

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

inside

The scandal of Irish health care
—centre pages

Could Hitler have been stopped?
—page 8

Hospitals starved of cash



■ Hospital workers take action against overcrowding and underfunding



■ Larry Goodman—Beef boss

£103m to bail out beef barons

LARRY Goodman is back in control of the largest beef processing company in Ireland. This is despite huge fraud in his companies.

Not only is Goodman back in charge but workers are to foot the bill for the beef scandals of the past few years.

The European Commission wants the Department of Agriculture to pay out £103 million of tax-payers' money for 'irregularities' in the meat industry. 'Irregularities' is a polite term for ripping off millions of pounds of public money.

Goodman now has the cheek to look for more state aid and EU money to prop up his firms.

The money used to bail out Goodman would be better spent providing hospital beds for every patient who needs them. Nurses in two Dublin hospitals have already been on strike to demand an end to overcrowded wards.

The crisis in health should be regarded as a national emergency with immediate funds being made available to alleviate the problem. For many people this is a matter of life and death as they wait on trolleys for vital operations.

But the misfortunes of Larry Goodman take priority. So much for having Labour and Democratic Left in Government. They have shown nothing but contempt for their own supporters since they went into office.

Maybe a few hours on a stretcher in Beaumont or the Mater Hospital would remind Spring and De Rossa to get their priorities right.

Make beef barons pay EU fine

THE EU are demanding that the Irish government pay them £103 million for fraud in the beef industry. They can only get their money from the taxes of Irish workers.

The reason for the fine is that the Irish Department of Agriculture covered up for the beef barons for years.

Companies like Larry Goodman made their fortune by sending their beef into intervention. They were guaranteed high prices when their meat was stored in huge freezers.

It was a crazy system that was designed to keep the price of food high.

But the beef barons were not satisfied with 'normal' profits. Their

greed knew no end.

■ In Goodman's Rathkeale plant, nearly £1 million worth of beef was robbed from intervention stocks.

■ In other plants the beef barons claimed that they could only get a yield of 68% of meat.

Minimum

This was the bare minimum for EU rules. But in reality, the beef barons were robbing the surplus meat above 68%.

The Department of Agri-

culture had a good idea of what was going on. In 1989, they even issued a letter headed, "Attempted Misappropriation of various pieces of Intervention Boneless Beef by certain meat plants".

But then they turned a blind eye to the fact that almost all meat plants just happened to be declaring the exact minimum yield.

The Irish government under Haughey and Reynolds claimed that it was in the 'national interest' that Goodman become the Mr Big of the meat industry in Europe.

He had paid £50,000 into the Fianna Fail election

fund in 1987 and they were not going to treat him like one poor young man who was jailed for robbing a packet of rashers.

They denounced anyone who attacked him as causing 'national sabotage'.

Fiddles

Now that Haughey and Reynolds have retired to their millionaire homes, they hope Irish workers will pick up the tab for their love affair with the beef barons.

This huge fine could mean that more hospital services will be run down and less money will be made available to people on

social welfare.

It is time to call a stop. If Larry Goodman can put together £40 million to buy back his company, then he can pay the EU bureaucrats for the fiddles his companies were putting over on them.

The politicians claim that there are 'technical difficulties' getting the money back. But in 1990 they recalled the Dail during the summer to rush through a special law to help save Goodman's company.

Why can't they put through a special emergency law now to make him and the other beef barons pay up?

Don't pay the water charges

THE COALITION has decided that people can have their water disconnected—if a court order is awarded.

Their promise that they would 'delimit' the powers of city managers to intimidate people has proved to be a fraud.

Most judges, who come from right wing political backgrounds, will have no difficulty granting court orders. Councils will now use the threat of court costs to intimidate people further.

But anger is growing over the new moves.

Opposed

One quarter of delegates at the Democratic Left conference opposed the move and there was major opposition at the Labour Party conference as well.

In some areas the campaign against water charges is being revived.

In Cork, nearly one hundred people turned up to an enthusiastic meeting to protest at the service charges.

The Labour Party minister is blind to the growing

wave of anger.

He even told his party's conference that, "while the present system has flaws, it enjoys a high level of acceptance".

But if non-payers get well organised they can wipe the smile off Howlin's face.

■ A telephone network should be organised in each area. Non-payers need to keep in contact and let each other know when they get letters warning of court action.

■ Every appearance by a non-payer in the court should be accompanied by demonstrations of local people. Anti-poll tax campaigners in Britain used this strategy successfully.

■ If disconnections are attempted protest pickets should be organised to stop them. In Waterford, local residents have resisted and made it virtually impossible for the council to cut water supplies.

Bonanza for bosses

THE IRISH boss class are raking it in—and there seems to be no limit to their greed.

While they lecture

workers about the need for sacrifice some of them now think that they have a right to earn over a quarter of a million a year.

And all this in a coun-

try where one in three people are living below the poverty line.

One government Minister, Pat Rabbitte, has claimed that the pay given to the AIB directors

is 'indecent'. But Rabbitte is going to do nothing about it.

His government has just cut the tax levy on the banks. This way they stand to make an extra

£35 million in profits in the coming years. So they can give even higher pay increases to the sharks.

Here is the rogues' gallery of greedy bosses.



Jerry Casey: director of Allied Irish Banks who has cost the bank a staggering £1.2 million last year. The same bank is trying to cut back on pay for new workers.



Don Godson: paid £532,000 a year. This gent thinks it is fine for his workers to get a 3% pay rise while he gets a 48% wage lift.



Paddy Galvin: of Waterford Glass got the tidy sum of £298,000. This is the same man who pushed through 10% wage cuts on his workers.



Gerry Murphy: a director of Greencore, the sugar company. He got only a small increase but still came out with £254,000.



Liam Healy: Tony O'Reilly's hatchet man at Independent Newspapers. While his papers attack greedy, irresponsible workers, he pays himself £206,508 a year.

Support for a woman's right to choose

A REPORT just published by the Family Planning Association reveals the reality of abortion in Northern Ireland.

The Abortion Law in Northern Ireland challenges the views of those politicians who say "there is no demand in Northern Ireland for the law on abortion to be changed".

It brings together other studies on the issue which show the real situation.

■ In April 1994, Ulster Marketing Surveys found that 79% of its survey supported legal abortion to pro-

tect the physical and mental health of the woman and 72% did in cases of rape or incest.

■ A survey of GPs found that 43% had a request for abortion in the previous three months and 47% believed the most common solution to an unwanted pregnancy was an abortion in England.

However, 11% of doctors surveyed had seen evidence of illegal abortion.

Every year 1,800 women go to England for abortions.

This figure has remained steady for years, but the FPA consider it an underestimate.

Cost

As the report points out, between the cost of fares, accommodation and the operation itself, a woman needs about £400-£500 to get an abortion in England.

For many working class women, this is an impossible sum to get together at short notice.

Some have little choice but to resort to backstreet abortion.

If abortion were available on the NHS, as it should be, working class women would have the same access to it as do better off women. It's time the law was changed.

Train must wait for late boss

A BELFAST train driver has been suspended just because he complained.

The driver wanted to know why the empty train he was taking to Dublin was held up in Lisburn for 20 minutes.

It became apparent that the train was held up for a boss who wanted a lift.

When the driver complained, Northern Ireland Railways suspended him.

Next time your train is delayed, it's probably because a railway boss is late again!

Anti Nazi League

KEEP IRELAND NAZI FREE



March Saturday 22nd April

Assemble 2.00pm Garden of Remembrance, Parnell Sq, Dublin

Speakers include: Dr Moosajee Bhamjee TD; Gary McFarlane (ANL Britain); Fintan O'Toole (journalist); Mick O'Reilly (ATGWU) and others

ANL, PO Box 4007, Dublin 1

N.I. Agencies spell water privatisation

AT THE start of the month, the Tories revealed that water is to be privatised in the North by the backdoor.

Two years ago, the level of opposition to water privatisation forced them to postpone it to 1997.

But on 4th April, Mayhew announced that the Department of the Environment is to be broken up into a number of agencies.

Agencies are hived-off parts of the public service which have to act like private firms.

NIPSA, which represents workers in the DOE also attacked the announcement and said that 1,000 jobs could be lost as a result of this plan.

The effect of water privatisation on working class families in England has been disastrous, with the average water bill rising by 57% since privatisation.

Thousands of homes have had their water cut off.

In areas where there have been a lot of disconnections, the British Medical Association reports a rise in the number of cases of dysentery and Hepatitis A—diseases whose causes are directly related to dirty water.

Both the ATGWU and NIPSA have threatened industrial action to defeat the Tory plans.

Strike action would force the Tories to back off and would have the overwhelming support of working class people.

What's more, it would bring Protestant and Catholic workers together in a way which the "Peace Process" has signally failed to do.

what we think

Spring plans more sell-outs



Nurses in Dublin's Beaumont hospital taking action against overcrowding and underfunding.

THE LABOUR Party leadership showed a high level of confidence at their party's conference in Limerick. But in reality thousands of working class people are sickened and disillusioned with their sell-outs.

The stage-managed conference, however, masked a real feeling of unease among some party activists who are worried about Labour's drift to the right.

Debates on service charges and housing were quickly shoved aside by the Chairman Jim Kemmy.

One delegate told *Socialist Worker*,

"Instead of having a real debate on water charges we have just listened to lengthy speeches about too many plastic bags in supermarkets.

"If anything was to divide this conference it is the whole question of water charges but they don't want to hear any argument."

Despite all its claims to be a democratic party, the leadership prevented their own delegates voting on the issue.

Neither the Labour Party or the union leaders have any intention of fighting against the ravages of the market on the conditions of workers' lives.

Yet they still try to keep

a voting base among workers.

This why Ruairi Quinn waxed lyrical about Labour as "the party of work, of working people".

Attacks

The Labour leadership hope that they can get away with their attacks if enough people believe

"there is no alternative".

Now that Labour have Democratic Left on side with them in Government, they believe they can gobble up any electoral opposition.

The conference gave its blessing to party leaders to negotiate a Labour/Democratic Left merger.

Most likely the two parties will work out some cosy arrangement.

But Quinn and Spring's ambition can be thwarted if an alternative left wing party is built in

the coming years.

Instead of left TD's and lily-livered trade union leaders, workers need strong organisation.

The struggles ahead on water-charges, the health service, pay and job losses will be fought by organising support and action among workers and not in the Dail.

It is in the course of these struggles that a strong party will be built that can offer a real alternative to the sham of Labour.

Labour's racism

THE LABOUR Party chief whip, Brian Fitzgerald, is joining in the racist clamour against travellers.

He claims that "we have to think about controlling these people's movements—they will have to be registered with a local authority."

But what right do politicians have to control anyone's movements?

Are they trying to get back to a Berlin Wall situation?

The reason for Fitzgerald's outburst is that he is trying to win a racist vote in Navan.

Here a campaign of intimidation has been launched against local travellers.

Regular pickets have been organ-

ised on sites.

Congregations have walked out on priests who condemned the racism.

Fitzgerald's remarks show up the hypocrisy about Labour's concern for equality.

They boast that they got Mervyn Taylor appointed as Minister for Equality—but they tolerate racism against travellers from Emmet Stagg and Brian Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald even had the gall to lament the fact that modern travellers had "no nice painted carts and ponies".

Yeah, and maybe the rest of us should get out our shillelaghs and a few leprechauns, so we could have like nice little Paddies.

The profits of bad blood

DR TERRY Walsh, the chief medical consultant with the Blood Transfusion Services Board, is retiring with a lump sum of £90,000 and a pension of £32,000 a year.

But the scandal is that decisions made while he was in charge of the BTSB have led to the infection of over 1,000 women with Hepatitis C. 30 of these women have been diagnosed as having severe and progressive liver damage.

The women were infected after warnings about the use of some anti-D blood stocks were ignored. These were given to pregnant women to prevent the "blue baby" syndrome.

At the end of the 1980s there were growing numbers of complaints from women who became ill after getting anti-D. But they were ignored.

Then in 1991 samples of the anti-D product were sent to the Middlesex Hospital in Britain. They wrote to the BTSB to warn them that there was a link with hepatitis C.

But nothing was done for the next two years and women continued to be given the contaminated anti-D product.

Blood is often given by donors for genuine reasons of helping others out. But across the world blood donation has become a big

business that is dominated by the profit motive.

■ In 1983, a medical director of a British blood bank was jailed for a criminal conspiracy in selling blood.

■ In France, the director of

the blood banks was jailed for selling haemophiliacs blood which he knew was contaminated with the AIDS virus.

■ In the US, the blood industry distributed Factor 8

to haemophiliacs and hid the fact that it was contaminated with the HIV virus.

Deaths

This product was also distributed in Ireland, causing

NEW LAWS ON YOUNG OFFENDERS:

'Lock up your kids'

THE GOVERNMENT are considering introducing a bill to change the laws governing juvenile offenders. The present law is 87 years old.

But there is nothing progressive about the proposed changes.

■ Children from as young as 10 will still be "criminally responsible" and can be brought before the courts.

■ Family conferences involving the local Gardai are to be set up to deal with "troublesome children".

This move will be totally impractical since most problems with kids involve a breach of trust between the police and the community in the first place.

Under the 1908 Act parents can be fined for the actions of their child. But this is rarely implemented.

Scraping

Parents of underprivileged kids are underprivileged themselves and are usually scraping by on social welfare.

One barrister told *Socialist Worker*:

"The proposed changes would seem to put a lot of emphasis on parental responsibility.

"This is picking up on the Thatcherite notion that children are in trouble on the streets because of bad parents.

"It reinforces the idea that it is not government's responsibility to provide facilities for children and diverts the issue away from the real social and economic problems."

In one sprawling working class estate in Dublin

local people have set up their own initiative to provide some facilities for kids where the government failed. KARTLINE is run by voluntary workers in Clondalkin and gives kids between 10 and 14 years of age the chance to build and run their own go-karts.

"We took this initiative because so many young people were in trouble with the law and there are no state-run facilities out here" according to the group.

So far this project has received only £6,000 from the Department of Social Welfare but it costs £40,000 to run the entire project. The rest is got from charitable fundraising.

Instead of really helping out projects like this, the government's motto is: Blame the parents, change the law but ignore the poverty, unemployment and alienation that both parents and children suffer.

several early deaths.

The Irish Blood Transfusion Service was also involved in selling blood to Sweden and other countries. Some of the members of its board were directors

of companies which made a £1 million a year selling blood to the BTSB.

They took blood from people with jaundice—against all medical practice—because they saw

market opportunities selling blood.

Instead of getting alump sum on retirement, the directors of the BTSB should be investigated for criminal negligence.

Thorp faces legal threat

FOUR PEOPLE from Dundalk have won the right to sue British Nuclear Fuels Limited for the health risk caused by the operation of their THORP plant at Sellafield.

In presenting their case they pointed to the findings of Dr Mary Grehan of Dundalk.

She reported that the level of still-births and miscarriages in her practice was two or three times the national average.

She said that it was "likely that this was caused by the operations of Sellafield."

Weapons

The new THORP reprocessing plant produces plutonium from nuclear waste.

Since 1962 it has been known that British plutonium has been used to make nuclear weapons.

This is the real reason for the British Government's continued

pollution of the Irish Sea, already the most radioactive in the world.

This week marks 25 years since the Nuclear Weapons Non-Proliferation treaty.

The treaty has completely failed to check the number of warheads in the world.

BRITANNIA POISONS THE WAVES

THE BRITISH Government has admitted that they dumped chemical weapons in the Irish Sea in a written reply to a question in the House of Commons.

The disclosure revealed that 330 tons of powdered arsenic are lying in the Beaufort Dyke.

But that is not the full story. Ex-army members report that up to 145,000 tons of chemical weapons were towed out into the Irish Sea and sunk between 40 and 50 years ago.

71,000 Nazi nerve gas bombs were dumped in the Irish Sea between 1954 and 1956.

John de Courcy Ireland, President of CND said:

"The British Government cannot be allowed to get away with this without a real battle for the complete revision of the use of the Sea in any way for dumping.

"Ultimately we will suffocate humanity if we suffocate the sea."

inside the system

Queen gets annoyed

ON HER recent visit to Northern Ireland, Elizabeth Windsor was on a public walkabout when she was filmed by a local camera crew.

THINGS THEY SAY

"I never identified myself as a Marxist"—*Proinsias De Rossa in the Irish Times.*

"When I turn on my milking machine, the lights dim in my house"—*Energy Minister Michael Lowry on what may be the real reason he wants to reorganise the ESB.*

"The ICTU should be strengthened to enable it to wield substantial influence over constituent unions"—*Sylvia Doyle, from the bosses organisation, IBEC*

"There are big industrial relations problems coming: Packard is an indication of it"—*New Labour Court Chairwoman Evelyn Owens*

Come fly with me!

WHO SAID this hodge-podge government is different from the last?

According to figures just released for the last four months, the government jet, *Gulfstream*, has been used 11 times (for official business!) at a cost of £80,000.

Bruton and Spring are the highest fliers.

But even Junior Ministers such as Liz McManus and Eamon Gilmore have managed to wangle a ride abroad.

Makes you wonder how many hospital beds would £80,000 pay for.

One soundman was wearing new red jeans. He noticed Queenie glancing over at him.

Was she attracted to his outfit? Might she be thinking of getting a pair of denims herself?

Not likely! Her private secretary had the audacity to phone the production company later and inform them that the Queen did not agree with such dress-codes and had "requested" that it not happen again.

Cops defend soccer thugs

MANCHESTER United star Eric Cantona has been ordered to do community service because of his attack on a loud-mouthed racist at a recent match.

As usual the tabloid press more than excelled themselves. "He'll Frog Off" declared the *British Daily Star*.

The attitude of the po-

The price of a pint of water

THE MEDIA are whipping up major hysteria about Irish youth taking drugs. But some enterprising capitalists have discovered new ways of making money.

Dublin's Temple of Sound club attracts hundreds every weekend to its raves and many of the revellers take Ecstasy before going to the club.

One of the problems users face is that they expend so much energy on the dance floor from the effects of the drug they are in danger of becoming dehydrated.

Tempted

The safest way to use the drug is to take lots of water.

But the management of

Temple of Sound are charging £3 for small bottles of water.

And in case anyone might feel tempted to get a re-fill from the bathrooms, our clever entrepreneurs have turned off the taps.

Being a 'hip' capitalist always means spotting a keen business opportunity.

Tara mines safety scandal

ON A cold December day in 1993, Navan man Maurice Mehan went to Tara Mines to inspect the area as part of a Health and Safety visit.

He was scaling down loose stones from the roof area in which he was working when the roof came down on top of him.

He sustained a broken neck and serious shoulder injuries.

Last week, after two and a half years of fighting through the courts, Maurice won his case against the mining company. His reward?

Tara were fined a miserly £1,000-and this at a time when companies around the country continue to put workers at risk and workplace deaths are on the increase.

Bigots set up right-wing company

WITH the divorce referendum on the horizon, right-wingers have set up a company called the Anti-Divorce Campaign (ADC) and have registered it with the Companies Office.

There are some familiar names on the board, not least Fianna Failer Des Hanafin, Family Solidarity's Joe McCarroll and John O'Reilly, the guiding light behind several right wing groups.

In the last referendum, this same group of bigots produced posters claiming that "Divorce Hurts Women" and are probably planning the same for the new referendum on November 30th.

But it should come as no surprise to find that there is not a single woman on the board of the Anti-Divorce Campaign.

lice was no better.

They never caught anyone for a string of racist murders in the South London area.

But they were able to pour massive resources into the prosecution of Cantona and his team mate Paul Ince.

They were also well

able to look after Matthew Simmons, the fascist BNP supporter that Cantona attacked.

When Manchester United returned for a match at Crystal Palace, some 20 uniformed police stood guard outside Simmons' door.

Trust the police and the press to cover for Nazis.

Don't snort at gardai

TWO YEARS ago the Labour-Fianna Fail government sneaked through the greatest attack on civil rights in recent years: the Public Order Bill.

People can be jailed for six months for using "offensive" words.

It was supposed to deal

with intimidation on the streets.

But Carlow-man Mark McDonald found otherwise.

He was recently convicted under the new act.

It was claimed that he engaged in offensive conduct in that he snorted at a garda.

Garda Eileen McGrath said she saw and "clearly heard" McDonald snort twice at her.

Socialist Worker welcomes

letters

PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

De Rossa social welfare sell-out

IN ATTEMPTING to defend his indefensible Social Welfare Bill that provides for a miserable 2.5 percent increase in welfare payments from June 1995, Minister De Rossa makes much of a £7 per month increase in Children's Allowance.

He makes little of the inexcusable delay in implementing this inadequate increase.

Wait

Recipients of Child Benefit must wait until September for their money, some eight months on from the Budget announcement. So much for

targetting resources at women and children who suffer the highest

incidence of poverty in Ireland!

Democratic Left, in their cynical attempts to slide past the facts show nothing short of contempt for working-

class people and demonstrate, yet again, how out of touch they are with our real needs and concerns.

MAJELLA DULLY,
DUN LAOGHAIRE

Salt in the wounds

I AM writing out of a deep sense of disgust at the new bus tour service in Belfast.

The tour is meant to ferry tourists through those parts of the city that have born the brunt of the past twenty five years of fighting.

Talk about adding insult to injury.

After all the talk about the benefits that would come from the peace process it seems to me that the only thing on offer for working class people in Belfast is the opportunity to stand under a mural on the Falls or the Shankill

like a cigar store Indian and have your picture taken by bus loads of tourists who want to be able to brag that they have seen the trouble spots.

I suppose this is what they mean when they talk about parity of esteem.

TOMMY SWEENEY,
BELFAST

behind the headlines

by GER TUOHY

Stop the attacks on Travellers

LAST MONTH Emmet Stagg showed the depth of his anti-Traveller racism when he claimed that wife-beating was an intrinsic part of Travellers' way of life. Stagg was Minister for Housing in the last government and was responsible for providing accommodation for Travellers.

The number of vicious attacks against Travellers has soared in the last two years.

Last September, hired thugs from Dublin attacked six families in Bantry.

They used cranes to hoist caravans into the air, one of which burst into flames.

In November, Kathleen and Michael Moorhouse and their twelve children were firebombed out of their home on a site near Bray by locals who had previously threatened to shoot them.

The family was forced into hiding having lost all their possessions.

Lies and myths such as those spouted by Stagg give justification to these naked racist attacks.

Casual

Stagg would not have articulated such casual racism about black people or Jews.

Anti-Traveller prejudice isn't confined to hired thugs but is ingrained in all official bodies of the state.

In January, a Social Welfare official in Bantry discussing people who were available for casual labour said the list should include "the names of the women itinerants ... a day with a pick and a shovel won't knock too much energy out of them".

Gardai and the courts finally succeeded in closing down one of the few pubs in the west of Ireland which served Travellers.

Two years earlier, the same Gardai stood by while locals smashed up the same pub and attacked Travellers with hurleys and sticks and overturned their vans.

Since Stagg's rant there has been no shortage of apologists for his views.

Predictably, *Irish Times* columnist, Kevin Myers who proudly boasts about his own bigotry against black people and single parents, rushed to congratulate Stagg.

Myers sees Travellers as wealthy parasites who are to blame for high levels of crime.

More disappointing are the views of liberals like

Nell McCafferty and Fintan O'Toole who attempt to give intellectual cover to Stagg's comments.

O'Toole argued that every culture has positive and negative aspects and should all be subject to the same unbiased scrutiny.

McCafferty also claims that "Stagg got it nearly right".

Neither can see the wood for the trees.

No culture is independent from the society that it survives under.

Isolation

It is never possible to view Traveller culture in isolation from all the racist attacks perpetrated on it.

Modern society enforces the oppression of women as second-class citizens, so wife-beating is prevalent in all "cultures".

O'Toole and McCafferty are criticising the Travelling community for something that has its root in wider society.

It is not part of "Traveller culture" to have high child mortality rates, to have no sanitation facilities and to live on dangerous sites.

These conditions are forced on them by a racist society.

While on the surface, O'Toole may seem to be engaging in useful theoretical debate, in reality, the logical conclusion of his argument is to blame the greatest victims for their conditions.

McCafferty maintains that Traveller women are defensive about their husbands' violence.

But when she interviewed one woman whose mother had been beaten by her father she got an answer that pinpointed the blame on the wider society.

The woman said "I will not attack my own people.

"We have it hard enough without you stereotyping our men the way whites did with black men ... what would he know, given the way your people treated my father like a beast?"

Instead of attacking Travellers for having an "inferior culture" we need to attack the society which forces them to live in Third World conditions on temporary sites with no toilets or electricity, where child mortality rates are three times higher than the national average and the life expectancy of Traveller women is twelve years less than their settled counterparts.

around the world

FRANCE:

Workers' anger erupts

AS THOUSANDS of people take to the streets in protest over every issue from homelessness to redundancies, the atmosphere surrounding the French elections has changed dramatically.

A few months ago, a straight victory for one or other of the right wing candidates seemed a foregone conclusion.

Now, the escalation of protests has shifted the debate to social issues, putting the right on the defensive.

The rise in class struggle has terrified the bosses of industry.

After weeks of stoppages, workers at Renault downed tools to march on the company headquarters in the Paris suburb of Billancourt.

They pelted the offices with eggs and demanded that management come out and negotiate with them.

For the prime minister and presidential candidate Edouard Balladur, the demo was another political embarrassment.

His main rivals, right-winger Jacques Chirac and the socialist candidate Lionel Jospin, and even Jean Gandois, the head of the bosses' confederation, the CNPF, have all conceded that workers in profitable companies deserve a rise.

Concede

They only concede this in order to head off workers' militancy; on the Renault demonstration, workers stopped traffic on Paris's main ring road and handed out leaflets to drivers, saying

"FF3,700m (around £300m) of profits could give us all an extra £200 each. We are not sparrows. We don't want crumbs."

Renault had hoped to

head off militancy by de-centralising its workforce and selling off the plant at Billancourt, traditionally a symbol of workers' defiance.

Afraid

The new demonstrations show that this strategy has failed.

Balladur's fear is clearly shown in the fact that the notorious CRS, the Parisian riot police, were not mobilised as the Renault workers took to the streets.

Instead, traffic police turned cars away to allow the workers to pass.

Balladur is clearly afraid of sparking off even more confrontation at a time when votes are hanging in the balance.

Yet the political temperature is still rising; pensioners are taking to the streets to demand a raise in pen-



sions.

Museums workers are striking over contract work; even workers at the Longchamps racecourse

have gone on strike.

Thousands are turning out to hear Communist candidate Robert Hue, whose support has risen to 8%.

Not far behind, with 5%, is the Trotskyist Arlette Laguiller, who talks about class struggle and the need for workers' militancy.

Now Chirac has declared support for the demands of the homeless peoples' movement, DAL, reviving a law of 1945 which per-

mits unused public buildings to be requisitioned for the homeless.

Again, this was in the wake of a series of occupations carried out by DAL, where property owned by speculators and big corporations such as Banque de France was simply taken over.

French workers are learning the lesson that militant action can win, as the government is forced into retreat after retreat.

Dreaming

Yet they can expect no real lead from the Communists or Socialists, who are dreaming of new seats in parliament and chasing middle class votes.

While communist candidate Hue can sound militant, his favourite quotes come from de Gaulle rather than Lenin.

French workers need a leadership that is built out class struggle rather than the jaded policies of Stalinism or social democracy.

BURUNDI:

Who is to blame for the killing?

ONE YEAR after a million people were killed in the African state of Rwanda, neighbouring Burundi faces the same tragedy.

The country has already seen several massacres as one ethnic group, encouraged by the western powers, has turned on another.

A charity worker told reporters, "We have seen the most incredible cynicism. This region had armaments poured into it by South

Africa, France and other countries. The same powers pledge aid but do not deliver."

Invaded

Newspapers and television portray the killing and the hatred as the result of irrational tribalism, proof that there is no hope for Africa.

They rarely point out that colonialism has had a stranglehold on central Africa since the late 19th century.

In the 1890s, Burundi and Rwanda were first invaded by Germany and were given to the Belgians by the victorious European powers after the first world war.

To overcome opposition to their conquest, both the Germans and the Belgians fostered divisions between the Tutsi and the Hutu peoples.

The end of colonialism did not sweep away the rivalries and divisions.

In 1960 a moderate

reforming prime minister was elected in Burundi.

The Belgians feared he might become a focus of revolt against the West and had him killed a few months before the country became independent.

They installed a puppet Tutsi ruler. During the next four years five different prime ministers held office and two were assassinated.

In 1971 350,000 people, mainly Hutus, were killed by government repression and tens of

thousands went into exile.

A succession of coups and counter-coups followed.

Coffee

Finally, a highly unstable constitution emerged whereby mainly Hutu parties control most of the government and the Tutsis hold top posts in the army.

Recent falls in the world price of coffee have devastated the region.

As income collapsed, desperate people, whipped up by nationalist politicians, turned increasingly on one another.

A small group of local rich have cynically manipulated the situation to maintain their grip on power.

Western governments and multinationals have bled Africa dry.

So long as their power remains unchallenged, tragedies like Rwanda and Burundi will continue to happen.

BRITAIN:

Is Labour going to be like the Tories?

JOHN MAJOR's Conservative government is one of the most unpopular in British history. The Tories were nearly wiped out in local elections in Scotland, winning only 11% of the vote.

The BBC has predicted that they will do little better in England and Wales in May, probably losing around 1,500 council seats.

There are plenty of reasons for the bitterness. The National Health Service, which once offered one of the best public health systems in the world, is in tatters.

The gas and electricity industries have all been privatised. They now pay their bosses more than £500,000 a year while they charge ordinary people more and more.

No wonder the Labour Party under Tony Blair is riding high. Four years ago commentators were claiming that there could

never be a majority Labour government in Britain again.

Too many workers were supposed to own their homes, have shares and enjoy living in the 'prosperous' South of England.

It was nonsense. The Tories set out to turn Britain into a haven for cheap labour in Europe.

Now the hatred against them is giving Blair the prospect of power.

But what sort of government would the new Labour offer?

Blair is already making sure he is trusted by the rich in British society.

The *Financial Times* has reported that he launched a "charm offensive" to win over the bosses and that he has regular breakfasts

with the director general of the CBI, the employers organisation.

He has refused to commit Labour to a minimum wage—although half a million people in Britain today are paid less than £2.50 an hour.

Lock Up

He refused to oppose the Criminal Justice Act which gave the police new powers to lock up protesters.

Now he is taking his crusade for 'modernisation' into the Labour Party itself by launching a battle to drop Clause Four of its constitution.

Clause Four was originally drafted by two moderate socialists who wanted to give the party a radical image.

It committed Labour to common ownership of industry and services.



Blair: Fighting to drop Clause Four

Behind the battle over words is a more serious aim.

Blair wants to turn the Labour Party into a US style Democratic Party which has few links with organised workers and has no commitment to collective values or social change.

Many Labour supporters are deeply suspicious of Blair.

Speakers such as Arthur Scargill have drawn large crowds in debates about Clause Four around Britain.

Tens of thousands of people have also begun to shift left.

The *Economist* recently noted that privatisation was invented in Britain—but it is now more unpopular there than in any other country in the world.

Confidence

85% of people, for example, want their water supplies brought back into public ownership.

But while the mood has changed, workers have not fully regained their confidence in their own ability to take on the bosses.

Blair is rising in the polls—but many already sense that he will not undo the damage of the Tories.

If that mood shifts into a rise in workers' struggles between now and the General Election, Blair could find himself in deep trouble.

North and South, support

The scandal of health care

IRELAND'S health service is in a state of near crisis. Long waiting lists are adding to suffering and pain. Throughout the North and South, nurses have been taking action to highlight their grievances. Here *Socialist Worker* reports on what is going wrong.

ANNE MARIE McHale (39) feels she is lucky just to be alive.

She suffers from a rare genetic muscle disorder and gets a good insight into the health service.

"We didn't start noticing it until I was in my teens.

"And the hospitals couldn't recognise what it was. I was constantly falling, I broke my leg, arm, four toes, four ribs and all my teeth.

"Because of the conditions in hospitals, you might be left waiting for hours. I was left waiting for attention in the Meath for five hours—and then they said there was no beds. I was shifted to Baggot St. and then the Adelaide. There was still no bed and I was left waiting all day. It was terrible, as the disease affects my kidneys," Anne Marie told *Socialist Worker*.

In the end, her sister had to ring the media on the case. Within the hour, Anne Marie had a bed.

Belittle

"It's terrible to have to belittle yourself. A hospital bed should be a basic right but it's not. You're treated like a lump of meat. If they take your dignity, they take your life."

Theresa Tucker, a nurse who took part in the 12 hour stoppage at Dublin's Beaumont hospital, is also concerned about the problem.

"Patients have to wait on hard trolleys for up to three days sometimes. It is acutely uncomfortable. Nurses are under a great deal of stress. We have no control over the beds which adds to our frustration and stress. There is no space for incoming patients and doctors have nowhere to examine their patients".

There has been a rise in emergency admissions to Beaumont. As a result 600 people who were on the waiting list for non-emergency work have had their operations cancelled.

Sue Burrows, a casualty nurse and SIPTU shop steward said that some mornings there are up to 25 people waiting for beds.

"This problem has been going on for 4 years now. We have been having talks with the management but so far nothing has been resolved.

"There are not enough beds in the catchment area. People can't go to operating theatre on time and



there are no facilities while they are in the waiting room".

The problem of the health service extends well beyond the hospitals. Anne Marie describes her experience of looking for a wheelchair.

"They wouldn't give me an automatic wheelchair, even though I've only one lung. I staged a sit-in at the health board I said I'd break every window in the building if they didn't. They gave in but I still had to pay for half the cost of the wheelchair"

Her friend Mary adds that even though the nurses were very kind, she was told there is a shortage of staff in the hospitals. Mary herself was waiting for a bed for eight months.

Stronger

"It always hits on working class people more than anybody else. I was told if I had money, I would have an appointment the next week," she said.

The nurses' case has never been stronger. Even right-wing papers such as the *Irish Independent* have to admit that nurses are 'overstretched and understaffed' and that Ireland is in the grip of a medical crisis in which financial cut-backs in hospitals have meant

fewer beds for patients and more pressure for staff.

All too frequently, nurses have to engage in crisis care.

It won't be long before pressure of work forces mistakes, with possibly fatal results. Not only are nurses badly paid, but they are fearful of the consequences, especially for patients.

And it's not just in Dublin that hospitals are underfunded, in Enniscorthy, in St. Josephs, there

are four nurses caring for 200 people every night of the year.

In Galway's UCH hospital, sheer demand and overcrowding forced the cancellation of over 2,000 'booked-in operations' in the past year alone.

"Pain doesn't matter anymore in a system that is grossly overloaded," says the Galway Response Group. In an overcrowded casualty, the staff pray there won't be a major accident.

The Tories in havoc

IN THE North, nurses are up in arms over the pay insult they have been offered by the Tories.

A 1% pay rise in the North means just £2.15 extra a week for each nurse. When they held a Day of Action on March 30th they got tremendous support from the general public.

Everyone knows that the Tories are trying to run down the NHS and many see the nurses as its true defenders.

A Belfast nurse said that with the "market-led reforms" people are now being told they cannot have care.

"Money just isn't available in the NHS. But if you go pri-

vate, you have no problem," she said.

"More and more hospital beds are being closed down and they're not employing nurses, especially full-time ones."

Inspired

The main system of training nurses is the Tory inspired 'Project 2000'. This involves taking nurses off the ward in favour of classroom-based training. It has failed miserably.

"Some years ago, student nurses used to be left alone on wards, and that wasn't good. But they were an extra staff and provided care. Not anymore. Project 2000 is cheaper but not a better quality of training," said a De Montfort nurse.

The Tories are also trying to train nurses in specific j-

Socialism is for your health

WORKERS DIE younger and experience more health than professional people. Under capitalism class is literally a life and death issue.

In Ireland, the death rate for professionals in the 55-64 age group is 13 per 1,000. But for unskilled manual workers it is 32 per 1,000.

Only a socialist society can remove all the evils of an unhealthy system and give every person a chance to live to the full.

A socialist society will change the pattern of health through a number of similar measures.

Improve

It would improve the diet of the great majority of people.

The poor usually spend a higher proportion of their income on food than the rich.

Yet they purchase less fresh vegetables and brown bread simply because fresh nutritious food is more expensive to buy.

A society under workers' control would cut the rate of accidents and disease that arise from work.

Stringent safety precautions

Private practice worsens crisis

THE CRISIS in the health service is made worse by the way the consultants try to maintain a system of private medicine.

Consultants in hospitals form a large elite group inside the health service. These people can earn over one third of their salary again by servicing private patients in public hospitals. They can make anything from £60,000 to £250,000 in a year.

The opening of the new Beaumont Hospital was held

up for years because consultants were demanding a greater complement of beds for their private practices.

But nurses and junior doctors in hospitals have complained that consultants often use up beds over and above their allocation for their private use.

One junior doctor told *Socialist Worker* that it is common practice for consultants to admit their private patients into beds which are left empty for emergency cases.

"They spend a lot of time playing games with beds.

When they are thinking about discharging a patient they are also thinking about admitting another for their own specialised practice."

Junior doctors, on the other hand, are over-worked. Their minimum working week is 65 hours. Their salary is £21,000 a year. Of the 3,500 doctors in our hospitals only 1,000 have permanent jobs.

Most doctors trained in Irish hospitals will end up emigrating. Yet our hospitals have only half of the numbers of doctors that are actually needed.

Port the nurses

of Irish

Care

ies wreak

you have no problems," said. More and more hospital are being closed down they're not employing especially full-time

Inspired

The main system of training nurses is the Tory inspired 'Project 2000'. This involves taking nurses off the wards in favour of classroom-based training. It has failed miserably. Some years ago, student nurses used to be left alone on wards, and that wasn't good. They were an extra staff provided care. Not any more. Project 2000 is a disaster but not a better quality of training," said a Derry nurse. The Tories are also trying to train nurses in specific jobs

at the beginning and not give them an overall course - leaving nurses less flexible. A lot of nurses are now unemployed.

Some are utterly demoralised with the state of the NHS at the moment. Two nurses on the recent UNISON Day of Action said that if they had the choice of doing nursing again, they wouldn't, because of the conditions they have to work under.

"We never get away from work when we're supposed to and are normally asked to do extra shifts. You feel you are letting other nurses down if you go. We need to fight this climate which is not created by us."

Doctors and secretaries are hoping the nurses smash the 1% pay offer. What is needed now is solidarity between all workers in the health service to make sure of this.

ism is good health

experience more ill people. Under capitalism, this is the issue.

Professionals in the 55-64 age group and manual workers it is killed. Only a socialist society could move all the evils of an unfair health system and give everyone a chance to live life to the full. A socialist society would change the pattern of health measures through a number of simple

Improve the diet of people. The great majority spend a far higher proportion of their income on food than the rich. Yet they purchase less fruit, vegetables and brown bread because of their nutritional needs. A society under workers' control would cut the rise of accidents and disease that arise from Stringent safety precaution

would be employed on building sites.

Dangerous material such as asbestos would be immediately abolished. This would prevent a situation where 50 people died in workplace accidents last year -- and countless more had their health damaged.

It would make health care freely available to all. Under capitalism those with money can pay to jump ahead of queues and get better treatment.

Under socialism society as a whole would pay for health care through its general labour and everyone would have fair access.

It would establish a major preventative health care programme. Regular breast scans would be encouraged to detect cancer.

Children's teeth would be examined routinely and treated in time to prevent problems later in life.

All of these measures could happen if resources were not squandered. In the long run, they would mean a cheaper and more efficient health service.

How nurses can win



THE INDUSTRIAL action of nurses across Ireland is fantastic.

Once moderate organisations like the Irish Nurses Organisation, which used to ban strike action, have officially backed their members.

They are not just fighting for themselves—they are standing up for a decent health service in this country.

In the South the main issue is overcrowding in the hospitals and the stress it places on nurses. In the North, the main issue is the low pay of nurses. In both cases the problem results from right wing government policies which cut back on health spending in order to subsidise big business.

The actions that have already taken place are part of a longer campaign. This action should now be stepped up.

As one nurse who went on strike at Beaumont explained, "We can't solve this on our own. Management must be forced to act and if it takes public pressure and more action in our hospitals, we are determined to make the Department of Health see sense."

The action of the nurses on both sides of the border can win if a number of steps are taken:

■ **Strengthen our Unions.** Everyone should be recruited into one of the hospital unions. In every ward there should be a union rep. If there is not already one, they should be elected on the basis of pursuing these campaigns.

■ **Organise joint union committees.** Management always tries to weaken hospital workers by creating divisions between nurses, junior doctors and domestic staff. Joint union rep meetings should be established to overcome these divisions.

■ **Build public protests.** Thousands of people would come out on the streets in support of the nurses. But the nurses union need to make an official call for Days of Protest.

■ **Extend the strike action:** Strike action with emergency cover could massively increase pressure on the governments and help to mobilise other workers.

What you can do

■ Invite a speaker from the Irish Nurses Organisation, SIPTU, or UNISON to present their case.

■ Raise resolutions in your union and community groups to support the nurses' action. Call for a Day of Protest to highlight the crisis in the health service.

■ If nurses take action in your area, organise a delegation from your workplace to visit them to offer support.

what do socialists say?

Why do trade union leaders sell out?

by DAVE McDONAGH

WHY DO trade union leaders sell out? Is it because they simply lack backbone or because their six-figure salaries put them out of touch with their members?

There is plenty of truth in both these reasons. The top officials clearly do not have the bottle for a real fight.

And they certainly have a lifestyle much closer to that enjoyed by company managers than that of workers.

Billy Atley, for example, earns a salary of over £70,000.

But the real reason for their behaviour lies deeper than this. It is rooted in the role trade unions play under capitalism.

Their role is to defend workers within the framework of capitalism not to get rid of the system.

The unions do not exist to end exploitation but to regulate it.

Divisions

Because the unions work within the laws of the system, they graft themselves onto that system and reflect its divisions.

They do not unite all workers across society but divide them up along lines of industry or job description.

Teachers and train drivers are in different unions as are civil servants and factory workers.

Even within a general union like SIPTU 'blue collar' workers are organised in separate branches or sections from 'white collar' workers.

Trade union leaders also see themselves as profes-

sional negotiators. They believe that their 'negotiating skills' are what bring results for workers.

In fact the whole trade union bureaucracy balances between the capitalist class and the working class.

This means that they will always be a conservative layer.

But the union leaders are subject to pressures from above and below.

If the employers have the upper hand the bureaucrats will do everything to keep their members under control.

But if workers want to fight the leaders may be forced into calling action.

After all they do not want to lose all credibility. But they will seek to limit the action and bring it back into the safe channels of 'proper procedure'.

Socialists will always support a left-wing official in a vote against a right-winger.

But even the left officials sell out in the end. In Packard, the left wing official Mick O Reilly made the same recommendation as the SIPTU official for workers to accept longer hours.

The reason they behave like this is that they too are subject to the same pressures as right wing officials.

They spend their life negotiating and do not have to live under the conditions they recommend.

Socialists are with the union leaders when they call for a fight but we oppose them when they ditch the rank and file.

We want to organise the best fighters inside the unions to push beyond the limits set by the officials.

We also stand for democracy inside the labour movement.

Full time officials should be on the same wages as workers they represent and should be subject to election and automatic recall as is the case with most shop stewards.

But reforms of the union structures are not enough to bring change. You also need to argue politically inside the unions.

Market

The role of trade union leaders is reflected in their politics.

They accept the Labour Party's notion that capitalism can only be reformed piecemeal and that the market is here to stay whether we like it or not.

Those ideas influence a whole layer of shop stewards below the bureaucrats which can lead them to accept redundancies and other concessions as the only alternative.

Socialists argue that a revolution is needed to end capitalism - that means workers pushing from below to overcome the limits placed by their official leaders.

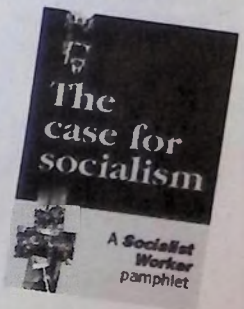
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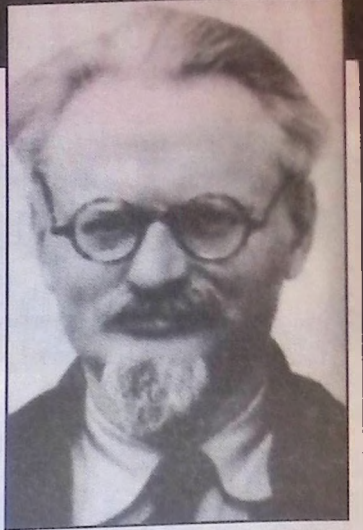


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TROTSKY'S STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM

Could Hitler have been stopped?

by
Catherine
Curran



IN 1928, Germany was a country that had one of the strongest levels of working class organisation in the world.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD) had the allegiance of 1,021,000 members. The Communist Party, though much smaller in influence than the SPD, still had a membership of 130,000. The Nazis were tiny, receiving a mere 2.5 per cent of the popular vote.

Yet five years later in 1933, the situation had been completely overturned.

In July 1932, the Nazi party polled 13.7 million votes. and on 30 January 1933, Hitler assumed the Chancellorship of Prussia. Within days the mass arrest of communists began.

In the following months, the full assault of the Nazis on the working class got underway. Social democratic rallies were broken up, printing plants and campaign headquarters were wrecked, and opponents were beaten and killed.

The Nazi leader, Goering, warned socialists that "my fist will grasp your necks".

Thousands were sent to the concentration camps.

The rest were driven underground, while the workers who looked to them for leadership were subjected to supervision by block wardens and street monitors. Workplaces were infiltrated by Nazi cells and by the Nazi police.

On 7 December 1933, German trade unions were formally dissolved and replaced with the Nazi German Labour Front.

Every independent workers' organisation had been flattened without organised resistance in the space of a few months.

The way was clear for the attacks on Jews, gypsies, and all those who did not fall into the category of "master race".

The leaders of the massive German workers' organisations surrendered without a fight, though the lives of millions hung in the balance.

BUT throughout this whole period there was one voice who consistently warned against the danger of fascism and argued for a way of stopping it coming to power.

That voice belonged to Leon Trotsky, exiled from the Soviet Union and isolated on the island of Prinkipo in Turkey.

He had only a tiny number of supporters in Germany but his analysis of the rise of fascism there remains unparalleled.

In his pamphlet, entitled *Germany: The Key to the International Situation*, written in November 1931, Trotsky spelled out clearly the dangers of fascism.

He predicted that the Nazis would be far worse than even the Italian fas-



Above: A Jewish family is driven out of their home watched by grinning Nazis. Top right: Trotsky: Argued for unity against the Nazis

cists.

"Considering the far greater maturity and acuteness of the social contradictions in Germany, the hellish work of Italian fascism would probably appear as a pale and almost humane experiment in comparison with the work of the German National Socialists"

TROTSKY argued that fascism grew out of the crisis in capitalist society.

Big business found that parliament no longer served their needs because they needed to smash workers' organisation.

This meant ruling in a very different way to the past.

They had to mobilise a mass movement that would serve their ends.

Trotsky argued that the base for a mass fascist movement was among the small producers, and the lower middle classes.

These groups had been bankrupted by the Wall Street Crash and were thrown onto the street.

They had neither the wealth of big business nor the organisation of the trade unions to protect themselves from disaster.

The Nazis had to mobilise these groups on the streets because that is where they could build up a feeling of collective organisation and strength.

They had to, in the words of Hitler, "burn into their souls the belief that though they were little men—

they were part of a great dragon."

They would then be used as a battering ram to destroy workers' organisations.

In *What Next*, written in 1932, Trotsky spelled out the historical function of fascism:

"It raises to their feet those classes that are immediately above the proletariat and that are ever in dread of being forced down into its ranks; it organises and militarises them at the expense of finance capital, and it directs them to the elimination of the proletarian organisations, from the most revolutionary to the most conservative"

THE adherence of the middle class to fascism was not inevitable.

It could be won to socialism, but only if the leadership of the workers' movement was strong enough to provide a revolutionary alternative.

This had not been done, either by the leaders of the SPD, or by the leaders of the KPD.

The SPD backed the right wing Hindenburg for German President in 1932 even though he was against using any force against the Nazis. They offered no hope for an end to the misery of capitalism.

The Communist Party followed Stalin's orders after he declared a "left turn" in 1928.

They argued that the main enemy was the social democrats. They set up breakaway unions and equated the

social democrats with the fascists themselves. In Prussia, they even lined up with the Nazis to get an SPD local government thrown out of office.

These ultra left tactics separated the militants in the Communist Party from the mass of workers in the SPD, and reduced any possible influence they might have had with them.

For Trotsky, this policy was disastrous, and history has proved him correct.

While he recognised that the leadership of the SPD was treacherous and cowardly, he realised that the Nazis in power would destroy all the organisations, including those of the SPD.

"Fascism is not merely a system of reprisals, of brutal force and of police terror.

"Fascism is a particular governmental system based on the uprooting of all elements of proletarian democracy within bourgeois society..

"To this end...it is necessary to smash all independent and voluntary organisations, to demolish all the defensive bulwarks of the proletariat, and to uproot whatever has been achieved during three quarters of a century by the Social Democracy and the Trade Unions"

FOR Trotsky, it was vital that communists and social democrats worked together in a united front against fascism.

The communists should have taken

a lead in calling on the SPD leaders to fight alongside them. This did not mean giving up on criticism of their policies. It simply meant recognising that they had a common interest in fighting the main enemy, fascism.

If the communists had pushed for a united fight against fascism, they could have shown that their tactics were better.

The SPD leadership told their members to "Hold fast to legality at all costs".

They had a big defence organisation the *Reichsbanner* but they refused to use it to smash Nazi marches.

Trotsky argued for workers' self defence organisations.

These were not to be built around small numbers of committed left wingers but should have involved thousands of workers.

And it could have been done.

By 1932, many in the *Reichsbanner* were looking for a more militant fighting strategy than their leaders.

But when they looked to the Communist Party they found they were denounced for being "social fascists".

Tragically, Trotsky remained a voice in the wilderness, while the leadership of the strongest working class movement in the world calmly awaited its own downfall.

But his writings are still relevant today.

They equip anyone who hates the fascists with ideas on how they can be beaten this time. That is why they are a vital part of our arsenal.

COMMENT

Fishy reasons for war

SPAIN AND Canada are going through all the motions of a war over fishing rights.

The Canadian authorities have captured Spanish boats and paraded their nets for the press like scalps. Spanish fishers have been described as "disgusting, reprehensible robbers of mankind" by the *Toronto Sun*.

In response, Spain has sent two navy patrol boats to protect its fleet and a frigate is standing by. At the same time Canadian visitors to Spain are now being told that they have to apply for special visas.

The heat and venom of the argument is pure hypocrisy on both sides. The Irish press tries to claim that Canada is right because it champions conservation against a Spanish fleet bent on robbery.

Wiped Out

But the Canadian Minister for Fisheries and Oceans, Brian Tobin, recently admitted that their fleets have wiped out Northern Cod through over-fishing.

Fish stocks are being devastated by intensive competition between the world's fleets. Fishing today is a multi-million pound business. Ships are equipped with the most up to date radar equipment to track the fish.

Because capitalists have invested so heavily in the fleet, they are determined to reap as much profit in the shortest possible time.

The ruthless competition between them now means that almost all the world's oceans are being overfished. Common varieties like cod are facing extinction.

Even in the least damaged sea, the East Pacific, 30 percent of fish have been depleted.

Matters are made worse by the way in which the race to amass large hauls of fish leads to huge waste. Of the 82.5 million tons landed last year, over 20 tons were discarded.

The particular dispute between Canada and Spain tells the whole story. In an effort to preserve stocks of turbot, as far back as 1986 the North Atlantic Fisheries

Organisation agreed to a quota of 26,000 tons. The EC decided to ignore this, and actually fished 172,000 tons. By 1991 the catch had fallen to 56,000 tons and the decline has continued.

A Scientific Council meeting in 1994 concluded that as a result of turbot being "exploited well above sustainable levels" there had been a "significant decline in abundance". The mass of turbot is estimated to have fallen by 60 percent in just three years—1991 to 1994.

Blaming

The reality of the dispute is that both Canadian and Spanish fishing fleets, having contributed to the destruction of the world's fish stocks, are now blaming each other as they fight over the shrinking catch. They ignore all the treaties about conservation because they are driven by greed and profit.

The excitement generated by the controversy comes at a useful time for both governments.

Before the fishing wars, the Liberal Canadian government was massively unpopular for introducing savage cuts to the welfare system. Millionaire Finance Minister Paul Martin announced that 45,000 public sector jobs were to go. Seizing Spanish trawlers has helped deflect anger from the Government.

Similarly in Spain, a government wracked by allegations of corruption has been eager to try and whip up strong nationalist feelings over the capture of trawlers. Fortunately most people are sceptical about the levels of government bluster. People are far more concerned about saving the world's stock of fish.

And it could be done. Modern technology means that precise estimates of shoals of fish can be made.

There is enough knowledge to know just how much fishing of certain stocks should be permitted in order to give them a chance to revive.

For this to really work it would need an economy based on planning and co-operation rather than one based on greed and profit.

— CONOR KOSTICK

BOOK

The reality of racism in Ireland

Review by
Mick Doyle

RACISM and Intolerance in Ireland, a study produced by the National Youth Council of Ireland, destroys the myth that our society is free of prejudice.

Apart from the age-old bigotry the travelling community have been subjected to for years, bigotry towards other minorities is commonplace; Africans, Asians, Jews and gays all suffer varying degrees of discrimination.

It ranges from exclusion in housing to physical violence.

All capitalist societies breed racism and Ireland is no exception.

But the report points to some specific issues that have encouraged Irish racism.

The Catholic Church's portrayal of victims of famine and war as "Black babies" encouraged the notion

that Africans, Asians and others were helpless and inferior.

Belief

The study points out: "there is still a belief underlying most Irish overseas development aid activities that we are not only better off but also more knowledgeable and intellectually or academically superior to

people in third world countries"

Mary Robinson, for example, recently claimed that Somalis were a cultured people—because they could speak English!

The report also shows how there has been a long history of racism against Jewish people in Ireland.

At an international conference in France in 1938, the Irish government claimed that it could not accept Jewish victims of the Nazis because of its 'economic problems'.

But the real reason was later revealed. "It is the policy of the Department of Justice to restrict the immigration of Jews.

"As Jews do not become

assimilated with the native population, like other immigrants, there is a danger that any big increase in their numbers might create a social problem".

Asylum

If the tiny numbers of Vietnamese and Bosnian refugees allowed into this country in recent years are anything to go by it would seem that modern Irish governments feel the same way about them as their predecessors felt about Jews.

What about those who do get to stay here? Asylum seekers, the few that actually manage to stay without being locked up, are constantly asked for documen-

tation, asked unnecessary questions and are discriminated against in social welfare.

They still have to report to an Aliens Office!

One weakness of the report is that it praises some government ministers.

But shortly after the NYC's study praised Stagg for his stance on discrimination against Travellers, he revealed how he really felt.

This begs the question, how can a government that slips so easily into racist rhetoric be trusted to challenge racist ideas?

The answer is it can't.

It will fall to socialists and organisations like the Anti-Nazi League to attack the filth of racism.

The Madness of King George

Reviewed by
Cathy Bergin



THE FIRST question I asked was: "Why did they pick on him?"

I was under the impression that every member of

the British royal family suffers from some form of mental illness.

But to be fair, this guy is barking.

When the film opens, we

see a happily married man, well, reasonably happily married, with a feel for the common folk and an elephantine memory.

The only hint of what's

to come is the king's inability to come to terms with the fact that the former American colonies are now independent of his benevolent rule.

This plays on his mind until he wakes up one morning in the wee hours—and he's mad.

Now his true nature is revealed.

He takes to running across fields, swiping at thistles with a stick in the pretence that they're American colonists; playing cricket, conducting orchestras and feeling up the female members of his court.

He carries on much like this until some members of parliament move to have him deposed and the Prince of Wales put on the throne.

His "friends" introduce him to a doctor with some

revolutionary methods for dealing with mental illness—strapping him to a chair whenever he slips up, "blistering" his back and buttocks, and the doctor's following him around with his evil eye.

His servants get to have a bit of fun too.

Up until this they couldn't even look the king in the face, now they get him to give them piggy-backs and slide down banisters.

Of course when he pulls through his servants get the boot. And he does pull through.

The Prince of Wales is thwarted and the king's loyal subjects rejoice.

All in all it's an impressive looking film, and it is entertaining without much political or historical meat.

And we could do without the impression at the end that the country, no, half the world, couldn't manage without a monarch.

BOOK

The politics of AIDS

Roisin Ryder reviews
Deep End by Ger Philpott, Poolbeg Press £5.99

IN 1983 Ger Philpott nursed his lover Paul who died of AIDS.

Some knowledge of the disease had filtered through to Ireland, but Ger's lover died, as far as everyone was concerned, of cancer.

In a very moving and angry book, Philpott chronicles his transition from dealing with personal tragedy to becoming political. He worked as a leading gay activist in AIDSWISE.

The book shows the conservatism and hypocrisy in Irish society and the pathetic attempts by successive Governments to deal with the AIDS crisis.

At every turn, it was left to individuals and groups of activists to lobby and push the Health Boards and various Health Ministers.

Dr. Jimmy Walsh, National Aids Coordinator maintained that the Government had been dealing with AIDS since 1982. In reality the first pathetic attempt by the Government to address the crisis was in 1990.

When the author asked why the Government hadn't taken any action and possibly saved lives he was told that homosexual activity was against the law and "we can't be seen to encourage illegal sexual activity".

In a 2 year period Philpott attended 22 funerals of friends who died of AIDS. His anger at the system pours out of every page.

Because of his outspokenness, AIDSWISE in 1992 didn't receive promised

funding from the Department of Health.

The book ends with the stark reality of services being cut back and what seems like a cover-up by the Government regarding the extent of the crisis.

Monthly figures for HIV sufferers are not published anymore.

A medical expert believes that there are 2,000 more HIV positive people than indicated by the figures and that this is increasing by 8% each year.

There is only one consultant, Dr. Fiona Mulcahy, employed by the Eastern Health Board in charge of all AIDS services.

In the book Philpott puts much of the Governments inactivity down to anti-gay prejudice.

However, the attitude of the Government to the spread of AIDS can't be

divorced from its general contempt for the poor.

In a society driven by the push for profits it is inevitable that the sick, the elderly, the homeless and people who are HIV positive are all seen as burdens. The Government continually doles out

the bare minimum amount of support and finance to keep the lid on the problems.

The solution lies in working class people uniting to give full backing to campaigns like the nurses are now waging for a decent health service

PREVIEW

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui is a great play by the German socialist, Bertolt Brecht. It is about a small time gangster determined to make it big in Chicago.

Written in 1941, it draws parallels with the way Hitler came to power. It shows how corrupt, right wing politicians and businessmen helped him on the way.

But it is also a warning for the future. With the Nazis trying to revive in Europe, this play is well worth seeing.

It runs from April 20th to April 29th at the City Arts Centre in Dublin. Tickets are £6 and £4 for concessions.



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

ESB: Anger boils over at Moneypoint

WORKERS at the ESB Moneypoint power station in Co. Clare held two unofficial strikes in the last week of March.

One of the stoppages was over the use of contractors to carry out the simple function of stripping lagging.

Arrive

Anger boiled when four workers were expected to wait for up to ten hours for a contractor to arrive from Dundalk and do their work which would have taken them just one hour.

"The McKinsey report claims the stations are overstaffed. Yet they bring in the cheaper labour of contractors at the expense of permanent jobs", a shop steward told *Socialist Worker*.

The company already increases the staffing levels by 50% every year by employing temporary workers for six months.

And yet they claim that jobs have to go.

Work that should be done by the existing general operatives is continually being contracted out—they even bring contractors up from Cork to cut the grass.

McKinsey's claims of over-staffing are lies.

The bosses are clearing the way for cheap, temporary labour.

The stoppage could be the sign of a real revolt against ESB management plans to push through redundancies, create a new grade of 'utility worker' who is always at their beck and call, and use more contract staff.

Lowry, The Minister for Energy, has made it clear

that the changes in the ESB will be forced through by the Government. But he is just repeating the message of successive ministers, from the PD's right through to Labour and Fine Gael.

The government's big stick is the threat of privatisation.

In every industry they use the threat of new competition to get changes.

Blackmail

The more they succeed in attacking workers conditions, the easier it is to involve private investors who want a quick buck.

The action of the workers at Moneypoint shows that there are many workers who will not stand for blackmail.

Electricity prices in Ireland are the cheapest in Europe.



ESB workers have the power to beat privatisation

The ESB also provides a social service which private companies would ignore.

"Privatisation will mean that electricity supply to a cottage in Connemara would not be worthwhile

but loads of money will be made from supplying factories and charging higher prices to ordinary householders"—a Moneypoint shop steward told Socialist Worker.

"The experience of privatisation in Britain shows that three companies can hold a monopoly on the power supply and push up the prices. They make a fortune and don't carry out any social obligation".

In Moneypoint alone over 200 jobs will go with privatisation.

The same pattern will be repeated in all the power stations.

Union leaders have warned workers not to engage in stoppages but anger in the power plants is building up.

Action

The government are nervous about the possibility of workers' action.

Their friends in the media have put an almost complete block on the story about the unofficial strike at Moneypoint.

Workers' resistance to the McKinsey plan could put manners on the government and stop this vicious attack on our service and on jobs and conditions.

Shorts workers reject 2% offer

THE SHORTS workforce have rejected a pay offer by a six to one majority in a workplace ballot.

Shorts had originally put forward a "final offer" of a 2 percent three-year deal with strings attached in the form of new shifts and greater flexibility.

The works committee which represents about 5,000 workers, put the deal to the workforce saying

they had no chance of getting any more money. They even went so far as to print a note: "This is the company's final offer" on the ballot papers.

They also held meetings telling workers they would lose redundancy money if they took strike action.

But the works committee was out of touch with the workers in Shorts. A petition of no confidence was circulated in some sec-

tions which got over 700 signatures—expressing anger at the way negotiations were going. The pay offer was then rejected six to one.

Bitterness

Massive bitterness exists in Shorts. Since privatisation in 1989 there have been more than 2,000 redundancies and huge pay hikes for directors.

Short's president Roy McNulty last year doubled his salary to £395,000 per year. An average worker at Shorts earns £14,000.

Last year Shorts made a profit of £16.5 million.

In spite of the ballot result, two weeks have elapsed without the works committee organising a meeting despite having a mandate from the workforce to fight for a one year deal.

An AEEU member

commented:

"The vote was certainly the biggest ever rejection of a pay deal I can remember.

"People are angry that McNulty gets 100 percent yet we're only offered 2 percent with strings attached".

Ballot

Another worker, a member of the T&GWU added:

"There were people re-

ally pissed off at the way the whole thing was handled.

"The ballot read like a management document.

"Some of the senior stewards were saying things like 'Let's just accept it and get on with it'.

"But maybe the vote will show them what we really think.

"The stewards should be straight back in telling Shorts we want more."

SWM branch meetings—all welcome

BELFAST CENTRAL Meets every Wednesday at 8pm, contact SW sellers or national address for details
Tues. 18th: Building the SWM
Wed. 26th: Yeltsin and the Russian crisis.

BELFAST SOUTH Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Queens Students Union Tues. 18th Building the SWM

Tues. 25th Yeltsin and the Russian Crisis

CORK Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the Anchor Inn, Georges Quay.
Thurs. 20th: Trade Unions and the Class Struggle
Thurs. 27th: Law and Order—the socialist view

DERRY Wed. 19th: Public

Meeting—The Politics of James Connolly 8pm, The Playhouse, Artillery Street.
Tues. 25th: 150 Years Since the Famine
8pm, Badgers Bar.

DUBLIN BALLINTEER Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in Ballinteer House.
Wed. 19th: Why Socialists Defend Travellers.
Wed. 26th: The 1905 Revolution.

DUBLIN BLANCHARDSTOWN Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in the Blakesown Community Centre.
Tues. 25th: Building the SWM.

DUBLIN COOLOCK Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the Artane/ Beaumont Family Recreation Centre, Kilmore Rd.
Thurs 20th: Why the Labour party fails.
Thurs 27th: Building the SWM.

DUBLIN CLONDALKIN Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in the Loch and Quay, Clondalkin.

Tues. 25th: Building the Socialist Alternative.

DUBLIN DRIMNAGH Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Halfway House.

Tues. 18th: The Portuguese Revolution 1974
Tues. 25th: Building the Socialist Alternative (in the Loch & Quay, Clondalkin).

DUBLIN FINGLAS Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in The Royal Oak.
Wed. 19th: How We Beat the Nazis.
Wed. 26th: Building the SWM.

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in Conways Pub, Parnell St.
Wed. 19th: Building the SWM
Wed. 26th: The fight against fascism

DUBLIN RATHMINES Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in Cassidy's, Camden St.
Wed. 26th: Building the Socialist Alternative.

DUBLIN RINGSEND Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Ringsend

Community Centre
Thurs 20th: Law and Order—What Socialists Say.
Thurs 27th: Building the Socialist Alternative.

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the Trinity Inn, Pearse st
Thurs. 20th: Can Socialist Worker Replace The Star?
Thurs. 27th: Building the SWM.

DUBLIN TALLAGHT Contact 8722682 for details of meetings

DUN LAOGHAIRE Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Smyths Pub, Lower Georges st.
Tues. 18th: The Fight Against Fascism.

Tues. 25th: Building the Socialist Alternative.

GALWAY Meets every second Thursday at 8.00pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square
Thurs. 20th: Why Socialists defend Travellers

MAYNOOTH Meets every Thursday in Class Hall B at 6pm.

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

WATERFORD Meets every Thursday at ATGWU Hall, Keizer St, Waterford.
Thurs. 20th: The Famine in Ireland
Thurs. 27th: Building the SWM.

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.....

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

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

TEAM walkout over safety

CONCERN over health and safety issues at TEAM Aer Lingus led to a stoppage recently at the plant.

Management who tried to disrupt the meeting were shouted down and condemned by the workers who are worried about issues affecting their safety.

Toxic

The main issue is the practice of working in hanger areas where aircraft have been spray painted.

The toxic paint used is even more dangerous when left drying than when it is being applied.

Airborne dust particles

and damaging chemical elements in the atmosphere can cause carcinogenic disease and lung problems.

Any area where this

paint is left drying out is supposed to be unsafe for hours after the aircraft has been painted.

But workers are being

told to work in such areas after just one hour of drying-out time.

This could be lethal. Shop stewards at Team

have asked that management buy in modern monitoring equipment to keep track of the safety levels in the atmosphere.

Barmen fight anti-union boss

FOUR UNION barmen have been on strike at the Foxhunter pub in Lucan since late March.

A barworker who has 5 years service with the pub was sacked by the owner Frank Towey, on suspicion of stealing money from the public telephone.

The worker only discovered he was being accused of theft when Gardai arrived at the pub to arrest him while he was still on duty. He

was taken to Lucan Garda station and questioned for six hours but released without charge.

Millionaire Frank Towey didn't even bother to interview the man and he wasn't given any trade union representation.

Anger

Towey has been steaming with anger since the Dublin bar strike.

He was Chairman of the Licensed Vintners Association until recently and was instrumental in opposing the claims of the barworkers last year.

At Christmas he paid out a bonus to all staff except the members of MANDATE, the barworkers union.

Although the picket on the Foxhunter is small, it has been a great success. Only four of the hundreds of regular customers have passed and the pub is nearly empty every night.

The strikers told *Socialist Worker*, "Without our customers' support we couldn't bring this exploitation to light."

They have been great to us and really want to see us win".

Trade unionism on the rise

THE LATEST figures for trade union membership in Ireland show the number of workers in unions has increased despite rising unemployment.

In 1993, according to the government's Central Statistics Office, 47.2% of employees belonged to a trade union.

Membership figures for that year were higher than the year before, in spite of the increase in the dole figures.

In the public sector—which

makes up over 70% of the overall workforce—more than three quarters of workers are trade unionists.

Potential

This shows that semi-state workers have great potential to beat back the attacks currently threatened by management and government.

The CSO figures prove that, contrary to the claims of right-wing media pundits, the trade union movement remains as relevant and as powerful as ever.

Wasted

The response of management was to hire a hand-monitor from Forbairt.

The over-paid Team bosses have wasted millions of pounds on golden hand shakes for managers and on the misuse of equipment and aircraft.

But they have a miser's approach when it comes to the safety of workers who build and maintain the aircraft.

More direct action is needed to force them to listen and make life safer and healthier on the ground.

United Technologies workers under pressure

MANAGEMENT at United Technologies Automotive (UTA) in Derry are trying to impose shift work in the plant, even though the union has voted three times to reject it.

Line managers are approaching people individually and trying to intimidate them into agreeing to work shifts.

Unfortunately, the union is allowing management to pick workers off in this way.

Instead they should be building on resistance in the factory.

Some workers, however, are determined to remain united and strong.

The local Socialist Worker branch have helped UTA workers organise meetings in sections of the factory to rebuild the union from the bottom up.

One woman told *Socialist Worker*, "The union used to be good and strong in the plant. Now it's seen as closer to management than to the workers on the line. We've got to get back to the fighting union we used to have".

UTA workers have a proud tradition of militancy. In 1981, they led many of the strikes in support of the hunger strikers.

But the shop steward, a Republican, who was central to leading those walkouts, is now a supervisor and is pushing the management line on shifts.

The first step towards rebuilding the union is a pe-

tion which is circulating in the factory demanding that convenor call a general meeting.

This meeting will give the workforce a chance to insist that the union hon-

our the vote against shift work and refuses to allow management deal directly with individual workers.

It is possible to call management's bluff.

Women in the canteen

were threatened with the contracting-out of catering work

Refused

But they refused to co-

operate when a new supervisor tried to get them to take on extra cleaning duties.

They stood together and they've been assured that the catering will not be

contracted out.

A fighting union can resist the imposition of shift work, protect temporary as well as permanent workers AND get a decent pay rise in this pay round.

Teachers demand early retirement deal

AS TEACHERS meet for their annual conferences this Easter, there is growing resentment at the way the government is handling the issue of early retirement.

Despite months of negotiations, Niamh Breatnach's Department of Education is not coming up with a satisfactory deal.

Pension

Teachers are demanding that they should be able to retire with full pension rights at the age of 60.

That would mean that teachers who normally start work at around 24 years of age could leave after 36 years.

But they also believe that teachers should be able to leave the service from 50 years on, at a reduced pension.

This is a perfectly reasonable demand.

Teaching like many other jobs can be stress-

Bank workers say No to Performance Related Pay

WORKERS in the Northern Bank have voted five to one against management's attempts to introduce performance related pay.

Most workers realise it is the thin end of the wedge which involves severe cuts in wages.

Some stand to lose up to £5,000 a year while pensions will also be cut.

Performance Related Pay is the tool the bank is using to divide workers making it easier to

change conditions such as introducing Saturday working.

Unfortunately the bank workers' union, IBOA, used the vote to push through court action—the first round of which went to the bosses.

Such a strategy is full of pitfalls.

Last year the bank made £62 million. Industrial action is needed to beat the bank into submission by hitting its profits.

ful and demanding.

People who have put decades into work should be allowed to leave with real benefits since they have paid into a pension fund.

But the Department of Education are try-

ing to tie any change to a worsening of conditions.

Increase

They want to increase the teaching year and establish new disciplinary powers.

The teachers union have raised an important and valid issue for all workers.

If they win, many others will seek to follow.

That is why their present demand should be fully supported.

Rehab workers strike against low pay

WORKERS employed in Rehab Industries have called off a series of one-day strikes from April 12th.

The strikes were planned to resist attempts to introduce lower pay into the industry.

Gandon Enterprises which was set up in 1994 as a subsidiary of Rehab pays its workforce £137 per week.

The basic pay for other Rehab workers is £160.

Most of these workers are disabled.

Their weekly pay is already way below the average industrial earnings.

Gandon Enterprises also want to increase the working week by one and a half hours.

Rehab are clearly exploiting people with dis-

abilities to make more profit.

These workers have every right to decent pay and working hours.

A SIPTU representative has accused the company of "attempting to scrap years of hard work aimed at advancing the integration of people with disabilities into the workplace which now risk being undermined by the Rehab management's unprecedented backward approach".

The total Rehab workforce is now 600.

But Gandon plans to employ 2,000 by the year 2003.

Their low-wage strategy needs to be stopped.

The workers at Rehab should fight to win the pay and conditions they deserve.

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

inside

Is Labour going to be like the Tories?

—page 5

Could Hitler have been stopped?

—page 8

50 years after the Welfare State:

139,000 Northern Irish children in poverty

'Most people were sickened as I was by the sight of these spongers descending like locusts, demanding benefits with menaces. We are not in the business of subsidising scroungers'—Peter Lilley, Tory Minister of Social Security

THE NORTH'S politicians talk a lot about the "different identities" of Protestants and Catholics but they have little to say about the common suffering that arises from the North's poverty.

A new report *Poverty: A War against Children* blows the lid on the reality of hardship in the North.

Breadline

It gives the lie to the Tory claim that the economy is recovering and that everyone is starting to benefit. Thousands are living on breadline conditions that are close to those of the 1930s.

The figures in the report are shocking:

■ **One in every three children lives in a household that has less than £108 a week.**

On this sort of income children cannot even be given a proper diet to keep their young bodies healthy.

■ **One in eight people have health problems or are handicapped.**

But they still have to put up with run-down health services where doctors and nurses are told to compete against each other.

■ **139,000 children in Northern Ireland are living**

in dire poverty.

This is proportionally higher than any other region in the UK.

The bosses used the sectarian divisions to drive wages down—and it's the children who suffer most.

A typical case is that of Kate. She's a lone parent

living with one child.

She gets £76.50 a week in benefits but because she is in arrears with the electricity bills, a quarter of that is deducted.

Pressing

The Child Support Agency is pressing her for details about her child's father.

If she does not co-operate, she can lose a further 20% of her benefit.

The Tories are to blame for this terrible poverty. They have made sure that child benefit is less than it was 30 years ago.

Now they are bringing in a Job Seekers Allowance which is a return to the "out-door relief" system of the

1930s. Under that system people had to work in menial jobs for their dole.

While they wage war on the poor, the Tories look after their own.

They have cut taxes on their rich friends by a staggering £13.4 billion since they came to power.

The Northern state was established to divide us and instil sectarian ideas.

Now our rulers want to remake the old structures in order to keep us in our ghettos, competing against each other for every morsel they throw our way.

It's time we woke up. *Class* is the most important divide in Northern Ireland.

It's time we started to build a socialist organisation determined that our side wins.

**'No other region in the UK so clearly demonstrates that low wages, high unemployment and "good" industrial relations are not the path to economic prosperity'—
Save the Children**