

Socialist Worker

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Socialist Worker reveals:

EXCLUSIVE

AHERN'S COVER UP OF CORRUPTION



BERTIE AHERN is engaged in a desperate attempt to cover up Fianna Fail corruption.

When Ahern met property developer Tom Gilmartin, one of the first questions he asked him was - had he made a donation to Fianna Fail.

He then helped Gilmartin to complete the purchase of a 70 acre site from Dublin Corporation. Yet he never mentioned this in a Dail statement and only acknowledged it happened after the Sunday Tribune discovered it.

Now even bigger questions are emerging about Ahern's role in assisting a Fianna Fail supporter, Owen O Callaghan, get tax relief on a shopping centre development in Athlone.

Developer Tom Gilmartin says that he met Ahern on one occasion with Charlie Haughey, Seamus Brennan, Brian Lenihan, Ray Burke and Liam Lawlor in the Fianna Fail offices in Leinster House to talk about his development at Quarryvale.

Offshore

As he left government buildings, Gilmartin was approached by an unknown individual who said his problems would be solved if he put £5 million into an offshore bank account. Gilmartin didn't and he didn't get to carry out the development.

However, the Cork businessman Owen O'Callaghan, who did eventually build the Quarryvale shopping centre - now known as Liffey Valley - was more fortunate. He gave

bribes to a key Fianna Fail councillor, Colm McGrath, and eventually got planning permission for the centre.

When the story of the donations broke, McGrath said, "I am being set up by Mount Street (Fianna Fail headquarters). There is a much bigger story out there involving some people who are now taking the high moral ground".

McGrath's reference to the 'bigger story' is interesting because it seems that Bertie Ahern also helped O'Callaghan.

The Fianna Fail/Labour government in 1994 had decided not give huge tax breaks to a shopping centre development in Athlone built by Owen O'Callaghan. The Golden Island site was a £20 million development which had failed to get tax breaks under the Urban Development Scheme.

Then after the government collapsed over the Brendan Smyth scandal, Bertie Ahern signed a statutory order to give a 50 percent tax break to O'Callaghan. A statutory instrument means that there was no discussion over the decision. On December 14th the day before the next government came to power Ahern signed a document, along with Michael Smith, which saved Owen O'Callaghan millions of pounds, despite the fact that his own government had originally opposed it.

It now transpires that a large number of files covering the granting of special tax status to developments have gone missing after they were sent to the Department of Finance when Ahern was the Minister.

JAIL THE CORRUPT POLITICIANS. . . JAIL THE CORRUPT

AIB bankrolled Haughey's crooked lifestyle

THE ALLIED Irish Bank has been a major backer of Charles Haughey from the late seventies. This startling revelation has come out of the Moriarity Tribunal.

The AIB's support for Haughey gave them the confidence to operate a series of tax scams which cost the tax payer over £100 million.

Just before he became Taoiseach, Haughey entered into discussions with AIB to maintain their soft loans.

The bank had a claim on much of his property - but it decided to let Haughey off paying his full debt. Effectively it gave him a gift of £400,000.



Protesting outside the courts against Haughey

Evidence

The Moriarity Tribunal has found no evidence that Haughey has ever paid off his debts to AIB.

In 1983, the Evening Press reported that Haughey had huge debts to the bank.

But the bank threatened legal action and forced the paper to

carry a lying retraction. The reality is that the AIB was working hand in glove with Haughey.

Throughout the 1980s, the bank built up 31,564 non-resident accounts.

These were accounts mainly designed to avoid tax — and the bank knew it. One internal memo noted that "75 percent of this

is 'funny money'."

In 1984, the AIB became virtually bankrupt after speculating on the London insurance market.

The Irish government had to organise an emergency rescue scheme.

Paying

Yet when Haughey

was back in government after 1987, the AIB was let away with paying the government back a tiny sum for the loan.

The Haughey government made sure that the Revenue Commissioners turned a blind eye to the tax scams even though the money could have been used to fund hospitals and schools.

Afterwards O'Malley received a note to convey how "appreciative he (Smurfit) was for the con-

It's not just Fianna Fail

'THE OPPOSITION did not land a blow on Bertie'. This has been the judgement of most of the media after Ahern made his statement in the Dail about the Gilmartin revelations on corruption.

Although Ahern was openly exposed, the performance of Bruton and Quinn was pathetic.

The reason why Ahern gets away with lame excuses is that the major parties in Dail Eireann all have something to hide.

The Progressive Democrats pretend to be a clean party who try to keep Fianna Fail honest. But after they got a £30,000 donation from the Smurfit group, Des O Malley met Michael Smurfit in the midst of the Telecom scandal of 1992.

Afterwards O'Malley received a note to convey how "appreciative he (Smurfit) was for the con-

fidential meeting".

Fine Gael are already implicated in some of the scandals. John Bruton and the former Fine Gael leader, Alan Dukes, both picked up cheques of £50,000 and £30,000 respectively from Ben Dunne.

Fine Gael councillors have also been involved in local authority re-zoning and a key Fine Gael TD, Nora Owen, has been named as exerting influence on behalf of builders.

Labour

Even the Labour Party has its own links with big business. Former leader, Dick Spring now sits on the board of several Irish companies. He also got a cheque for £50,000 from Ben Dunne for a development in Tralee.

The reality is that whenever democracy is organised on a capitalist basis, it is distorted and

directed by big business.

Officially the votes of every citizen are supposed to be equal. In reality, cheque books count far more than votes.

Big business help parties which promote their policies to win elections by giving them money to pay for canvassers.

They also ensure they get a good slant in the commercially owned press.

Once their favourite candidates get in, business then leans on them for tax cutting policies and individual favours.

By contrast genuine socialist parties do not get a penny from their class enemies and there is a concerted attempt to marginalise its their views in the media.

It shows that real change in Ireland will never simply come through parliament. We need a revolutionary movement from below to break the Golden Circle forever.

what you can do?

The Socialist Workers Party has organised several pickets and street meetings over the current spate of scandals.

The Sunday Tribune columnist, Anne Marie Hourihane, even acknowledged that 'it was refreshing to see that someone had a reaction to the current scandals which didn't involve swearing and throwing the odd bit of delph at the radio'.

But the protests need to grow much bigger. We need to see a major national demonstration to call for the Jailing of Corrupt Politicians.

The trade union movement which represents the interests of PAYE workers is the key. Now is the time to make the union leaders turn the rhetoric of condemnation into action

WE URGE OUR READERS TO RAISE THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION IN THEIR UNION BRANCH

■ This branch expresses its anger at the fact that no politician or businessman has been jailed over the recent scandals involving corruption, bribery and tax dodging.

■ No charges can be laid against the alleged culprits on the basis of evidence gathered at expensive and lengthy tribunals.

■ Noting that while union leaders have condemned the corruption, no organised focus has been provided to allow people to express their anger.

This branch therefore agrees to sponsor an anti-corruption demonstration in March and to publicise this among other union bodies."

Backhanders and racism

COLM MCGRATH, the Fianna Fail councillor for Clondalkin is one of the new breed of right wing politicians.

In the past, Fianna Fail could use their republican credentials and claim to be the

party of the plain people of Ireland. But not anymore.

Like much of the backbone of Fianna Fail, McGrath is a small businessman, running a security company, Essential Services.

McGrath has used his

role as a councillor to make connections which helps his business. He took bribes from the property developer, Owen O Callaghan, to help get the Liffey Valley shopping centre established. Then when it was set up, McGrath's security company won the contract for centre.

This was a nice little arrangement for McGrath but it did nothing for the people he is supposed to represent.

North Clondalkin is an area with high levels of unemployment and drug use. It needs worker's representatives who will organise protests to win the resources that the area desperately deserves.

McGrath's only way of promoting Fianna Fail politics is to promise a few favours — and to divert anger in a racist direction.

As his ambition grew,

McGrath stood in the last General Election on an openly racist ticket. He sent around leaflets to houses attacking refugees claiming that they were taking resources from Irish people.

Organised

He even claimed that refugees organised the 'ritual slaughter' of animals in their own back gardens.

As the pressure mounts on Fianna Fail, they will try the same trick of stirring up racism against refugees to help cover their own robbery from Irish workers. O'Donoghue's new legislation to expel refugees is part of this strategy.

But the McGrath case shows how this racism is just a filthy cover to divert attention from their bribe taking.

State firms ripped off

JAMES GOGARTY'S evidence at the Flood Tribunal shows how private industry rips off state companies.

Gogarty says that he had £700,000 in a bank account and this money came from the ESB.

An argument had broken out in his company JMSE about who should get the commission for this fee which they had charged the ESB.

But the real issue is why the ESB were paying out a staggering £700,000 out in the first place. JMSE had done work on the Moneypoint site and were owed £42,000 but after a few meetings this turned into a payment of £700,000.

An honest politician?

When one FF hack discovered that Brian Lenihan, had received a £10,000 gift which he pocketed himself, he demanded that Lenihan bring in the cheque to the party the next morning.

Unfortunately for Lenihan he got his bribes mixed up and handed over a cheque for £20,000 he had received at the same time.

As Lenihan said in the Dail debate over the McCracken tribunal, "Misconduct on the part of a small number of office holders has sullied the reputation of the great majority of us." Perhaps not that small a number after all.

what we think

Blame Fianna Fail not the refugees

Bombs will not stop Kosovan Horror

THE HIGH Court has ruled that the recent wave of deportations by the Minister for Justice John O'Donoghue was illegal.

The 1935 Aliens Act, which O'Donoghue used to sign the deportation orders, was too wide and gave the Minister too many powers.

But instead of stepping back, O'Donoghue is now trying to rush through new legislation to expel refugees.

Fianna Fail's hostility to refugees was even in evidence when Ahern opened a refugee centre in Phibsboro, Dublin and argued that there were too many refugees "concentrated" in his Dublin constituency.

Would Ahern also claim that there are too many Irish emigrants "concentrated" in Camden Town in London and that this was causing tensions?

Blame

Fianna Fail politicians like Ahern and O'Donoghue want to blame refugees for the housing crisis.

But the fact that there are 40,000 people on the housing lists is not the fault

of refugees. Fianna Fail cut back the local authority house-building programme long before refugees arrived here.

And it has done nothing to stop the building companies making a fortune from escalating house prices.

Anger

Fianna Fail know that people are angry about political corruption and this is why they are trying to divert anger onto refugees.

The Flood and Moriarty tribunals have revealed the scale of Fianna Fail's links with big business. The party may get votes from working class people but they only look after their rich friends who pay the donations and the bribes.

As Fianna Fail try to whip up racism, it is vital that there is an organised focus against their corruption.

Racism only grows when people feel that nothing can be done about those at the top of society and they are left to compete with each other for meagre resources.

If the trade union leaders matched their rhetoric with some action and called mass demonstrations, many would soon learn that the rich are the real spongers in society, and not refugees.

GREEK STUDENTS FILL THE STREETS



THE BIGGEST student demonstrations since 1991 took place in Greece in January. More than 50,000 high school students marched in Athens together with teachers and university students.

Tens of thousands demonstrated in Salonica, Patras, Crete and Volos. Every big town was filled with students with their banners.

"Give money for education, not for wars and the police" they chanted. The new Labour style government of Costas Simitis hoped the demonstrations would be the end of the high school occupations that began across Greece last December. Instead the number of occupied schools rose, teachers have called two one day strikes and more demonstrations are planned.

NATO FORCES are threatening to bomb Serbia after the atrocity in the Kosovan village of Recak that saw 45 people slaughtered. Serbian security forces butchered men, women and children in a horrific massacre.

No one should pin their hopes on Western forces solving the bloody conflict between Serbia and ethnic Albanian guerrillas who make up the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

In 1993, the US invaded Somalia in what was supposed to be a peace keeping mission to stop conflict between tribal leaders. But its actions left 10,000 dead and many observers subsequently claimed that US troops engaged in racist attacks on local civilians.

Killing

The US and Britain have also been regularly bombing Iraq, killing scores of innocent civilians.

Bombing Serbia will only drive the Serbs into the hands of nationalist leaders and isolate ordinary Serbs who want to get rid of Milosevic.

The West is not interested in tackling the root cause of the conflict. All it is trying to do is keep a lid on the situation. It is not in favour of independence for Kosovo, because it is terrified that this would have implications for the surrounding countries in the region.

This is why the West has zigzagged between threatening Serbia and trying to get rid of the KLA, who the US special envoy Richard Holbrooke labelled "terrorists" last year.

The West's policy of threats, combined with deals that cast in stone the supposed differences between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, will never deliver peace.

SAY NO TO PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE

BERTIE AHERN is trying to present membership of Partnership for Peace as an opportunity to increase Ireland's international peace keeping role.

But in reality Ireland's joining the PFP could be the first step to its joining the NATO military alliance.

The British Ministry for Defence paper *Stable Forces in a Strong Britain* claims that participa-

tion in the Partnership for Peace programme will:

"assist those partners who aspire to NATO membership in the evolutionary process leading to their integration".

Membership of the PFP will need a major military build up. A much larger troop commitment would be required as well as a major investment in military hardware. This will demand a huge increase in Irish military spending.

After they had stopped fighting

the Cold War with Russia, NATO generals reinvented themselves as international peace keepers ready to intervene in the World's "trouble spots". But wherever NATO has intervened it has worsened the conflict.

In Somalia the US-led NATO intervention resulted in the deaths of 10,000 Somalis.

In the former Yugoslavia, NATO intervention served only to enforce and institutionalise ethnic cleansing. In one case, 260,000

Serbs were driven out of the Krajina region of Croatia after the US secretly armed its regime.

Today Western governments hide their old style colonial ambitions behind a claim that they are engaged on peace keeping missions.

But Partnership For Peace and NATO are not about maintaining humanitarian interventions — they are about asserting Western dominance and supporting US imperialism.

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

THE SOCIALIST Workers Party is establishing branches all over the country. A new East Belfast branch has been formed.

- On all the major issues that have emerged, the party is promoting a clear action programme that breaks with the political consensus.
- On housing: The SWP has campaigned for rent controls to stop landlords hiking up rents; an emergency local authority house building programme; and the nationalisation of building land.
- In the unions: The party is fighting to break Partnership 2000. It openly supports groups like the bricklayers who are defying anti-union laws.
- On Northern Ireland: The war is over but behind the continued sectarian bickering, all the main parties from Sinn Fein to the DUP want to cut taxes on profits. Only the socialists say: Tax the fat cats.
- As another major recession looms on the world economy, we need a strong socialist alternative.

- I would like to join the Socialist Workers Party
- I would like to receive more information about the party

Name:.....

Address:.....

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Indonesia

'Elections won't solve workers' problems'

Socialist Worker spoke to two Indonesian socialists, Sandi and May, about revolution in Indonesia

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE MOVEMENT WHICH OVERTHREW GENERAL SUHARTO IN MAY OF LAST YEAR?

The events of May last year were a crystallisation of people's anger at the Suharto's regime. He had been in power for 32 years. Feelings against him had built up across society. Many people were unhappy at the lack of democracy.

But the anger had really built up from December the previous year.

That is when the East Asian economic crisis hit Indonesia. The currency, the rupiah, collapsed and the International Monetary Fund moved in.

In March, the delegates at the national assembly voted for Suharto to be president. But it was not democratic, the delegates were hand picked delegates, and the governing party, Golkar, had an inbuilt majority.

Suharto was elected once again and people thought that was the end of it.

Then the crisis became worse and worse. Lots of people got sacked and the economy really started to slow down.

Students started to demonstrate against the Suharto regime. Other pro-democracy forces joined in.

People tried to put their hopes in other political parties but the regime repressed them.

The revolution began with the students. The government denounced the students as agents of social change. But this propaganda meant that many students started to see themselves as capable of making things happen.

There were many debates about what we should do. Many of us tried to radicalise the movement.



"We had to beat the police and military"

We said to the people that this was a military regime and a capitalist regime that we had to fight.

There were debates about whether we should go on the street or not. Many demonstrators had been attacked over the previous months.

Some people argued we should just demonstrate on the campus. But there were so many provocations from the police that we just had to take to the streets.

Jakarta was the centre of the movement. We also had connections with other cities like Yogyakarta and Lambong.

Within a few days the marches grew from 1,000 to 30,000.

This was a big provocation to the regime. We tried to go to the parliamentary building and four students were killed.

This is what sparked off the riots. Millions of people who had not been active suddenly expressed sympathy for the students. And in the poor areas many people rioted.

That was when the students entered the parliamentary building. The move-

ment grew and on 21 May Suharto resigned.

WHAT TYPE OF DEBATES TOOK PLACE WITHIN THE MOVEMENT?

There were debates about tactics but also about the aim of the movement itself. These continue today.

For example, many students tended to believe that they were the only agents of change and saw their movement as separate from everything else that was happening.

Just after Suharto's fall the students were occupying the parliament building and 3,000 workers and poor people wanted to enter it and join them. The students said no.

Many students believed that the riots which took place on 13 and 14 of May showed people were only interested in anarchy. But others looked to make links with the poor and the workers. That is where our groups KOBAR and KOMERAD come from.

SO HOW STABLE IS THE HABIBIE GOVERNMENT?

He cannot stop the economic crisis. More people are expected to be pushed into poverty this year.

He tries to show he is a reformer and says he has a cabinet for reform.

But he does not see the reforms through. There will be new elections in June, but Habibie has agreed to undemocratic election regulations.

He has talked of independence for East Timor which has been occupied for 23 years. At the same time Indonesian troops are in the capital Dili harassing people and there is no date for a referendum for people to vote for independence.

For the first few months Habibie's control was very fragile. The one who controlled the situations was General Wiranto.

Since then Habibie has been able to consolidate his position. Now Habibie is stronger than Wiranto.

THE REGIME TRIED TO CLAMP DOWN ON THE MOVEMENT IN NOVEMBER SHOOTING DOWN DEMONSTRATORS

ON 'BLOODY FRIDAY'. WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF THAT?

Before it people just hated Suharto. Then many people came to realise it is not just the person, it is the system that needs changing.

In September there were demonstrations against Habibie and for far reaching reforms that were in the hundreds.

By November the demonstrations had reached hundreds of thousands.

The main organisation calling the protests was called the City Forum. It linked together the pro-democracy groups like the groups we belong to, KOBAR and KOMERAD.

We demonstrated against Habibie and against the employment minister. We tried to organise groups of workers. We had some particular success with the airline workers.

We also campaigned for the withdrawal of dual function of the military. This is the law which says the military has a political as well as defence function.

We were the first in the

student movement to campaign for this.

On 28th October there were 25,000 people on a pro-democracy march to a special parliament session. It was not only students, there were workers peasants and the urban poor.

We were beaten back from the parliament.

The government moved up 35,000 troops and 75,000 supporters to defend the special session of parliament.

We covered Jakarta with leaflets, we had to make sure that we had bigger masses than they did.

Then on 11 November we held another march. The people in this neighbourhood who had previously fought against each other united and supported the march.

There was 700,000 people on the march.

We stopped just near the police headquarters, where they shot at us.

From this moment we learned that we had to fight back or we would totally lose this battle.

Then the following day we got one million people onto the street. Police had prepared from the morning

and shot 10 people. It was like civil war until about 5am.

People came from everywhere protesting at the murder of the 10 people.

If we could not get into the parliament many of us had the idea that we could occupy the centre of the city like they did in Kwangju in South Korea in 1981 or in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

This was the beginning of a new phrase in our struggle.

The regime was not strong enough to drive us off the streets. But there was a problem.

The students and the workers were worried that the opposition politicians like Amien Rais and Megawati Sukarnoputri did not support us even though they say they are for democracy.

We got one million people on the street but then we faced a choice. Where do we go from here?

SO WHAT IS THE SITUATION NOW?

Many people are looking forward to the elections in June. Rais and Sukarnoputri are very popular. But we say the elections will not solve the problems workers face.

Workers have great hopes for the elections, but there are still strikes and protests now.

We are trying to build organisation among students and workers. This is not an easy thing to do.

It is not just the slogan of unity but building it practically that we need. Demonstrations on the streets maintain the political escalation. But we also need to build an alternative power in society.

THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN OUTBREAKS OF ETHNIC VIOLENCE. HOW SERIOUS ARE THESE?

Sections of the military are trying to stir up ethnic hatred. There are divisions between Christians and Muslims and the small number of Chinese people.

These date back to the time when Indonesia was a Dutch colony.

They are used to hide class divide.

So when the class movement is weak you can get this ethnic rioting which is happening in places like Ambon.

These can get worse or can be pushed to the side. It all depends on the strength of the class movement.

Eamonn McCann

Can the Agreement survive?

FOR THE first time since last April, pessimism outweighs optimism in political circles in the North. There is real alarm building up about the chances of the Agreement surviving.

Even when the Drumcree stand-off was at its most obdurate last July, with the three Quinn children dead and the Portadown Orange Order still refusing to budge, most commentators saw the issue as marginal to the Process itself. After all, there was nothing in the Agreement specifically to do with marches.

The most appalling incident since April 10th last, the Omagh bomb in August, was widely interpreted as actually boosting the Agreement, by further isolating those Republicans who saw it as a sell-out.

But the impasse over decommissioning and the formation of an Executive is different. This goes to the heart of the Agreement. If the Executive isn't established, the cross-border bodies can't be called into being and the changes to the Southern constitution won't take effect. The entire edifice will crumble.

Pro-Agreement parties are now openly admitting this is a distinct possibility.

Parking

David Trimble talked last month about "parking" the Agreement if there is no movement on decommissioning. And at the annual Bloody Sunday rally in Derry, Sinn Fein's Martin Ferris warned that the Assembly could fall apart if Trimble didn't change his tune.

This is, on the face of it, a strange state of affairs. Both Ulster Unionists and Sinn Fein had hailed the Agreement as an historic breakthrough and campaigned to persuade their supporters to support it.

How can they now, less than a year later, disagree so fundamentally about what it means that each predicts disaster if the other doesn't change its line?

This conundrum has arisen because the Agreement was endorsed on the basis of two contradictory and irreconcilable understandings.

"Everyone's a winner!" was the happy cry which echoed around the car-park at Stormont on the blissful dawn of April 10th. The implicit message was that the conflict which had ripped the community apart had been all down an unfortunate failure of communication.

But now that each side understood what had been ailing the other, all that was necessary were sheepish apologies, and a readiness to let bygones be bygones. John Hume's banal mantra to the effect that "It's people who are divided, not territory"—now there's a dazzling insight!—and that "The solution to division is agreement" perfectly matched the intellectual level at which the Agreement had been struck.

This is not to pretend that any better or more honest Agreement was possible, given the basis on which the Talks had been undertaken from the outset. The only issues allowed onto the agenda were those related to the Orange-Green divide. It was entirely taken for granted that there was nothing to Northern Ireland politics, or Northern Ireland people, than sectarian colouration.

That done, the sectarian divide was erased, whisked away, made as if by magic to disappear. The message was (a) only the Orange-Green divide matters and (b) the Orange-Green divide doesn't matter. The degree of double-think involved came through clearly in the week before the Assembly election when David Trimble stood on Derry Walls overlooking the Bogside and told journalists that overlooking the Bogside, in suppeace was at hand now that the Bogside, in suppeacing the Agreement, had accepted that it was "as British as Bournemouth."

Meanwhile, the SDLP and Sinn Fein were delivering Bogside to the Agreement on the basis that David Trimble now, at last, accepted and respected their Irishness. The Agreement demanded that people allocate themselves to either the Orange or Green camps, and then told each camp a different story about what would come next.

While Sinn Fein is right and the Ulster Unionists wrong about what the Agreement says on decommissioning and the establishment of an Executive, the key problem isn't about interpretation. The problem is at the heart of the Agreement itself. The problem has to do with politics which are based entirely on community and not at all on class.

Why was Eamonn Collins killed?

THE KILLING of Eamon Collins has been justified by some republicans as "payback time" for his role as an RUC 'super-grass'.

But Collins was not a willing informer.

He named 50 of his fellow IRA men because he was 'broken' while in RUC custody by a combination of sleep deprivation and mental and physical torture.

Convicted

Once away from the Special Branch he retracted his statements.

He was never convicted of a crime because the judge said his confession had not been made voluntarily.

So why was Collins killed?

The most probable reason was that he had become a persistent critic of the Republican Movement.

His death comes at a time when the Provos are cracking down on criti-

cism of their strategy. Shortly after Collins's death, a prominent Tyrone republican, Paddy Fox was kidnapped.

Fox is well known for his criticism of the Adams/McGuinness 'sellout'.

It is ironic that a movement that has fought for 30 years against repression should now use repression to defend its compromise with the system.

The Provos are treading the well worn path of revolutionary nationalists becoming bog standard capitalist cops and politicians.

The PLO are doing exactly the same with the torturing of Islamic activists in PLO police cells.

The tragedy of Eamon Collins is that he started out influenced by Marxist ideas.

He mistakenly believed the IRA were fighting for socialism.

After several years as a dedicated IRA activist he came to the knowledge that "the war was unwinnable".

He was demoralised and exhausted, wanting only to rest and be with



Eamon Collins

his family.

Before he was broken by the RUC Eamon Collins had already been 'broken' by the experience

of being a militant inside an organisation that had no vision of socialism and no strategy to bring about an end to the

Northern State.

Eamon Collins was killed because he continued to speak out about that experience.

Recession hits in Belfast

A MAJOR engineering company in Northern Ireland, FG Wilson, has announced 400 sackings. Workers were given no warning of the redundancies and were shocked at the scale of the sackings.

The jobs losses represent a fifth of the workforce at the three factories in Larne, Monkstown and Springvale, West Belfast. Over 200 jobs are set to go at the Larne plant alone.

Industry

The redundancies are the first effects of the growing international recession hitting manufacturing.

In the last six months, 1,400 workers in the textile industry have been sacked.

FG Wilson is owned by an American multinational,

Emerson Electric, and the notorious anti-union company Caterpillar Inc., has recently bought up shares.

Company bosses are blaming the economic collapse in South East Asia and the strength of sterling.

But in 1997 FG Wilson received a government grant of £36 million on the promise that it would create an extra 1,500 jobs.

The news received massive publicity from the Northern Ireland Office at the time and was promoted as an example of American inward investment.

The idea of handing out Development Board grants to companies in return for promises of job creation is at the heart of the Assembly's plans for dealing with unemployment.

The sackings at FG Wilson, one of the biggest manufacturing companies in the North, show that it is based on an illusion.

The sackings are the latest in string of companies, including Desmonds and Fruit of the Loom, who have had high profile IDB grants only to announce massive job cuts months later.

Local politicians responded to the redundancy plans by seeking urgent meetings with the company to look after their local plant.

East Antrim Unionist MP Roy Beggs, who is based in Larne, defended the company and played down rumours that the sackings resulted from a new plant being opened in the US.

Result

Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams was "seeking an urgent meeting with the company's management to persuade the company to defer any decision which might result in job losses in Springvale."

Both these communal politicians could see no further than seeking protection for their side of the religious divide.

But it is obvious that the job losses require a united response from workers in all three plants. Instead of the communal response, we need a class response that unites Catholic and Protestant workers against redundancy.

Tragically the union leaders have so far made no attempt to call meetings to decide on action. It will be up to workers in the plants to push for such action themselves.

In England and Scotland a series of similar factory closures and job cuts have been met with local trade union demonstrations and ballots for industrial action.

Such a response means rejecting strategy of the communal parties, and relying instead on workers strength to defend jobs.

A struggle at FG Wilson could set down a marker for other groups of workers faced with similar job cuts as the recession bites deeper in the coming months.

Prisoners of the American nightmare

NEARLY TWO million people — or half the equivalent population of the Republic of Ireland — are incarcerated in American prisons. This is the new reality behind the hype about 'zero tolerance' policies on crime.

The poor and minorities have borne the brunt of this drive to lock more people up. An appalling 70 percent of US prisoners are illiterate, and some 200,000 suffer from mental illness.

There are now more young black men under the control of the criminal justice system than in college.

It is now estimated that one out of every four black men will be imprisoned at some point in their life.

During his two terms in office, Clinton has been responsible for the introduction of very draconian crime legislation.

He follows in the footsteps of Reagan and Bush who used the so-called war on drugs as a pretext for imprisoning hundreds of thousands of people.

Rocketed

As the demand for prison places has sky rocketed a growing number of private prisons have emerged. Private prison corporations build their own jails and then win contracts from state governments to fill them. It is big business.

As a recent business brochure put it "While arrests and convictions are steadily on the rise, profits are to be made - profits from crime. Get in on the ground floor of this booming industry!"

Currently 6 percent of the US prison population are in jails run by private prison corporations but this figure will more than triple in the next ten years.

In the drive to make profits every conceivable corner has been cut.

Food is barely edible and according to one prisoner "this place has rats, mice and faeces droppings. It is clearly unsanitary for a human being". They are staffed by people whose pay is just above the minimum wage.

Not surprisingly there have been numerous reports of brutality.

In August of last year Wisconsin inmates housed at a Corrections Corporation of America prison (the largest private-prison operator in the country) in Whiteville, Tennessee were tortured with stun guns and one was sodomized with a shampoo bottle by a special armoured team "investigating" a violation.

CCA denied wrongdoing

by **DEIRDRE CRONIN**

for months. Then it admitted the incident took place and fired a few guards, claiming the problem was solved.

Meanwhile, five women prisoners from Oregon housed at a CCA prison in Arizona have filed a lawsuit charging repeated sexual abuse over a period of months.

CCA's 1700-bed Northeast Ohio Correctional Centre has recorded 16 stabbings since it opened in 1997 - 20 times the level of assaults in Ohio's state system.

US prisoners are also forced to work for slave wages in both public and private prisons.

CCA pays inmate workers an average wage of 20p an hour thus saving itself vast sums of money.

Increasingly, big business have been allowed to take advantage of prison labour.

Microsoft uses prisoners to package its software while a number of airlines pay prisoners 50 cents an hour for data entry and lay off workers who used to make \$8 an hour for the same work.

In Wisconsin, the state Department of Corrections actually gave a company loans and perks to replace staff it had laid off with cheap prison labour.

As Adrian Lomax, a Wisconsin prisoner, has said "A more outrageous use of public resources by a state agency is hard to imagine".

Not surprisingly, there has been resistance from prisoners themselves in particular to the privatisation programme.

The scandalous conditions at private prisons were exposed in 1995 when immigrants awaiting hearings on requests for political asylum staged a five hour uprising at the Esmor Correctional Facility in New Jersey.

Meanwhile last June prisoners in Wisconsin occupied their recreation yard in protest at transfers of inmates to private prisons outside the state.

It's clear that America's incarceration boom is really about scapegoating the most vulnerable people in society and protecting the real criminals who have condemned so many Americans to poverty, exploitation and low wages.

DON'T LET C RUN DOWN HOSPITAL

HEALTH MINISTER Brian Cowen is putting lives at risk by starving Tallaght Hospital of cash. The hospital, which has only been open six months, has already been forced to take out a bank loan due to underfunding.

The hospital spent £8.5 million over its budget. This overrun has to be covered by a private loan taken out in the name of the hospital board.

But Cowen has refused to guarantee the loan under any circumstances and he won't allow the loan to be repaid from the hospital's allocation for 1999.

Now the hospital has been allocated £4.4 million less than it expected in 1999. Unless something is done quickly, this will provoke a real crisis.

Tallaght residents began a campaign for a hospital to serve

the area's 100,000 strong population in the early eighties.

Despite persistent rebuttals and the repeated failure of politicians to deliver on election promises, they continued their fight.

They finally won a victory in 1997 with the opening of the Tallaght hospital, which was formed out of the merger of the Adelaide, Meath and National children's hospitals.

But now they are watching as the Fianna Fail Health Minister, Brian Cowen, runs down the facility and threatens 200 job losses from hospital staff.

Facilities

Tallaght hospital has super-modern facilities and was supposed to be the first hospital in the country to offer child, adult and geriatric care in one location. But some of these wonderful facilities are not being used.

The hydrotherapy pool which is supposed to be used for physio-

therapy now stores medical records.

The dialysis centre, used for patients with kidney failure, is only running at half its capacity.

The children's hospital has neither an intensive care unit nor a high dependency unit and now the Department of Health is planning to shut the children's cancer treatment section.

In a desperate attempt to raise funds, staff and patients are charged exorbitant rates in the car park.

Fifty people recently attended a public meeting called by the Tallaght Hospital Campaign. Speaking at the meeting, Ritchie O'Reilly, a leading hospital campaigner urged people to "come together as a united force to defend the hospital".

He warned against relying on establishment politicians and placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of the Minister for Health. "The way to put it right is to give us proper funding", Ritchie said.

Hospital staff reject Cowen's job cuts

FEELINGS ARE running high among the staff at the Tallaght hospital. Emergency meetings were called by all of the unions in the hospital in response to the Health Minister's threat to sack up to 200 staff.

A SIPTU shop steward told *Socialist Worker* that "workers in the hospital would not tolerate the Minister's carry-on and that any cutbacks would meet with resistance. The country is full of money but not for us or the sick".

This government was "up to their necks in corruption" he said, and that "workers were not going to

let them get away with it".

The workers that he represented would ballot for strike action should the Department of Health attempt to cut staff levels at the hospital.

Many staff in the hospital are on short term contracts and they are most likely to be the target of the forced redundancies.

Defend

A canteen worker told *Socialist Worker* that workers and the local community had to unite to defend the hospital.

"It's the public we need now. Everyone's in the

same boat - without their help we really don't know what the future has in store".

National officials in SIPTU have responded to this anger.

Matt Merrigan, the SIPTU Regional Secretary has even threatened that the union might withdraw from partnership if the government attempted to implement staff cutbacks.

But the union should also be telling Fianna Fail that if a single job is lost because of the financial crisis, hospital workers will take industrial action.

Peter Homan, a SIP steward, spoke on the ge sis in Irish health care.

"Irish hospitals are de underfunded and resourced," he said. "In of a booming economy ernment expects Irish w put up with a Third We dard hospital service, a which is paid for mainly PAYE tax contributions.

"Health care is a basi right which must be c fought and battled for."

Campaigns

Ciara, a local resident the Tallaght Hospital c should be linked to ca across the country aga backs in the health servic

"Only a national c which involved mass de tions could save the Talle pital".

This was echoed by other speakers from the j

Many had horror stori of elderly patients dyi c tal trolleys and hours c queues in Accident Emergency rooms cau understaffing in the health

At the end of the meet tions in defence of the were handed round for p bring around their nei hoods and workplaces.

Service in crisis...Health service

COWAN TALLAGHT

Special report
by DAVE
LORDAN

THE ADELAIDE & MEATH
HOSPITAL, DUBLIN
INCORPORATING
THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

WHAT WE THINK

HEALTH CARE should be a right not a privilege. But successive governments have encouraged a two-tier health system where there is a high standard of care provided for a rich minority in private hospitals, while the majority have to put up with long queues, waiting lists and a declining standard of care.

Despite the fact that Ireland has the fastest growing economy in the EU, it holds the record for closing more hospital beds per head of the population.

The run down of the health service began when Charles J Haughey told the country to 'tighten our belts' he lived on an overdraft of over £1 million.

The last Rainbow

Coalition government composed of Fine Gael and Labour brought in a new system where hospitals that do not stick to their budgets are penalised.

This was a modified version of the Trust system that operates in Britain.

The effect of this new move has been to provoke a new wave of ward closures. Late last year the Regional Hospital in Galway faced a crisis - now it is the turn of Tallaght hospital.

Cutbacks

Instead of cutbacks, Ireland needs a comprehensive National Health Service where people are treated on the basis of need and not the size of their cheque books. Drugs and hospital treatment should be free.

A comprehensive health service also means that there should be no special treatment given to wealthy patients. Tax subsidies for

private health insurance should be ended and organisations like BUPA should not be given access to private beds in public hospitals.

The tax subsidies that are used to fund private hospitals like the Blackrock clinic should be immediately diverted to stem the crisis in Tallaght.

The crisis of the Tallaght hospital is part of a national crisis in the health service which results from gross underfunding.

There is a huge mood of anger amongst Irish workers in the wake of the corruption scandals and health campaigners and hospital workers can tap into this mood.

The main thing is not to rely on establishment politicians to provide decent health care.

Instead we need to organise mass demonstrations and work stoppages to defend the health service.

Questions on the crisis

The future looks grisly

WHATEVER HAPPENED to the world economic crisis? After falling sharply last Autumn, stock markets have resumed their spectacular upward rise. On both Wall Street and the City of London stock exchanges, share prices have passed the all time peak they achieved in June and July last year.

But economic driving forces are much more profound than the daily movements of share prices. Once we dig a bit deeper, things don't look so good.

This is confirmed by a very interesting paper, "America and the World Economy", by Bill Martin, chief economist at Phillips and Drew, and the unorthodox Cambridge economist Wynne Godley.

The United States, still the biggest economy in the world, has been enjoying its strongest period of growth since the 1960s—an average of 3 percent a year between 1992 and 1997. Since the East Asian crisis exploded 18 months ago, the US boom has been the main force standing between the world economy and global depression.

Imported

As Godley and Martin put it, the US is "the world's spender of last resort", preventing collapse elsewhere through its appetite for imported goods.

The main factor sustaining US growth has been private sector spending—firms spending on investment and households on goods for consumption. This spending has been growing much faster than profits and wages.

According to Godley and Martin, the private sector spent around \$100 billion in excess of its income in the last three months of 1998. US companies and households have been able to increase their spending by borrowing on a massive scale.

This huge rise in debt has been made possible by the stock market boom. Rising shares have meant a huge paper increase in investors' wealth. So, feeling richer thanks to the increased value of their shares, middle class households have carried on spending. Pro-capitalist boosters call this "a virtuous circle".

According to this notion prosperity boosts the stock market, encouraging households and companies to spend and thus to help keep the economy growing. The boom can go on forever, making everyone rich in the process.

This is a fantasy. For one thing, as the Washington economist John Schmitt pointed out, only a middle class minority can afford to play the stock market.

Six out of ten US households don't own any shares at all, while 72 percent have holdings, including insurance policies, of less than \$5,000. In any case, the

A US slowdown would hit the rest of the world as well. Canada, East Asia and Latin America would, because of their dependence on trade with the US, suffer especially badly.

economic pattern responsible for the US boom is unsustainable.

For it to carry on, net private sector borrowing would have to rise as a share of national income from what Godley and Martin call "an unprecedented 4 percent in 1998 to over 8 percent in 2003".

Much of this increased borrowing would have to be financed from abroad. The US's payments gap with the rest of the world—already high because of a flood of imports and declining exports—would double.

Meanwhile, to keep spending rising, share prices would have to soar to levels even more out of line with the real economy than they are now.

Sooner or later, Godley and Martin argue, the great spending and borrowing machine will have to go into reverse. But once firms and households start to cut back on their spending, the effect on the US economy could be devastating.

Brutal

The best comparison is with the brutal recession in Britain in the early 1990s.

This came after a boom had sent share and property prices rising way out of line with the real economy.

"In our judgement," write Godley and Martin, "the medium term prospects for the United States on present policy settings are bleak—ranging from, at best, below par growth and rising unemployment to, at worst, outright recession."

A US slowdown would hit the rest of the world as well. Canada, East Asia and Latin America would, because of their dependence on trade with the US, suffer especially badly. Finally, coming at a time when the rate of inflation in the advanced economies is already very low, a recession in the United States could push the world into a deflationary condition, where prices actually fall.

The free market economics that is still orthodoxy among Western governments would be quite incapable of dealing with such a situation.

Or, as Godley and Martin put it in their paper, more politely, "We are not confident that policy-makers could avoid a grisly outcome."

by ALEX CALLINICOS

1919 Belfast engineers' strike

The unity that terrified bosses

EIGHTY YEARS ago in January 1919, a huge unofficial strike paralysed the city of Belfast for four weeks. The strike is rarely mentioned in history books, but the action terrified the British government and both the British and Irish bosses.

The revolt was part of the wave of working class militancy which swept Europe in the aftermath of the First World War, inspired by the successful workers' revolution in Russia 1917.

At its height the Belfast strike involved up to 40,000 engineering and public sector workers. It is an inspiring example of working class militancy. Moreover the strike began to break down the barriers between Catholic and Protestant workers and gave a glimpse of a very real alternative to sectarianism.

After the world war workers were becoming increasingly confident as well as angry. The war had hit Northern Ireland hard. The Shankill road in Belfast had lost an entire generation of its young men in a single day at the Somme. The Northern Protestants who had volunteered in huge numbers to fight for the British Empire discovered that the empire was giving them precious little in return. Many working class Protestants were openly attacking Carson, Craig and the Unionist bosses.

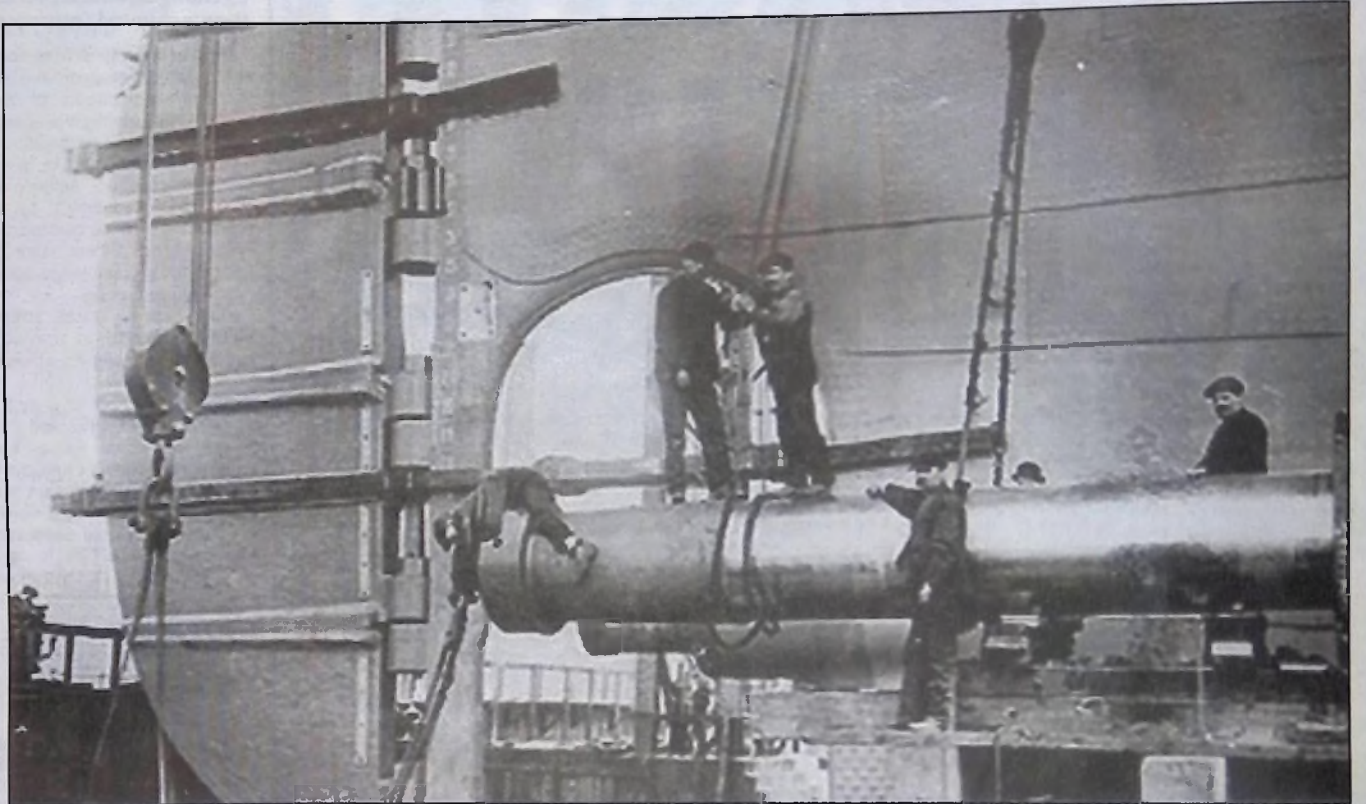
Revolution was engulfing Europe and in 1919 Britain too came close to revolution. One of the most important battles was fought by the Catholic and Protestant workers of Belfast.

As a result of the war engineers in Britain had gone from a 54 hour week in 1914 to an average 66 hour week by the end of 1918 with little or no increase in pay. Throughout the First World War living standards had been eroded. Anger was turned towards the shipping and engineering bosses who had made their fortunes out of workers' misery.

Workers were spurred on by the militant action of shipyard workers on the Clyde in Glasgow who were striking for a 40 hour working week.

In Belfast workers demanded a 44 hour working week with no loss of pay which they saw as protection against the constant threat of unemployment.

On 14th of January the Belfast district committee of the ASE engineering union called a vote on whether to strike. Thousands of workers in the giant Harland and Wolf shipyard and engineering plants across the city walked out on the day.



Belfast Shipyard workers were at the center of the 1919 strike

A procession of 20,000 workers marched to the City Hall with workers carrying banners saying "44 hours means no unemployment" and "44 means work for demobilised soldiers".

There was overwhelming support for action. Over 20,000 workers voted for "drastic action in the way of an unofficial strike" for 44 hours with only 558 voting against.

THE STRIKE began ten days later on January 25 1919 when workers brought Belfast's shipyards and engineering shops to a standstill. The strike was run by the Belfast committee of the engineering union against the wishes of their national leaders. The strike committee produced a newspaper, the *Workers Bulletin* which appeared nearly every ten days

There was a marvellous display of solidarity across the city. The engineers were joined by municipal workers who shut down the gasworks and electricity power station.

All electricity supplies were cut with the strikes making a special exception for hospitals and other vital services. *The Belfast Telegraph*, who were bitterly against the strike, tried to siphon off some of this power to produce the paper. A crowd of workers threw bricks at the windows of the *Telegraph* building and stopped the paper appearing for a week. For the next month the biggest selling paper in the city was the *Workers*

Bulletin.

Tram drivers and conductors stopped the trams. Railway engineering shops, carpenters and joiners and grave-diggers all joined the strike. The workers of Belfast had effectively taken control of the city through the strike.

When shipyard bosses tried to keep work going with foremen and apprentices, 2,000 strikers broke through the gates, pulled out the apprentices and stoned the offices.

Huge crowds filled the city's streets every day for mass rallies. One member of the strike committee wrote in the Workers Bulletin. "The workers have discovered their friends. They are not in the City Hall, nor yet in the elected legislature. They like themselves, were always to be found on the Queen's Road and on their way to the engine shops all over the city at 5.30 each morning."

The mayor of Belfast admitted that "as far as the municipal undertakings were concerned, [he was] entirely at the mercy of the strike committee." British and unionist bosses were terrified. Unionist leaders denounced the strike as "a Sinn Fein, Bolshevik plot". The *Belfast Newsletter* urged workers not to strike because "the whole world was a melting pot."

The strike was centred around the Harland and Wolf shipyard, the heartland of loyalism. The industrialised area around Belfast was then the most profitable part of Ireland and Britain's rulers wanted to maintain their grip.

However this strike showed how class struggle and break the grip of sectarian politics. While the majority of the strikers were Protestants, many Catholic workers also joined in the

strike. Most importantly the strike leader, Charles McKay was a Catholic, as were others on the strike committee.

SUCH UNITY was remarkable if we consider the fact that Ireland was on the brink of a full scale guerrilla war against British rule and that the bosses were increasingly anxious to whip up sectarianism.

As one historian put it "There is no doubt the workers wanted a shorter working week, were not fooled by the economic and political arguments of the employers and showed mass solidarity in organising the strike. This solidarity was not threatened at any stage by communal tensions."

The turning point of the strike came after 3 weeks when the ASE union national officials sacked the Belfast strike leaders from the union. This gave the bosses and the authorities the confidence to crush the strike.

In Glasgow British troops had forced the strikers back to work but the Belfast workers voted by over 58 percent to continue the strike until they won.

On Saturday 15 February the British government sent in troops to occupy the power station and restore power. The night strikers fought running battles with armed troops and police as they escorted scab trams through the city.

The real failure of the strike was the reluctance of the strike leaders to spread the action and call other workers out even after the troops were sent in.

Once the power station was re-

opened and the trams were running, the morale of the strikers was dented and by 20 February they voted to return to work.

But they did not lose everything. The strike forced the bosses to agree to a basic 47 hour week and overtime payments for working 54 hours.

Neither did the militancy just disappear with the end of the strike.

On 1 May 1919 the biggest ever celebration of the workers' holiday took place with 100,000 workers parading through Belfast. The following year building workers won a strike for a 44 hour week and shipyard workers won pay increases.

THE GREATEST tragedy of the strike was that the strike leaders saw the strike primarily in economic terms. They never spoke of the need to confront British rule and Orange sectarianism.

This made it easier for the Orange bosses to regain their hold over Protestant workers after the strike was over.

In 1920 shipyard bosses arranged for Loyalist terror groups to hold meetings in the shipyards and encouraged Orange mobs to drive out Catholics and 'disloyal' Protestants. Some 10,000 Catholics and over 1,000 Protestants were forced from their jobs.

In 1921 the British government partitioned Ireland and created the sectarian state of Northern Ireland which would be a disaster for the working class. But the 1919 Belfast strike is a fantastic example of workers' power and the potential for unity between Catholic and Protestant workers.

in my view

A Fascist Olympian

THE OLYMPIC games have been thrown into confusion after it was revealed that sports officials were bribed to locate the Winter games in Salt Lake city.

But the most amazing thing about the scandal that has engulfed the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is that the man at the top is likely to survive unscathed. Juan Antonio Samaranch was even held up by some governments as the best person to sort out the mess. Yet Samaranch has a long and sickening fascist record.

He was the son of one of the wealthiest families in Barcelona and as a young man worked in the family textile business. Unions were banned and workers' wages held down.

He deserted from the army of the Spanish Republic as soon as General Franco launched his attempt to overthrow the elected Spanish government in 1936. Samaranch then rushed to join the fascist party.

For the next 40 years he was a leading supporter of the brutal Franco regime, proudly giving the fascist salute. He was a fascist sports minister and remained loyal to the dictatorship right up until Franco's death in 1975.

In that year, over 100,000 people demonstrated outside the Catalan regional council building shouting, "Samaranch, fuck off!"

Samaranch fled to Moscow where he helped organise the 1980 Olympics. Since then he has reinvented himself as one of the top men in world sport.

His fascist past did not stop him from cuddling up to some of the worst dictators in the former Stalinist regimes.

East Germany's Erich Honecker and Romania's Nicolae Ceausescu were both awarded the Gold Olympic Order by Samaranch.

Horror

The mock horror of pundits and politicians at the "new revelations" of Olympian bribery and corruption is sickening. Corrupt dealings are a long established part of the process. This has been dealt with in an excellent book by Vyv Simpson and Andrew Jennings, *The Lords of the Rings*, published eight years ago.

Almost every country knew the story about bribing the Olympics Committee. The Sydney committee publicly admitted they bribed the IOC to win the venue for the summer Olympics in 2000.

Bob Scott, who has headed Manchester's bid for the games, said almost a decade ago, "You have

The mock horror of pundits and politicians at the "new revelations" of Olympian bribery and corruption is sickening.

to get out and build the relationships with the IOC members. I even know the shoe size of the second daughter of one particular IOC member."

Denis Howell, a Labour sports minister in the 1970s and a key figure in more recent British bids, said a decade ago, "It was the invariable practice to give gifts to IOC members."

We are now being told that all this tarnishes the "Olympic ideal". Yet from the very start the games have been about money and politics. Before 1984 the games usually made a loss, and were largely exploited for nationalist political reasons.

But in 1984 Los Angeles made £130 million profit. That was a signal to politicians and big business that there was money to be made.

Ever since, the amount of money thrown around to "persuade" IOC delegates to back a particular city has spiralled.

The IOC is composed of European Royalty and big businessmen. Britain's Princess Anne is a member. So too is Mohamad 'Bob' Hassan - Suharto's golfing buddy. Another member is Lee Kun Hee, the head of the giant Korean company Samsung.

The Japanese city of Nagoya shelled out £6 million to convince IOC delegates to back its bid for the 1998 winter games. Rupert Murdoch once flew £100,000 of seafood into an IOC meeting in Germany to entertain delegates to bolster a bid by the Australian city of Brisbane. The goings on in the Olympic bidding process are simply an extension of what goes on every day in "normal" politics and business. A bit like what goes on in the normal course of Irish politics.

by PAUL MCGARR

film

Something rotten in the heart of the USA

SOMETHING IS rotten in the state of California. The big insurance companies are bribing politicians to vote down a bill that would force insurers to sell low cost policies to the poor.

Senator Jay Bulworth has had enough of the pretence.

He does not want to make another glib speech about how the American people are standing "on the threshold of the millennium".

Bribe

In the middle of an election campaign, Bulworth organises his own assassination and accepts an insurance company bribe that will guarantee a huge payout for his daughter.

But then the Senator flips his lid. He is suddenly free to say whatever he likes and does so with a vengeance.

The plot of Warren Beatty's film *Bulworth* sounds like an over the top version of the Flood Tribunal.

Like Hollywood's answer to Jim Gogarty, Bulworth suddenly starts spilling the beans on what his erstwhile cronies have been doing.

When a member of a mainly black inner city audience asks him why the government has done nothing for poor blacks, Bulworth tells the truth.

Politicians leave the poor to rot because they are too busy looking after their rich backers.

Many in the audience are horrified but some young black women are won over by the novelty of a politician telling the truth and they volunteer for his campaign team.

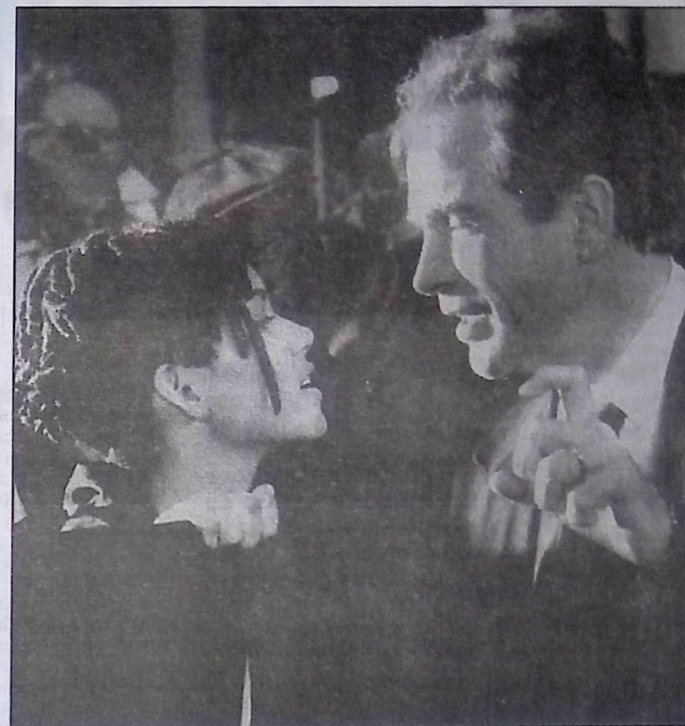
Suddenly

Bulworth finds a new lease of life. He tries to stop the assassination so he can use his re-election campaign to expose the rotten system of which he has been a part.

The Senator's advisers crack up as their boss suddenly begins to speak in rap and publicly insults his big business supporters.

The advisers are forced to follow their boss on an all night party in South Central LA.

Bulworth now finds himself among real people, a million miles away from the phoney world he has been living in, and he starts to have fun. He dresses like a rapper and goes on the run with the



daughter of a Black Panther activist.

Bulworth is an extremely funny and angry attack on the class divide in American society.

Playing the leading role himself, Beatty exposes the way politicians use racism to divide black and white. He calls for a redistribu-

tion of wealth and taunts company bosses at an election dinner to "say the dirty word—socialism!"

The Labour TD Pat Rabbitte said Bulworth reminded him of the corruption in Irish politics. But he seemed to miss Beatty's point about wealth redistribution.

Maybe that doesn't fit in with Labour's support for a lower tax on business.

Something is certainly rotten when a big Hollywood studio can produce a message far to the left of anything Labour says these days.

—DAVE MCDONAGH

health

Right's bitter pill

AFTER 40 years and countless scare stories, research into the contraceptive pill recently concluded that it did not cause long term damage to women's health.

Over a hundred million women around the world breathed a sigh of relief.

The Pill, the tiny contraceptive that changed the lives of millions of women world-wide, was developed in an obscure laboratory in Mexico City on October 15th, 1951. It was invented by a US research chemist Prof. Carl Djerassi and the mass availability of the contraceptive within nine years led to the liberation of a generation of women.

With its near-total success rate, women were at last able to take control of their own sex life and pregnancy became a choice for the first time in history.

From its inception the Pill has been a favourite target of the right. SPUC and Youth Defence argue that the 'contraceptive culture' it produces leads to

more abortions and an increase in teenage pregnancies.

Apart from the fact that the Pill prevents pregnancies, several studies have shown that in areas where the pill and decent sex education is freely available to young people teenage pregnancy rates have fallen.

In the nine months following the 1995 pill scare, when some pill brands were linked with blood clots, there were some 10,000 abortions, the highest recorded rate.

Doses

The early brands of the Pill contained high doses of drugs which produced some serious side-effects in women.

However, today low-dosage pills, which combine the two female hormones involved in managing birth control, are the third generation of pill.

A woman taking an oral contraceptive in the 1990's is likely to be ingesting fewer hormones in a month

than her 1960's equivalent would have in a single day.

The Pill became available in most countries in the 1960's alongside the growth of women's liberation and the civil rights movements.

The explosion of workers' struggles fuelled these movements.

Yet in Ireland the Pill only became available in 1972 when it was seen as a 'cycle regulator'. Later it was made available only to married couples who wanted to limit their children.

Irish women today do have greater freedom over their lives and sexuality than ever before.

The Right wing cannot turn back the clock on contraception but we need to fight for access to abortion to have full control over our own bodies.

But we will never achieve real freedom over our sex lives until we take control of every aspect of the society we live in.

by 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.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army. Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class.

Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states.

We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:

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

We support the leaders when they fight but oppose them when they betray workers. We stand for independent rank and file action.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:

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

Dublin: Moss Street demonstration

'We need homes not high rises'

ON WEDNESDAY 20 January more than 400 people protested against plans by Cosgrove Property group to build a 22 story, 80 metre high skyscraper at Moss Street and George's Quay.

The protest was organised by resident groups who were angry at the lack of consultation with

local residents. The new development threatens to block out the light from surrounding houses.

It will also affect the water pressure and lead to increased traffic congestion.

But the building also symbolises the growing gap in Irish society where the wealthy build skyscrapers where once there could have been affordable housing.

This anger was reflected by the local residents who spoke at the protest. One young woman Deborah

Moore said "I want to live in my local community.

This won't happen unless their is affordable housing built. Developers have never asked local people for their opinion, they just don't care."

This development if it goes ahead will be following the precedent set by Zoc developers at the Charlotte Quay site in Ringsend.

People from Ringsend, Irishtown and parts of the Northside came to support the Moss street demonstration.

Also speaking at the protest was local community activist Derek Murphy. "This development is the first of many skyscrapers. It causes shadows of up to a mile long and causes even more traffic problems.

"There are no gains for the local community.

"We need affordable housing and play areas."



ANTI NAZI LEAGUE
OVER THIRTY Anti-Nazi League supporters recently attended a public thintout to remove Nazi graffiti that had been painted at the rear of the Dublin Hebrew Congregational in Adelaide Road.

It consisted of Nazi and anti-Semitic graffiti. Tim Coles, Spokesperson for the local ANL said, "Jewish people have been using this Congregational for decades and have a right to be free from intimidation.

"We need to send a clear message to the tiny number of Nazis in Ireland that they will not be allowed to organise here. Fascism in Germany in the 1930s was allowed to grow through inaction. The paint-out shows that we are determined this will never happen here."

Maynooth

A GROUP of students from Maynooth college have formed a campaign to oppose the Students Unions attempt to get students to pay a £25 - £45 levy.

The proposed levy will involve students having to contribute to the cost of building new facilities in the college and will be put to a referendum in early March.

Rising

A spokesperson for the campaign Mark Walsh said "the fee may seem small now but it is part of a process whereby via higher registration fees and special levies, the cost of education is rising.

"In Britain, Blair's government has reintroduced fees. There is no reason to believe it could not happen here.

"It is a disgrace that it is

the students union that is calling for this levy to be introduced. The union is supposed to be fighting to defend our rights. As it is, many of us are forced to drop out of college for financial reasons."

Trinity college students have been forced to pay a levy for the past two years. All students including those getting grants have been billed £50 with no exemptions.

Students have faced bad facilities and inadequate grants for years. The government should be made to double the grant and cough up to pay for campus facilities. Two years ago Maynooth students organised a boycott of the canteen when the college authorities refused to renovate the swimming pool. The boycott was a huge success and the college agreed to fund the repairs to the pool. This proves that when students get organised they can fight back and win.

Nurses

Huge surge in union membership

THE NURSES' unions have experienced a huge surge in membership since militancy began to grow among nurses over the last 18 months.

The Irish Nurses Organisation (INO) says its numbers have swelled by 8,000 in that time.

This number is expected to accelerate even further if the Labour Courts recommendations on the national pay dispute are not favourable.

Since 1996 just over 2,000 new

nurses have qualified and many are joining unions because of the national pay disputes over pay and overtime.

The INO represents general nurses, public health nurses and nurse teachers and managers among others. Psychiatric nurses are represented by the Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA) which has always been seen as a more militant union. Two years ago they had 2,000 members, today they have close to 4,000.

Contrary to what the union bureaucracy have been arguing, union membership grows when unions begin to

fight and take action on issues.

In the past the ICTU argued that confrontational politics would discourage people from joining the union. They tried to recruit people to the union by offering them discounts on railway vouchers, cheap car insurance and medical benefits.

But it was only when the ICTU began to fight that people wanted to join the union. This is similar to what happened in Mandate. When the union began to fight, as it did in the Dúnnes Stores Strike, its membership increased.

SWP Branch meetings - all welcome

- ATHLONE:** Contact 01- 872 2682 for details
- BRAY:** Contact 01 -872 2682 for details
- BELFAST CENTRAL:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Garrick Bar, Chichester St.
- BELFAST EAST:** Contact 01- 8722682 for details
- BELFAST SOUTH:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in Queens University Students Union Club Room
- BELFAST QUEENS UNIVERSITY:** Meets every Thursday 1.00pm Mature Students Room
- CORK CENTRAL:** Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in Cornmarket
- CORK SOUTH:** Meets every Monday at 8.00pm in Scellig, UC
- DERRY:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in Badge Bar, Derry
- DUNDALK:** Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details
- DUN LAOGHAIRE:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Christian Institute
- DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane/Beaumont Recreational Centre opp. Artane Castle
- DUBLIN CENTRAL:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways, Parnell St.
- DUBLIN NORTH:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Snug, Dorset St.
- DUBLIN RATHMINES:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond St.
- DUBLIN RANELAGH:** Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Tom Kelly Flats, Charlemont St
- DUBLIN TALLAGHT:** Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in Jobstown Community Centre
- DUBLIN TALLAGHT:** Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square
- DUBLIN TALLAGHT:** Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square
- LIMERICK:** Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details
- MAYNOOTH:** Meets every Wednesday at 6.30pm in Classhall D, Arts Block, Maynooth College
- UCD:** Meets every Tuesday at 1pm (See posters for room no.)
- TRINITY:** Meets every Thursday at 7.00pm (See posters for room no.)
- WATERFORD:** Meets every Thursday in at 8.00pm ATGWU Hall, Keizer St. Feb. 11th: Is Human Nature a Barrier to Socialism
- WATERFORD:** Feb. 18th: John Red: The Revolutionary Journalist?

Public Meeting
THE CASE FOR SOCIALISM TODAY
Speaker: Eamonn McCann
Glentworth Hotel, Limerick
Feb. 11th at 8pm

news/reports/politics/industry/unions (01)8722682; fax (01) 8723838;
email: swp@clubi.ie web: www.clubi.ie/swp

BOTANIC GARDENS

Pickets won what the talks couldn't

THE BOTANIC Gardeners have finally got a settlement to their strike.

Sixteen gardeners were on strike for eight weeks before Christmas when management locked them out. Management had tried to impose on them supervision of students in a new modular system.

When they looked for recognition of the special nature of this work,

management suspended them.

After they were out for eight weeks, management finally climbed down and agreed to reinstate them. A third party panel met to adjudicate on the issues which would be binding.

key

On the key issue of assessing students, the panel ruled that "was quite different to training duties in other parks and gardens in

Dublin". This represented a significant climb-down for management.

Originally the SIPTU official - Brendan Hayes claimed that the gardeners would have no choice but to accept it. The solid strike proved otherwise.

The panel fell short of recommending promotions across the board

which is what the gardeners would have wanted. Shop Steward Brian Furlong recognises that this may still have to be fought for.

"But the strike has made the union stronger. People know that the management is not to be trusted and the union has come through it

much more united", Brian Furlong, the shop steward says.

"We are specially grateful to the SWP for their support and all the collections made. What surprised us was the extent of the support we got. The strike cleared up where allegiances lie".

Crane Drivers

CRANE DRIVERS are the latest group of building workers to start organising for better conditions.

Up to now this key group, have been paid only £6.25 an hour. Sometimes there are extra bonuses thrown in by employers but the official rate is abysmally low.

After a wave of struggle by bricklayers brought major pay increases, the crane drivers believe they can follow suit.

They have put in for a claim of £15 an hour.

The movement for higher pay increases began when crane drivers began meeting informally and formed their own association. Eventually they decided to join SIPTU as a group.

"SIPTU does not have a great record of pressing for improve-

ments in the building sites. But they are a union that organises across the grades.

We are giving them a chance to show what they can do. The main thing is to keep our own informal organisation together as well" one activist told Socialist Worker.

Major

The crane drivers have held two major meetings in Dublin where they stopped work to attend.

Just before the last meeting the employers promised to open immediate negotiations.

Workers should make sure that this is not just a stalling tactic and ensure that the bosses come up with proper wage increases immediately.

Bewleys

Bewleys ballot for action

SIPTU MEMBERS in Bewley's restaurants were still waiting to be balloted for strike action as we went to press.

They have been demanding a basic pay rate of £5 an hour for all staff. The momentum for action began before Xmas when Bewley's boss Patrick Campbell went on the radio and complained that Irish workers were not prepared to work for low wages.

A number of shop stewards began to press SIPTU to take action for a decent pay rise.

Threat

The company wrote to staff saying they had offered £4 an hour. This offer resulted from the threat of action and shows what could be won if the workers actually went on strike.

But SIPTU officials have begun to show signs of backing away from their earlier militancy.

They postponed the ballot on the pretext of having to recruit more people to the

union. Then they postponed it again to allow a further meeting with management about the Performance Reward Scheme.

Under this scheme workers are graded according to their experience. By successfully completing a training course a staff member can move up the scale until they reach a maximum of £4.60 an hour.

"They want to treat us like girl guides, awarding us blue badges and diamond badges as we climb the ladder," said one angry Bewley's worker.

"But I've asked to go on courses and never been sent. They just want the fuss to die down so they can promote a few of us and leave the rest on £3.50."

The Performance Reward Scheme is a trick. Bewley's hope that most staff will not stay long enough to reach the higher levels.

It is also difficult for some part time workers to go on courses. One worker we spoke to was told she had to go on a course until 5pm.

"I only work until 3pm because I'm a lone parent and I have to collect kids from school. How can I get my badges if I can't attend their courses?"

Up until recently SIPTU officials had rejected the Performance Related Scheme.

They should not be allowed to resurrect this divisive plan to back out of their commitment to all-out action.

Bewley's workers should insist that the union stick to £5 an hour for all staff and that strike action should not be delayed any further.

Enterprise Ireland

Enterprising workers fight back

WORKERS AT Forfas, the IDA and Enterprise Ireland have embarked on a campaign of industrial action over a re-grading claim

The action began when they refused to answer phones on February 1st. This was set to escalate with workers refusing to operate computers and e mail. If management refuse to

make concessions, pickets are due to be placed on offices which are responsible for attracting investment to Ireland.

The action started after 71% of the employees voted in favour of this course.

Workers are protesting about the fact that there are pay differentials of up to 40 percent amongst people doing the same tasks.

This occurred because the various agencies amalgamated but management refused to rectify the anomalies.

Background

An employee from an IDA background can reach a maximum of £27,000 and can achieve promotion only through open competition whereas a workers from another background can achieve a maximum of £42,000 and is entitled to automatic career progression.

The industrial action at agencies designed to support capital investment is highly symbolic. If the Celtic Tiger cannot even look after those who are feeding it with grants, it cannot offer much to other workers.

Fruit of the loom

Workers demand vote on the deal

IT HAS been over a month now since Fruit of the Loom announced closures at its plants in Donegal.

But workers have not had a single chance to vote on their response. At a mass meeting in Buncrana in December, SIPTU union leaders wouldn't even allow union members to vote on action against the sackings.

Since then there have only been rumours about what the company might be offering as a redundancy package.

At the end of January, rumours began to circulate that the company had sold its factories in Buncrana to another company.

A worker in Buncrana told Socialist Worker, "We

can't find out anything. We still have no idea how many jobs are going in our section. Some of the machinists were taken in the other day to a meeting but all they were told was how to get the redundancy package.

"Now they are saying that only the workers who are going to take voluntary redundancy will get a vote on the deal."

This suits Fruit of the Loom management. They have been holding back on information, playing off one group against another.

Future

Management are refusing to guarantee that the same redundancy deal will apply to all future layoffs, in order to scare people into accepting anything that is given to them.

There are reports now that management will present its plans to union leaders at the start of February. The union leaders will then, in secret, decide which union members should have a vote on the redundancy package.

This approach can only undermine the possibility of a united struggle to save the remaining jobs and stop the closures. It makes a mockery of trade unionism.

"We think that all the jobs could go once they get the plant in Morocco up and running," said one worker. "No job is safe. We're all going to be in the same boat." It should be a collective decision about the redundancy deal.

There is an alternative to all this. It is to stay and fight to keep the jobs.

That would mean rejecting the 'go easy' attitude of the SIPTU leaders.

It would mean being prepared to take industrial action, to stop the machinery being moved if necessary, to make the company agree.

It would mean demanding that the factory stay open or be taken into public ownership.

The SIPTU leaders won't even consider that. They stick to the belief that loyalty to multinationals will result in jobs, even when those jobs are disappearing before their eyes.

The very least that workers should demand is that everyone get a copy of the management proposals as soon as they come out, and that SIPTU calls a mass meeting of all union members to vote to accept or reject it.

Ryanair

THE BAGGAGE handlers at Ryanair, who brought Dublin Airport to a standstill last year, have been forced to take industrial action again.

Workers organised a "Ryanitis" sick day in protest at continued attacks by management.

The inquiry into Ryanair which was set up after the strike, has brought no improvements for the workers there.

Instead, Ryanair have sacked a number of militants and hired agency workers who

are denied the same rights as those directly employed.

The workers decided to take action when one agency worker was refused compensation after his legs were crushed in an accident.

Angered

They were also angered by managements attempts to force them to work extra hours on Sundays.

It's clear that Ryanair have no respect for the safety of their staff.

The only tactic open to the workers is to build the kind of rank and file movement that gained them such solidarity from Airport workers last year.

Socialist Worker

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Inside

Recession hits Belfast

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End low pay, Stop the closures

Fight for full union rights

THE EMPLOYERS and the Tories are screaming about Labour's Fairness at Work bill. They say that it will make industry "uncompetitive" and destroy jobs.

But in reality Labour has already

What Labour's Bill means

Unions can win recognition if they can show that 50 percent plus one of workers in any "bargaining unit" are union members.

Alternatively, if unions can show a 10 percent membership in a bargaining unit, they can get a recognition ballot. The union then has to win the ballot and the support of at least 40 percent of the entire workforce to gain recognition.

Union officials will be able to represent any workers with serious grievances even if a union is not recognised.

Maximum compensation awards for unfair dismissal rises from £12,000 to £50,000.

Employers will be able to sack workers involved in lawful disputes after eight weeks.

The Tory anti-union laws on balloting, picketing and secondary action will remain in force.

made too many concessions to the bosses.

To win the right to union recognition, workers will have to win a 40 percent overall majority in a workplace or "bargaining unit".

Yet no government in Britain has been elected in the last thirty years with an overall 40 percent majority of all those eligible to vote.

Workplaces can also be unionised if there is a list of 50 percent of workers who want to join a union.

Yet the employers can challenge the names on the list or even claim that it will cause industrial relations difficulties. Labour's bill accepts that these are good enough excuses to keep the unions out.

Opportunity

Despite all this, the bill provides an opportunity to unionise many workplaces in the North.

Multi-national companies like Seagate in Derry are getting away with sacking workers for having a "poor attitude".

Other companies are paying such low wages that Northern Ireland now tops the poverty wages league in Britain.

Some of these employers will go to extreme lengths to keep the unions out.

The *Observer* newspaper reported that some companies are already gearing up to use American dirty tricks to smash unions and prevent them from winning such ballots. Already, US union busting firms have been advising anti-union companies on how



A union recruitment drive can beat the union busters

to get round the *Fairness at Work* measures.

But these firms can be beaten if there is a determined unionisation drive.

Already the TGWU has said that it will launch a recruitment drive in Seagate.

It plans to park a caravan outside the gates of the Derry plant and sign up the workers.

This is a good start and should be repeated all around the North.

There are too many sweatshops paying less than £5 an hour. Strong trade union organisation can help take on these employers and win proper wage increases.

But to build that sort of union organisation you cannot just look to the law.

You need to build a spirit of solidarity that cuts across sectarian divisions and sees the employers as the main enemy.

ORGANISE YOUR JOB

DO YOU work in Seagate or Stream, in one of the nursing homes or supermarkets where there is no union? Now is the time to organise for union recognition.

You can ask your Socialist Worker seller for advice on how to unionise your job or write to us at PO Box 354, Tomb Street, Belfast.