

# **Socialist Worker**

**For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p**

**inside:**

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Republicanism—page eight**

# **STOP THE BOMBING!**

# **Don't let the Tories wreck the peace!**

# **WORKERS UNITE!**

# Principal Tyrants

LAST year leaving cert students in Donegal had to run home to put on their uniforms before a local principal would let them sit their exam.

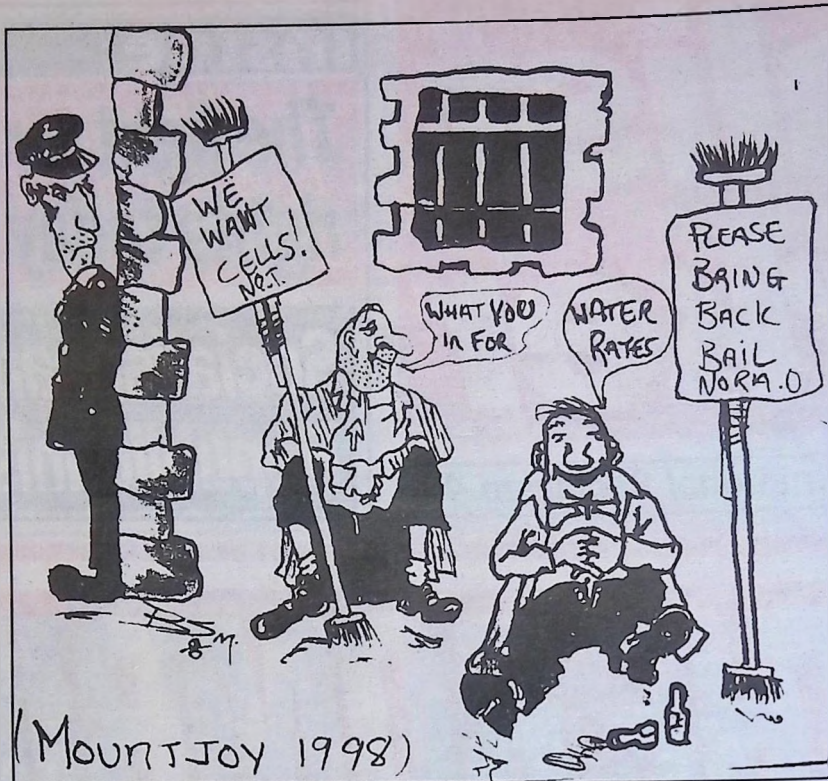
Instead of rapping the petty tyrant on the knuckles, Labour Minister Niamh Breathnach decided to 'draft new guidelines'.

## Excluding

Several months later the Department of Education has come to the earth-shattering conclusion that excluding pupils with no uniform is a bit over the top.

But the Secondary Schools Principals Association are none too pleased with this reduction in their authority. They want 'local codes of practice'.

In other words if they can bully parents and students into keeping these ridiculous rules, they would like to.



(MOUNTJOY 1998)

# New logo an insult to TEAM Aer Lingus workers

THE HUNDREDS of workers laid off by TEAM must have greeted the news that Aer Lingus is spending £8 million on a "new" corporate identity with disgust.

The so-called radically different logo is another shamrock—only it's said to be a softer shade of green, has been stretched, has a stem and leans a little to the right!!

A company spokesman said the logo has been "revolutionised" and is "vibrant, dynamic and natural".

But what was 'natural'

about dumping workers on the dole when the likes of Bernie Cahill was enjoying his jacuzzi in the Westbury.

And what about the 1,200 Aer Lingus workers who are still waiting three years for a paltry pay rise. Some of the staff now take home less than £100 a week.

## inside the system

### JAILED FOR BEGGING

JOHN Quilligan, a man with no previous convictions, has been jailed for a month for begging in Killarney town.

Meanwhile the directors of Murray's PR firm who tried to fiddle their tax manage to walk free—and even get government contracts as 'consultants'.

### Disturbing Report:

The recent Combat Poverty report on how poor most gay and lesbians are makes disturbing reading.

The report debunks the myth that class does not count.

Nearly 60% of respondents said they found it difficult to make ends meet, with a fifth admitting they were living in poverty.

Even though legislation has been introduced, gay and lesbians are discriminated at work and in training.

11 of the 159 respondents said they were sacked because of their sexuality, with another 23 resigning "because their sexuality could not be reconciled with their workplace".



Remember the days when the phrase 'the rich grow richer, and the poor get poorer' was thought a bit 'extreme'.

But now a recent study in the US from the leading economist Robert Frank shows that it is no exaggeration.

Chief executives of the top American companies are now earning 120 times more than the average worker.

In the bad old days of the 1970s, they used to earn only 35 times more.

# US to execute a 17 year old

A 17 year old was sentenced to death in the US state of Arkansas in January. The US remains one of a handful of countries which has a policy of capital punishment for juveniles.

Damond Sanford was convicted of rape, robbery and murder of an 85 year old woman last year.

The death sentence makes Sanford the youngest man on Arkansas' death row. He was 16 when the crime was committed.

At Sanford's trial a consulting psychologist testified that the defendant is close to being considered mentally retarded.

Prosecutors weren't deterred by this, however.

Although 'concerned' by

Sanford's age, prosecutor Joe Wray defended the sentence.

"I would not have asked for the death penalty if I did not feel it was warranted under the circumstances," he said.

### Delay

Sanford was scheduled to be executed in February but his expected appeal will almost certainly delay the date.

Between 1977 and 1995 at least nine people have been executed who were under age 18 when the crimes for which

they were convicted were committed.

Meanwhile crime rates continue to rise in the US all the time.

# How big is a Nazi's brain

THE TINY British fascist party, the British National Party is obviously feeling a bit touchy at the moment.

It has just lodged a complaint with the Advertising Standards Authority against the Commission for Racial Equality.

The Commission had produced a poster advert showing four brains.

Three were the same size: one labelled African, one Asian, and a third European. The fourth brain is much smaller than the rest and is labelled "racist".

This was obviously too much of an insult for the "master race".

The Nazi goons have written to the Advertising Standards Authority whingeing: "The suggestion is clearly that those who express racist opinions are stupid".

We couldn't have put it better ourselves. And the ASA evidently agreed as well. They threw out the BNP complaint.

# IQ myth challenged

Why do the poor seldom get into third level education and score low on IQ tests?

Right wingers increasingly claim it is because they are genetically stupid. Only the rich get the right sort of genes that explain their success.

Now the recent conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science has heard a research paper showing just how crazy this argument is.

A psychologist, Craig Ramey, found that with a programme of intensive stimulation and diet, intellectual performance is increased.

Simple experiments whereby children were given extra space and where there were never more than four children to one adult were all linked to lasting effects on performance in maths and reading.

# The cost of your baby dying

A Darndale mother is still mourning the death of her baby son this time last year.

The family doctor had refused to make house calls in Darndale. On one occasion he even told the woman to get her sick children out of bed and walk them to a petrol station a good distance from the house where he would examine them in his car.

If medical help had come at any time the little boy might still be alive today.

Instead, when the parents went to wake him in the morning to bring him to the medical centre he was already dead from Meningitis.

After the funeral the mother informed social welfare and the health board of what had happened by phone and in writing.

Despite this she received fortnightly notices reminding her to get the baby vaccinated four months after the funeral.

When she went to collect the children's allowance for her other kids a month after the funeral, the baby's name was still on the book.

Thinking that this was to help cover expenses such as the £810 cost of a cheap headstone, she continued to collect, assuming the authorities knew what they were doing.

Half a year later they discovered their mistake, and have since then been docking the allowance for one of the other children until the full amount has been paid back.

# £1 million a day for AIB

Ireland's new boom is being enjoyed by a tiny minority of the rich.

The latest group to declare obscene profits is the Allied Irish Bank.

They proudly announced that at £373 million a year, they are making a profit of more than £1 million a day.

Most of the profits are still coming from the small island of Ireland whose to-

tal population is just over 5 million people.

AIB profits have actually doubled since 1992 when the company 'only' made over £160 million.

None of this will prevent these sharks lecturing workers about the need for restraint and sacrifice.

we think

# Three questions for Bishop Comiskey

**WHEN Bishop Brendan Comiskey finally returned to his diocese in Wexford, his supporters claimed he was a victim of media harassment.**

In the months before, politicians like the Fine Gael Agriculture Minister Ivan Yates rushed to his defence.

But before any ground-swell of sympathy develops, Bishop Comiskey might want to compare himself to one Eileen Flynn.

Eileen was employed as a school teacher in Bishop Comiskey's diocese when she became pregnant with the man she chose to live with.

Having a child outside marriage was regarded as a cause for moral

scandal by the nuns who employed her and Eileen was promptly sacked from her job.

## Campaign

There was no great campaign to 'clear her name'. Few people accused the church hierarchy of appalling harassment. No government Minister leaped to her defence.

To this day neither Bishop Comiskey nor the nuns who sacked her have apologised—still less offered her the job

back.

Far from being harassed, the facts of the case show that Bishop Comiskey has a lot to answer for.

*Socialist Worker* has a few simple questions.

■ In 1988, Bishop Comiskey personally requested a copy of a report from the local health board which showed that one of his priests in the parish of Monageer was sexually abusing girls who were preparing for their Confirmation.

Not only did he do nothing about the case but he even celebrated the Confirmation alongside the abusing priest.

**How could a Bishop who stood by this child abuser have no diffi-**

**culty lecturing ordinary people about 'family values' and sexual morality?**

■ Bishop Comiskey was a frequent visitor to Bangkok in Thailand. He travelled first class and stayed in the best of hotels.

During one of his trips, he found that his access to Dublin airport was blocked by protesting TEAM workers who were fighting job losses and a cut in their earnings.

## Response

Bishop Comiskey's response was to denounce the workers for their 'disruption'.

**How could someone who took a vow of poverty afford these flights? What level of arrogance allowed him to denounce workers who could never afford to spend a day in the Thai capital?**

■ In 1988, a luxury apartment was purchased for the Bishop in Ballsbridge in the name of the St Aidan's Diocesan Trust for the sum of £80,000.

A spokesperson for the Bishop even claimed it was used as an alternative to staying in hotels.

**Were the many sincere Catholics who left their money to the Church ever informed that it might be used for such purposes?**

The questions are not of an entirely personal character.

Despite all the official claims that Irish society has changed fundamentally, there are still deep ties which bind the elite



High-life, jet setting Bishop Comiskey—rejected by his flock

of the church and the state.

## Molested

After the abuse case in Monageer was covered up, a parent of one of the girls was driven to say that he felt that "there was very little that could be done against the might of the law and the

church".

When a parent in the 1990s in Ireland is forced to making such a remark after their own daughter was molested, then no effort should be lost in pressurising Bishop Comiskey into giving some clear answers.

Any of the indignity he feels is nothing com-

pared to the parent concerned.

■ **FACT: Bishop Comiskey moves in the most exalted circles.**

On his return he appointed top solicitor Noel Smyth as his advisor.

Smyth previously advised ex-supermarket mogul and cocaine sniffer Ben Dunne.

## National Bigots Party formed

**YET ANOTHER** new party has been formed by Ireland's disgruntled 'Bring back the 1950s' lobby.

This time the National Party is run by the Limerick supremo, Nora Bennis.

The new party wants yet another anti-abortion referendum and wants to 'carefully look at' the idea of turning gay people into criminals.

The reason for the new party, according to Bennis, is that every party in Dail Eireann from Labour to Fianna Fail are promoting 'left wing' politics in order to damage Ireland!

Bennis's party could make some gains from the bitterness that ex-

ists with the behaviour of Labour or Democratic Left in coalition.

But the bigots also have major problems.

## Scandals

They have a record of covering up for the child abuse scandals in the church. The vast majority oppose their views on issues like the Stay Safe programme.

Their vision of a 1950s style Ireland is associated with poverty and emigration.

But their appearance shows why it is more urgent than ever to establish a serious left wing party that can give expression to the anger that exists at this government.

## SCOTT REPORT INTO ARMS TO IRAQ

# How the Tories armed Saddam Hussein

**WHEN THE Tories condemn violence they are hypocrites.**

The Scott Inquiry, which reported recently, was set up to investigate the arms to Iraq scandal.

From 1980 to 1988 Iraq was at war with Iran. Western governments condemned the war and said there would be no arms supplied to either side.

But as the war progressed America and Britain saw their chance of using Saddam Hussein to cripple the Iranian regime. Secretly Tory ministers gave a nod and wink to

British companies to supply arms to Iraq.

And these arms sales were increased after March 1988 when the Iraqi regime murdered by poison gas 5,000 Kurdish villagers at Halabja.

## Slaughter

After this slaughter every government minister knew the arms exports were aiding a government that killed civilians and babies.

But the Tories opened the floodgates. Saddam was going to win the war with Iran. It was time to

cash in.

The British government donated £350,000 to the 100,000 Kurdish refugees fleeing Saddam Hussein's sea of poisonous gas. It approved £340 million in trade credits to Iraq.

When the war ended Tory ministers further relaxed the rules for supplying arms to Saddam and lied to Parliament about it.

Trade minister Alan Clark had encouraged British manufacturers to disguise their applications for export licences.

Only later when Saddam Hussein threatened the oil companies'

profits in Kuwait did Bush, Thatcher and Major discover him to be a murdering tyrant.

They began to prepare for the second Gulf War—this time against Saddam Hussein.

That war saw thousands of Iraqi civilians killed as US and British forces rained down bombs on Iraqi cities.

## Killed

No-one knows exactly how many were killed by the US-led coalition during the second Gulf War. It is at least 200,000.

Saddam Hussein—yesterday's ally—was now the Butcher of Baghdad. Now the Tories tried to cover up the support they had earlier given him.

For example, Paul Grecian, a director of the Ortech company, was arrested for shipping an entire assembly line for the production of artillery shells to Iraq.

He was also a Special Branch and MI6 informer. Grecian was told he would be exposed as a spy to the Iraqis unless he pleaded guilty.

Tory ministers signed Public Interest Immunity

certificates preventing defence lawyers having access to important evidence.

These could have prevented the truth coming out and sent men unjustly to jail.

## Scandals

When the scandals got too great, the Tories turned to a rabid right-wing judge to produce an innocuous report.

Judge Scott is the top drawer son of a British Indian army officer.

He learnt his law in

apartheid South Africa.

During the British miners strike in 1984-5 he ruled that miners could not picket in parts of South Wales and he dealt savagely with the funds of the miners' union.

But his inquiry has unpicked at least some of the truth about the Tories' crimes.

We do not support or excuse the resumption of the IRA armed campaign.

But their bombs are a drop in the ocean compared to those of John Major's Tories.

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 8th March

# The fight for Women's rights

**"I DON'T want to sit around like a bungalow head with nothing upstairs" said Rachel Hegarty a students union women's rights officer. It summed up the mood of many young women who want more control of their lives.**

Some claim women have now gained equality with men and that the fight for women's liberation is well and truly over.

But only a small minority of career women have gained. 36 percent of all managers and proprietors are now women. And there are now more women TDs than ever before.

But the majority of working class women are still stuck at the bottom of the pile.

## Only

In 1993, the average hourly earning of women was still only 70% of men's. And women are still expected to bear the burden of childcare and housework within the family.

Mary is a middle-aged woman who has spent the last three years looking for a decent job.

*"When I got married I had to give up my job. I've spent the last twenty-five years bringing up my kids. Now I want to go out to work, but I've found it impossible to get anything. The only thing employers think I'm quali-*



**The Dunnes strike showed the importance of the fight against low pay in the fight for women's rights**

*fied for is minding babies and housework."*

Debbie left school two years ago. Since then she's been

working as a secretary in an office in Dublin.

*"I've been on £85 for the last year and a half. That's for forty*

*hours a week. It's really boring work and I feel like I'm going nowhere. Nearly all secretarial work is very low paid."*

Debbie's situation is typical. Women workers tend to be concentrated in the lowest paid jobs and have very little hope of getting out of them.

Women are also more likely to be stuck in part-time or temporary work where they have fewer rights and benefits. Of the 137,000 part-time workers in Ireland 70% are women.

This is what makes nonsense of the claim that the fight for women's equality has been won.

At a time when many of Ireland's liberal intelligentsia are claiming that the great conflicts with the church and state are now over, there is a rising mood among many working class women to assert their rights.

In many areas hundreds of women are attending courses and groups that get grants from official agencies. The results can produce a few surprises for the authorities.

Janet was involved in a group of 170 Bray women who enrolled in the Bray Resource Centre in the early 1990s.

*"The centre provided services that working class women would not get elsewhere. There was classes, counselling, courses on personal development.*

*"We started to take seriously all the talk about 'empowerment' and 'consciousness raising'.*

*Some of the women began to start asking really political questions.*

*"The management could not handle it. In February 1994 they even closed down the centre to get rid of us. They called us 'trouble-makers' and 'Bolsheviks'. I am not kidding.*

*"A group of us still meet together regularly. We will be or-*

*ganising a local celebration for International Women's Day this year.*

*"We want to show that it is all about supporting women who are fighting for their rights.*

*That is why we are organising a 'donation day' to build up funds for the nurses who are going on strike."*

## A tradition of struggle

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day was started by socialist women in 1910. March 8th was chosen because on that day thousands of New York women textile workers had demonstrated for the right to join a union and get the vote.

In the past, the feminist movement has claimed that women have to fight alone and that all men have a stake in their oppression.

But only a minority of men own and control huge wealth and resources in this society and it is this minority who runs and benefits from the system.

The day needs to be reclaimed by those who want to support the struggles of working class women.

Last year 500 people took to the streets of Dublin to demand greater access to creches, equal pay and full access to abortion information.

It was a demonstration that was joined by both men and women.

This year the International Womens Day Committee has been formed to celebrate the traditions of International Women's day, raising the demands of free access to divorce; abortion rights in Ireland; equal pay and an end to low pay and state funded creches.

They have called a march on March 8th. Be involved in building the march and bring your Trade Union and Student Union banners.

## Childcare provision

**In Ireland there are just six state-funded creches. Just 2% of childcare facilities for children under three are publicly funded, and these are essentially for families at risk.**

For many women the high cost of childcare is a huge barrier to them going out to work.

Although since the early 1970s there has been an increase of about 100% in the

number of married women in the workforce, Ireland still has one of the lowest participation rates in terms of the number of women with young children in the workforce.

A recent survey by the Unemployed Centre for the Unemployed in Dublin revealed that 24 out of the 50 women questioned had to refuse employment as a result of the difficulty in obtaining decent childcare facilities.

The average income of a working woman is about £145 a week. The average cost of

childcare for one child is £50 per week.

This is a huge proportion of a woman's wages and compounds the problem of low pay already experienced by so many women.

We need to fight for decent cheap childcare facilities so that women can participate fully in the workforce.

## Abortion rights

**ABORTION is still illegal in Ireland. But thirteen Irish women are having abortions in Britain every day. And this only includes those who give addresses in Ireland.**

Working class women suffer most from this form of Irish hypocrisy. It is extremely difficult to find the £500 that they will need to take the trip.

Under the 1967 Abortion Act in Britain a woman must have been in the country for at least 24 hours before she can have the operation.

Added to this is the ex-

tra stress of having to travel for the operation, which many women often have to keep a secret from their family and friends.

After thousands took to the streets to force the courts to allow the 14 year old X case to go to Britain to have an abortion, the government was forced to bring in some

reforms. But they have been very limited.

Not a single abortion has actually been carried out in Ireland—despite the fact that the Supreme Court has ruled that women who were feeling suicidal had a right to abortion in Irish hospitals. Even though two thirds of people voted for a woman's right to have information on abortion, the Regulation of Information Act prevents doctors from referring their patients directly to clinics in Britain.

Groups such as CURA and Life, who actively argue with women not to have an abortion get £400,000 each year in funding from the government.

The divorce referendum has shown that there has been great changes in Irish society. We need to build on this and fight to win the right for Irish women to avail of decent, safe and affordable abortion facilities in this country.

### Now fight for women's rights

- Free Access to Divorce
- Abortion rights in Ireland
- Equal Pay - End Low Pay
- State-funded creches

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH**

Friday 8th March,  
Assemble: 7.00pm, GPO  
Called by the International Women's Day Committee

# 'TRAVELLER CRIME' and the racist agenda

Racists usually put across their arguments in one of two ways - the subtle approach or the sledgehammer method.

by David Scott

Mary Ellen Synon prefers to use the sledgehammer. Her rant against travellers in a recent edition of the *Sunday Independent* could have been taken straight out of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

Synon described travellers as living a life of "appetite ungoverned by intellect" and of being capable of "murder without remorse". She said the source of rural attacks on the elderly was "lying on the roadside...indulged by the money of the welfare state..."

The Pavee Point travellers' centre in Dublin are considering legal action against Synon for incitement to hatred. Leading NUJ activist Eamonn McCann said the union "should take steps to make sure it is not allowed to happen again".

## Terms

But Synon article was only unusual in terms of its ferocity. The *Sunday Independent* are now mounting a campaign to link travellers with the crime hysteria which the O'Reilly group of newspapers has done so much to create.

'TRAVELLER'S MAFIA PREYS ON ELDERLY' screamed the headline over Kevin Moore's piece on rural violence. Veronica Guerin wrote about the "involvement of the Irish travelling community in organised crime" in Europe.

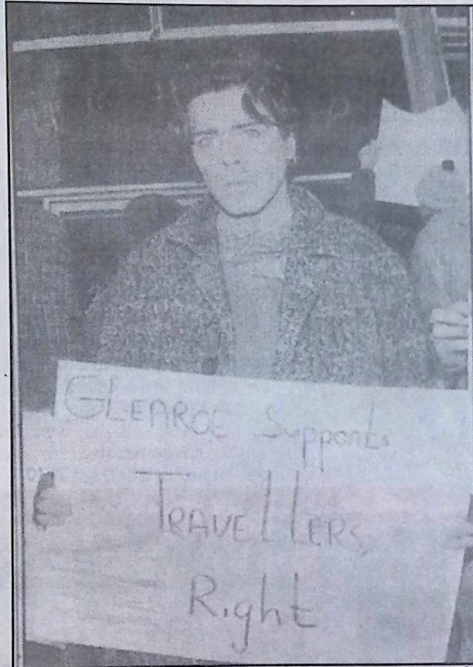
If the word 'black' were substituted for the word 'traveller' in any of the aforementioned articles the racist intent would become clear.

The *Sunday Independent* campaign draws its support from elements of the Gardaí who also want to scapegoat travellers.

The Gardaí have claimed that up to 80 'travellers and mobile traders' are responsible for most of the recent attacks on the elderly.

They say that up to another 200 people give 'tip-offs' to the gangs.

But even if all 280 people allegedly involved in this 'mafia' are travellers, that still only amounts to just over one per cent of the 22,000 travellers living in Ireland. Yet all travellers



Liam Heffernan from Glenroe on an anti-discrimination picket

have been stigmatised by the recent coverage.

John O'Connell, director of Pavee Point, said this scapegoating is "a major setback for the human rights work with travellers which, if not challenged, will affect traveller accommodation provision, education etc."

Already the children of travellers are facing abuse and bullying in schools as a direct result of the new media campaign.

The hype about 'traveller crime' could not have come at a better time for the reactionary forces who hope to defeat proposed anti-discrimination laws.

The Vintners' Federation of Ireland have attacked Mervyn Taylor's mild proposals to make it an offence to refuse service in pubs on the grounds of ethnic identity.

The discrimination against travellers was dramatically highlighted four years ago when Dublin's famous Palace Bar was the scene of a regular 50 strong picket after a Glenroe actor and traveller Micheal Collins was refused entry.

The Vintners' Federation have the full backing of the Fianna Fail Parliamentary Party which has passed a

motion supporting the right to refuse certain groups.

Taylor's legislation would allow legal action to be taken over incidents like the one in Tralee last November when the Grand Hotel refused entry to the Parish Bazaar to a group of travellers and their children.

The Vintners claim that they need the 'right to refuse' service to keep out 'drug pushers, criminals or troublemakers'.

(Note the laughable objection to drugs by people who make a living by selling the lethal drug alcohol!)

As the *Pavee Point Newsletter* argues, the publicans really want the right to refuse people because they are travellers, or because of their colour, their sexual orientation or their disabilities.

But even if the Vintners are defeated, legislation alone will not solve the problem. Travellers will still have to face the bias of the Gardaí and the courts.

Protests are needed to force the politicians to pass the new laws.

And more protests will be needed to back every case taken against a racist publican.

## International news

# Polish miners win

MINERS IN Poland have successfully taken on one of the biggest mining companies in the country.

The action rocked Poland at the same time as fellow miners took action in the Ukraine and Russia.

In Poland 40,000 miners took part in a series of strikes, protests and pit occupations.

The strikers called for and got solidarity action. Blocking of coal deliveries took place in over 60 other mines across the Silesia region. Over 200 miners occupied 20 pits in support of the strikers.

## Action

This militancy shows how workers' action in Eastern Europe can take on privatisation.

The Nadwislanska Spolka Wglowa (NSW) company, one of seven companies operating the mines in Poland, is gearing up for privatisation.

It produces one sixth of Poland's coal and owns three of the biggest pits in Europe.

The strikers have won large wage increases, sick pay and pension rises. The NSW company boss was sacked—one of the main demands of strikers.

But they could have won more. The strikes were led by the leaders of the Solidarity union.

Solidarity formed the gov-

ernment under leader Lech Walesa until last autumn, when it was defeated in elections by the former Communist leadership.

The deal agreed by union leaders to end the strike is tied to an increase in workers' productivity.

But there was the potential for a complete victory. The militancy of the miners was not fully tapped by the leaders of Solidarity.

The miners could have won complete parity of wages with other mine workers in Poland, who earn up to 20 percent more.

That gap has now been reduced to 5 percent—but loaded with a productivity deal.

## Demanding

There are other unions which organise in the pits and some of them have said they want to continue demanding more money.

Most pits, however, returned to work.

There is still discontent. Solidarity leaders were forced to say the union remained on "strike alert".



Flashback: Solidarity in the 1980s

We don't know if there will be more action. But what is clear is that miners in Poland have tested their strength.

They have shown they are a force which cannot be ignored as more companies prepare the ground for privatisation.

# Coal miners paralyse Ukraine

HUNDREDS OF thousands of striking miners paralysed the Donbass coalfield in Ukraine for two weeks.

Their strike was finally called off by union leaders after halting all coal production.

The action hit Ukraine's government and bosses hard. It coincided with the Russian government cutting Ukraine off their joint power grid.

Factories were ordered to close and power stations were desperately short of coal.

The action began at the same time as miners' strikes in neighbouring Russia, which forced concessions out of Yeltsin's government.

Ukrainian miners, like their Rus-

sian counterparts, are demanding back payment of unpaid wages and an increase in government subsidies.

The government initially claimed that promises to the International Monetary Fund meant it could not pay the money owed to the miners.

But the strike forced the government to promise about two thirds of the money owed.

## Killed

The miners take their lives in their hands at the Donbass coalfield, which uses 19th century mining equipment. Last year 218 miners were killed at work.

At first the strike was supported by up to 700,000 miners, but reporters say the action was beginning to

lose momentum.

But workers at 62 out of 250 mines were still on strike, with workers at a further 102 mines refusing to load coal.

The power crisis could have provided miners with the opportunity to win all their demands swiftly.

Strike leader Nikolai Podgorny initially said, "We'll call off the strike when our demands are satisfied."

But unfortunately union leaders accepted the government's argument that the action could lead to "catastrophe".

Nonetheless, the miners' strikes across the Ukraine, Russia and Poland have provided a sign of hope for workers facing the cold wind of the market across the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

# BAHRAIN ROCKED BY REVOLT

REVOLT IS shaking the rulers of Bahrain, a key Western ally in the Middle East.

A wave of mass protests and bombings has shaken the island state off the coast of Saudi Arabia, and it is worrying all the rulers in the region.

Bahrain, like almost all the other states in the area, is run by a dictatorship which has used massive oil wealth to enrich itself and a minority of the population.

The ruling Khalifa family suppressed all democracy in 1975 after the country's weak parliament dared to ask questions about the government granting the US navy use of key facilities.

The majority of the population are Shia Muslims — while the ruling family comes from the Sunni branch of Islam.

The rulers have used the religious split to divide the population and better secure their own control.

But the oil revenues on which the state depends have slumped due to falling prices and lack of sales.

As a result widespread poverty and unemployment

Bahrain's secret police force is run by a former British Special Branch officer, Ian Henderson, whose forces have systematically beaten, tortured and killed opponents.

Over 2,000 opponents of the regime have been jailed. Yet despite the repression the

protests have continued.

The conditions which have fuelled the growing revolt in Bahrain are common to many Gulf states, not least the giant Saudi Arabia whose rulers and Western backers will be eyeing events on the island off the coast nervously.

## Algerian pay cut strike

WORKERS in Algeria staged a two day general strike recently against government plans to cut wages.

The strike brought the country to a standstill as workers in factories, transport, the post and schools walked out. Only oil and gas workers stayed at work.

Prime minister Ahmed Ouyahia announced wage cuts equivalent to seven days pay a month for millions of workers.

The strike, called by the main UGTA union federation, was aimed at forcing the government to drop the threat.

The government has now said it will postpone the wage cuts until next month, but UGTA leaders say they will call more action unless the plan is dropped completely.

The strike is a hint of the workers' struggle that is the real alternative to the bloody civil war between the government and Islamist groups which has claimed tens of thousands of lives in the last few years.

The rulers' response has been savage repression.

# The ceasefire shatters... The ceasefire s

# The blame lies with the Tories



Tories set the scene for the Docklands bomb

**THE DECISION** of the IRA to end the ceasefire after 17 months of peace was an appalling tragedy.

Already fear and depression is starting to stalk the streets of cities like Belfast. Many believe that the old cycle of suffering and repression is about to return.

They know that it will be working class areas which are the hardest hit. The aptly named 'Gold Coast' in North Antrim where the wealthy live was barely affected by the 25 years of 'The Troubles'.

But while the media and the politicians condemn the IRA for the return to violence, they have pointedly refused to point the finger of blame at John Major.

Yet 67% of people in a recent poll in the Irish Re-

is highly accurate.

Before the IRA ceasefire, the British government held secret talks with the IRA.

They promised them that if they stopped, there would be 'an imaginative response' from their side and that talks could soon get underway.

But on the day after the ceasefire was announced, Major told the House of Commons that a period of 'de-contamination' would

be required. Obstacle after obstacle was then put up to all-party talks.

## Focus

The Tories spent the first two months demanding that the IRA use the word 'permanent' before Sinn Fein leaders could talk to British government ministers.

Then they began to focus on the issue of 'de-commissioning.'

by **KIERAN ALLEN**

public have indicated that the British Tories must take responsibility for the breakdown. It is a perception that

## The bankruptcy of Republicanism

# Why did the Tories let the ceasefire go?

FOR several years prior to the ceasefire the British government repeatedly declared that 'it had no long term strategic interest in Northern Ireland.'

This was never fully true. They certainly had a political interest in shoring up the authority of their army and encouraging workers to show loyalty to 'Queen and country'. That is why they were so adamant to push the IRA as close to surrender as they could.

Nevertheless the relationship between Britain and Northern Ireland has changed since partition was first established. Northern industry had gone into decline and a huge subsidy of billions has had to be paid out.

The British ruling class knew that their interests could be equally safeguarded if the Southern government moved closer to them in the institutions of the European Union. Any military or strategic goals could be fully achieved when the neutrality was abolished.

This is why both governments spent years before the ceasefire



Major needs the votes Trimble

working on a proposals that could lay the basis for a new settlement in Ireland.

The broad outline of that settlement involved some form of power sharing in Northern Ireland and an institutional role for the Southern government as a guarantor for the status of middle class Catholics.

Their aim was to co-opt the republican leadership into this plan while allowing them to aspire to a United Ireland in the future.

As Ed Maloney wrote in the *Sunday Tribune* "the proposals for a Sunningdale Mark 2 found surprising support among the leadership and supporters of the republican movement".

But like many of the world's rulers today, the British establishment is split and is unable to control events.

Major has become the most unpopular Prime Minister since polls began.

Not only does he need the votes of Trimble to survive, he presides over a party that is split on Europe.

One Tory MP summed it up accurately when he claimed that, "Major is the prisoner of 20 or so hard-line Unionists within the party who won't move unless Trimble says okay".

Key sections of the British establishment still want a settlement. Key figures in the IRA are undoubtedly still willing to buy into it.

But the general instability that confronts the rulers of capitalism today means they cannot even come to a modest deal to restructure the sectarian basis of the North.

The resumption of a bombing campaign shows that republicanism has come to a dead end.

It offers nothing to those who want to see radical change in Ireland, including the end of oppression against Catholics in Northern Ireland.

The new campaign will heighten sectarianism to an unprecedented pitch. It will help to drive thousands of Protestant workers into the hands of the UDA and UVF. It will provide an excuse for the Irish and British governments to introduce new levels of repression.

And if it failed to deliver concrete results after 25 years of suffering, then there is little prospect it will do as now. Almost every variety of tactic within the armed struggle — including bombing England — has been tried before and failed.

Despite their willingness to order bombs to be planted the IRA leaders are more than willing to make their peace with imperial-



Gerry Adams

ism than at any other time in recent years.

A few short weeks ago they openly encouraged their supporters to provide crowd scenes for Bill Clinton's election campaign.

## Pressure

They had hoped that this was a means of 'using' Clinton to put pressure on the British government.

But Clinton has more in common with fellow imperialists who joined with his country in the Gulf War than with working class Catholics.

Despite the huge suffer-

ing the bombing campaign will cause, the 'war aims' of the IRA this time are very modest indeed. Gone is all talk of an Eire Nua or bringing any fundamental change to Ireland as a whole.

The objective of the IRA leadership today is only 'all-party talks'.

They see the new campaign as a way of winning leverage to help Adams and McGuinness in future negotiations.

This is why even in the midst of a bombing campaign they still talk about having 'a nationalist consensus'.

They think that they can both bomb London and still play to conservatives like Albert Reynolds who they have transformed into a hero.

It is an absurd strategy. Instead of achieving anything, in all likelihood, the new campaign will open up a huge crisis at the heart of republicanism.

Never has the need for a clear socialist alternative which stresses the need for class unity been more urgent.

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# shatters... The ceasefire shatters... Th

## School student speaks out...

**KATHERINE HASLETT** is the 18 year old A-level student at Foyle and Londonderry College, the Protestant grammar school in Derry and a member of the Socialist Workers Party.

She recently spoke at the Trades Council organised Rally for Peace in Derry after the Canary Wharf bomb. We spoke to her after the rally.

**SW:** What was the response of your family and friends to you speaking at the rally?

**KH:** They were all fine about it. Most said: "I'm really proud of you for getting up there and speaking like that, I wouldn't have had the nerve."

A friend of my Mum's has "adopted" me since—it turns out she was on all the early civil rights marches, for one man one vote and all that.

At school there wasn't much response—most of them have no interest in politics.

**SW:** Some of the Peace and Reconciliation people complained that the rally was alienating people from a Protestant background because it criticised the Tories. What do you think of that?

**KH:** I know hardly anyone who supports the Tories. I suppose you could say that my family's never been that staunch Protestant or Unionist.

Granny would have been but she's had to relax her views because of my uncle being gay and my other uncle marrying a Catholic and my Dad marrying a woman who was divorced.

So my family has never been bigoted—they'd all be Labour supporters.

But when we sell *Socialist Worker* in working

class Protestant housing estates you can see it's not just my family and friends—everyone hates the Tories!

Everybody is being affected by low wages and unemployment and the health cuts. But even on things like the RUC—they don't want the RUC any more than people in Catholic areas.

You get pretty much the same response in Nelson Drive as you would do in the Shantallow on, say, the release of prisoners.

### Release

Most people are for their release. I can't see how anyone can say that Protestant workers support the Tories.

**SW:** It can't be easy being a socialist in a school—what kind of things can you do?

**KH:** There are so many people in secondary school who haven't got a notion about the political situation and who say "it doesn't affect me" and when you try to talk to them and say you should form your own ideas and make up your own mind about things, they're not interested.

And it's really frustrating sometimes when you say: "don't you think you're oppressed as a young person, and exploited by being expected to work for such low wages in places like McDonalds", they just

say "this is what you've got to get used to."

Well I don't think you have to get used to it! Then you do get a few more people who would be much more open minded and willing to accept new ideas and think about them and give you some support.

And there's other things you can do.

For example, I put up a poster in the common room about the gay rights march before Christmas.

And it meant that for lesbian and gay students at the school they had an opportunity to come out in the streets, along with students who were straight, and say "look, we're gay and proud we're gay."

**SW:** As a young person, what do you think about things now, after three bombs in London?

**KH:** It's our generation who are facing all this again. It was a real shock for us the Friday of the bomb. We really felt it.

I think that being willing to go out onto the streets and demonstrate and shout and get people up off their arses to do something helps.

It must be horrible to be sitting at home on your own shouting at the TV and saying this is terrible.

There's so many young people who want to tell the politicians to stop their dilly-dallying and their disputes, cos it's our lives that they're basically playing with.

A lot of young people, if they knew what we do to challenge sectarianism and really change society, they would get up and come out and join us.

## Hope from Derry

**No Return to War. Don't let the Tories wreck the peace process**

That was the slogan of 2,000 workers who marched through the streets of Derry within days of the IRA bombing of Canary Wharf.

Workers from United Technologies, civil servants, telecom workers joined the demonstration which was organised by Derry Trades Council.

When the management of the DHSS heard the slogans they refused to sanction attendance at the rally because they were 'criticising the government'.

But some workers came out anyway.

### Unity

The march was joined by school students from local Catholic and Protestant schools. It was a magnificent display of working class unity.

The speech of Eamonn McCann, the Trades Council chairperson was carried live on Radio Foyle.

In it he denounced the Tories for being "more interested in office than keeping the peace" and criticised Labour leader Tony Blair for "failing to generate debate about the fundamentals of British policy in Ireland".

At the 6,000 strong Belfast

rally, by contrast, the ICTU leaders ruled that no criticism of the Tory government should be allowed.

So pleased was Mayhew with this decision that civil servants in Stormont were told over the tannoy system to go to the march.

The ICTU leaders claimed that any criticism of the Tories would 'alienate' Protestants. It was a disgusting, patronising lie.

When the Scottish TUC General Secretary, Campbell Christie made the one criticism of Major for not calling an election in Britain, there were huge cheers.

Protestant and Catholic workers hate what the Tories have done to their health service and despise their new plans to attack the unemployed.

Protestant workers as well as Catholics know that Major will put his survival in office above the prospects for peace in Ireland.

In the coming months the best hope of preserving the peace lies in the unity of Catholic and Protestant workers.

The sectarian politicians have had 17 months to work with the British and Irish governments — and have failed.

The movement for peace must now come from below. That movement needs to be informed with a set of politics which sees class as the main divide.

That was what was so inspiring about the Derry march.

### Class

The organisers understood that the assertion of a common class identity is the best insulation against sectarian pressures.

But workers unity cannot be built in the abstract. The experience of the past shows that sectarian tensions can tear away at movements that are based simply on wearing a white ribbon or pretending to be 'non-political'.

This is why real workers unity has to be forged in the course of struggle against the Tories and the class who support them.

The prospects for peace on this island depend on it.



No one wants a return to war

They did nothing to recall any of the 150,000 legal weapons that are held in Northern Ireland but they still wanted the IRA to formally surrender.

This demand was never advanced in any other peace process around the world. Yasser Arafat's PLO never handed in weapons before the hard line Israeli government negotiated with them.

Even though the Western powers labelled the leaders of the Bosnia Serbs as 'war criminals', they never demanded that they hand in weapons before they negotiated with them.

### Prepare

The British and Irish government instructed George Mitchell to prepare a report on de-commissioning.

When it was published it demanded further concessions from the IRA—including the handing of arms before a final negotiated settlement was reached. But Major even brushed this report aside.

Instead he claimed that elections for a Stormont style assembly could open the way to peace negotiations.

Yet every single prominent politician from the nationalist side made clear their opposition.

An assembly would be used as a stepping stone to full scale majority rule in Northern Ireland.

Major's manoeuvres already allowed Trimble grow in confidence as he refused to discuss 'the internal affairs' of Northern Ireland with Dick Spring.

No wonder that even the Tory MP, Peter Temple Morris admitted after the IRA bombing of Canary Wharf, "once we decided not to operate within the Mitchell report but outside it... the scene was set for a possible resumption of violence".

### ISLE OF DOGS RESIDENT SPEAKS:

## These bombs hit ordinary workers



Mostly local workers being hit in bombs like that in the Isle of Dogs

**REPUBLICANS** have been telling their supporters that the bombing in London is targeted at high class areas that hit at the heart of the British establishment.

But the reality is that it is mainly local workers who are being hit.

Paul McGarr is a local Isle of Dogs resident where the Canary Wharf bomb went off. He spent his time of Friday night helping residents whose windows were blown in move to a community centre. He wrote about his experience in the British *Socialist Worker*.

"The blast damaged office buildings but also badly hit the main working class areas where I live.

The IRA says the bomb is aimed at the British government.

Yet the people in the firing line have nothing at all to do with the British government's disgraceful role in Northern Ireland.

The two men who died, Inan Bashir and John Jefferies, certainly bore no responsibility for the terrible history of British rule and oppression of Catholics in Northern Ireland.

On my estate hundreds of working class families had their homes wrecked. Many suffered terrible cuts as their windows were blasted in.

A disabled young Bengali boy was fortunate enough to escape without serious injury when glass showered around his bed.

Local workers also suffered from the bomb.

Among them are some who have long campaigned in their trade unions against Britain's role in Ireland.

Working class people in the Isle of Dogs have suffered at the hands of the British government. John Major is our enemy too.

Many of the people I spoke too in the aftermath of Friday night were angry and bitter with the IRA. No wonder.

But many also know and argued that John Major is to blame for the failure of the peace process.

The local residents and workers who suffered should and can be allies of those fighting for peace and an end to oppression of Catholics in Northern Ireland.

The IRA bomb does nothing to help win that support.

# After the ceasefire ends...

by ALEX CALLINICOS

# Socialism and Republicanism

**"COWARDS", "Murderers", "Animals", say the press. The end of the IRA's ceasefire has brought all the abuse flooding back. What the media never do is look seriously at what Irish Republicanism stands for, or recognise the socialist alternative.**

**R**EPUBLICANISM IS a distinctive political tradition with its own history. In modern times it has grown, above all, because of the experience of the Catholic population of the North of Ireland.

The North of Ireland was partitioned off from the rest of the island in 1921.

It was built on violence and systematic discrimination against the Catholic population.

The borders of the state, and electoral boundaries within it, were rigged to ensure a Protestant majority. Catholics were and still are a minority in the North as a result. They were discriminated against when it came to jobs and housing and denied basic civil rights.

For 50 years Northern Ireland was controlled by a Loyalist dominated parliament at Stormont. It ruled as a one party state.

But people began to fight back in the late 1960s.

*The civil rights movement saw a new generation, mainly but not wholly Catholic, begin to press for an end to discrimination and for democratic reforms*

It quickly brought them directly into conflict with the repressive structures of the state.

The Protestant only police force, the "B specials", were turned on the demonstrators. Loyalists like Ian Paisley incited Protestants to attack civil rights marchers. Catholic families were firebombed out of their homes.

The British army was deployed on the streets of Northern Ireland in 1969, supposedly to protect Catholic families. But it soon became clear that was not the real intention.

The government in London was concerned to prop up the Northern Ireland state, not to reform it.

**T**HE Provisional IRA came out of this experience. It emerged initially to defend the Catholic working class areas against the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British army.

Then British security forces began an all out offensive. Internment without trial was introduced in 1971.

Hundreds of Catholics were rounded up and imprisoned. Many were tortured.

In January 1972 British paratroopers fired on a demonstration in Derry, killing 14 people.

Internment, the Bloody Sunday



**THE IRA grew as a result of the routine repression of Catholics**

massacre and other atrocities convinced many young working class Catholics that the only solution to the situation lay in the armed struggle being waged by the IRA.

Their goal was the destruction of the Northern state and the creation of a united Irish republic. Among those attracted to the IRA were the present leaders of Sinn Fein, Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness.

**T**HE ESSENCE of the Republican tradition is that it puts nation above class. It is summed up in the words of the leaders of the Easter Rising against the British rule of Ireland in 1916:

"We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible.

"In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty, six times during the last three hundred years they have asserted it in arms."

The goal of Republicanism is thus "national freedom and sovereignty"—a united Ireland free of British domination.

The main division in the world is therefore that between nations.

Thus the Republican movement sees Irish workers and bosses as having, fundamentally, a common interest which arises from their shared national identity.

As a result Republicans find it hard to fit into their strategy the Protestant working class in the North of Ireland

who see themselves as British rather than Irish.

They have been persuaded by Loyalist politicians like Ian Paisley to fear a united Ireland.

The Republican movement often simply dismisses Protestant workers as British dupes. Occasionally, as in the case of the Enniskillen bombing in 1987, the IRA has actually targeted ordinary Protestants.

This only helps to drive Protestant workers to support Unionist politicians. But, whilst better off than Catholics, Protestant workers are much worse off than workers in Britain.

*The average weekly disposable family income in Northern Ireland is 20 percent below that in Britain. In the Shankill Road, one of the main bases of Loyalist support, it is 40 percent less.*

More recently Sinn Fein has taken a more positive attitude, recognising the existence of different "traditions" in Ireland.

But this treats being Catholic or Protestant as fixed "identities", as though differences cannot be changed.

Protestant and Catholic workers can be won, in struggle, to see that they share a common interest against the bosses. Time and again conditions have pushed Protestant and Catholic workers to unite in struggle.

For example during the 1907 Belfast dock strike and the riots over outdoor relief in the early 1930s. But these examples are simply ignored by Republicans.

Similarly Republicans do not see the British working class as a potential ally

in the struggle for a united Ireland. The IRA's bombing campaigns in Britain all too often treat ordinary working class people as targets.

**W**HERE THIS sort of politics has lead became clear. The IRA found itself in an impasse by the early 1980s. Neither they nor the British could win a military victory.

The IRA, based on the Catholic minority in the North, lacked the kind of majority support that allowed other nationalist guerrillas to achieve liberation as in Vietnam and Algeria, for example.

The IRA's base in the Catholic working class ghettos and rural communities along the border, however, was strong enough to prevent the British army and RUC from crushing it.

This military stalemate lay behind the slow process that brought both the British government and the Republican movement to seek a negotiated settlement.

As an IRA document from 1994 put it, "Republicans at this time, and on their own, do not have the strength to achieve the end goal. *The struggle needs to be strengthened, most obviously from other nationalist constituencies led by the SDLP, Dublin government and the emerging Irish-American lobby.*" Thus when Republicans look for allies they do not see them in the working class either in the South of Ireland or in Britain.

They look instead towards the middle class nationalist SDLP, the Southern Irish government with its ferocious

history of persecuting and even executing Republicans and the Clinton administration in the US.

These are all conservative forces. The Southern Irish government is attacking Southern Irish workers, just as Clinton is attacking workers and the poor in the US. None of them are interested in dismantling the Northern Irish state and ending the partition of Ireland.

Therefore Sinn Fein and the IRA have been pressing for negotiations whose best possible outcome would leave them as very junior partners in a power sharing administration in Northern Ireland.

Progress towards this very modest goal has been sabotaged by John Major and Loyalist politicians.

But resumption of the armed struggle will not alter the military stalemate that pushed the Republican movement towards the ceasefire in the first place.

The only escape from this dead end is offered by socialist politics that recognise the common interests that can unite Protestant and Catholic workers against British and Irish bosses alike.

**S**Ocialism offers quite a different vision. For socialists the main division in society is that of class.

Workers of the world have common interests against the employers. Protestant workers are therefore potential allies, not enemies. Catholic and Protestant workers have an interest in uniting against the bosses who hold down wages, cut jobs and attack services.

They also have an interest in linking their fight with workers in the South. That does not mean socialists ignore British imperialism in Ireland. Revolutionary socialists have always defended the right of the Irish people to self determination and to fight to drive British imperialism out of Ireland. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels championed Irish independence in the 1860s.

The great Irish socialist James Connolly was, as one of the leaders of the Easter Rising, executed by a British firing squad.

But the allies of Irish workers are not the bosses, the presidents and prime ministers of the US, Britain and Southern Ireland. A reorganised Northern Irish state will not end the discrimination against Catholics or end poverty for both Protestant and Catholic workers. A stable peace can only be built on the basis of Protestant and Catholic unity.

The way forward for Irish workers, both for peace and for decent houses, jobs, schools and a health service, is through fighting back together.

That will take socialist ideas, organisation and agitation to win Protestant workers away from sectarianism. It means arguing with Catholic workers about who their allies are.

But the ceasefire has opened up the possibility for class politics to be heard again in Ireland. Socialists must now fight to maintain that possibility.



**Behind  
the  
headlines**

**Sex,  
Gossip  
and  
Pop Stars**

**"The language of the toilet wall". That is how a Conservative MP. Peter Luff in Britain has described the content of best selling teenage girls magazines like Sugar, Its Bliss and Mizz.**

He was introducing a bill to force the publishers to print an age warning, a bit like cinema ratings on their front cover.

His campaign has won the support of Gay Byrne who devoted a programme to calls from people who wanted a to whip up a campaign against these magazines.

Conservatives everywhere hate the idea of young people, especially young women, asserting their sexuality.

They push 'family values' while at the same time covering up for hypocritical clerics who have engaged in child abuse of young boys and girls.

In Britain magazines like **Just Seventeen** and **Sugar** are the most popular magazines for girls aged 11 to 14 while boys of the same age prefer to read the **Sun**.

Yet Luff and his supporters do not rail against the **Sun** and similar publications.

They exaggerate the amount of explicit sex in the girls magazines.

The magazines certainly do attempt to address issues about contraception, being gay and generally what it's like to grow up.

The main problem with these magazines is all the trivia about pop and soap stars, fashion and make up tips.

The message is not new. It is a more explicit version of teenage magazines like **Jackie**, popular 20 years ago.

The new magazines reflect the increasing commercialisation of sex and the way the market has encroached more and more into every area of our lives.

They are a lucrative business - worth an estimated £62 million last year. **Sugar** at £1.40 a copy sells nearly 320,000 copies a month.

Sex is used on the front cover as a selling point.

For example, the magazines advertise "sealed sex sections". **Mizz** magazine, this month, has a "Secret-your pull out and hide section."

This self censorship is actually similar to Luff's own suggestion of age warnings.

It encourages the idea that sex should not be discussed openly.

In fact the "sealed sexually explicit" sections are often the most informative and least offensive parts of the magazine.

The 16 page sealed section

in this month's **Sugar**, for example, contains mostly sensible advice on sex.

Any kind of censorship is likely in this being cut rather than the endless articles on boys, gossip and fashion.

The overwhelming message in the magazines is that getting a boyfriend is the most important event in a young woman's life - and to get one you need to look slim and sexy.

They portray reactionary images and stereo types of women and men.

Nowhere do the magazines reflect the wider concerns of young women - the finding of a job or college places, the challenging of racism or sexism or major political issues.

What about the young women who don't fit the stereotype or have more to do than worry about boys all the time?

Such magazines can contribute to young women's lack of confidence, fuelling doubts about their looks, feelings and sexuality.

But this isn't what concerns the conservatives. They continually attack the very idea of sex education in schools.

A survey in **It's Bliss** magazine found that only 5 percent of respondents got any information about sex from their parents and just 6 percent from school.

The right wing claim that information about sex and contraception encourages the young to have sex before they reach 16.

The opposite is true. A survey by the World Health Organisation concluded that sex education delays or decreases young people's sexual activity.

Moreover, discovering and exploring your sexuality is part of growing up.

Coming to terms with new sexual feelings can be both exciting and scary. But conservatives want to smother such feelings with shame.

This can only lead to misery and much higher risks of unwanted pregnancy, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

Young people need more not less information about sex.

The real scandal is that right wingers have made it harder for young people to get such information, forcing them to rely on the very magazines they attack.

**Hazel Croft**

film:

**Up from the  
crack den?**

by  
**JENNY  
WITT**

**SPIKE LEE'S** latest movie about the life (and death) of clockers, small drug dealers, in New York is a treat.

With two white cops and plenty of drug dealers you'd think the plot was somewhat predictable. Not so.

Strike (Mekhi Phifer), a young small-time dealer, grows up under the wings and guardianship of Rodney. Rodney's local shop happens to conceal a buzzing drugs distribution centre.

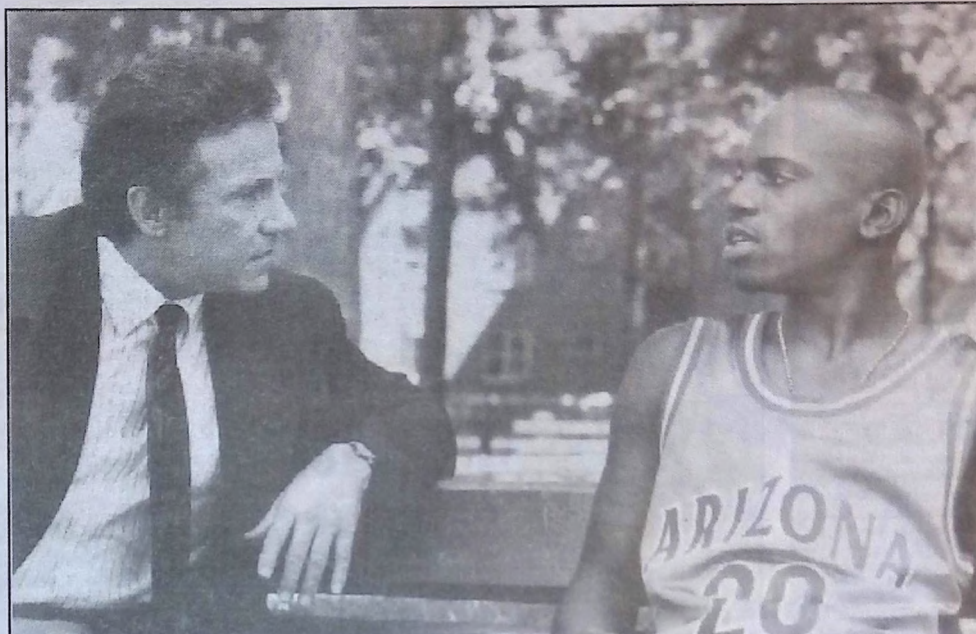
During one of their nightly drives, Rodney stops outside a fast-food joint and tells Strike that a guy who works there "is to be got" - Strike's first opportunity to try out his gun on another petty criminal.

A little later, Strike looks on from behind the 'Crime scene - do not cross' tape as cops Rocco Klein (Harvey Keitel) and Larry Mazilli (John Turturro) count the dead waiter's bullet holes. Soon, Detective Klein catches up with Strike - to tell him that his brother Victor has confessed to the killing.

Klein doesn't believe Victor's story. The net tightens around Strike and ... go and see. For once this is a film with a brilliant ending.

**Clockers** shows the violent, grim estates Strike and many black kids never manage to escape from. Crack cocaine changes hands in broad daylight in front of a sign saying "Welcome to Nelson Mandela Buildings".

A standard sunny day in the park involves police raids and strip searches ("Spread your buttocks, bitch!") Outlandish detectives descend on Strike for information, scattering



**Detective Rocco Klein (Harvey Keitel) ready to frame Strike (Mekhi Phifer)**

their business cards ("... you may wish to call me.") and continue their questioning for an eternity while Strike vomits handfuls of blood from his growing stomach ulcer.

"You should go and see a doctor," is Klein's helpful advice.

The cops' racism doesn't stop back at base: they lambast 'Nubians' and 'niggers' in front of their black colleague in the police station. Spike Lee's scenes reflect most blacks' total distrust of the US legal system following the Rodney King beatings.

However, as in Lee's earlier films the message is that America's great divide runs between black and white. In **Clockers**, too, the one black cop is basically a goodie, although the white Klein does display some genuine concern towards Strike.

**Negligible**

Secondly, and very annoyingly, Spike Lee once again gives women an utterly negligible part in the whole plot, although concerned with keeping the family together. The bottle of 'Chocolate Moo'

milk drink, Strike's hall mark, features more prominently than his mother - who holds the key to the film's story line.

Don't expect a radical message. The Clinton administration's wrecking of the health services and law and order crackdown are not mentioned.

In fact, Lee quite happily aligns with the US mainstream in condemning drugs and violence.

But **Clockers**' great strength lies in its analysis of how alienation can mess up individuals like Strike, the petty dealer with a handy gun and

a hobby train set, and his hard-working brother Victor. **Clockers** climaxes as 12-year old Shorty gets in on the action.

You'll enjoy the soundtrack and some of the whackier lines from Strike and the cops alike. As social commentary goes it portrays today's USA and the black experience without a way forward. But Gallanstown never seems that far removed from the New York 'projects' - and socialists should point out that blacks, whites, Asians and Latinos rose up together in Los Angeles in 1992.

book:

**Mistrust at the end of history**

**FRANCIS FUKUYAMA**, former adviser to the Bush administration, gained notoriety when he published an article declaring the end of history. The subsequent book **The End of History and the Last Man**, written in the aftermath of the collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe, described how the triumph of "liberal capitalist democracy" was complete. The "New World Order" was the shorthand for Fukuyama's ideas.

The Gulf War caused a refinement of his initial theory.

Whilst still at the end of history some countries may not have realised it yet. Fukuyama used the metaphor of a wagon train heading through the old West. Some of the wagons may be ramshackle, some may fall by the wayside occasionally, but they all share the same destination.

Obviously the millions starving in the Third World may not see how they are on the same train as the bosses of the Western Banks, or how the 500,000 dead on the Basra Road constitute a falling off to the wayside.

Even the most able defenders of the present system like Fukuyama have had to respond to the continued crisis of capitalism.

He has now produced a follow up book **Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity**.

It is a response to a specific problem for American capitalism.

Fukuyama attempts to explain why Asian economies have consistently outstripped the West in terms of growth whilst the "liberal democracies" of Europe and America are in crisis.

He still considers this to be the end of history and that:

*"Liberal Democracy and capitalism remain essentially, indeed the only framework for the political and economic organisation of modern societies."*

But he suggests that unfettered market economics is only "80% right". What is needed to make the most of the end of history is the concept of trust.

Fukuyama believes that those societies that do well (by which he means have high profit rates) are the ones that have high levels of trust. For profits to be made Fukuyama wants a high level of cohesion in society. As he describes it, "workers are more likely to work harder if they feel they are treated as adults".



**Francis Fukuyama**

But all the talk of trust means nothing. Why should ordinary people have any trust in the rulers that produce so much misery whilst making huge profits for themselves.

He sees the structures of "civil society" (churches, voluntary and community groups and the family) as the way of making sure that capitalism runs smoothly.

The suggestion that if only we all did what we were told by church, family and union leaders then all our problems would disappear is clearly farcical.

Fukuyama makes a distinction between those societies that have an integrated civil society (high trust) and those where the structures of so-

ciety are against the production of profit.

He talks of distinctive cultures that are pro prosperity. Yet it is quite clear that capitalism constantly shapes and homogenises culture to fit its own needs. More and more, people around the world share a common culture.

Fukuyama's subtext in talking about culture is that he wants to encourage family values like the ones promoted by the American right wing to become part and parcel of local cultures around the world. This can be seen when he speaks in glowing terms about the success of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea in more than halving employment in older industries and still being able to hold traditional values together.

The book is an attempt to come to terms with the crisis from a ruling class point of view. It hopes to offer a strategy for the bosses. Fortunately for workers the strategy is flawed.

It is noticeable that France is amongst Fukuyama's low trust societies. The events of last year in France show that a healthy mistrust of employers and governments mean that history is far from over.

**Francis Fukuyama Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity** Hamish Hamilton £25.00  
**—Simon Basketter**

where we stand

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

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system. The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion. To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

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

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

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

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

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

news & reports—politics; the unions—

PUBLIC

Solidarity with Liverpool dockers



LIVERPOOL dockers have voted overwhelmingly to turn down a £25,000 payoff and continue their six month fight for jobs.

A staggering 84 percent voted to continue their strike—despite pressure from the union leaders of the TGWU.

Collection

Meanwhile solidarity for the dockers continues to come from Ireland. Waterford Glass workers have raised a big collection and are organising a levy on their members. SIPTU members in Waterford have also donated £500.

Waterford busworkers fight yellow pack jobs

BUS WORKERS in Waterford have been in dispute twice recently over the introduction of new buses, the IMP.

tacked the decision to pay new drivers 'yellow pack rates'.

for the new drivers are also below standard.

dancy offers have been made to the permanent drivers.

The drivers have at-

Pensions Pension arrangements

The IMP buses have been allowed for a trial run on one route. But already redun-

More action could be likely in the future.

Public Sector workers are beginning to take action against attacks on their conditions.

Thousands of health workers and civil servants have already taken part in stoppages and Dublin Bus workers are balloting for a one day strike.

Here, Socialist Worker gives a roundup of where the action is happening and where it is likely to happen.

ESB

AS Socialist Worker went to press, trade union leaders were set to endorse the £270 million ESB restructuring plan.

But ESB workers should reject the Cost and Competitive Review. The plan involves: ■ 2,000 redundancies out of a total workforce of 9,400.

without have regard for the social costs involved.

In Britain privatisation has meant mega salaries for the bosses, rotten conditions for workers and worsening service for consumers.

The company is prepared to throw £270 million at redundancy payments to get this through.

Sell

But even big redundancy payments are eventually spent and workers can be a long time on the dole.

But the union leaders seem intent on trying to ram it through.

Having got the redundancies, ESB hope to have decisively weakened trade unionism in the job, allowing them to push further "flexibility"

They have laid down a four week "Communication Period" where they will try to sell the deal to their members.

■ Restructuring prices and softening up the ESB for privatisation.

This will be more like an "Indoctrination Period". They are trying to sap any resistance to the plan.

The government wants a situation where big companies can buy their electricity from competing suppliers

Only in late March will a ballot be held.

ESB union activists will have to organise to get the deal rejected.

SWP branch meetings—all welcome

BELFAST Meets every Wednesday at 8pm Penny Farthing Bar Central Belfast Feb 28th: Marx and the Communist Manifesto; March 6th: Can Socialism liberate women?

BRAY Meets every Monday at 8pm in Mayfair Hotel. Feb 26th: Is the Communist Manifesto still relevant?; March 6th: Dublin District Rally: The fight for women's rights, see below for details, note change of venue/day

Beaumont Family Recreation Centre, Kilmore Rd. Feb 28th: Is the Communist Manifesto still relevant?; Wednesday March 6th: Dublin District Rally: The fight for women's rights, see below for details, note change of venue/day

DUBLIN TALLAGHT/CLONDALKIN Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm, Clonsilla Sports & Leisure centre. Feb 28th: Is the Communist Manifesto still relevant?; Wednesday March 6th: Dublin District Rally: The fight for women's rights, see below for details, note change of venue

MAYNOOTH Meets every Thursday at 6 pm in Class Hall D.Arts Block, Maynooth College. Feb 29th: Is the Communist Manifesto still relevant?; March 7th: Feminism, socialism and women's liberation

WATERFORD Meets every Thursday at 8pm in ATGWU Hall, Keaysr St. Feb 29th: Is the Communist Manifesto still relevant?; March 7th: Is there an Alternative to the market?

CORK Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Denny's Pub, Cornmarket St. Feb 29th: Is there an Alternative to the market?; March 7th: Marx and the Communist Manifesto

DUBLIN NORTH-WEST Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in The Old Brogue, Dorset St. Feb 27th: Is the Communist Manifesto still relevant?; March 6th: Dublin District Rally: The fight for women's rights, see below for details, note change of venue/day

DUBLIN DRINNAGH Monday 26th Feb 8.30pm Ballyfermot Community Association: The North: Which way forward?; Wednesday March 6th: Dublin District Rally: The fight for women's rights, see below for details, note change of venue/day

DUN LAOGHAIRE Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Smyths Pub. Feb 27th: What do socialists say about crime?; Wednesday March 6th: Dublin District Rally: The fight for women's rights, see below for details, note change of venue/day

DERRY Meets every Tuesday in Badgers Bar at 8pm Feb 27th: Is the Communist Manifesto still relevant?; March 5th: Reform or Revolution: which way forward?

DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in the Artane/

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in Conways, Parnell St. Feb 28th: The Gulf war, five years on; Wednesday March 6th: Dublin District Rally: The fight for women's rights, see below for details, note change of venue

GALWAY Meets every Thursday at 6pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square Feb 29th: Is the Communist Manifesto still relevant?; March 7th: Is there an Alternative to the market?

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

DUBLIN RATHMINES Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in O'Connells Pub, Richmond Street. Feb 28th: The Politics of Leon Trotsky; Wednesday March 6th: Dublin District Rally: The fight for women's rights, see below for details, note change of venue

DUBLIN SOUTH-CENTRAL Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St. Feb 29th: Is the Communist Manifesto still relevant?; Wednesday March 6th: Dublin District Rally: The fight for women's rights, see below for details, note change of venue/day

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

Dublin District Rally Socialist Worker RALLY THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS: WHERE TO NOW? Speaker: JUDITH ORR (SWP-Britain) Wednesday March 6th 8.00pm ATGWU Hall, Middle Abbey St Bookstall opens at 7.00pm

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

# SECTOR WORKERS ... PREPARING FOR BATTLE

## Nurses

**NURSES** were poised to overwhelmingly reject Health Minister Noonan's pay offer as we went to press.

Monster nurses' meetings in January hammered home that nurses were ready to fight for decent pay.

The government's offer is a delaying tactic.

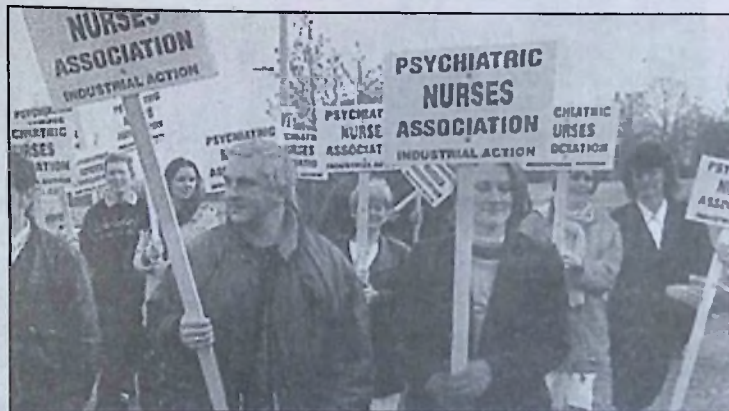
It means:

■ An increase that would bring the top of the scale to £19,207.

But the target figure set by the nurses' unions is £21,000.

■ The new maximum would also only be reached after another six years has been added onto the scale.

■ There are no increases beyond the normal PCW for those lower down on the scale—despite the fact that all nurses face increased stress



Psychiatric nurses taking action last year

levels.

Nurses should reject this offer outright.

The government is taking a tough line with nurses in order to hold back workers throughout the public sector.

If nurses win a decent pay

rise, the government fears it will encourage other poorly-paid public sector workers to fight back.

### Support

But it works the other way too—nurses taking action can be sure of the support of masses of workers.

The health service is in crisis from underfunding which affects patients as well as staff.

■ Over two thousand hospi-

tal beds have been cut in the past ten years leaving many patients accommodated on trolleys, chairs and even on floor space.

■ One study found nurses often lift the equivalent of a ton in an hour, leading to one in twelve nurses ending up with some form of disability.

After the rejection of the offer it will be necessary to quickly escalate the action from a series of stoppages to full scale industrial action, with emergency cover.

## Teachers

**THE negotiations between the government and teachers' unions INTO, ASTI and TUI have reached a stalemate.**

The deal due to be voted on in January has still not materialised. It is clear however that the deal will see most teachers making small gains in the area of early retirement but at the price of working longer hours.

Teachers want to retire earlier from a highly stressful occupation but if longer hours are accepted in return, that stress will increase.

Last year's one day teachers strike and demonstration put Niamh Breathnach and the government under pressure. It shows how teachers can win their early retirement claim without having to make compromises.

## Dublin Corporation

**WHEN Dublin Corporation attempted to introduce outside contractors in the Ballymun flats complex, unions representing general operatives threatened strike action.**

Bin men refused to collect the rubbish and the Corpo backed down.

Two caretakers who were suspended during the dispute were re-instated with full pay.

The general operatives' unions have already rejected a job-cutting plan extending across all departments.

But management now plan mobile squads for caretakers. With less caretakers in the flats, tenants' services and conditions would worsen.

But jobs and services can be defended with workers' action.

## Civil Service

**THE half-day stoppage on 21st February is just the start of a campaign of action by the CPSU against the embargo on jobs.**

Ruairi Quinn's announcement of the embargo was a slap in the face to Civil Servants who had been awaiting the outcome of restructuring talks which they hoped would be a step towards alleviating low pay.

One CPSU activist, who spoke to *Socialist Worker*, angrily accused the government of a breach of the promise of 'meaningful negotiations' contained in the PCW:

"Their response to 'meaningful negotiations' on restructuring is to impose unilaterally an embargo on their lowest paid workers."

The embargo means that only one in three vacancies will be filled in the Civil Service. About 800 per year leave the clerical grades of the Civil Service. The embargo will only allow about 260 of these posts to be filled.

lower grades. Higher civil service posts were filled while the lower grades were hardest hit.

Civil Servants are ready to fight back this time. A CPSU Consultative Conference on 24th February is likely to lead to further action.

But other unions like the PSEU and IMPACT should join forces with the CPSU.

The Architectural and Heritage Services Branch of IMPACT passed a motion unanimously to support the CPSU stoppage as part of a campaign against the embargo.

One IMPACT member told *Socialist Worker*, "a broad campaign is needed along the lines of the nurses' action. Their unity should be a model for us in the Civil Service."

### Basic

The understaffing will lead to delays in basic services like dole payments and passport applications.

The restructuring deal would have meant increased promotion opportunities for Clerical Assistants hoping to escape poverty wages. But the embargo will severely limit the chance of promotion.

The last embargo in the 1980s led to promotion prospects drying up for the

## Telecom Eireann

**CPSU members in Telecom Eireann's Eircell subsidiary began a work to rule and overtime ban on 13th February against the use of FAS contracts to fill vacancies.**

Telecom's use of FAS recruits shows up the hypocrisy of their claim to be overstaffed. While thousands of redundancies have taken place the company is now using Work Experience as a source of cheap temporary labour.

In a letter to the FAS workers the CPSU made it clear that the dispute is not a personal attack on them.

### Welcomes

The letter says the union welcomes new employees as long as they are brought in under agreed conditions.

■ Unions in Telecom Eireann have promised to resist a company circular which threatens to force employees to retire at age 60 instead of 65.

It is an attempt to force people to take early retirement or be forcibly retired. If Telecom succeed in this aim it could open the door to compulsory redundancies.

## Non nursing staff

**OVER 3,000 non-nursing staff walked out for four hours on February 15 following an 18 to 1 ballot to demand action on their pensions.**

The action, by SIPTU members in Dublin's EHB and voluntary hospitals and more than 50 health centres, was solid throughout the region. Two further stoppages were planned for late February.

At present, after 40 years service, health workers are retiring on £28 a week.

A care assistant told *Socialist Worker*: "Our pension is a disgrace. After a lifetime working to care for others, the government expects us to retire to poverty."

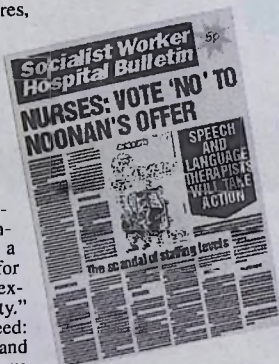
A canteen worker agreed: "We've waited five years and we've got nothing. We'll have to take more action until we win our rights."

The Labour Relations Commission called in both sides for a hearing as we went to press. But unless the workers' demands are met the action will have to be escalated.

One SIPTU health service union activist told *Socialist Worker*: "The huge support for the four hour stoppage in

Dublin has wide implications for SIPTU in the health service around the country.

"SIPTU needs to spread the action. This is a national pension scheme. Workers in Cork and Galway have an identical scheme. They need to be brought into the action".



■ The second issue of *Socialist Worker Hospital Bulletin*, written by Socialist Workers Party members and supporters in the health service, was produced in time for the days of action.

Take copies to circulate in your hospital/health centre. £2 per 100 from *Socialist Worker Hospital Bulletin*, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

## Dublin Bus

**NBRU members in Dublin Bus are balloting for a one day strike over the company's treatment of drivers who have been assaulted.**

At present Dublin Bus guarantees a year's full pay for drivers injured and off work through assault.

The company now plans to cut this to six months. They are also demanding that assaulted drivers attend the driving school under the supervision of an inspector five days a week and attend a gymnasium or else lose their pay.

The company also proposes to have inspectors calling on assaulted drivers at their homes within two days of the incident.

In Conyngham Road garage in late February drivers threatened to refuse to take their buses out when two drivers had their wages withheld for refusing to go to the training school. In the face of this action the company backed down.

### Intimidate

One bus worker told *Socialist Worker*: "The company is trying to intimidate back to work drivers who are off sick due to assaults."

"Dublin Bus has always made light of assaults. Screens have even now not been fitted to all buses."

"The company dragged its feet on Autofare -- the cashless bus. After five years of stalling, it took the strike last May to get the company to move."

"Even now only four routes have been put on Autofare and Dublin Bus says it will take two years to extend the cashless buses to all routes."

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

inside:

The fight for women's rights today—page four

Socialism and Republicanism—page eight

# PAY

# THE

# NURSES!



**IN JANUARY, 29 patients had to be left on trolleys in the corridors of Galway's main University Hospital.**

The people who had to take the brunt of the stress in dealing with the situation were poorly paid nurses.

This type of crisis is happening because the govern-

ment refuses to fund the health service properly.

They are more interested in cutting the taxes of the rich.

### Balloting

Now nurses around the country are balloting on a new pay deal.

Reports from meetings already indicate that they

will throw out Health Minister Noonan's miserly offer.

"He thinks that he can treat us like Florence Nightingale's."

"We are supposed to do the work for the love of it and forget about trivial little things like decent pay," one nurse told *Socialist Worker*.

The nurses have fallen

behind many other groups of workers.

They have few promotion prospects but have had to take on more responsibilities in recent years.

### Deserve

They deserve a salary that puts them over £20,000 after their nine years service and training.

And they also need big increase right down the scale.

The last year has seen politicians boast that Ireland is the booming economy in Europe.

But workers have seen few benefits.

The nurses fight could help to change all that. If they manage to break through it could pave the

way for other groups of workers.

It could help to set a target of a 10% wage rise for everyone to help catch up with all the wasted sacrifices of recent years.

That is why they deserve the support of every trade unionist.

**PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS PREPARE FOR ACTION: TURN TO PAGE 11**