from a seductive clinch with Demi Moore.

Power

The film makes the point that sexual harassment is about power and that women in such a position can be just as likely to abuse their power.

However it hardly makes for credible viewing since women are very rarely in

such positions.

Less than 5% of the complaints of sexual harassment received by the Employment Equality Agency in Ireland come from men.

The film feeds into the sexist myth that women's rights have gone too far.

Such a myth tries to give the impression that women clamber their way to the top using their feminine charms and once there ride rough-

shod over anybody that dares to question their judgement.

This film is the latest installment of the anti feminist backlash.

Crisis

The chief actor, Michael Douglas, has long used his films to play down the oppression that women suffer.

After *Fatal Attraction* he said "If you want to know

I'm really sick of feminists, sick of them... Guys are going through a really terrible crisis now because of women's unreasonable demands"

A token gesture is thrown in for at the end when the vice-presidency is given to the best qualified person who happens to be a woman.

Anyway, the tinsel town players are never really in the real picture.

BOOKLET

Trade Unions and the fight for workers' unity

JIM LARMOUR reviews "The key role of the unions in the fight against sectarianism", by Derry Trades Council

THE MASSIVE anti sectarian rallies in November 1993 placed the trade union movement at the head of a genuine move towards peace in the North.

Rallies in Belfast, Derry and elsewhere drew working class people out in their tens of thousands.

For many of us it was a strange day of mixed reactions: positive in the sense of the working

class of the North mobilised with the potential to move towards real change; negative, because the union leaders tried to co-operate with the bosses organisation, the CBI, which has had a material interest in maintaining sectarianism and keeping the working class divided.

Class

This booklet is based on a Derry Trades Council seminar.

It is a breath of fresh air and certainly well worth a read for anyone who wants to see a progressive trade union movement in the North.

The trade union movement is the only mass movement to represent people of all creeds, but it does not represent all classes.

Its role is to defend and advance the interests of its members—the working class.

There are many worthwhile contributions in the booklet including the address from Sammy Douglas, a Protestant community worker, who is deeply critical of the Unionists who "conned the Protestant working class".

But the point is made most clearly in the open letter to the ICTU by Eamonn McCann, chair of Derry Trades Council:

Workers both sides of the sectarian divide are affected by unemployment, job insecurity, increasingly arrogant management, Tory attempts to dismantle the health service, cuts in benefits, VAT on fuel, etc, etc.

Angry

Everywhere we turn there are workers with angry stories about the way these issues are affecting their lives and the lives of their families. It is in the mobilisation

of the already-existing and growing class anger that our movement can play a key role in overcoming sectarianism.

No section of workers benefit by sectarianism. All have lost out because of the divisions in our midst.

The key is therefore to fight on those issues that unite people, both Protestant and Catholic, and stress always what we have in common not what divides us.

That in itself will not smash the sectarian state but it is the only context in which working class people can unite and begin to challenge the structures of the state in a political way.

where we stand

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

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM
The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system.

The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion. To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

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

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

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

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

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

news & reports—politics; the unions

United Technologies Automotive, a second Packard Electric

"MANY OF us are wondering just whose side our union is on".

That was the conclusion of a letter issued last week by more than 20 workers at the United Technologies Automotive (UTA) Plant in Derry.

They were raging at the role of AEEU District Secretary, Uel Adair in trying to pressurise them into accepting a worsening of their conditions.

The workers had already voted *three times* against a new shift system which UTA management wants to impose. The latest vote, on March 2nd, was 443 to 344 against.

But instead of going to management to speak up for union members, Adair went to the local media to denounce the workers as "intransigent" and to accuse them of putting jobs in jeopardy.

The workforce at the Bligh's Lane Plant stands at 1,000 plus, making it easily the biggest industrial employer on the west bank of the Foyle. The plant is particularly important to the Creggan Estate and Bogside areas. The majority female workforce make harnesses for major car manufacturers like Ford and Citroen.

UTA bosses have threatened that if shift work isn't accepted they will transfer 25 percent of current Ford work to Hungary and 25 percent to Portugal, and that no harnesses for a new Ford model to be produced in 1997 would be made in Derry.

In a move strongly reminiscent of Packard, they are using the threat of the dole to browbeat workers into accepting worse conditions.

Adair and other officials managed to get the shop stewards to endorse the bosses' plan.

Split

One steward explained. "We were told by Mr Adair that this was the only way to save jobs and that was our main duty".

Management has tried to split the workers by suggesting that resistance to

the new shifts comes from the mainly male maintenance and craft workers who have conned women workers. This is a patronising insult to the women at UTA.

But, disgracefully, the "official" union line has been to parrot management's propaganda. An anonymous supporter of Mr. Adair lied to the *Derry Journal* that "greedy workers ... on astronomical wages" were rejecting shifts at other workers' expense.

The same "spokesperson"—believed to be a

former shop steward, now a member of management—attacked the local branch of *Socialist Worker* for supporting resistance to the management's shift system.

One woman worker who also has a daughter working at UTA told *Socialist Worker*:

"It is totally untrue that we have been manipulated by anybody. I find it hard enough to work the normal 39 hour week. I have a boy coming in from school at three. If I was put on a 4-12 shift I'd see him less than an hour a day."

"The money they are offering for shifts wouldn't cover a baby-sitter to watch him. So my whole family life would be worsened, and I'd be worse off as well."

Adamant

"A lot of workers are against the shifts but are afraid of questioning what Uel Adair says for fear it would harm them on the job."

"I asked Uel Adair straight out that if we agreed to what the management wanted, would

our jobs be safe, and he said there was no guarantee of that. Why is the union so adamant after three votes against about getting the shifts in when the jobs might go anyway?"

"Why doesn't the union tell the management, look, this has been rejected three times, we are not going back to our members with it again?"

"Why won't they stand up for the people who pay their union dues instead of pushing things on us?"

The workers at United Technologies should stand firm on the shift work option and not give in to the intimidation of multinationals like UTA. If they give in on the shifts what will they be asked to give up next in order to 'save' their jobs?

UTA Europe are worried about the possibility of industrial action during this round of pay negotiations.

Part of the reason they want to move jobs from Derry is to cover themselves in case there's a strike.

Ever since the workers at Molins (now MPE) occupied their factory and saved their jobs, workers in Derry know the multinationals don't hold all the cards.

There are millions of pounds worth of machinery in UTA also. What's needed to protect the jobs is not the grovelling attitude of the union officials but more militancy.

Cinema fight to save jobs

SIX WOMEN cleaners at Strand Multiplex cinema in Derry are picketing to try to save their jobs.

The women, all members of the MSF union, have been working in the cinema since before it even opened.

They've been earning £3.00 an hour. Management sacked them and brought in Grove Contract Cleaners because that will cost them less.

The usual wages for contract cleaners are £2.20 an hour.

The complex is owned by Ward Anderson, a Dublin based multinational.

Local management are blaming the Dublin man-

agement for the decision, while Ward Anderson are saying it's a local decision.

The women say they don't care whose decision it is, they want their jobs back. One of them told *Socialist Worker*

"We cleaned the place again and again to get rid of all the building dirt. And then last week we got these wee notes in our pay packets—'your services are no longer required.' We've been treated like dirt".

Argument

They have mounted a good, militant picket. Takings in the cinema are way down.

Socialists and trade unionists have joined them on

the picket line.

On the weekend of 11/12 March they managed to turn away more than half those who wanted to go to the cinema.

Many people who had been looking forward to a night out were tempted to pass the picket line.

But after a bit of argument, most agreed that the jobs were more important and went off to do something else for the night.

The women agreed that the leaflet which members of the local branch of the *Socialist Worker* had helped them to produce made a big difference in stopping people passing.

In the leaflet, the women said *"The people of Derry have a name for standing up*

for their rights. That's all we're trying to do. We're asking you not to go to the cinema for a few days until we get our jobs back. Two or three nights with empty houses and they'll be forced to give our jobs back".

If the workers who are still inside the cinema, especially the projectionists—one of whom is also in MSF—were to come out in solidarity with the women, they would have their jobs back even quicker.

However, MSF still hasn't made the dispute official and so hasn't called its other members out. If the dispute does drag on, getting the other workers out will be the only way to win.

SWM branch meetings—all welcome

BELFAST CENTRAL
Wednesday 22nd March
Is human nature a barrier to Socialism?
Wednesday 29th March
Why we need a Socialist Paper

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

Thursday 23rd March
Why is half the world starving?
Thursday 30th March
The fight for abortion rights in Ireland

CORK
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in the Anchor Inn, Georges Quay
Wednesday 22nd March

Can workers run society?
Wednesday 29th March
Why we need a Socialist Paper

DERRY
Badgers Bar - 8pm
Tuesday 21st March
Can workers run society?
Tuesday 28th March
Can sexism be defeated?

Animals, Food and Capitalism

DUBLIN DRIMNAGH
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in the Half Way House.
Tuesday 21st March
Animals, Food and Capitalism
Tuesday 28th March
Can workers run society?

Paper

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL
Meets every Thursday, 8pm, Trinity Inn, Pearse St.
Thursday 23rd March
Animals, Food and Capitalism
Thursday 30th March
Can workers run society?

Tuesday 29th March
Can workers run society?

MAYNOOTH
Meets every Thursday in Class Hall B at 6pm.
Thursday 23rd March
The fight for Womens' Rights Today

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

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

Name

Address

Phone

DUBLIN BALLINTEER
Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in Ballinteer House
Wednesday 22nd March
The Revolutionary Ideas of Engels
Wednesday 29th March
Why we need a Socialist Paper

DUBLIN BLANCHARDSTOWN
Meets Tuesdays at 8pm in the Blakestown Community Centre
Tuesday 21st March
Why we need a Socialist Paper
Tuesday 28th March
Animals, Food and Capitalism

DUBLIN CLONDALKIN
Contact 872 2682 for details of venue
Tuesday 21st March

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL
Meets in the Conways Pub, Parnell Street
Wednesday 22nd March
Can workers run society?
Wednesday 29th March
Animals, Food and Capitalism

DUBLIN PHIBSBORO
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in The Snug, Eccles St.
Thursday 23rd March
Can workers run society?
Thursday 30th March
Why we need a Socialist Paper

DUBLIN RATHMINES
Meets in the Junction Pub, Kevin Street/Wexford Street
Wednesday 22nd March
Can workers run society?
Wednesday 29th March
Why we need a Socialist

DUBLIN TALLAGHT
Contact 8722682 for details of venue
Tuesday 28th March
Can workers run society?

DUN LAOGHAIRE
Meets in Smiths Pub, Dun Laoghaire
Tuesday 22nd March
Class and Education

WATERFORD
Meets every Thursday, 8pm ATGWU Hall Keyser St.
Thursday 23rd March
Why we need a socialist paper
Thursday 30th March
Is human nature a barrier to Socialism?

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

send in your reports telephone: (01) 872 2682

Transport workers defend right to strike

THE NATIONAL Rail and Busworkers Union has balloted all their members throughout Irish Rail, Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann in defence of the workers' right to strike.

As we go to press, the vote has not yet been counted but all the signs indicate that there has been a tremendous response in favour of a one-day stoppage if any of the companies use scab labour to try to break a strike.

Bus Eireann used private contractors to break the one-day strike action held throughout the country on 17th February.

Cronins, Kerry Coaches, Ovens Coaches, Barrys of

Cork and Deros of Killarney—were just some of the private-hire operators who scabbed.

Attacked

Gardai who were brought in to assist the scabbing operation in Cork city attacked pickets and badly injured one worker.

The tactics used by the company represent a direct threat to bus and rail workers' right to strike.

The vote for an all-out day's strike

action is vital for workers in Bus Eireann.

This company are notorious for breaking agreements and for bad management.

Many of the drivers have to work a 6-day week and are automatically marked-up for Sunday work.

A Labour Court recommendation on the issue which sparked off the strike in Bus Eireann is expected at the end of the month.

But the Court is unlikely to find in favour of the workers on the question of spread-over payments.

Strike action may

★ THE FOLLOWING lines were written by a Cork busworker who went out on strike on 17th February and fought against scabs and Garda brutality with his fellow union members for workers rights.

*It was on a Friday morning
It was in the time of Spring
A picket it was mounted
Our just rights to bring
For two years we had wasted time
As we spoke unto deaf ears
So once again we went on strike
As often down the years.
The battle that we fought that day
We fought on Merchants Quay
And friends dear friends I do declare
An awful sight to see
Workers punched and battoned down
And kicked by local Garda
Aided and abetted
By that rat we call Fitzie
We're back at work again
Bloody but unbowed
And for our part on Merchants Quay
We are so very proud
For workers rights we will stand up
No matter what they be
We'll raise and shout
All hackers out
And revenge for Merchants Quay*

be needed once other transport workers again and the solidarity expected from win.

Done by Dunnes



Flashback: Workers picket Dunnes Stores in Waterford

"SEVENTY per cent of theft in Dunnes Stores are caused by the workers."

This outrageous statement was made by Sean Cavanagh, the former head of security at Dunnes.

Cavanagh was at a tribunal hearing claiming that he was unfairly dismissed.

His statement revealed the attitude of Dunnes management to their staff.

Over the years, they have been booting workers out of their jobs on the most spurious grounds.

They sacked Danny Sullivan, a night pack worker, for drinking a can of coke. Night workers are allowed to eat and drink from the stock provided they pay for it. Danny Sullivan had intended paying the 50p the following morning.

Karen Geanon, who was the Shop Steward during the Henry Street anti-apartheid strike, was sacked because she was accused of being

sloppy on till duties and was absent through illness for 25 days out of two years.

A woman in Tralee was fired after a customer mistakenly overpaid her bill by £10.00. The worker put the £10.00 aside in the till to have it returned to the customer. But when a manager checked her till and found it £10.00 over, she was accused of trying to pocket it for herself.

Cavanagh's outrageous statement is a complete lie. Floor walkers constantly watch both customers and employees.

Workers are searched on leaving the premises every night.

One employee told Socialist Worker, "We're very angry about these accusations. The Company should be telling the media that it is just not true and deny that we are the thieves."

Working conditions all round in Dunnes are atrocious.

Although individual se-

curity guards get on well with staff, security heads are notoriously ignorant and discourteous towards them.

Workers are not allowed to have long hair, to wear earrings or jewellery and they have to pay for their own skirts, pants and shoes.

Sunday shifts are supposed to be voluntary but staff are frequently rostered without being consulted, and any reluctance to work Sundays is not tolerated. Anyone employed after October 1994, only gets a flat rate for Sunday hours.

Workers new to Dunnes Stores should join the union and campaign for the same Sunday rates as longer term workers.

MANDATE, the union representing Dunnes Stores workers should demand that the company deny the allegations made by Cavanagh and should fight for better wages and conditions from this hard-nosed management.

Premier Dairies

TEN YEARS ago Premier milkmen were faced with the choice of redundancy or buying out their milk rounds and operating as small businessmen.

Many took the latter option but have found their conditions persistently eroded over the years.

Management now want them to sign new contracts with a company called Premier Dairies Distribution Ltd. The new contract represents a massive attack on the milk distributors. It includes:

■ A demand by the Dairy that the distributors insure it against compensation claims brought by the public.

■ A decision that other agents be allowed to operate on existing roads, thus leaving the way open for management to engineer undercutting of existing distributors.

■ A demand that where a distributor decides to sell his round, the Company be given first option to buy at a price set by the Company itself.

Bosses, looking to reduce their workforces, are increasingly attempting to contract out work to employees. The Premier example should serve as a warning to workers who find themselves in this situation.

Such deals offer absolutely no protection from a vicious management.

Instead workers should stand together against any attacks on wages and conditions.

Shannonside Co-op

AT THE beginning of March workers at Shannonside Co Op in County Roscommon received letters from the company telling its workers who had a future in the plant and who would be let go.

The company are looking for selective redundancies in a plant that has suffered badly from the loss of sales to another creamery.

But workers who are willing to accept cutbacks to save jobs believe that any redundancies should be voluntary.

The company are insisting that they have the right to decide who goes and who stays.

Forcing

SIPTU which represents the workers, are angry that these redundancies are being forced on some workers and are trying to get the company into the Labour Court.

So far the company has not agreed to a full court hearing.

Shannonside should not get away with insulting these workers and any forced redundancies should be resisted.

Dublin Corporation

DUBLIN Corporation workers are balloting on a pay deal which has many strings attached.

At the moment a general operative earns £140 per week while a tradesman earns £200.

The new pay deal means Corpo workers must give a lot but still get a pittance back.

Craftworkers will be £6.81 better off before tax. For this princely sum they have to be paid directly through bank accounts and subjected to the usual heavy bank-charges.

They will also lose the "time off" for cashing cheques by 1996.

The Corpo are offering craftworkers a loan totalling £200—on a once off basis. This is the carrot that is being dangled to get them to accept very radical changes in their work practices.

If the deal goes through they will have to agree to:

- Do work that is appropriate to another tradesman
- Be completely flexible and transferable through all departments
- Take on training and use of new technology
- Take on driving duties.

In practice it will mean that

all workers will do whatever it is they are told to do by their supervisors.

General operatives will also lose many of their allowances, including an "eating-on-site" allowance.

One Corpo worker told us of the conditions they enjoy in some places for eating their lunch:

"There is one small gas ring between 15 blokes. On a good day when we have a water supply, we queue for up to 10 minutes to wash our hands before eating. On the bad days we don't wash. There's 15 men piled into an area no bigger than a kitchen in a flat."

G.O.s will also immediately lose their "time off" on Thursdays for cashing cheques.

The Corpo intends to continue and extend the use of private contractors. At the same time they are seriously scaling down their workforce and want to employ more "Scheme" workers on Community Employment schemes.

Corpo workers should resist these plans. Any attack on one department should be fought against by all. A decent pay increase, an end to private hire and bad management should be demanded by the unions.

U.C.D. semesterisation

STUDENTS in UCD have been granted a number of minor concessions regarding semesterisation by the authorities of the college.

UCD President, Art Cosgrove, has announced that while the 1995/96 academic year will begin earlier than usual, there will be no January exams in faculties where they do not already exist.

These concessions are a U-turn on the college's earlier position that they would implement semesterisation regardless of the wishes of students and staff.

Earlier

Students are opposed to semesterisation as it involves starting term up to two weeks earlier, sitting two sets of exams (one just after Christmas) rather than the usual

Summer exams. This will turn the college into a cram school, and destroy college life.

The college's climb-down comes in the wake of the Day of Action by students on February 10th. Up to 80% of the non-academic staff have also voted against semesterisation.

One member of staff told Socialist Worker that he was opposed to the move because,

"It is ill-thought out,

will seriously affect the quality of the education that we can provide for our students, and is an attack on our conditions as it adds at least one working week to the year."

While the concessions on semesterisation are welcome, they are almost meaningless as they do not provide for any student representation on the all-powerful Academic Council.

This is the body which

will make the final decision on semesterisation, which will affect 15,000 students and 2,000 staff.

The college's tactics seem to be to offer the Student's Union the absolute minimum to prevent further action.

Unfortunately, the Students Union shows no sign of stepping up the action—and could fall into the trap set by the authorities unless a more militant strategy is adopted.

ESB workers face attacks

DETAILS OF the ESB's plans for attacks on their workforce are beginning to come out.

Power workers are to take the brunt of the cuts.

The number of general workers in the power stations will be cut by 500 and the number of shift workers will be halved. In all 1,500 jobs are to go in the power stations.

ESB management are also trying to create a completely "flexible" workforce. A new category of "Utility Workers" is to be established which abolishes all demarcation.

Traditional categories of linesmen, electricians and general operatives are to be

"blurred".

Management hope to push the plan through by fostering divisions.

Operatives will be told that there are new "career paths" available to them. But the reality is that all workers could be at the beck and call of management.

No one would have permission to refuse to do any job that management set them.

The ESB management are following the McKensy plan to the letter.

They hope to ram through their plans by May 1st to be able to take on the workforce when electricity usage is at a low point.

Tragically, union leaders

are going along with their approach.

They pretend that both management and workers have a vested interest in making cuts in order to ward off the threat of private competitors.

But ESB workers are the most powerful group of workers in the country.

They should not allow their unions to fall for this blackmail.

Rank and file workers should start calling emergency union meetings to reject this plan.

They should not let their union leaders drag on negotiations that are designed to soften them up for these cuts.

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

Spot the Odd one out:

- Eddie Haughey—head of Norbrook Labs—£739,000
- Roy McNulty—President of Shorts—£395,000
- Patrick Heren—Chairman of NI Electricity—£158,000
- Sir Brian Heron—Lord Chief Justice—£115,000

A Nurse —£10,500

Defend the NHS

PAY THE NURSES

Scrap prescription charges

UNISON Day of Action Thursday 30th March

THE TORIES claim that the NHS is safe in their hands. It is a barefaced lie.

The pathetic 1% pay rise for nurses is just the latest swing of the axe as they try to make profit from our health. In the last month:

■ a 10 year old girl in Britain was refused cancer treatment because it cost too much.

■ a man died after being made to travel 200 miles for an operation he couldn't get in London, due to a lack of beds.

■ prescription charges are going up by three times the rate of inflation.

■ workers in the Belfast City Hospital have been asked to donate towards operating theatre equipment.

The aim of John Major's government is simple. Health—just like water and electricity—is a thing to make money out of. Last year the Royal Group of Hospitals made £1.6 million profit. The Belfast City Hospital made £2.6 million.

This was done by closing nurses accommodation and privatising as many services as they could get away with.

The government attacks are deeply unpopular as most people have used the NHS at some time. Many have experienced the way patients are released too early because of the shortage of beds.

While the Tories slash the NHS, Tony Blair and the Labour Party make no promises to reverse these cuts.

The campaign to give nurses a decent pay rise is the spearhead of a campaign to stop further deterioration of our health services.

At a time when politicians are trying to divide us, Catholic and Protestant workers can unite to deliver solidarity with the nurses.

March 30th is the day of action called by UNISON in support of them. Workplaces across the North should send delegations to hospitals to offer their support.

If the unions called for city wide demonstrations, massive numbers would turn up to show the Tories their anger. Together we can make sure nurses get the pay they deserve.