

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p

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Storming the
heavens

—CENTRE PAGES

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the sake
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Solidarity price £1

Justice for Peadar O'Grady



Don't let them jail this man

■ 1,000 women infected
with Hep-C—no prosecution

■ Haughey, Lowry and
Burke—no prosecution

■ Dr Peadar O'Grady—on
trial for speaking out

DR PEADAR O'Grady—a Socialist Workers Party candidate in the last general election—is the only person on trial after the recent political scandals.

He was arrested while electioneering in May when he spoke out against corruption.

While making a speech outside the shopping centre he was bundled into a police car and held for six hours. He was charged on a number of counts under the Public Order Act.

The prosecution case hinges on a series of statements by gardai claiming

Peadar behaved in an insulting manner.

Only one statement was made by anyone other than a member of the Garda Síochána—and that was taken eleven days later claiming Peadar was doing a lot of "mouthing".

Peadar O'Grady was denouncing the huge sums of money accepted by leading politicians and said he believed Haughey and

Lowry should face jail for their actions.

Accompanied by about half a dozen supporters handing out leaflets Peadar spoke without amplification.

Yet ludicrously gardai claim he was disrupting business in the shops in the area.

While held at Rathmines Garda station Dr O'Grady was roughly handled.

As he was about to be let go, he complained about his treatment and was immediately re-arrested.

Gardai claim that while held in the station and surrounded by cops he behaved in a threatening manner and even assaulted a garda.

TURN TO PAGE TWO

**Demonstrate outside the Court:
Wednesday November 12
10.00am Court 50, Richmond
Hospital Complex**

On trial for speaking out against corruption

FROM PAGE ONE

Unusually, the prosecution suddenly came up with a number of new statements just as Dr O'Grady's case was to be heard in early October. The trial was postponed until November.

All the indications are that the authorities want to postpone the hearing until the scandal of corrupt politicians has died down.

They realise that thousands of people would see through the hypocrisy of jailing Dr O'Grady while politicians who accept bribes go free.

Charles Haughey, Michael Lowry and Ray Burke have all admitted to receiving huge sums of money from businessmen. These three are surrounded by a stench of corruption yet none of them have been bundled into a police car for questioning.

In this society that is a fate reserved mainly for working class people, like the woman recently jailed for not paying her TV licence.

There is no likelihood that the scandals in high places will subside before Dr O'Grady's trial takes place. Already a can of worms looks set to open over the rezoning issue.

Several politicians who have served on Dublin County Council recently stated on television that they were either directly or indirectly aware of councillors being bribed for planning permission.

The corrupt politicians will be delighted if Peadar O'Grady, a child psychiatrist, can be branded a 'troublemaker' while they themselves go free. It is essential to build the campaign to have the charges dropped in the O'Grady case.

A broad-based campaign of support has already called one demonstration which was supported by over 600 people and a dozen trade union bodies. The Defence campaign has called for a protest outside the court when Dr O'Grady's case resumes in November.

One of the last public acts of deceased Limerick Labour TD Jim Kemmy was to back the Peadar O'Grady defence campaign.

Support has come from academics, trade unionists, doctors and lawyers many of whom would not necessarily agree politically with Peadar O'Grady. Like Jim Kemmy, they have expressed their concern at the threat this prosecution poses to civil liberties and the right to free speech.

Glen Ding mystery

PAPERS RELATING to the controversial rezoning of Glen Ding woods in Co Wicklow have gone missing, only weeks ahead of a High Court judgement on the issue.

The missing papers relate to two area planning meetings where councillors made representations on planning applications.

Mysteriously, the two documents were filed separately at two different offices. One of them recorded the first meeting where the Glen Ding rezoning was proposed.

As politicians duck for cover from growing scandals, the rezoning controversy is starting to resemble the plot of the X-files.

BRITISH STATE FEARED INDIA REVOLT IN 1916

THE BRITISH Home Office has released documents showing the ruling classes' fears that the 1916 Easter Rising would only be the first crack in the Empire.

A file marked Irish Political Societies, 1876-1914, shows how British agents were worried about links between Irish Republicans

and Indian nationalists.

One agent reported in 1905 that, "the native in India is as anxious to throw off the British yoke as the malcontent Irishman professes to be...an Irish revolt would be aided by a simultaneous Indian rising".

The file was one of the oldest closed Home Office files and was

only recently released by Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw.

But some pages are missing from the file on the grounds of "national security".

If eighty year old papers are still being suppressed imagine what secrets they are keeping about more recent events!

REFUGEES:

O'Donoghue's scapegoating will lead to attacks

JUSTICE Minister John O'Donoghue has launched a vicious racist campaign against asylum seekers.

O'Donoghue wants legislation to prevent what he calls "trafficking" in refugees. He claims that organised gangs are "smuggling" asylum seekers into the country.

But if governments were not passing tougher immigration laws there would be no need for refugees to take such desperate measures to come into the country.

Why won't O'Donoghue jail his Fianna Fail colleague Albert Reynolds who has sheltered the former Mexican dictator Carlos Salinas in this country? But of course such racist measures are only aimed at poor immigrants.

O'Donoghue also wants to jail people who employ illegal immigrants.

This would make it harder for all immigrants, and black people born here, to find work.

Workers at Connolly Station in Dublin have reported that black people are being singled out for harassment on trains coming from the North.

Refugees arriving in Dublin are to be tested for the hepatitis B virus.

They are already being screened for tuberculosis.

Such measures will only strengthen the racist hysteria that claims immigrants from Africa and Asia come here carrying disease.

John O'Donoghue has even managed to link immigration with child prostitution and the smuggling of child pornography.

In reality the hysteria will lead to more attacks on immigrant families living in Ireland.

John O'Donoghue's "get tough" approach is an attempt to divert anger away from the inequalities of the Celtic Tiger, by scapegoating the tiny number of refugees reaching these shores.

Picket Against Racist Harassment
Friday 31 October,
5.30-7.30pm,
Connolly Station,
Amiens St

BLOOD BANK COVER-UP

No prosecutions in State's worst health scandal

THE Director of Public Prosecutions has decided not to prosecute anyone for the Hepatitis C scandal.

One of the women affected said it was "unbelievable" that no prosecutions were to arise from "the greatest health scandal in the history of the State".

"People who were exposed during that inquiry for wrongful acts can now, it appears, escape being held publicly accountable for their actions.

"The lives of close to 1,000 women have been ruined through the known negligence of the Blood Transfusion Service Board, and many more women will die prematurely because of the serious wrongs outlined in the Finlay report".

The government's own report by Justice Finlay blamed senior staff at the BTSB yet none of these is to be prosecuted.

Dr Jack O'Riordain, former national director of the BTSB, bears the "major responsibility" for the infection of anti-D with the hepatitis C virus.

Ms Cecily Cunningham, principal biochemist at the BTSB at the time the anti-D infection occurred, who ran the laboratory where the anti-D was produced, "bore an important and



Positive Action members at a press conference after the DPP's decision

serious responsibility" for the product being infected.

In 1991 she ignored warning signs arising from a form of positive hepatitis C test "due apparently to indifference".

Dr Terry Walsh, the most junior medical officer at the BTSB at the time, was found to have ne-

glected his duty when he failed to recommend against using patient X's plasma as soon as he learned of her jaundice and hepatitis.

Criticised

In 1991 he received a letter which confirmed pa-

tient X's plasma was hepatitis C positive but, said the report, he appeared to have a "vague hope that by ignoring the problem it would go away."

Dr James Kirrane, then a part-time consultant with the BTSB, was criticised for not pressing for an in-

vestigation after he was told in the Mater Hospital in 1977 of patients who had developed jaundice after being given anti-D.

Michael Noonan and Brendan Howlin both covered up the scandal, now Brian Cowen seems happy to continue where they left off.

Nazis in German Army exposed



A GERMAN television station has exposed Nazi rituals by soldiers and officers in a unit of the German army.

The SAT-2 commercial station has obtained a video, made four years ago, showing five hours of racist behaviour by members of the 571 Mountain Infantry Battalion.

The film shows soldiers and officers making Hitler salutes and singing anti-Semitic songs. During a discussion of the 'Jewish problem', Jews are referred to as "the demons of the human race".

"What about the six million Jews? All lies",

proclaims one soldier. Another wears a T-shirt, celebrating one of Nazi Germany's most notorious war criminals, with the words "Rudolf Hess lives".

At one point the soldiers sing the ballad "Eternal Germany—Holy Reich". They are also seen giving a mock 'thrashing' to a soldier who proclaims, "I am a Jew, I take the German people's money".

Despite the evidence, Germany's Justice Minister is opposed to keeping Nazis out of the army. He has denounced a mild call from the Defence Minister for stricter vetting of recruits.

what we think

HONG KONG STOCK EXCHANGE IN MELTDOWN:

When tigers fall

"IT'S A blood bath", said one European share dealer, "We've caught a dose of Asian flu."

It summed up the mood in the world's stock exchanges after £35.9 billion was wiped off the Hong Kong market in a single day.

For the last number of years, commentators have sung the praises of the South East Asian Tigers.

Huge amounts of money—including about 8% of Irish pension funds—were invested in these markets.

As a result the instability in the region spread across the world markets.

Apologists for capitalism, point to the peculiar political conditions in Hong Kong since its merger with China as the primary cause of the collapse.

But this is to ignore the anarchy at the heart of the system itself.

The free market is driven by a relentless greed where there is no planning or stability.

As the rate of profit from manufacturing industry remains at comparatively low levels, billions in speculative investment float across the world in a desperate search for greater profits.

It means that the so called success stories of yesterday can easily become basket cases tomorrow.

Bankrupt

This is what has happened to most of the miracle economies throughout South East Asia.

Take for example the biggest tiger of them all, South Korea.

Only a few years ago, writers like the *Observer* editor Will Hutton were praising South Korea for providing a new model for how capitalism could be made to work.

But today five of South Korea's huge conglomerates have been made bankrupt.

A web of corruption that linked these companies to the top politicians is falling apart.

The South Korean currency has gone through the floor. As the *Penguin* investment house in Hong Kong put it, "South Korea has the biggest structural problem in Asia."

All of this means that predictions by the ESRI that the Celtic Tiger will be booming until 2005 sound increasingly ridiculous.

The instability in South East Asia is only a sign of what is coming for the system as a whole.

Today the big capitalist economies are going through one of these regular phases of collective madness.

Share prices have gone through the roof, with the price of stocks on Wall Street now more than 200 per cent higher than in 1989.

A merger mania is also under way with \$639.7 million worth of mergers and acquisitions deals already announced in the United States for this year alone.

These figures bear no relation to increases in the value of what has actually been produced. They reflect only the insatiable greed that drives the system.

Ten years ago the merger mania and share price boom ended on Black Monday, when the crash helped to usher in the world recession of the early nineties.

The collapse of share prices in Hong Kong shows that there is every sign this will happen again.



■ Panic as the markets collapse

Why Gerry Adams backs Mary McAleese

WHEN GERRY Adams endorsed Mary McAleese for President he indicated an important shift that is taking place in Irish politics.

Sinn Fein is positioning itself to become the legitimate party of the nationalist middle class in Northern Ireland—a class that increasingly provides an important support base for traditional Catholic values.

Mary McAleese symbolises the changes that are taking place within this class. In the past, they were

marginalised from the power structures of the North.

But now McAleese is the second in command at Queen's University.

Access

Although the secret documents from the Department of Foreign Affairs shows that she complains about the favouritism shown to Unionist supporters in the college, she has no problems with student fees or the lack of access to the college for working class people generally.

As the Catholic middle class in the North win more and more positions as top civil servants, barristers and business people, they see no need to show any deference to Unionism.

They want their stake in the system—and on their own terms.

Sinn Fein is making itself more acceptable to this class.

Not only has it dropped the armed struggle, but increasingly it stresses the importance of cultural difference.

Spokespersons like Martin McGuinness have argued that the struggle in the North is now about

asserting "our Irishness" while student supporters of Sinn Fein clearly consider the issue of Irish language signs to be more important than issues like fees (see Page 5).

The emphasis on cultural difference suits the middle class.

It allows them to unite a 'community' behind them and shift the struggle from radical economic demands to ones which can be accommodated within the system.

Adams supported McAleese despite the fact that she has stood over the antics of Ray Burke and is a known opponent of divorce, contraception and abortion.

That is the clearest sign that Sinn Fein considers the interests of working class people to be of secondary importance to the growing influence of Mary McAleese's class.

Dr Peadar O'Grady Defence Campaign

■ Money is urgently required to meet the mounting defence costs of Peadar O'Grady.

■ Send donations to Dr Peadar O'Grady Legal Defence Fund, Account No 36696032, Sort Code: 92-12-33, AIB, 64 Grafton St, Dublin 2

■ For Petitions, leaflets and factsheets: Contact Dr Peadar O'Grady Defence Campaign c/o PO Box 5877, Blackrock, Co. Dublin





Bosses' fury at 35-hour week

"IDEOLOGY HAS triumphed over reason. I will fight all the way. If it's war, it's war."

That was the furious reaction of Jean Gandois, head of the Patronat French bosses' organisation, to the government's plan to introduce a law limiting the working week to 35 hours.

Gandois has since resigned in protest at the plan French employers are up in arms about.

Across Europe the debate on working hours has suddenly become the centre of political argument.

It dominates the front pages of the newspapers and the debate on television and radio.

"Thirty five hours shakes Europe", was the front page of one of the main French daily papers last week.

"The question of whether and how to cut working hours is once again confronting governments, employers and trade unions in Europe," commented the Financial Times.

In Italy too the government has now promised legislation on a 35 hour week.

And from Germany to Spain and Greece the issue has been thrust to centre stage.

The debate is the sharpest example yet of a fundamental clash over the key questions facing society as we approach the end of the 20th century.

Prosperity

Europe is richer than ever before, producing more goods and wealth than at any time in history.

Yet instead of this bringing greater prosperity and leisure for all, we have sickening levels of unemployment and harder, more stressful work for those with jobs.

Some 20 million people are unemployed across the EU. The bosses and bankers, their economic experts and most politicians and governments have only one answer.

They prescribe more of the medicine which has created the problem. They say we need to give more free rein to market forces, more deregulation, more privatisation.

As a result millions now have the feeling that their children and grandchildren will have a harder, worse life than they have had.

But instead of some working ever harder and longer while others live in poverty and unemployment, why not cut the hours everyone works? The wealth is there. There is enough work to do.

If everyone worked less, without losing existing pay,



Flashback: French workers take to the streets two years ago

WHY SHORTER HOURS MEAN MORE JOBS

"I WOULD like to see shorter hours, but you must realise that our wages here are much higher than in other parts of the country. I also fear the employers from abroad with whom we shall not compete if your hours are cut."

Those words could more or less have come from any boss in Europe today in reaction to talk of cutting working hours.

In fact they were spoken by Charles Palmer, a British engineering employer, in 1866.

He was fighting against a campaign to cut hours to less than 59 a week! Throughout the history of capitalism bosses have always argued that any cut in working hours would undermine their ability to compete, defied economic logic and would lead to job cuts.

They said it in 1836 when London engineers successfully struck and fought to win a ten hour day.

They said it when factory workers in north east England fought for and won a nine hour day in the 1870s.

They said the same in the 1880s when workers started battling to win the eight

surely, millions ask, it would bring immense social benefits? Those already in jobs would have more leisure, more time to spend with friends and families.

That would mean less stress, less social problems and a more pleasant life.

Those without jobs could then be employed to do the work now done in all the hours over 35 that workers do each week.

That would transform the lives of the unemployed, and reduce the poverty and social

problems unemployment brings.

It would certainly cut the amount paid out in benefits and, through taxes paid by those in work, could even boost government revenues to finance better welfare.

Rational

One thing stands in the way of this rational measure. The bosses and those who back them fear it would cut into the profits they and their system feed on.

hour day.

And they argued exactly the same when engineers in Britain struck to win a 37 hour week in 1989-90.

Today the US business paper the Wall Street Journal says, "One of the best known fallacies in economics is the notion that there is a fixed amount of work, a lump of labour, that can be shared out to lead to fewer or more jobs."

In reality for the last 150 years workers have won reductions in working hours without causing mass unemployment or the collapse of the economy.

In 1836 workers in Britain were fighting for a cut in hours from 12 to ten a day.

A very important Oxford professor called Nassau Senior denounced such a cut and claimed that in any factory "the whole net profit is derived from the last hour" worked each day.

So any reduction at all in hours would destroy profits.

Karl Marx scorned Nassau and argued that the length of the working day was the result of the struggle between "collective capital", the capitalists, and "collective labour", the working class".

What matters is who wins that struggle.

That is why they have reacted so furiously.

"A general cut in working hours won't cut unemployment because it will damage competitiveness," says the German conservative government, adding, "Germans have to be ready to work harder for the same wages."

"We should be moving towards more flexibility and less regulation. This is all the other way round," said UNICE, the European wide bosses' organisation.

"It is entirely unreasonable

and has no connection with reality," foamed the Patronat French bosses' organisation.

"It is totally absurd and defies all logic," said the furious Confindustria Italian bosses' organisation.

But their arguments about "economic logic" are a smoke-screen.

They are the same arguments bosses have always used against cuts in working hours.

Their real fear is that cutting hours while paying workers the same would cut their profits.

At root it is a battle over whether people's lives or profits come first.

Reject

Workers are right to reject the bosses' arguments. Two thirds of people in France welcomed the 35 hours plan. But they will have to fight to make it into a reality.

In both France and Italy the governments have only been pushed by the mood from below, and the workers' struggles of the last few years, into pledging an hours cut.

But these governments have shown that they are committed to running the bosses' system, not challenging it, and are more than ready to bow to the bosses' demands.

This means that the proposed 35 hour laws are so vague they could turn out to be meaningless in practice.

Workers can win the fight for shorter hours. But such a fight hits at the heart of the profits which drive the bosses' system.

And that raises the argument for a fight to end that system altogether and replace it with one in which people's needs come first.

Canada: Teachers strike against cuts

TEACHERS IN the Canadian province of Ontario began an all out indefinite strike on Monday of this week.

The 126,000 teachers are angry at the state government's plans to make massive cuts that would mean 10,000 teachers are sacked and the workload of remaining teachers would hugely increase.

There were countless walkouts by school students in support of the teachers in the weeks running up to the strike.

And thousands of teachers attended rallies, including a 25,000 strong rally that then marched through central Toronto.

The strike is illegal because it is not over the teachers' contract but over state government cuts.

The Tory controlled state government of Ontario by far the most populated province in Canada-cut \$800 million from the education budget last year, and plans another \$1 billion cut next year.

The teachers have massive public support. One recent poll found 91 percent of people are against further education cuts.

And the teachers' strike follows a general strike against Ontario's Tories in the city of Windsor last week. It was a huge success.

Employers admitted they lost \$300 million in lost production. Thousands of teachers marched alongside car, post and construction workers. Public transport was shutdown and local government closed.

The Windsor strike was the ninth day of action since last December.

"Everyone is watching Ontario," is the message from trade unionists across Canada.

New Zealand: Anger at health shortfall

THE underfunding of the health service has sparked a mood of anger against the country's Tory coalition government.

Protesters were due to march through Wellington, the second biggest city in New Zealand, on Wednesday of this week.

A march in Auckland, where one third of the total population lives, is planned on 11 November and is expected to be huge.

A national health action day is also planned on 12 December.

There is a sense that the government is going too far after years of attacks and free market policies.

It is now talking about "commercialising" roads, pumping more money into private schools, selling off state TV and funding more arms and more police, while also talking about making "hard choices" on health, education and welfare.

A recent opinion poll found some 84 percent of people say they are unhappy with the government.

Its health policy is to hold down funding to open the way for private companies to muscle in on profitable health services.

A former health minister commissioned a report on the government's health reforms that found an extra £1 billion was needed to sustain services.

The government just kept the report secret. The first march over health in Dunedin in September triggered the mood. A number of marches have followed in smaller towns.

In Nelson 1,000 people attended a meeting to protest at the underfunding of their local hospital and set up a Crisis Funding Committee to organise a campaign and march.

There have also been three student demonstrations in Auckland over government plans to increase fees and begin the first stages of privatisation of universities.

Around 500 marched on 1 October, followed by 1,500 a week later and then 3,000 a week after that.

On the first two occasions students broke into the university and occupied it before being evicted by the police.

Sadly on the 3rd student union officials led the demonstration away from the university.

Greece: Strike and demonstrations

THE GREEK TUC called a one day general strike last week demanding a 35 hour week with no loss of pay for Greek workers.

The action involved workers in the private sector and utilities plus public sector workers in local government and the civil service.

There were large demonstrations in all the major cities. Electricity workers struck for two days and also demanded better pensions and a halt to privatisation plans.

Public sector workers were also striking over pay, demanding the government changes its tax scales so they pay proportionately less.

The PASOK Labour government, however, claims that Greece is "too poor" to be able to afford French or Italian style agreements.

More civil service strikes are planned.

Behind the headlines

Abortion is still a class issue

THIRTY YEARS after abortion was legalised in Britain, it is still illegal in Northern Ireland. In spite of this, abortion is very much a reality in the North.

We know about the 5,000 or so women who travel every year from the South for abortions.

Less is heard about the 1,800 women from the North who travel every year to Britain to terminate a pregnancy—that's 40 women every week.

That abortion is a class question, rather than a moral one, is nowhere clearer than in the North.

Unlike the South, abortion is available locally, for those with the money to book into one of the private hospitals for a 'D&C'.

Doctors and nurses admit in private that this is so.

But the cost of operations in private hospitals is counted in thousands of pounds.

For most women, England is the only option.

Travel

The catch is that it costs £300-£350 to pay for the operation in a non-profit clinic plus £150 or so for travel.

For many working class women, especially those living on benefits or in low paid jobs, this is an impossible amount to raise in just a few weeks.

Everyone knows someone forced to continue an unwanted pregnancy because of lack of money.

Bills go unpaid, friends contribute fivers and tenners they can ill afford.

Illegal

Because abortion is still illegal, few talk openly about it yet—as in the South. But thousands of working class people have been involved in this panic to raise money to get a woman to England on time.

According to government figures, up to 60,000 women from the North have had abortions in Britain since 1967.

This is probably an underestimate because some women may give a British address.

The Tories always justified their refusal to extend the Act on the grounds that there was little support for abortion in Northern Ireland. Whatever the case 20

by GORETTI HORGAN

or even 10 years ago, this is clearly no longer true.

With women now making up 49 percent of the workforce in the North, most women want to be able to control their fertility.

Attitudes to abortion have changed dramatically, north as well as south of the border. Opinion polls show that three out of four of those questioned support the availability of abortion under the provisions of the 1967 act.

Unfortunately, Mowlam and Blair continue to chant the Tory mantra that there is no reason to legalise abortion in the North because all the MPs are against it.

When the Brook Advisory Centre opened in Belfast in 1992, all the MPs were against that too.

Nationalist and Unionist politicians did the seemingly impossible and united against it.

Paisley stood side by side with Catholic bigots and promised they would maintain a picket until the Brook Centre closed.

Demonstrate

Hundreds of mainly young people, both Catholic and Protestant, marched together through the streets of Belfast to demonstrate support for their right to information about sexuality and birth control.

Five years on, Brook is expanding its opening hours and, while half a dozen sad individuals maintain the picket, most bigots have crawled back under their usual rocks.

Socialist Worker argues that the extension of the Abortion Act should be supported by all who support workers' rights.

Even those who are personally opposed to abortion should see that the present position is hypocritical and discriminates blatantly against working class women.

It hits especially those most likely to be having difficulties in making ends meet for themselves and the children many of them already have.

'Easily known Blair's kids were raised by nannies'

Blair's 'reforms' will scapegoat lone parents

LABOUR'S plan to cut the benefit for a lone parent with one child from the present £70.10 to £52.85 a week by next April is only one part of a three-pronged attack.

Welfare to Work promises to help single mothers back into the workforce rather than, as Tony Blair so insultingly put it, "sitting at home till the end of the week, waiting for the benefit cheque".

Easily known his children were brought up by nannies, since he clearly doesn't see child care as work!

Welfare to Work offers every lone parent a 'personal adviser' who will work out what options are open to them. Central to this is the calculation of how much better off the single mother could be in work, once account is taken of family credit benefit which tops up low pay and can help with child care costs.

The problem for many lone parents is they would be worse off given that most jobs available are low paid.

Socialist Worker spoke to Mairead, a divorced mother of five children who says *Welfare to Work* won't help her.

"I'm on Income Support at present and it pays my mortgage.

"Family credit with Housing Benefit doesn't—so I would need a job that paid me enough to cover school meals, which I get free on Income Support and the mortgage.

"Plus it would need to cover the costs of lunches for myself and travel to and from work. I would need about £250 a week into my hand to have just the same



Blair claims lone parents sit at home "until the welfare cheque comes."

amount of money to spend that I do at present.

"Do you know of a job going in Derry that pays that kind of money for work during school times only? I don't."

Attacks

The third strand to the new attacks on single parents is through the infamous Child Support Agency.

The CSA, set up by the Tories in 1993, has just launched a shake up which will mean huge attacks on both CSA workers and on single parents.

As well as threatening

some 3,000 staff with redundancy, the CSA is demanding that all staff agree to flexible hours, including

evening and weekend work. The reason they want this 'flexible working' is to further victimise lone parents.

Sign of the times in Queens

SINN FEIN and SDLP members at Queen's University seem to regard Irish language signs as more important than student fees.

They recently insisted at a Student Union meeting that the issue be put to the top of the agenda. When this was refused they walked out.

With the meeting now inquorate, the union could not deal with more pressing issues like fees and grants.

Of course it is ridiculous of Unionists at the college to regard signs in Irish as 'insulting' to Protestants.

But it hardly matters what language directions to the toilet are in if people from working class backgrounds cannot even get into Queen's because of the fees.

TROUBLES HIT WORKING CLASS HARDEST

THE TROUBLES have hit working class people hardest.

Young men between the ages of 20 and 24 who lived in the poorest Catholic and Protestant areas of Belfast were most likely to be killed in the 25 years from 1969 to 1994.

This is a key conclusion of a new University of Ulster study, *The Cost of the Troubles*.

But not only Catholic working class areas suffered: out of the 28 wards with the highest death rates 16 have a majority Catholic population. The other 12 were not defined, but would contain a larger share of Protestants.

In general the middle classes can avoid the worst of the Troubles by moving away—an option not open to most working class people.

The select few in plush houses on the shores of Belfast Lough can live with the sectarian state. So too can Derry's Catholic middle class who have moved into the suburbs where the RUC is unlikely to harass their children for having an Irish name.



Tony Blair

Now the CSA will interview single mothers in their own homes every time they claim for benefit - just to make sure there is no man in their lives.

Women will also be forced to name the father of their child immediately or face a 20 percent cut in benefit.

The three months' grace there used to be to think things through is gone.

One effect of this is that women are not naming their child's father on the birth certificate.

Media reports on the number of birth certs with no father's name have concentrated on the myth of the career woman who wants a child but not a man in her life.

There may be a few of these, but the reality is many working class women are afraid that if they put the father's name on the birth cert, they will have to name him to the CSA.

in brief

★ Protestant workers at a Belfast cleaning depot showed that they have nothing in common with bigoted unionist politicians: they recently removed a portrait of the queen for the sake of workplace harmony.

"We have made this gesture in the interests of harmony and peace and to ensure a harmonious workplace.

"We feel it's the right time, with the peace talks getting properly underway, to make this move and keep work relations at their best."

David Trimble, Robert McCartney and all the other unionist bigots could

take a leaf out of their book.

★ A Belfast drugs centre may have to close down before Christmas because some of the money it normally receives has been diverted to the RUC.

Until recently, the Health Boards, the Northern Ireland Office and the Probation Board gave £30,000 per year to the centre.

But the former Tory government redirected money from the health and education budgets towards RUC overtime.

Many charities and the Northern health sector in general are now

cash-strapped while RUC men earned millions of pounds in overtime during this year's Drumcree standoff.

★ The Northern economy is booming but workers earn less and die earlier than those who live in England, Wales or Scotland.

People here earn £323 per week compared to an average of £381 across the water in 1995/96, a new study has found.

They also have shorter lives: the average Northern man lives until age 73 and a woman until age 78, compared to 74 and 80 respectively in Britain.

And a shocking one out

of four workers here have no formal education, compared to 18 percent in England, Scotland and Wales.

These are some of the issues the Stormont talks will not address.

★ In Northern Ireland one person per fortnight is killed at work and one per day is badly injured, according to the Health and Safety Agency.

And the law treats bosses who ignore safety regulations with kid gloves. Recently quarry bosses were fined a mere £500 when one of their workers was mangled and killed in a stone crusher.

Eighty years since the Russian Revolution



"DETACHMENTS of Red Guards were arriving from the factories. A motor car came from the Smolney. Someone in a leather overcoat called to the soldiers 'What detachment is this?' 'We are from the Putilov Works' said a young man in civilian clothing with a rifle on his shoulder and a red band on his arm. 'Who is your officer?' asked the man 'There are none. We are all officers' replied the worker."

This is how Morgan Price Phillips describes the reality of revolution in Russia in October 1917.

Phillips was a correspondent with the Manchester Guardian who held fairly conservative views. But what he saw was to change his political outlook for the rest of his life.

The October revolution, in which workers took power is the greatest event in human history. It is a memory which the privileged have tried to wipe off the face the earth. But it is one that socialists everywhere should celebrate.

For centuries the Russian people suffered and were oppressed under the rule of the Czars.

Only a few decades before 1917 the mass of peasants had been treated like serfs. One peasant deputy summed it up when he told the landlords, "We know your idea of property: my uncle was exchanged for a greyhound".

Power

Yet people took power. The world was turned upside down. The revolution seized the factories, gave land to the peasants and withdrew Russia from the First World War.

Control and administration of society was no longer exclusive to the few. It was no longer necessary to be rich to have a say.

The talents and confidences of ordinary people, which are blunted and corrupted in our society, were unleashed.

John Reed an American journalist described the atmosphere:

"The talk. Lectures, debates, speeches—in theatres, circuses, school houses, clubs, soviet meeting rooms, union head quarters. Meetings in the trenches at the front, in the village squares, factories.

"What a marvellous sight to see the Putilov factory pore out its forty thou-

STORMING THE HEAVENS

sand to listen to Social Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries, Anarchists, anybody, whatever they had to say as long as they would talk.

"For months in Petrograd, and all over Russia, every street corner was a public tribune. In railway trains, street cars, always the spurring of impromptu debate, everywhere."

What is remarkable is how the new society was able to survive, for a brief period before it was finally crushed.

This was possible because of the de-

termination of workers not to let go of the power that they had won.

Lenin summed up how the Russian Revolution was to defend itself.

"Comrades, Workers! Remember that from now on you yourselves are administering the state. Nobody is going to help you if you do not unite and take over all state affairs. Rally around your Soviets, make them strong."

"Get to work there at the base, without waiting orders. Institute the strictest revolutionary order, suppress with-

out mercy the anarchic excesses of drunken hooligans, counter revolutionary Junkers, followers of Komilov (a right wing General).

"Institute rigorous control over production and the accounting of products. Arrest and deliver to the tribunal of revolutionary people whoever dares to raise his hand against the people's cause."

For the first time ordinary people ran society, Arthur Ransome, a British journalist, wrote in 1918 "I do not think I shall never again be so happy in my life as I was during those first days when I saw working men and peasant soldiers sending representatives of their class and not of mine. I remembered Shelley's poem.

"Shake your chains to earth like dew Which in sleep had fallen on you Ye are many they are few" and wondered that this thing had not come to pass before."

THIS WAS NO COUP

RIGHT WING historians argue that Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized power in October through a coup which had only minority support.

But the only elected institutions in Russia at the time were the soviets. The Bolsheviks only moved towards insurrection when they had won the majority of delegates there.

Lenin summed up the conditions needed for an insurrection: "In order for an insurrection to be crowned with success, it should have the support, not of a conspiracy, not of a party but of an advanced class: that is first of all. The insurrection must rest on a popular revolutionary upsurge: that is second.

"The insurrection must come at the historic turning point of the expanding revolution, at the moment when the activity of the masses reaches its peak and when the hesitation in the ranks of the enemy, and among false friends of the revolution, the double dealers and faint hearts, reaches its peak. That is third."

The Revolution:

★ **FEBRUARY:** The Tsar is overthrown and a Provisional government formed that is supported by the soviets.

★ **MARCH:** Provisional government tells peasants that land cannot be distributed immediately. Despite proclaiming a policy of peace, it continues to back the war effort.

★ **APRIL:** Lenin calls for the Bolshevik Party to work for the overthrow of the compromising government. After a huge argument the new policy wins out.

★ **JUNE:** Major Russian offensive launched in the thousands die on the battle field. The General Staff argues for the re-imposition of the death penalty.

★ **JULY:** Near insurrection in Petrograd. The Bolsheviks argue against the seizure of power because the revolutionaries do not have the majority across country. Lenin is forced into hiding. Denounced as a German spy.

★ **AUGUST:** Right wing General Kornilov attempts a coup. Defeated by workers who rip up railway lines and fraternise with his troops.

★ **SEPTEMBER:** The Bolsheviks win the majority of delegates in the soviets and argue for a national congress to take all power.

★ **OCTOBER:** Petrograd Soviet forms a Military Revolutionary Committee and begins preparation for an insurrection.

★ **OCTOBER 24th:** Lenin comes out of hiding. Appears at the Petrograd Soviet. Operations against the Winter Palace, the seat of the old Government, begin at 9pm.

★ **At 11 pm,** the All Russian Congress of Soviets convenes and assumes power.

The festival of the oppressed

THE RUSSIAN empire had played ethnic group against ethnic group. It was what Lenin called a "prison house of nations".

Non-Christians were only allowed to make up a third of the deputies to the old Czarist parliament. Non-Russian languages were not recognised.

But during the revolution workers of all nationalities fought side by side.

Pogroms

In Petrograd, workers elected Leon Trotsky, a Jew, as the President of their workers council—even though the old regime was once able to institute pogroms against Jews.

Against all the odds people overcame what Marx had called the muck of ages and fought together for a better world.

It did so because at the centre of the revolution was a recognition that every oppressed nation within the old empire had the right to secede.

Most striking of all was the

transformation of the position of women in the revolution.

Before the revolution the conditions for women were appalling. The Russian male peasant often kept a whip over his bed to remind his wife of her subordinate role.

Yet the Russian Revolution started when women textile workers turned an International Womens Day march into a general strike. They had demanded "bread for our children and our men home from the front".

After workers took power huge gains were made for women. Equal pay was made compulsory. Civil marriage replaced church ceremonies.

Illegitimacy was no longer recognised and complete equality of rights was granted between husband and wife. Divorce was made available to all who wanted it and abortion was introduced free in soviet hospitals.

Communal kitchens and laundries were established to alleviate the burden of childcare and house work. Sexual relations became more open and homosexuality was decriminalised.

The streets are our brushes, the squares our palettes

THE REVOLUTION meant an explosion of arts and culture.

After the insurrection thousands of people turned up to hear the revolutionary leader Lunacharsky lecture on Greek drama and the opera was packed with workers every night.

Streets, squares and monuments were dyed with dazzling colours and designs.

New forms of painting, cinema and printing became popular. The new art was spread around Russia in agit prop trains and boats that carried cinemas and printing presses.

Poems by revolutionary artists like Mayakovsky were printed as posters and spread around Russia to argue the cause of revolution.

The cinema of Eisenstein smashed all the old visual rules and allowed films to become more

than simply a way of recording events.

Architecture changed from emulating classical buildings to combining a new type of design with the needs of workers.

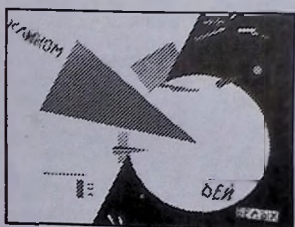
Tatlin, who moved from designing portable stoves for the Red Army to great idealist monuments and public buildings, said "We must look neither to what is old or new but what is needed".

Literacy campaigns went hand in hand with huge public spectacle.

The sculptor Gabo showed how the link between art and revolution worked.

"In the squares and on the streets we are placing our work convinced that art must not remain a sanctuary for the idle and a justification for the lazy.

"Art should attend us every where that life flows and acts, at the bench at the table, at rest, at play, on working days and holidays. In order that the flame to live should not be extinguished."



Lissitzky's Beat the Whites with a Red wedge

How the Soviets worked

The proclamation of the workers government by the soviets

by SIMON BASKETTER



THE RUSSIAN Revolution was based on soviets or workers councils. Here John Reed explained how they worked.

"The Soviet state is based upon the Soviets—or Councils of Workers and Peasants' Soviets.

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies...consisted of about 1200 deputies, and in normal circumstances held a plenary session every two weeks.

Besides the big City Soviet, there were also Rayon, or Ward, Soviets. These were made up of the deputies elected from each ward to the City Soviet, and administered their part of the city. Naturally, in some wards there were no factories, and therefore normally, no representation of those wards, either in the City Soviet or in Ward Soviets of their own.

But the Soviet system is ex-

tremely flexible, and if the cooks and waiters, or the street sweepers, or the courtyard servants, or the cab drivers of that ward organised and demanded representation, they were allowed delegates.

No political body more sensitive and responsive to the popular mood was ever invented.

Delegates

At least twice a year delegates are elected from all over Russia to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

This body, consisting of about two thousand delegates, meets in the capital in the form of a *great soviet*, and settles upon the essentials of national policy.

It elects a Central Executive Committee, like the Central Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, which invites delegates from the central committees

of all democratic organisations.

The chief function of the Soviets is the defence and consolidation of the Revolution.

They express the political will of the masses, not only in the All-Russian Congresses, for the whole country, but also in their own localities, where their authority is practically supreme.

For example in one factory a committee was elected, one delegate from each department.

As one of the workers put it: "Why do we worry? The question of technical experts is not a difficult one. Remember, the boss didn't know engineering or chemistry or bookkeeping. All he did was to own. When he wanted technical help, he hired men to do it for him. Well, now we are the boss. Let's hire engineers, bookkeepers, and so forth—to work for us!"

What do socialists say?

Did the revolution need Bolsheviks?

"YOU SAY that genuine socialism involves the rule of democratically elected workers councils.

"But then you insist on the need for a party like that of the Bolsheviks.

"Surely that was a party run from above which imposed its will on the workers?"

Such is the traditional argument against revolutionary socialism both from supporters of parliamentary Labourism and from "libertarian socialists".

But there is no contradiction in saying, we want to see society run by workers' councils and stressing the need for a revolutionary party.

Workers' councils are representative of all workers, not just those who in the past have been revolutionaries or even trade union militants.

In Russia in 1905 and 1917 they were the means by which workers with very different political backgrounds could decide what they needed to do and set about doing it.

Someone who had accepted Tsarist propaganda until the February Revolution could feel just as involved in framing the demands of their class as someone who had been a revolutionary opponent of the Tsar for many years.

Influenced

The workers' councils enabled all sorts of workers to begin to feel they had the power and the ability to affect how society was run.

But these changes did not take place at the same speed among all workers.

Many continued to be influenced by the old ideas.

In every workplace there remained workers influenced by nationalism, anti-Semitism and sexism.

Even workers who felt they should be able to influence the direction in which society went often still accepted that they themselves were not capable of running things.

At first the middle class and "moderate" socialist politicians who wanted to keep Russia capitalist were able to win big majorities in the workers' councils.

The experience of the next few months would make many workers change their minds, but only when that experience was reinforced by arguments from

those who saw the need for a further revolution.

This is where the Bolshevik Party came in.

Lenin and the people around him were known in the years before 1917 as the "hard" faction among socialists in Russia.

They insisted two things had to be combined to make the coming Russian Revolution a success, hammering out clear ideas and a relentless struggle to spread these ideas to a network of workers in every workplace and locality.

Demanded

They were not afraid to be unpopular when the occasion demanded it—as when they stood out more firmly than anyone else against the First World War.

But they were certainly not, as is sometimes claimed, a small conspiratorial group run like a religious cult by Lenin.

They attempted to build as widely as possible.

They took advantage of a brief relaxation of the Tsarist censorship to establish the best selling workers' paper in the years 1912-14.

It drew around them many thousands of workers who sent in reports to the paper, sold it and collected among their workmates to finance it.

The Bolsheviks were a small minority in the early spring of 1917 when people still put their faith in the new government.

But they grew massively out of the struggles which pitted workers against that government as the year progressed, until they had more members among the workers in the main cities than all the other parties together.

The party members were not robots who followed Lenin's commands. He often found himself in a minority and could only ever win people to his views through vigorous debate.

The party was not imposed on workers and workers' councils.

It was the means by which the most militant, socialist section of workers could argue about policies and then seek to win other workers to them.

If it had not existed, the parties which tried to tie workers to capitalism would have been successful and the workers' councils would have been drowned in blood—as they were to be in Germany barely 18 months later.

by CHRIS HARMAN

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Kieran Allen looks at the cruelty for the sake of profit in...

Alan J Bannister has been executed. For fourteen years, he waited on death row hoping that his life might be spared. In a final desperate bid, he spoke live on the air to Pat Kenny on his radio show.

But in the end, the Missouri state administered him a lethal injection. Its cold, clinical precision was shocking.

In his final statement Alan Bannister, a convicted murderer, noted that "the state of Missouri is committing as premeditated a murder as possible, far more heinous than my crime."

The death penalty is the ultimate piece of cruelty in America's growing prison—industrial complex.

Today there are over five times as many Americans in prison than there were twenty years ago. One million people are now behind bars and another four million are on probation or parole.

Yet despite the millions being spent on this organised cruelty, the crime rates show no sign of dropping.

California is good example. After 12 year old Polly Klaas was brutally murdered, the press and the politicians launched a massive campaign of hysteria.

An idea backed by the notoriously right wing National Rifleman's Association with the catchy baseball name, 'three strikes and you're out' was quickly signed into law.

It guaranteed an automatic life sentence for anyone convicted of a felony if they had previously been convicted on two other offences.

It also guaranteed votes for the right wing fanatics and helped sell more of the tabloid press.

Yet today, hundreds are facing decades in jail for petty offences because of this political cynicism.

People like Eddie Jordan who stole a shirt before a job interview or Chandelle Cooked who shoplifted one can of beer from a 7—Eleven Store.

In one jail, Stanislaus County inmates charged with 'third strike offences' are clothed in a special canary yellow jumpsuits to distinguish them from others.

A life sentence is not enough in the richest state in the world—the prisoners have to be sentenced to perpetual humiliation.

Yet despite all the talk of a 'get tough' nonsense policy on law and order, crime has not decreased in the slightest.

California's prison population has risen six fold since 1977—but the crime rate has stayed exactly the same.

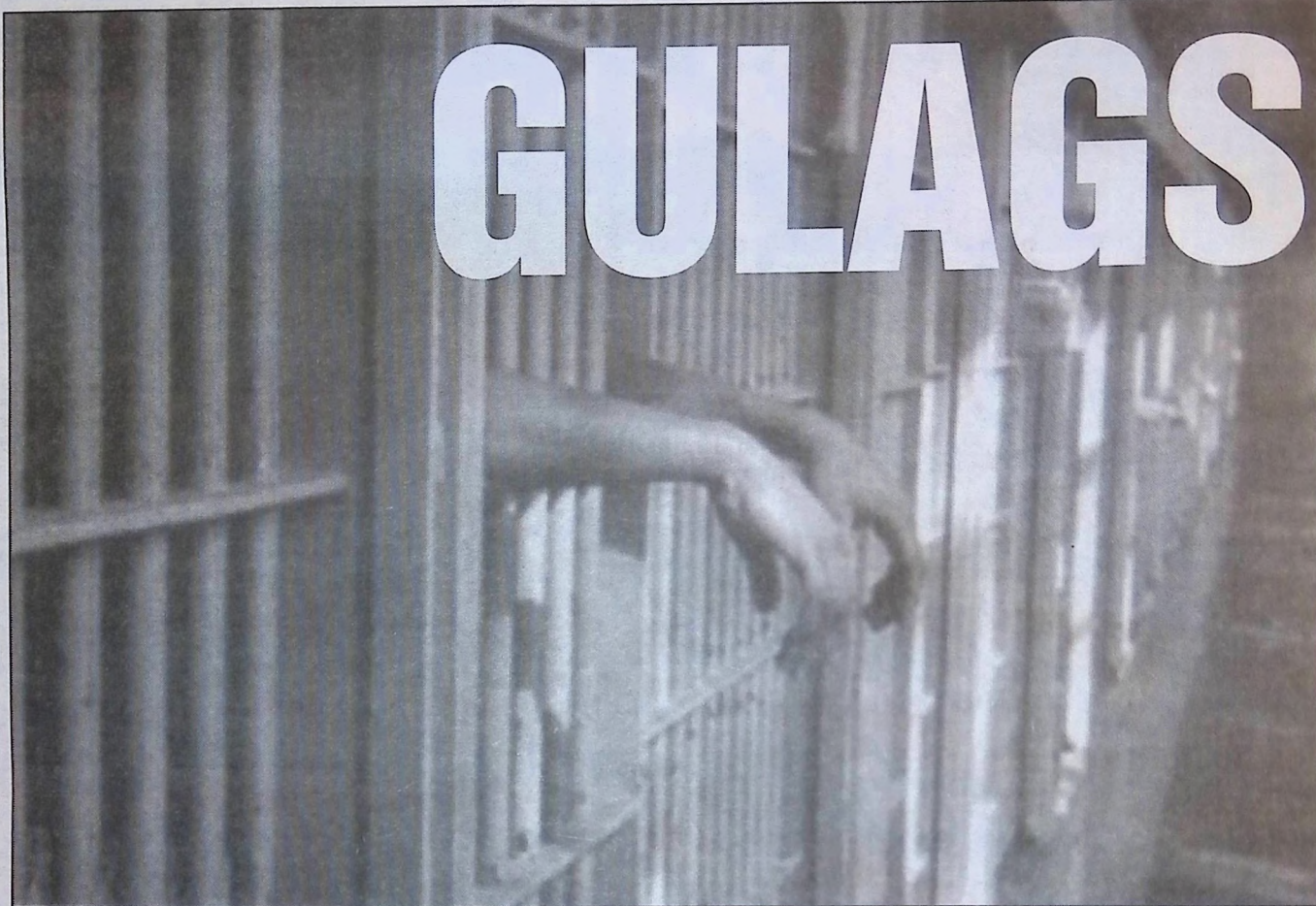
No wonder the Klass family, who first backed the measure out of anger at their daughter's murder, have denounced the whole scheme.

As the American prison system grows, big business has become increasingly interested in the opportunities for profit. Prison privatisation—a policy that is advocated by Mary Harney in Ireland—has become a booming industry.

The largest player in the field is the Corrections Corporation of America. It has now 30,000 'beds' operating or under construction in 47 facilities in America, Britain and Australia.

And it is a booming business. As one US academic, Robert Lilly put it, "prisons are a wonderful place to

AMERICA'S GULAGS



The US prison system—a modern form of slavery.

put your money because we've started to hate prisoners and drug dealers more than communists."

Share prices in the Correction Corporation of America have certainly soared. In 1995, for example the price rose from \$8 to \$37 a share—a jump of some 385%.

And it is not just the odd company which is involved. Wall Street is getting fully behind the expansion of the prison industrial complex. Companies such as Merrill Lynch, Prudential Securities, Goldman Sachs are all reaping big rewards from the prison building programme.

They supply the capital for new buildings and then count their cash as the interest pours in.

The trade in human bodies provides a near certainty for the money merchants.

Today about 10% of US prisons are privatised but it is estimated this could rise to nearly 90% in five years time.

However the Corrections Corporation are not just waiting around for the expansion to take place. They pride themselves as "risk takers; real buccaneers of the free marketplace".

They are building prisons on spec and then tendering to different states in America to have their prisoners transported to Correction Corporation jails.

And ever inventive, free enterprise is finding even more vicious ways of

profit making.

Corrections Corporation's main competitor in the prison business is Wackenhut, which has made major headway in Texas.

It receives \$31 a day for each prisoner and for that it must provide housing guards and everything else to run the facility. Whatever is left is profit.

Wackenhut, however, believe they

And, he notes, the inmates "don't go on vacations".

It's an idea that is catching on among the privileged elite of America. In a revealing comment, the Oregon State representative, Kevin Mannix, argues that the prisons should make contracts with the big companies just like the Indonesian government does with Nike.

Nike subcontractors there pay \$1.20 a day but Mannix says, "we propose that (Nike) take a look at their

transportation costs and their labour costs. We could offer competitive prison inmate labour in Oregon".

This competitive tendering has already started to happen. The medium security Monterey prison in California pays its inmates 45 cents an hour to make blue workshirts.

Recently it has been discovered that California has been exporting this prison made clothing to Asia.

In Alabama and Arizona, the prisons have recruited chain gangs to do road work.

In Ohio, the Weastec Corporation hired prisoners to assemble Honda parts. The company paid the state just over two dollars an hour per hour and from that the prisoners got a mere 35 cents an hour.

This was only stopped after the local United Auto Workers launched a major campaign against it.

In all, it is estimated that by 1998, prisoners will be turning out nine billion dollars worth of products. Prisoners in Illinois alone are producing 280 different products.

As the prison industry grows, it is overlaid with a terrible racism that pervades US society.

Black men make up 48% of the US prison population even though only 12.5% of the general population is black. The police have used the excuse of a 'War on Drugs' to justify their heavily handed tactics in black ghettos.

Stricter sentences are always handed out to black men than rich gangsters like Ben Dunne who are caught with crack cocaine.

The growth of the prison industrial complex is therefore increasingly built on the oppression of hundreds of thousands of black bodies.

This is the reality behind the US law and order rhetoric that Fianna Fail wants to hide.

Organised brutality and cruelty on a grand scale is being inflicted on human beings in the name of profit.

As one black prisoner put it: "Imagine if all of a sudden they were to bring back slavery. What do you think it might look like."

"People would have to be held captive behind bars, doing work for virtually nothing. That is what we have now"

In the wealthiest country in the world, capitalism has brought slavery and cruelty to its finest point.

As the American prison system grows, big business has become increasingly interested in the opportunities for profit. Prison privatisation—a policy that is advocated by Mary Harney in Ireland—has become a booming industry.

television

Was Sinn Fein anti-semitic?

CHANNEL FOUR recently ran a programme, *A Great Hatred*, linking Sinn Fein and the IRA with anti-Semitism.

Tory journalist Simon Sebag-Montefiore argued that there was an unbroken chain of anti-Semitism running from Arthur Griffith to the IRA's contacts with Nazi Germany.

The *Irish Times* television critic described *A Great Hatred* as "nourishing television and historically valuable". In fact it was neither—the only thing it fed were the critic's prejudices.

There is no doubt that the founder of Sinn Fein, Arthur Griffith, was racist and anti-Semitic. He gave his full backing to the anti-Jewish pogrom in Limerick in 1904.

But it was the Catholic Church not Sinn Fein that were the instigators of these vicious attacks.

But at this point the seemingly unbroken chain breaks at the very first link. For Griffith became an implacable opponent of the IRA with the establishment of the Free State and the Civil War.

Splits

By the late 1930s the IRA was a demoralised organisation riven with factionalism with splits to both the left and right. For many the election of the Fianna Fail government seemed like a major step forward. Those on the left formed the short-lived Republican Congress. For the IRA there was the old question of which way forward - a broader political struggle or militarism.

Sean Russell, elected IRA Chief of Staff in 1938, provided an answer. His answer was simple - the only way to break the connection with Britain was by force and the IRA could supply that force.

The IRA declared war and the following day there were seven major explosions at electricity pylons and powerstations throughout Britain. There were to be many other bomb attacks in the months that followed.

This campaign convinced the Nazi authorities that the IRA were potential allies in the forthcoming world war. They tried to establish links with nationalist and separatist movements—including Scotland and Wales—throughout Europe.

The IRA for their part saw the Nazis as a good source for arms and explosives. Contacts were established between them but from the very start there were difficulties.

The Germans had a very poor understanding of the realities of Irish politics.

They were shocked at the IRA's level of disorganisation and more interested in urging them to come to terms with de Valera for a joint attack on Northern Ireland.

There is no doubt that Arthur Griffith, was racist and anti-Semitic. He gave his full backing to the anti-Jewish pogrom in Limerick in 1904. But it was the Catholic Church not Sinn Fein that were the instigators of these vicious attacks.

But with over a hundred IRA prisoners in de Valera's prisons—some on hunger strike—this was unlikely.

Russell went to Germany to establish direct contacts. By now the Second World War had started. He died while returning to Ireland by U-boat and was buried at sea. He was accompanied on this journey by Frank Ryan. Ryan was brought back to Germany where he died four years later.

Ryan's presence on the trip was surprising. He had been a left wing republican and was a well known anti-fascist. He had left the IRA to form the Republican Congress and was commander of the Irish contingent of the International Brigade in Spain.

Captured by Franco's army he was sentenced to death. The sentence was commuted to thirty years imprisonment. The Nazi authorities had him released into their custody and brought to Berlin.

Some have seen Ryan as a potential leader of a 'Gaelic Vichy'.

But this is nonsense. There is no evidence that Ryan agreed to work for the Nazis.

He refused to write or do radio broadcasts for them.

During the Emergency the Irish government, like other governments in Europe, pandered to anti-Semitism.

The Secretary of the Department of Justice, for example, wrote: "The immigration of Jews is generally to be discouraged" and described Jewish people as "a potential irritant in the body politic".

Sinn Fein and the republican movement never challenged this racism. But it would be wrong to see them as the source of anti-Semitism.

There were no doubt individual members who were, but the IRA's contacts with Nazi Germany were motivated by the view that England's enemy is our friend.

Because of their narrow nationalist politics the wider international struggle against fascism was of no interest to them. That has always been the weakness of modern day republicanism.

—WILLY CUMMING

film

More than just a wit and critic

by SINEAD KENNEDY

WILDE, directed by Brian Gilbert, is a biographical account of the life of Oscar Wilde, the 19th century writer and wit, who delighted his audience with his humorous and critical comments on the British aristocracy.

He also outraged upperclass society with his flamboyance, unconventional sexuality, and was a self declared socialist.

Wilde was influenced by the socialist ideas of his time.

The 1880's in England were a time of social and economic upheaval.

Poverty

Thirty percent of London was living in poverty and in February 1886, 20,000 workers gathered in Trafalgar square protesting against their conditions.

This sent a wave of fear of working class revolution into the hearts of the establishment and people like Wilde became increasingly open to socialist ideas.

He was a friend of George Bernard Shaw, a member of the Fabian Society, which began as a group of middle class moral idealists, who had a vision of a more just society where prosperity could be enjoyed by all.

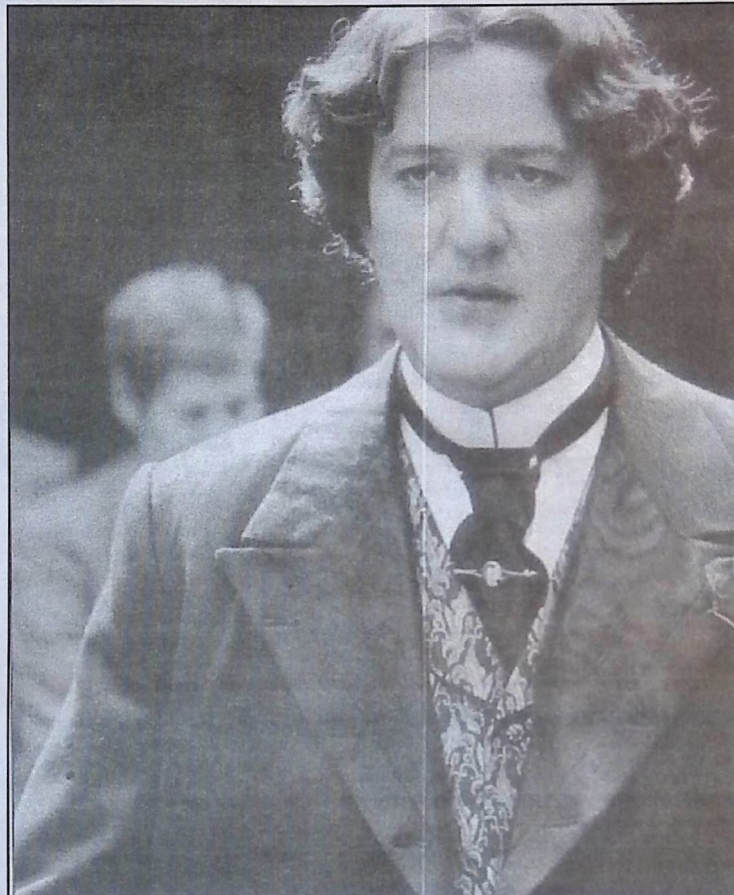
By the late 1880s they had a broad working-class and dissident audience.

Wilde attended and spoke at several of the Fabian meetings.

He argued that after the abolition of private property and authority, ideal social conditions would be established and people would be able to realise their full potential.

He claimed that "It is through disobedience that progress has been made".

He also spoke critically of marriage and family life.



Stephen Fry as the persecuted Oscar Wilde

Wilde was a figure of dissent in Victorian society, reacting against its claustrophobic morality.

Persecuted

He was viciously persecuted by the establishment for his homosexu-

ality, and sentenced to two years hard labour in Reading prison.

It was there he wrote his greatest socialist work, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, a damning attack on the penal system.

The weakness of

Wilde's politics lay in his distrust of the working-class as the vehicle of social change.

However he remains a figure whose struggle against a system that attempts to sanitise and standardise human life continues today.

film

The emptiness of Suburbia

by EMER MALONEY

SUBURBIA is quite a bleak film. It deals with a group of twentysomethings who live in a typical middle class American suburb.

The action revolves around a twenty-four hour period which sees the return of one of their group who has made it big as a singer, and who has everything the others claim to want—lots of money, adoring fans and a stretch limo.

The intention of *Suburbia* is, presumably, to

show how trapped and empty and sad the lives of these young people are and it does this very well. But that's also the problem.

The main protagonists are all fools and one of them is a dangerous racist with strong fascist tendencies.

Frustrating

But his actions and pronouncements go virtually unchallenged by the other characters and this makes for frustrating viewing.

There are a lot of ugly scenes, such as confrontations with the Pakistani owner of the 24 hour convenience store where the twentysomethings hang out. These are well done; the director uses the smallest actions to convey the menace of racism.

But the plot is weak. The film illustrates the awful lives of these people, without going beyond that or offering any hope. It's a well made film, but at the end you're left wondering "what was the point?"

play

THOMAS Kilroy's play, *The Secret Fall of Constance Wilde*, attempts to tell the story of Constance Wilde, the wife of Oscar Wilde, whose own story is often neglected in his tragedy.

Constance and Oscar married in 1884 but by the birth of their second son their relationship began to break down.

By 1891, Oscar was at the height of his literary career and had begun a relationship with Alfred Douglas, son of the Marquess of Queensbury.

After Wilde lost a libel case, he was arrested and found guilty of "committing acts of gross indecency."

He was sentenced to two years hard labour.

Escape

Constance was unable to escape the shackles of Victorian morality, viewing homosexuality as a "filthy perversion" and could never forgive Oscar, although she clearly loved him.

The play's insistence on emphasising the private rather than the broader social climate is its real limitation.

It questions sexual puritanism but ignores where it comes from.

At the end of the day, Constance and Oscar remain secure in their aristocratic class.

Homosexuality is perceived as a "perversion" associated with the working class and Wilde was as much persecuted for the "contamination" of his class as he was for his homosexuality.

The play however ignores this.

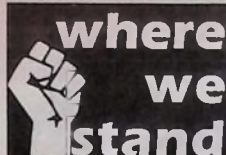
The play refers to the manner in which Oscar and Douglas actively sought working class boys and men.

Wilde's attitude to sexual transgression was the conventional one of his class, using the boys as objects.

The working class also remain nameless and faceless figures in this play with no social context given for their actions.

The Secret Fall of Constance Wilde could have been a great play but instead of questioning the conventions of class, it reinforces them.

—SINEAD KENNEDY



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.

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:

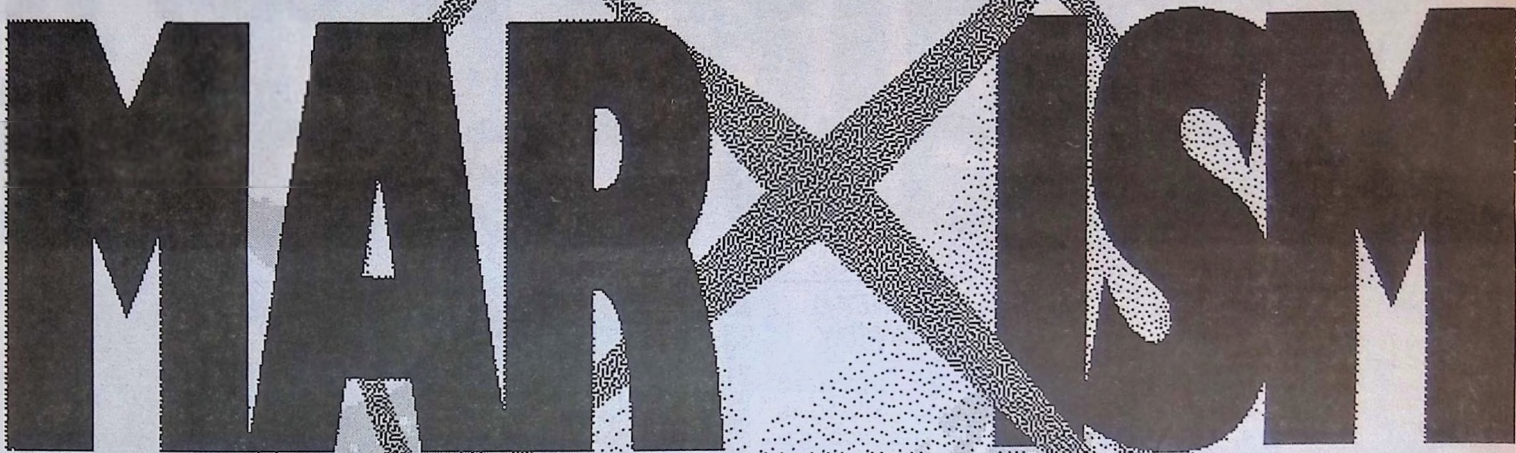
Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it.

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.

A weekend of socialist ideas and discussion



n i n e t y s e v e n

14th -16th November
ATGWU Hall
Dublin
Tickets available from Socialist Worker sellers, or fill in the booking form below and send to PO Box 1648, Dublin 8. Or ring (01) 8722682

Friday

- 6.30—7.45
CHE GUEVARA AND THE CUBAN REVOLUTION—Colm O'Riain
- IS RELIGION THE OPIUM OF THE PEOPLE?**—Juliet Bressan
- AN INTRODUCTION TO MARXIST ECONOMICS**—Kevin Wingfield
- 8.00—9.30
REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE 1990's—Kieran Allen (Editor Socialist Worker) Chris Bambery (SWP Britain)
- 150 years since the Communist Manifesto: MARX AND THE EARLY SOCIALISTS**—Deidre Cronin
- SIGMUND FREUD IN PERSPECTIVE**—Peadar O'Grady

Saturday

- 10.00—11.15
THE CELTIC TIGER—CAN THE BOOM LAST?—Ger Tuohy
- ENGELS ON THE RISE OF CLASS SOCIETY**—Joan Gallagher
- DRUGS AND COMMUNITY POLICING**—Mary Smith
- 11.45—1.00
FORUM: THE RISE OF RACISM IN IRELAND—Brid Smith, Davey Carlin, Dr Mohammed-al-Sadar
- AFTER DOLLY: DO SOCIALISTS SUPPORT GENETIC ENGINEERING?**—Paul McGarr
- JAMES JOYCE AND MODERNISM**—Richard Boyd Barrett
- 2.00—3.15
DEBATE: How can the exploitation of workers in developing countries be ended?—Mary Van Leishout(Oxfam), Conor Kostick (SWP)
- 10.00—11.15
TROTSKY'S FIGHT AGAINST STALIN—Damien Ahern
- New lads or old sexism? SEXUAL POLITICS IN THE 90'S**—Marnie Holborrow
- 3.45—5.00
SOCIALISTS IN THE UNIONS TODAY—Carolann Duggan, Marnie Holborrow and others
- HOW POWERFUL IS THE MEDIA?**—Eamonn McCann
- CROMWELL: REVOLUTIONARY OR TYRANT?**—Prof. Brian Manning
- 7.00—8.30
80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION—Chris Bambery
- LOYALISM AND THE PROTESTANT WORKING CLASS**—Linda Moore
- ABORTION—WHY WOMEN SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE**—Goretti Horgan

Sunday

- 10.00—11.15
THE POLITICS OF THE UNITED IRISHMEN—Mark Hewitt
- ROADS, POLLUTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT**—Owen McCormack
- ZIONISM AND ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT**—Shay Killalea
- 11.45—1.00
BOLSHEVIKS AND THE CIVIL WAR—Kieran Allen
- DOES PATRIARCHY EXPLAIN WOMENS OPPRESSION?**—Melisa Halpin
- HAS BLAIR MADE A DIFFERENCE?**—Chris Bambery
- 2.00—3.15
THE FUTURE SOCIALIST SOCIETY—Paul McGarr
- THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS TODAY**—Brenda Piercy
- THE POLITICS OF NOAM CHOMSKY**—Sinead Kennedy
- 3.45—5.00
FASCISM IN THE 1930'S How the nazis could have been stopped?—Richard Boyd Barrett
- THE NORTH—WILL BRITAIN EVER LEAVE?**—Colm Bryce
- THE POLITICS OF THE SWP**—5.00-6.00
- FINAL RALLY**—Brid Smith, Carolann Duggan

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

Name

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Union (if a student please state your college)

I enclose the sum of £.....(cheques and postal orders payable to SWP)

Signed.....

Booking form (PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK CAPITALS)

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Union (if a student please state your college)

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Signed.....

The price of the ticket for Marxism 97 costs £8.00 (£5.00 unwaged). This includes entrance to evening entertainments.

Free accommodation can be arranged. This is in the homes of Dublin SWP members—bring a sleeping bag Do you want us to arrange free accommodation for you?

If you need to use the creche please ensure you book your place(s) well in advance and state the ages and number of children

news & reports— politics; the unions
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Public Sector

Pay revolt can break Partnership 2000

A MAJOR pay revolt is developing in the health boards and local authorities that could break Partnership 2,000.

Nearly 30,000 workers are now balloting for strike action for significant pay rises.

The issue began when 4,000 craft workers from a variety of unions began a ballot for a £27 a week rise.

Under a 1979 analogue

agreement, the pay of craft workers is supposed to be related to pay of eighteen different private and state companies.

The average rate of these companies was supposed to form the craft rate.

But in the past the local authorities and health boards have refused to pay the full amount and have continually reneged on promises.

This has resulted in an ever widening gap between

local authority workers and other comparable jobs.

"We have sat there and heard all this talk about the Celtic Tiger and the boom. But when you look at your wage packets you see hardly any change.

There is a real mood to fight" one craft worker in Dublin Corporation told *Socialist Worker*.

After the craft workers began their ballot SIPTU announced that they were

also going to take a vote of general workers in these areas for strike action.

Ever since 1994, general operatives and non-nursing personnel grades are supposed to have a 80% relativity rate with the craft workers.

Any gain for the craft workers is supposed to have major spin on effects.

Today general hospital workers are very badly paid and many have to depend on overtime to survive.

"You can work as a domestic for years and still not earn the proposed minimum wage of £5 an hour.

"It is time we did something about this" one shop steward told us.

The growing mood for militancy is to be welcomed. But workers should still ensure that their union leaders do the job properly.

There should be no question of SIPTU members passing the pickets of craft workers or vice versa.

As soon as the pickets go up, every workers should respect them because every worker stands to gain.

The ballot in SIPTU is also for action 'up to and including industrial action'.

The National Executive Committee of the union has said that it will be deciding the timing and place of action.

But there should be no return to the disastrous policy of selective action.

Winning a claim for a £22 a week rise means workers will have to hit hard and fast.

Intel

Organise the union

THE non-union computer company Intel was threatened with a major work stoppage that was only averted at the last moment.

The company is facing a period of turbulence after its share prices dropped.

Its domination of the computer chip market is being challenged by rivals such as Cyrix.

The company has responded to this by trying to increase production at its Leixlip plant which is now one of the four largest suppliers in the company.

Their latest demand is for a 24 hour day production runs every day of the year, including Christmas and Bank holidays.

This would mean making Sunday work compulsory.

Intel workers are already put on 12 hour shifts and there is considerable discontent at the plant.

Pay rates are about 5% behind the going rate in the computer industry and there is a continual pressure against 'low performers'.

Intel tried to get the changes through through meetings of its 'work teams'. Ironically this system of Human Resources Management has won the top award from the bosses organisation IBEC for the best personnel policy.

But the work teams were told they could only discuss options which guaranteed that the company got 24 hour day continual production throughout the year.

With choices like that, it is like being consulted with a gun to your head.

"We are treated like dirt here. They keep us under

pressure all the time. I would love to see a union here" one Intel workers told us.

Intel has received £90 million in grants from the IDA. It is the biggest recipient of grants in the computer industry. But it is being let get

away with banning unions.

The union movement should now organise a massive recruitment campaign with a regular caravan outside the Intel factory to explain to workers the benefits of union organisation.

Social Security Agency

Strike against privatisation

WORKERS IN the Social Security Agency (SSA) in the North have voted overwhelmingly for industrial action against privatisation.

In a magnificent show of opposition to privatisation 66 per cent of NIPSA members voted in favour of a half-day strike and 86 per cent in favour of non-cooperation.

"The discrepancy between the two votes is a little bit concerning, but we think it had a lot to do with confusion about the ballot paper, with some members thinking it was a choice between the strike and non-cooperation," a shop steward from Belfast told *Socialist Worker*. "The main thing is that there is a vote for action and we can build on that."

SSA workers will strike for half a day on 31 October, with lunchtime rallies in major centres.

They will now ban all contact with private contractors who have been invited into the Agency for the next 12 months to assess possible areas for privatisation.

"We need to press for more action," the NIPSA steward said. "We have already forced management to give the union 24 hours notice of any of these companies arriving at an office. We want to see immediate walk-outs as soon as they arrive."

The plans to privatise Social Security were proposed by the former Tory government but are being continued by Labour. Under what is known as the ADAPT '98 contract, three private firms - EISIS, EQUIP Services and SEMA Group—will spend the next year working in both the Social Security and Ben-

efit Agency offices to find out what they will take over and run for profit.

Agency management have already agreed that privatisation will result in redundancies and the compulsory transfer of workers to the private sector. It will also mean pressure to cut wages and union conditions and more pressure to force people off benefits to boost profits.

The ballot for strike action was proposed by the SSA Panel, a body made up of NIPSA shop stewards from across the North.

The strike vote clearly shows the strength of feeling for serious action.

Unfortunately, the NIPSA leadership's plans fall far short of the action that is needed.

They are only proposing to have letter writing campaigns to MPs and discussions with community groups and local authorities after 31 October.

Union activists will need to push their own leaders to back further action and build support in the offices for the idea of strikes as the way to stop the private companies.

Dunnes Stores

STAFF AT Dunnes Stores are set to ballot on selective industrial action.

This follows the refusal of Dunnes Stores to pay treble time to long standing staff for working the four Sundays before Christmas.

Since 1994 staff are on three different payments for Xmas Sundays.

All those that have joined the company since that date are on time and a half for the Sundays.

Others are on double time. But staff still working in stores that were open on Sundays three years ago are due to receive treble time.

Last year the company refused to pay the agreed treble time to those entitled to it and closed the stores on Sundays before Xmas.

The Labour Court recommended the store pay all workers double time and give those who previously received treble time days off in lieu.

Dunnes management has rejected this recommendation and refuses to pay the

extra.

The company has set out to divide the staff by employing those starting since 1994 or transferring from other stores employed on worse contracts.

■The restructuring of the supermarket sector is threatening already inadequate pay

and conditions.

Quinnsworth and Crazy Prices, now owned by Tesco, are employing youngsters on a starting rate of £2.60 an hour.

One shop worker told *Socialist Worker*, "We thought Dunnes Stores were bad employers but Tesco is even worse."

Dublin Institute of Technology

ANGER IS growing among both staff and students in the Dublin Institute of Technology as students are being crammed in with no proportional increase in expenditure on facilities.

Over 40% of all hours are being taught by non-permanent staff. Some of these lecturers get as little as 7 hours teaching a week as there is a deliberate policy of denying teachers their entitlements under protective legislation. DIT is now being called 'the Dunnes Stores of Irish education' for its treatment of staff.

Although the TUI members voted for action in February over the staffing structure this has been deferred by union leaders while negotiations continue between them and man-

agement.

The Dublin Colleges Branch of TUI have agreed to hold a protest outside the DIT Headquarters on Friday 31 Oct to protest against the implementation of new faculty arrangements without proper negotiations.

Staff at DIT Aungier Street have also issued strike notice over management's failure to resolve a dispute over the failure to provide permanent posts for a number of part-time staff.

Two weeks ago about 70 art students in the DIT in Mountjoy Square protested about the severe lack of space there. Management have made some concessions but the local protest needs to be linked up with other colleges.

St Loman's Hospital

NURSES IN the Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA) in St Loman's Hospital have been involved in an industrial action for over one month.

They are taking action over low staffing levels which place both nurses and patients in danger.

They have refused to perform non-nursing duties, and have refused to answer telephones in the wards, to get supplies from the stores etc.

One nurse told *Socialist Worker*: "What's important is that we're fighting for better working conditions, and any inconvenience has been

caused by the management.

"No patients are suffering as a result of our action, but they do suffer because of poor conditions on the wards."

This isn't the first action which we have seen against poor conditions in the hospitals.

Nurses in a ward in St Brendans Grangeorgan walked off their ward in protest at poor working conditions.

St. Lomans nurses should be supported and should escalate their action to force management to pay attention to their demands.

Liverpool dockers

THE 329 Liverpool dockers, sacked in 1995 for refusing to cross a picket line, have rejected the latest offer from the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC).

They voted by 213 to 97 to turn down £28,000 each or the reinstatement of just 40 dockers.

John Smith, a third generation dockerman, argued that the payoff would not last long:

"I'm 47. When I go looking for another job and they find my last job was on the docks, they say: 'Goodbye sweetheart'."

The workers were locked out in 1995 because they refused to pass a picket of 80 workers from a firm called Torside, who were in dispute over casual labour.

They have had tremendous support from dockers around the world. Unions like the US West Coast Longshoremen have given hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The Liverpool dockers are

members of the Transport and General Workers Unions (TGWU).

The union's hardship fund has provided £620,000 but the TGWU leaders have refused to make the strike official.

The union's leader Bill Morris imposed the recent ballot on the dockers claiming he was "impatient" with their refusal to organise their own vote.

But the dockers had refused to ballot because the 80 workers originally sacked were not included.

The dockers are demanding no less than full reinstatement. Prime Minister Tony Blair has the power to order their reinstatement given the Labour government's shareholding in the MDHC.

At this crucial stage in the dispute, the widespread sympathy needs to be turned into solidarity action and the TGWU leaders must be forced to back the strike.

Castlemahon Foods

WORKERS at Castlemahon Foods in Co Limerick won a £10 a week rise and back money last month.

The company employs 500 workers and processes chickens. The company was told by the workers they would face industrial action if they did not pay up.

One worker told *Socialist Worker*, "We saw the company's figures and they are making a lot of profit. It was about time we got what we deserve."

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p

**STOP THE FEES
Demonstration**
Called by National Union of Students
November 5th
Assemble 1pm Queens
University
March to rally at Belfast
City Hall

PROTESTS CAN

STOP FEES



THE DEMONSTRATION against student fees in Belfast on 5 November should be loud and militant.

Labour plans to introduce fees of £1,000 a year, abolish grants and replace them entirely with loans.

It is already having a devastating effect. Figures released some weeks ago showed that applications to universities for 1998 - the first year that fees will be charged - have fallen by 12 percent already.

Sectarian

The students unions should have gone all out to build a fight against the fees. But sadly some college unions are more interested in fighting sectarian battles than in mobilising students for a common fight.

In Magee, Stop the Fees Campaign members were told that there would be no transport to Belfast because "students don't believe in marching any more".

The students union only agreed to send a bus when the Campaign petitioned for a union meeting to discuss the Belfast demo.

Yet students are livid about the

fees. In Belfast, 60 students blocked the road outside Queen's for 15 minutes following a picket organised by the Campaign.

"The students chanted for free education as they advanced on the vice-chancellor's building at lunchtime," the *Irish News* reported.

Davy, one of the organisers of the protest, said: "If these fees come

through the equality of opportunity in our society will be diminished. It will basically affect working class people and people on low incomes."

Power

The fees can be defeated if militant action is organised. Students may not have economic power but

they do have the power of numbers.

The best way to show anger against the fees is to begin a campaign of occupations of universities and government buildings.

Students should also be seeking to address trade union meetings to forge unity with workers and ask for solidarity on an issue that will increasingly affect their sons, daughters and relatives.

ters and relatives.

In Northern Ireland, we are always told that Catholic and Protestant will forever be divided.

Instead of waiting for politicians to deliver peace from on high. We should forge a feeling of solidarity from below by fighting hard to defend the principle of free education.

**WHAT
LABOUR
WON'T
TELL YOU
ABOUT
THE
FEES:**

1 THE GRANT

The richest students won't suffer as much. The *Guardian* calculated that after three years they will owe the state £8,055. That is £3,000 more than at present.

But poorer students will leave with debts of £10,300. This is £5,265 more than now.

"The loss of grants means that the least wealthy would end up having to pay back the most," said the *Times Educational Supplement*.

2 LOAN RE-PAYMENT

Blunkett says students won't have to repay student loans until they earn £10,000 a year. That amounts to £130 a week, the pitiful wage paid to many nurses and other graduates.

On that sort of money, loan repayments can be crippling. People may find themselves paying off their loans for 23 years under Labour's scheme.

3 FEES

Blunkett says "The government has taken

key steps to protect students from lower income families." This is a lie.

The very poorest students may not pay, but they still face a mountain of debt from the abolition of the grant.

Students of parents whose joint income is over £23,000 will be liable for fees. But that is the equivalent of each parent earning £150 a week after tax.

The children of a semi skilled factory worker and a part time office cleaner will have to pay fees.

4 WHO SHOULD PAY?

Blunkett says that graduates now earn an average of 20 percent more than those who do not have a degree. But a degree is no passport to wealth these days.

The richest 500 people in Britain are worth more than £86 billion. Labour should tax these people not those working to get an education.

Even the higher tax rates used by the Tories in the 1980s would net an extra £6 billion.

Yet Blunkett says only £4 billion would be needed to give a grant to every student today AND to expand higher education.