

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 40p

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# No Coalition with the Right!

# NOW FIGHT ON JOBS AND WAGES

The General Election shows that workers are fed up with FF's con-job.

For the last five years FF demanded that WE make sacrifices so that THEIR friends in big business could make a fortune. The promise was that this was the way to create jobs.

But it was nonsense. There are now 300,000 out of work

and FF's only programme was to cut more off social welfare.

Dick Spring and the Labour Party have benefited from the huge wave of anger against FF

## Defence

But Spring will not offer any defence against the mounting attacks on workers' conditions.

■ Immediately after the

election, FF's millionaire friend Larry Goodman locked out 1,000 workers.

He told them that he was not going to pay an agreed 3% pay rise.

Tragically, he intimidated SIPTU into recommending that workers accept the wage freeze.

■ In Waterford Glass, FF's friend Tony O'Reilly is demanding that workers take a pay cut of between 15% and 40%.

He has brought in some would-be union busters to take on the workers.

■ The bosses union, the Confederation of Irish Industry has called for cutting out the rises due under the PESP.

The rich and powerful will use the pressure for devaluation of the Irish punt to call for a new set of sacrifices from workers.

And they will tell the Labour Party bluntly that they

can forget about their promise to create jobs and increase Children's Allowance.

Workers cannot rely on Dick Spring to defend them. We have to organise ourselves for the fightback.

## Struggle

The support shown over the miners struggle in Britain shows what can be done.

There hundreds of thousands of British workers took

to the streets to demand that the mines be kept open.

The call for a general strike got a magnificent response.

Every time the bosses come after our wages and jobs in this country, our watchword has to be: SOLIDARITY.

But to re-build that fighting spirit we need a strong socialist organisation that stands well to the left of Dick Spring.

# Can Labour bring change? Turn to pages 6+7

# Don't let the Tories destroy the NHS! Build for action now!

Health Minister Lord Arran has recently approved Trust status to nine out of ten hospitals and community units in the North.

The decision to allow the hospitals and units to opt out completely disregards the wishes of hospital workers and local communities who are overwhelmingly against the move.

20,000 people marched in September over the proposed closure of Downe Hospital, while the vast majority of hospital staff at Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital and Craigavon Hospital voted "No" to Trust status.

Management at the Royal Victoria Hospital and City Hospital have already begun to cutback jobs and services.

At the Royal Victoria Hospital patients have had to eat off paper plates using plastic knives and forks because of staff cuts in the hospital kitchen and a refusal by hospital management to replace faulty dishwashing equipment.

T.G.W.U. and NUPE shop stewards have said that the morale of catering staff is at an all time low because workers are expected to maintain the same level of productivity despite losing some 200 hours.

Workers are giving up their days off and staying on after shifts to enable the



kitchens to function.

At the City Hospital in Belfast management has permanently closed 20 surgical beds as part of a cost cutting drive to claw back a £1m overspend.

## Plush

Meanwhile hundreds of thousands of pounds are being spent on training week-ends for senior hospital staff in plush hotels throughout the North.

Patients lives are being put at risk while hospital administrators are wined and dined

in comfort.

Trust status means the introduction of a two tier healthcare system where services deemed to be "unprofitable" — meaning services for the elderly the very young, and the terminally ill — will be slashed.

Already under threat is the maternity unit at Downpatrick deemed to be unprofitable because less than 2,000 children are born there every year. Closure of the unit will mean that women will have to make an hour's journey to Belfast to maternity services there.

Doctors opposing the closure say it will mean children being born in the back of cars!

This is the reality of the market — healthcare based on profit and not on need will inevitably lead to lives being put at risk.

## Devastating

In Britain where trust status has already been introduced thousands of health service jobs have been lost and hundreds of wards have been closed with a devastating effect on patient services.

2,000 health workers recently demonstrated in central London against the proposed closure of ten London hospitals, while nurses at University College Hospital in London are to vote for an all out strike against ward closures.

This kind of action is the way forward, activists in every workplace should be building on the anger of health workers and local communities.

It is time to start building for a day of action against the introduction of Trust status.

# Belfast: Junkets for Crooks...

THE Unionist dominated Belfast City Council is setting a record on junkets. Last year 88 trips were made outside Northern Ireland by city councillors.

Typical of the activities was a proposed trip by the Official Unionist, Councillor Margaret Crooks to Hong Kong. Crooks is chairperson of the Parks Department.

On her trip to Hong Kong she planned to attend lectures on the restoration of Malaysian rain-

forests.

Obviously expecting an imminent troop withdrawal from Northern Ireland she also planned to attend lectures on the conversion of "former military

sites into parks".

The official programme of the Hong Kong trip also included such relevant activities as "a happy hour cruise" and "unlimited free drinks and live music".

Councillor Crooks had no problem justifying her activities.

She told objectors "I work hard as a chairman of a committee so there is

nothing wrong with playing hard".

Meanwhile the Belfast City Council is also sacking 600 of its hard working employees.

## ...but no joy for travellers

TWENTY traveller families are living on the side of the Monagh By-Pass outside Belfast because the Belfast City Council refuses to house them.

The same council which sends its members on trips to Barcelona and Lille has broken its promise to provide 6 sites for travellers.

In Britain the councils are legally obliged to

provide serviced sites for travellers. But in the North, the laws relating to travellers are closer to the South African pass laws when it comes to freedom of movement and designated living areas.

Some time ago travellers were literally burnt out of Poleglass.

They had previously been stoned out of the Markets area. The attacks on the travellers in Poleglass was led by a local SDLP councillor.

# Things they say

"Do your best to lose the election." Irish Times economic editor, Cliff Taylor's advice to politicians.

"God has a way of riding straight on crooked lines and it may well be now divine providence he was needed in Latin America and this is a sad, tortured way of getting there." Cardinal O'Connor of New York on Bishop Casey.

"Ireland is a deeply divided society, where a substantial proportion of the population is excluded.

"This is not the result of some relentless law of nature. Rather, it flows from decisions that have been made over many years."

Conference of Major Religious Superiors election briefing document.

"It appears, therefore, that the best capitalists in today's Russia are the communists; it also appears that these communists were never really communist at all. They joined the party to get on in the world and when the party collapsed, their impeccable capitalist instincts told them precisely what to do."

Seamus Martin, Irish Times Moscow correspondent.

Reynolds: "Charlie McCreevy is looking at the whole system to make it, to dehumanise it to make it more..."

Little: "To humanise it, surely?"

Reynolds: "To dehumanise it, yes, to take it away from any harshness that's in it." Albert Reynolds on RTE radio—telling the truth for a change!

## ONE IN FOUR POOR

Combat Poverty believes that one in four Irish people live in poverty.

These people get less than half of the average disposable income.

An ESRI report found that unemployed people are five times more likely to suffer from clinical depression than others.

Combat Poverty's new document "Telling it like it is" shows the reality behind the figures in Kilmount, a small area in North Dublin.

This is what working class women in Kilmount have to say about their lives:

KATEY: "Most of my time is spent watching the food to make sure it lasts the week."

"I often feel like the Special Branch when I hear myself asking who's at the fridge, who was at the milk and so on."

SUSAN: "I am frightened every time a strange car pulls up outside the door."

"A strange car means trouble and trouble means money."

This grinding poverty is just one reason why workers gave Fianna Fail a drubbing at the polls.

# 150 march for O'Connell Court strike

One hundred and fifty workers marched through Cork in support of the O'Connell Court strikers in November.

The six O'Connell Court workers had been on strike for 20 weeks. They had worked in a privately run institution offering sheltered accommodation for the elderly. Up to July 1992 two nurses were employed who were responsible for the medical welfare of the elderly.

But the manager Dave Williamson made the nurses redundant. He then asked the non-nursing staff to keep

medical reports on the elderly. They refused and were sacked.

One of the strikers explained why they could not take up the reports:

"I might be on duty by myself at night and make a report that one of the elderly people had a flu. But it could be much more serious. I wasn't trained to take responsibility for medical decisions"

The strikers have got tremendous support from outside Cork. Busworkers and hospital workers in Dublin and glass workers in Waterford have all raised collections.

But the SIPTU union in Cork could have done more to win this important strike.

# Fairbrother case—one of many

When it comes to Garda brutality the Derek Fairbrother case is only the tip of the iceberg.

Fairbrother got £375,000 compensation after Garda who beat him left him with permanent brain damage.

But the total given out this year in such claims is £750,000.

Gerald Bohan, a Co. Leitrim farmer, got £140,000 for an assault carried out eleven years ago.

Two Coolock men got an undisclosed sum in May for a similar assault.

In the Fairbrother case,

Gardai beat their victim on the head with a baton — this contravened Garda rules.

Some Gardai involved in the Bohan case were also involved when Nicky Kelly was beaten and wrongly imprisoned after the Sallins train robbery.

Kelly is still awaiting compensation. And the State has resisted calls for an inquiry into the Garda "Heavy Gang" era of the 1970's.

In the past five years the Garda Complaints Board received 5,000 complaints about Garda harassment. But very few Gardai have been punished — unlike "ordinary" criminals.



AWARD: Derek Fairbrother got £375,000

## BELFAST CITY BUS WALK-OUT WIN

EIGHT hundred City Bus workers, members of the ATGWU, walked out of work last month in defence of a colleague dismissed over a ticket dispute. Management accepted a passenger's word against that of the driver.

The action had a widespread impact in the city and won his reinstatement.

# WE THINK

# Huge gains for Labour NOW BUILD THE FIGHT BACK

Fianna Fail have been given a hammering. It has shrunk to its lowest votes since 1927. Thousands of Irish workers who voted for it in the past have seen the party for what it is: Fianna Fail: The Millionaires Party.

Among the people who were most surprised by the result was the Irish Labour Party. They only put up 41 candidates and found that 33 of them were elected.

The huge swing to labour has broken one of the great myths about the conservative nature of Irish politics. Up to now, the Republic of Ireland was unique in Western Europe because voting patterns were not based on class divisions.

The Irish left came up with all sort of explanations for this. The republicans claimed that there could never be class politics in Ireland until AFTER partition had been removed. The soft left claimed that voting allegiances were based on "clientelism" — personal favours done by establishment politicians — and so the left was always bound to be weak.

In reality, the explanation was far simpler. Ever since the 1930s, FF constructed an all-class alliance to promote Irish development. FF stood for a break of the neo-colonial link with Britain and an expansion of Irish capitalism.

They promised — and in various

periods were able to deliver — improvements for workers. In that sense, they resembled movements like the Peronists in Argentina.

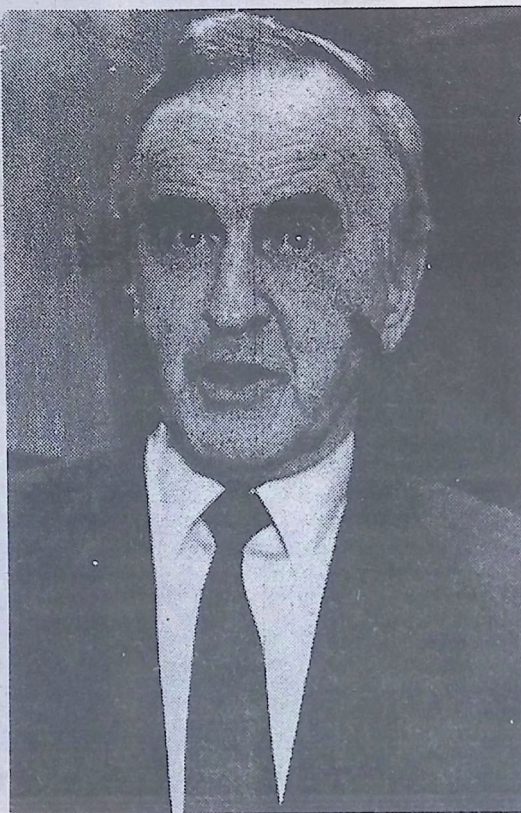
But today the basis for FF's all-class alliance has ended. The Irish working class are now far stronger than in the past. And FF can no longer deliver any improvements from an expanding capitalism.

The growth of the Labour vote has little to do with the personality or the parliamentary performance of Dick Spring. It has everything to do with growing class consciousness in Irish society.

## Welcome

Socialists welcome this change. But past experience shows that the Labour Party cannot build on the anger that has given them the vote.

Right throughout the election campaign the Labour Party kept open the possibility of coalition



with the Right. Ruairi Quinn, for example, claimed that the Labour Party programme and that of the PDs could be complimentary.

The day after the election, however, he claimed that the Labour Party were "closer" to FF than the other main parties.

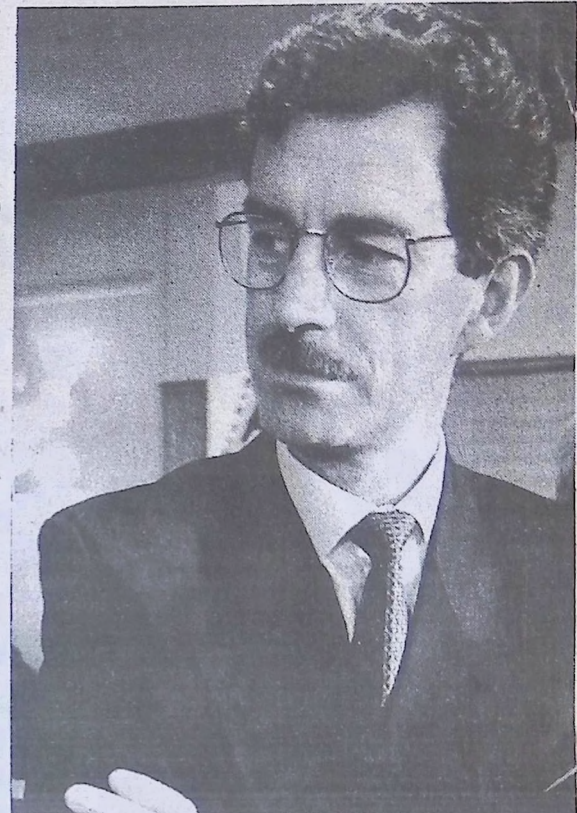
The Labour Party wants to use its huge increase in support to make a deal with the discredited right wing parties of FG or FF. The debate among the leadership of the party is solely about how to get the best bargain.

Some sections of the party want

to stay out of government altogether, for now. They hope to replace Fine Gael as the main opposition party and then be a stronger position to do a deal.

Tragically, what no section of the Labour Party is arguing for building the fight back from below. Yet the anger against FF in the polls has translated into active working class resistance.

After some hesitation the Irish boss class have come out in favour of devaluation of the punt. But instead of solving their difficulties this will add to their problems.



The devaluation of the punt will increase the huge £24 billion national debt. It will add to inflation. It will destroy their fantastic dream of tying themselves to a strong German economy.

## Chorus

The bosses are determined that workers will pay for these difficulties. There has already been a chorus call for a public sector pay freeze. They also want to slash spending on social welfare.

The Labour Party could soon

find itself in government presiding over these attacks.

The possibility of Dick Spring as Taoiseach or even a majority Labour Party government would not alter the fundamental lesson of recent history that Labour Parties turn on their own supporters to prop up capitalism.

To build on the anger shown at the elections we will need to build a strong left wing alternative to the Labour Party. We can start on that by backing the struggles that are emerging from the growing crisis of Irish capitalism.

# Bigots get a bloody nose...

The results of the referendum on represented a major victory for the pro-choice forces in Ireland. But the bigots tried to confuse matters by claiming that the vote on the "substantive issue" was victory for themselves.

This is complete nonsense. Only three constituencies in Donegal and Cork took the bigots advice and voted to deny women the right to information and travel.

Where the bigots actually stood for election they got a derisory vote. Youth Defence Supremo Niamh Nic Mhathuna who stood on a platform of "Jobs for Fathers" and wanted married women thrown out of the workforce got a miserable 500 votes.

The results on the referendum tied in with the general swing to the Labour Party who also called for a No, Yes, Yes position.

The vote in the cities for the right to information was fantastic with many Dublin constituencies tum-

ing in a 70-75% Yes vote. This reflects the huge change in Ireland where thousands of married women have started to look for paid employment and are no longer under the influence of the parish priest.

The new government will now have to implement the Supreme Court judgement. This allows abortion if there is a danger of suicide.

This situation falls far short of the rights that socialists demand. We see no reason why abortion should be limited to those who are suicidal. We do not see why the decision about whether women have an abortion or not should be made by psychiatrists rather than by the women themselves.

Nevertheless, the defence of the Supreme Court judgement represents a major victory over SPUC. Ever since the foundation of the Irish Free State, the hard Catholic Right were able to push through their social programme.

In the 1930s, they got divorce and contraception banned. In the 1950s, the Knights of Columbus were given control of the Censorship Board.

Right up to the early 1980s they defeated and demoralised thousands of radically minded Irish people when they won two referenda.

The hard Catholic Right were part and parcel of the Southern establishment.

Typical of their numbers is one Justice O'Hanlon, the High Court Judge.

This bigots sat in judgement on 14 year old rape victim in February and pronounced that she had no right to travel to Britain for an abortion.

Fortunately the mobilisation of 10,000 people in Dublin forced the Supreme Court to reverse the decision.

## Closet

In the last few months, O'Hanlon has come out of the closet and revealed himself as a fully paid up member of the Opus Dei.

But he also revealed the sense of desperation among the bigots when, just before the referendum, he pronounced that even if people voted for limited abortion, the state should not accept the vote as the Irish

Constitution was dedicated to the Holy Trinity!

This type of bigot who poisoned Irish society for so long are now on the run.

The results of the referendum will demoralise and divide them further.

But they won't simply go away. The involvement of the Labour Party in a right wing coalition would once again allow them to crawl out of the woodwork with the type of slogans they ran in 1984 about "Jobs not divorce".

Socialists have to maintain the offensive against them. When ever they march, there should be counter-demos against them.

If they try to inflict massive costs on the students unions (see below) there has to be a huge defence campaign.

If they try to stop the legalisation of homosexuality in Ireland, they should once again be pushed back.

Socialists in Ireland have always been under attack from what Connolly called "The Pope's Brass Band". Now, however, for the first time we can see them defeated.

## ...BUT SPUC LASH OUT AT STUDENTS

In 1989 SPUC brought 14 student leaders to court. Four of these were from Trinity College, all were from Students' Unions which distributed abortion information.

SPUC brought their action on the grounds that the students were actively encouraging abortion.

What this amounted to was homemade censorship when the case was won by SPUC, and the costs of the case, £23,000, were charged against the individual students concerned.

Needless to say, the number of women who travelled for abortion in no way decreased because of censorship.

Since the cause is unwanted pregnancy, which is a fact of life, this is not surprising.

Three years later SPUC are now trying to make the Unions pay the court costs. The Unions should not be bankrupted for standing up for women's rights in Ireland.

On Tuesday the 24th over 70 students from different colleges around Dublin picketed the pro-life campaign offices to show that they are not afraid of SPUC to break the Unions before the right to information is passed.

The students of Trinity and of other colleges are going to continue to tell these right wing bigots to SPUC OFF!

# United States: Will Clinton bring change?

The election of Bill Clinton to the US Presidency on November 3rd was greeted both inside and outside America with joy and expectation by millions of people after 12 years of Republican misrule.

His rhetoric attracted support from radicals, liberals and feminists.

His attraction, however, has more to do with his ability to speak from both sides of his mouth than any real commitment to change. His record as Governor of Arkansas quickly reveals his true colours.

Arkansas is one of the poorest states in America, twenty per cent of its population live below the poverty line.

In a country with no health service, only 25 per cent can afford medical insurance.

The infant mortality rate amongst the poorest rural sections, ie. black families is higher than that of Cuba, French Guiana and Malaysia.

The unemployment rate for black people is 17.5 per cent, the highest of the five deep southern states.

## Endorsed

As Governor of Arkansas for 11 years, Clinton has presided and endorsed policies which attacked and cut the living standards of ordinary Arkansans while improving those of the rich.

In 1983 he increased the sales tax from 3 to 4 per cent. The Arkansas Fairness Council, a coalition of trade unionists, women and black groups asked for food to be exempt from the increase. Clinton REFUSED.

Arkansas also has the unenviable record along with Alabama as the only state not to have a Civil Rights Bill outlawing discrimination in housing or employment.

Arkansas also has no

laws to protect gays from bigotry. In fact it is one of several states which still has an anti-sodomy law.

Doctors in Arkansas are allowed test their patients for H.I.V. infection without their consent.

The Arkansas Gay and Lesbian Task Force is certainly not impressed with Clinton's record on gay issues. They report that they have been rebuffed every time they have approached the Governor's office.

Bill Clinton is not just a particularly nasty individual in the Democrat Party. He fully reflects the policies of the Democrats.

The Democratic Party are a Party of the rich just as much as the Republicans in the U.S. The difference between the two capitalist parties is one of form and not substance.

The Democrats merely use populist rhetoric similar to that of Fianna Fail.

The 'New Deal' which in the 1930's in America introduced reforms, such as Social Security and recognising the rights of workers to form trade unions, was done in the face of the worst recession American capitalism had seen.

It was also a response to the growing revolt from below by U.S. workers and the growth of the Communist Party and its influence in a militant trade union movement.

Similarly in the 1960's the seemingly liberal image of the Democrats was as a result of the growing Civil Rights movement, the Student radicalisation and the Anti-Vietnam war movement.

The Democrats have attacked workers as enthusiastically as the Republicans.

In 1943 the Democratic Congress passed the Smith-Connolly Act which empowered the President to break strikes in war related industries.

They also refused to repeal the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act in 1946 despite promising to do so, while accepting millions in dona-

tions from the American Federation of Labour, the main Trade Union body in the U.S.

When Truman, the Democrat, actually came to power, he used the Act to break strikes 12 times in his first year.

## Distance

If anything, Bill Clinton has represented a move to the right by the Democrats.

He was the chair of the

Democratic Leadership Council which tried to distance the party from pro-black and pro-worker sentiments.

But the LA riots terrified the American ruling class. They began to move to Clinton who once more turned on the "caring", populist rhetoric.

But behind the image, Clinton's policies favour the rich. As American workers see their illusions shattered, we are likely to see more upheavals like the one in Los Angeles.



Clinton: "the friend of big business"

## Germany:

by SIMON GILBERT

# Kohl fuels racism

The horrific murders of three Turkish people in Molln last month has again raised the spectre of fascism.

The victims, two of them children, died when their house was burned down by Nazis. A phone call to the police ended with the words "Heil Hitler".

Sofar this year sixteen people have been murdered in racial attacks in Germany. Another 1,700 assaults have been committed by extreme thugs.

But there are thousands of people who want to stop the Nazis. Following the murders, over 10,000 demonstrated in Molln, Berlin, Hamburg and other cities.

Chancellor Kohl expressed his outrage at the killings, but his government has fuelled racism in Germany. That is why he was booed at the 300,000 strong anti-racist demonstration in Berlin.

Just a week earlier

Kohl began the forced deportation of Romanian Gypsies. These people had fled to Germany to avoid persecution in Romania.

Kohl's conservative government is also planning to further restrict the country's asylum laws. The SPD - Germany's labour party - has dropped its opposition to the harsh new laws.

Much is made in the press of Germany's supposed "liberal" asylum laws that allow refugees to "flood" into the country.

The truth is very different. Only 5 per cent of asylum applications are accepted in one of the world's wealthiest countries.

Most of the world's refugees, 83 per cent, live in third world countries. The so called "flood" of asylum seekers to western Europe amounts to just 5 per cent of the total.

Neither are racist attacks confined to recent

arrivals. The two children murdered in Molln were born in Germany, the parents of one of them have lived there since 1969.

But under German law the children of immigrants do not qualify for citizenship. One Turkish immigrant explained to journalists "I came here 30 years ago. The German government invited us here because there was a labour shortage."

"But what can I show for it? We have no political rights."

"It is almost impossible to obtain German citizenship."

Further restrictions in immigration will not reduce Nazi attacks.

On the contrary, they only concede the racist's argument that refugees are to blame for the country's problems. This gives the fascists confidence to carry out more attacks.

For Kohl it diverts attention from the abysmal performance of his

own government.

When the Berlin wall came down in 1989 he promised that the free market would bring prosperity to the East.

Instead it brought a catastrophic 44 per cent fall in production in 1990-91 and a further fall last year.

The East German workforce of 10 million three years ago has now been reduced to 6 million.

## Dragged

The West too is being dragged into recession. Kohl's government has responded by attempting to impose a freeze on Public Sector wages and social security payments.

The government is also using the murders as an excuse to strengthen police powers.

But many Turkish people do not trust the police to protect them. One of them explained why:

"My friend was attacked last week. We tell the police sometimes.

"They say they will take action. But they are not tough enough with the neo-nazis."

Another said "sometimes I think they sympathise with them. Sometimes I think they want us to go home."

In the 1930's Britain passed a public order act which gave the police powers to ban fascist marches. However, it has since been used almost exclusively against the left.

The huge anti-racist demonstrations show the anger that most people in Germany feel about the Nazi atrocities. A mass movement to stop the fascists can be built from that anger.

But Chancellor Kohl will not be an ally of that movement. His policies have helped to fuel the far right and scapegoat immigrants.

The SPD cannot be trusted to fight the Nazis either - they have already conceded the racist argument that immigrants are a problem.

# As the recession goes on...

In New York, the killer disease T.B. has risen by 150 per cent since 1980. Tom Friedman, from the New York City Department of Health explained that 'this was a time bomb constructed by social and economic inequality'.

Homelessness, the lack of treatment for HIV patients, the decline in public health spending have laid the basis for the rise of T.B.

The recession has meant that the diseases of poverty are returning to the world's most advanced nation.

Millions have been laid off work. In the richer OECD countries 30 million people are unemployed. In one week in November 10,000 British workers were sacked.

The recession began in North America in 1989. But the recovery that was supposed to begin in 1991 gave way to a 'double dip' recession.

Now the rulers of capitalism are watching anxiously to see if anything like the collapse of the GATT free trade deal precipitates a full 1930s style crash.

At the start of the recession they thought that the two countries which were still growing — Japan and Germany — could pull the world out of recession. But their hopes were soon dashed.

Japan's financial markets are now in chaos. Since the beginning of 1990, stocks have lost half their value.

Over the past year bankruptcies in manufacturing and construction have soared by 35 per cent. In August, industrial production fell by 7.6 per cent.

In the 1980s, the Japanese banks loaned billions to the US government and big business. But now the flow of funds from Japan has dried up.

In Germany it is much the same story. After the collapse of the Berlin Wall, German capitalists were euphoric as their economy kept growing in the midst of the world recession.

But now unification has meant that half of all industry in East Germany has shut down. The German government was forced to borrow massively to offset a full scale economic collapse.

But this in turn has pushed up interest rates all over Europe which has only added to the depth of the recession.

Capitalism faces two central problems at the moment. Its system has literally become clogged up. In the past, recession meant that huge companies went bust. This was often brutal and

devastating.

But for the system as a whole it created new opportunities. Machinery could be bought at knock down prices.

Remaining firms could win a much larger market share. Wages could be pushed down to rock bottom.

But now there is a much closer economic integration. In the US at the moment, General Motors the largest car producer in the world is in deep trouble.

But if it was allowed to go bankrupt thousands of jobs would also go in the component suppliers industry. A black hole might start to open up in the American economy.

This would mean a massive blow not just to the investors involved but to the US state.

As a result the US government will prop up GM just as they propped up Chrysler—the third largest US car manufacturer in the past.

But this can only help lower the rate of profit for the surviving car manufacturers in the US and so prolong their difficulties.

The other huge problem for capitalism is the debt burden it has inherited from the 1980s. As profit rates declined in manufacturing industry, capitalists across the world borrowed heavily both to prolong a boom and engage in property speculation.

## Trouble

Companies such as the Irish multinational Guinness Peat Aviation are now left with a massive 'debt overhang' when the recession pulled down the world's airline business.

Others who invested in London's property boom in the 1980s are in big trouble as office rents have fallen by 50 per cent due to the oversupply of useless office space.

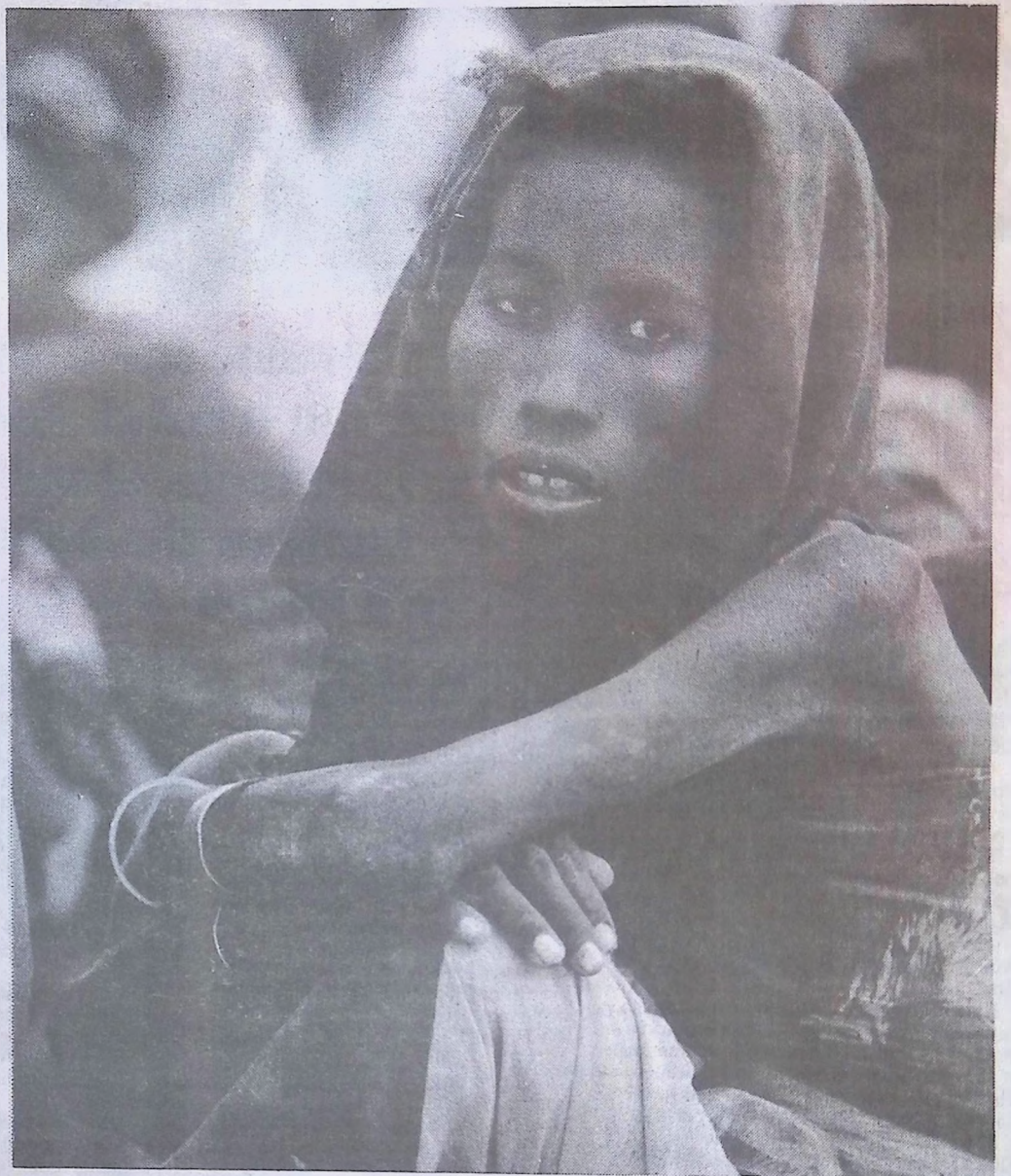
The level of debt which many companies carry means that they are reluctant to borrow more. There is less capital available for new machinery and factories.

This in turn means that a recovery is further postponed.

Capitalism will probably eventually experience some form of recovery. But it will be weak and slow.

The fundamental problems of the system have not been solved. Masses of ordinary workers will still find themselves out of work.

Today the recession adds to the pressures on our rulers. Right across Europe they are weak and divided seeing no way out of their difficulties. It is time to organise to overthrow them.



# ...millions starve for the sake of profits

**THE African continent has been devastated by the crisis. If ever evidence was needed to show that the "free market" provides no solution, Africa is the ultimate example.**

The U.N. has estimated that over 23 million people face famine in the Horn of Africa—the North East corner of the continent. In Mozambique nine million people are dependent on food aid.

In the meantime farmers in the U.S. and in the E.C. are paid subsidies to leave areas of their land uncultivated.

But this disaster is not natural—it is manmade. Almost all of the African countries rely on the export of one or two agricultural or mineral commodities.

However in 1992 commodity prices fell for the fifth consecutive year. In real terms commodity prices are now at virtually half of their 1979-81 average levels.

In 1972 it took 38 tonnes of Tanza-

nian sisal to buy a seven tonne lorry; in 1982 it took 134 tonnes.

The Ivory Coast, the continent's biggest coffee exporter, is expecting a bumper crop this year.

But because of the collapse of the world market for coffee London traders expect up to one-fifth of the crop to remain unpicked.

During the 1960s the booming world economy enabled the production and export of agricultural crops and exports to expand.

## Surplus

Huge numbers of peasants were brought into commercial agriculture either as small holders or as labourers on plantations or state farms.

The surplus generated by these exports was to provide the capital for Africa's modernization, in particular the development of industry.

Initially this plan seemed to work with some countries experiencing growth of GNP of up to 10 per cent per year.

But by the mid-80s fifteen countries were registering negative growth rates. For Africa as a whole by 1983 income per head had fallen to 4 per cent below its 1970 level.

In most countries food consumption per head is less than it was in 1970.

The World Bank has estimated that if Africa's decline continues, by 1995 80 per cent of the population will be living below a poverty line of US\$135 (1980 level).

Susan George in her new book "The Debt Boomerang" graphically illustrates the situation:

*"Soils are exhausted to grow cash crops. Senegal, for instance, borrowed heavily to install refining capacity for a million tons of groundnuts.*

*"But its soils are so depleted by groundnut production that today it can produce nowhere near that amount. Still, the cost of the industrial plant must be reimbursed—through the export of groundnuts."*

So that the profits of a few can be maintained—millions are condemned to starve.

**Susan George: The Debt Boomerang, £7.20 incl post.**  
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# What does the Labour Party stand for?

The Labour Party has become the dominant force in left wing politics in Ireland. But what does the Labour Party actually stand for? Here, KIERAN ALLEN, looks at the policies of Spring's new look Labour Party.

During the General Election campaign FF hired Saatchi and Saatchi, the Public Relations agency that helped Margaret Thatcher into power.

One of their ads claimed any victory for Spring would bring 'Hard labour.' The ad was borrowed directly from the British Tories election campaign.

The election of 1992 has brought class politics out into the open in Ireland. For 60 years the FF party—like the Unionist Party in the North—operated as a great monolith. It won the support of all classes because of its promise to build up Ireland and Irish capitalism.

But now FF is on the decline. The scandals have revealed that FF is not the party of the workers and the small farmers—but the party of the Goodmans, Smurfits and O'Reillys. That is why thousands have turned to the Labour Party in the hope of bringing change. But the Labour Party will dash those hopes. The party has moved firmly to the right over the last few years.

The roots of Labour's present policies stem from its year's in Coalition between 1982 and 1987. The three key figures of the Labour Party today—Spring, Desmond, Quinn—were Ministers in that government.

There they implemented extremely right wing policies. Spring offered huge tax breaks to the oil companies to begin exploration off the Irish coast while he sent in the Gardai to attack ESB workers on strike in Cork.

Desmond allowed wealthy consultants to open a private clinic at the Beaumont hospital in Dublin while he closed eight other hospitals in 1986.

After this period of office the Labour Party vote sunk to an all time low of 6 per cent. Inside the party, the Labour Left began to mount a challenge. Spring was forced to hold a regular election for the post of party leader.

But the right wing leadership, remembering the Benn challenge inside the British Labour Party in the early 1980s, hit back sharply. A special conference was called to expel sections of *Militant*.

Spring's supporter, Niamh Breatnach replaced Labour left winger, Michael D Higgins, as chair of the party.

In 1991, the Labour Left tried to run the veteran socialist Noel Browne for Presidency. But Spring simply imposed Mary Robinson as the candidate in order to 're-open the liberal-progressive agenda' as Emily O'Reilly put it.

The Labour Left were weakened by their own policies. Many of them had looked to Eastern Europe as a model of some sort of socialism. When it collapsed they found

themselves in ideological disarray.

Today the right wing leadership of the Labour Party is in complete control. The policies of this grouping are to be seen in *Labour's Alternative* written in 1991 by Dick Spring.

In this document Spring takes as his model the strategies of social democratic parties in Austria, Netherlands and Sweden.

He claims that Labour Parties in these countries try to form a consensus in society on economic policies. This will mean that: "there is a continuity in economic policy between different governments—usually coalitions of different political hues".

This no-change strategy was spelt out by Ruairi Quinn immediately after the election when he said that he wanted to "tell financial analysts and investors that the Labour Party like most other parties was committed to the spending requirements of the Maastericht Treaty".

*Labour's Alternative* committed the party firmly to working the market.

This inevitably would mean attacking the working class supporters of the Labour Party. But Spring also revealed his attitude to the working class in the document.

## Trendy

Borrowing from the trendy student radical of the 1960s, Herbert Marcuse, he claimed that "the working class has been largely absorbed into the capitalist system not just materially but psychologically as well".

For Spring, the working class are witless readers of the tabloid press lapping up the greed is good philosophy of capitalism. Real change in society can come from the progressive, caring middle class typified by Mary Robinson.

Ever since the Robinson victory, Spring's aim has been to push the party further towards the centre. Labour's manifesto for the 1992 election bears the hallmark of going after the Robinson vote.

The manifesto made no call for a Wealth Tax or a Property Tax even though the Irish rich are among the most under-taxed in Europe.

Instead there was a promise of more subsidies for the rich.

The Labour Party promised to slash Capital Gains tax to 10% for small business projects in manufacturing industry. It promised more tax credits to first time businessmen.

But for its own supporters it emphasised the need for 'constraints'.

The manifesto borrowed the language of the US right wing Democrat, Bill Clinton, to claim that "tax and spend" policies will not

solve our problems now'.

In some areas, however, there were no constraints. Labour promised to increase the number of Gardai by 2,000—even though the Republic of Ireland has already the highest number of police per head of population in Western Europe.

Even if the Labour Party never went into Coalition, its policies are among the most right wing for a decade. The Labour Party is firmly committed to managing capitalism.

In a period when the system is stumbling from recession to crisis, this means that Labour has to first try to restore the system to health *before* it can talk about bringing reforms.

This can only mean that it has to attack its own supporters. Faced with a major run on the Irish pound, for example, the Labour Party will go along with calls to cut back on social welfare spending or hold down public sector pay.

The Labour Party in Ireland is emerging in a period where reformism throughout Europe cannot bring any real reforms. The heyday of reformism in Europe was in the 1950s and 1960s.

When the system was booming Labour Parties could preside over major gains for workers like the NHS in Britain. But while reformism was strong in Europe, Irish Labour missed the boat.

These decades have now passed and today Labour Parties implement cuts and attacks on the working class.

In 1992, the Labour Party has just surpassed the electoral heights it reached in 1969. It took over twenty years and a major crisis in world capitalism to bring them back.

The Labour Party is arriving too late on the scene. It can continue to grow electorally.

But before it sinks deep roots into the Irish labour movement with active supporters arguing for its politics in the unions and working class communities, it will find itself fighting working class militants.

This means that socialists have to organise outside the Labour Party. The experience of France shows us why.

In 1981, thousands of people danced on the streets of Paris to celebrate the victory of Mitterrand. Then Mitterrand enjoyed the euphoria that Spring enjoys today.

But within the space of a few years the euphoria turned to bitterness as Mitterrand laid off tens of thousands of steel workers and went back on his promises.

The organisation that picked up on the bitterness with Mitterrand were the fascist National Front.

Today we have to work to make sure that this type of future bitterness goes to a revolutionary socialist organisation.



## A record

### FRANCE

Mitterrand came to power in May '81 on a huge wave of enthusiasm. A massive job creation programme was promised on the basis of economic expansion and state intervention in industry.

Within a year a severe wages and price freeze (with the emphasis on wages) was introduced. A second programme of austerity measures was introduced in '83 which led to a fall in living standards for the first time in thirty years.

In July '73 Mitterrand stated that "the Socialist Party has always

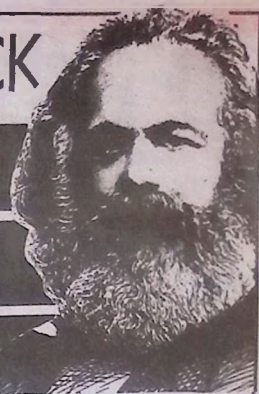
considered France's nuclear tests to be useless and dangerous." By '85 the French Socialist government was implicated in the killing of a crew member from the Greenpeace ship "Rainbow Warrior" which was monitoring nuclear tests in the Pacific; nuclear tests have continued and France's fleet of nuclear submarines has been increased.

Proportional representation was introduced, not in the interest of democracy, but to allow the fascist National Front steal votes from the traditional right wing parties. The NF's

# Labour Party

CONOR KOSTICK

Teach yourself Marxism



## Their democracy and ours

Contrary to the myth that Marxists are in favour of dictatorship, we see democracy and freedom as very valuable gains.

The overthrow of the aristocracy and the establishment of parliamentary power in England and France were the achievements of great revolutionary movements in the 1640's and 1789 respectively.

So too, the victory of Dail Eireann over the British Empire required a popular guerrilla war.

However, we do recognise the limitations of the parliamentary democracy that was created.

For the class which gained those rights was the capitalist class, and the institutions that evolved only give freedom of a peculiar sort -- freedom for the massive majority of society to be exploited by the wealthy minority.

Although we did get to determine the composition of the new government, last month's elections in the South were a false and restricted form of democracy for three main reasons:

Firstly, the T.D.'s are not accountable. They might have scurried around after votes for the two weeks before the election, but we'll be lucky to ever see them again now they're in.

There is no possibility of recalling them for failing to represent us. So our involvement in the running of government is restricted to the one moment every few years.

Secondly, the 165 T.D.'s in the Dail don't really control society. Their speeches have no effect on the day to day running of businesses.

Economic decisions are made by the bosses without any democratic accountability.

We live in a society where thousands of people can be thrown on the dole without us ever seeing an employer prosecuted for ruining people's lives.

More generally, the government's decisions about welfare, building new homes and hospitals, about providing new jobs, are constrained by their efforts to run a capitalist economy -- an economy which demands the exploitation of the working class.

That's why even reforming governments such as Mitterand's in France, or Gonzalez's in Spain have viciously attacked workers' living standards.

Thirdly, and most importantly of all, parliamentary democracy is surrounded by a state apparatus, paid by, and loyal to, the ruling class.

The top civil servants, judges, police chiefs and generals are all unelected. These are people who will do whatever they can to preserve the rule of their class.

They will even overthrow of democratic institutions if necessary. In Chile, in 1973, General Pinochet headed a military coup against the

electing reforming government of Allende.

Because of these limitations Marxists argue that it is impossible to bring about a socialist society through parliament.

Those who do believe this, from Labour, Democratic Left, through to the Militant Socialist have different principles to Marx's belief that socialism is the act of the workers themselves, and not leaders acting on our behalf.

### Bluntly

Moreover, the practicality of their strategy is equally wrong. Even if they won the necessary seats in the Dail, they would be bound to fail. For as Trotsky explained very bluntly to members of the British Labour Party:

"The defection of a considerable part of the armed forces to the side of the workers can guarantee the conquest of power by the working class without any parliamentary majority.

"The workers' majority in parliament can be destroyed if armed force is in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Whoever does not understand this is not a socialist but a numbskull."

So what is our alternative to parliamentary democracy?

Even a small strike points towards the answer. For by acting together, by electing a committee to run the strike, workers are involving themselves in organising new forms of democratic structures.

In times of huge strikes and working class activity, these sorts of organisations can grow into an alternative democracy -- the Workers Council.

The first workers' councils were the soviets of Rus-

sia 1905. Similar organisations have sprung up in the revolutions of Germany 1918, Italy 1920, France and Spain in 1936, Hungary in 1956, Iran 1979 and Poland 1980.

Workers from all the different workplaces sent delegates to the soviets, which soon became an alternative, working class government.

The workers' delegates were elected from the workplace, were known to everyone, and accountable to them on a daily basis. The decisions taken by workers' councils were therefore backed by the participation of millions.

Because of this mass involvement, there was no separation between words and deeds. All decisions were capable of being put readily into effect.

On the two occasions when workers formed governments and took over power from the capitalist class, Paris 1871 and October 1917 in Russia; there was no privilege for those given responsibilities.

Officials were all recallable and paid the average workers' wage. Unelected judges, police chiefs and prison governors were abolished, and ordinary workers took over these responsibilities.

This sort of democracy, mass working class democracy, holds out the prospect of a society without exploitation and oppression.

A society controlled from below, by the people who do the work, would be a truly free society.

Not the current freedom to live in poverty and cast a vote every few years, but of real involvement and say in the running of our lives.

Revolution will not lead to less democracy, to dictatorship, but rather to a collective democracy of millions.



# Record of betrayal

electoral successes have helped to make racism respectable.

### SPAIN

Gonzalez promised a new type of politics to that on offer from the Francoist rightwing.

Yet he too soon turned on his supporters.

His attempt to impose a five per cent wage freeze and cuts in public health services was met by a huge strike wave. Tough antistrike laws were introduced to break these strikes.

Hundreds of poor farm workers in Southern

Spain who occupied some of the vast ranches of the region were jailed.

Despite a promise to get out of NATO, Gonzalez remains a staunch supporter of it.

Anti-terrorist laws have been strengthened. Even the expression of political support for the Basque ETA is now an offence.

It is no wonder that Gonzalez was described by The Economist magazine "as a model of responsibility".

### ITALY

Italy's Bettino Craxi, the country's first

Socialist prime minister, was of a special breed.

In '84 he led the first attempt to smash the automatic wage indexation system which guarantees workers 75% of any increases in the cost of living.

This reform was granted as a result of massive workers struggles in the late sixties.

He welcomed the siting of Cruise missiles in the country.

More recently, he and some of his cronies have been implicated in corruption and mafia-linked deals.

ered France's tests to be and "By '85 the Socialist government was... in the killing... member from... peace ship... Warrior"... was monitoring... nuclear tests in the... continued and... fleet of nuclear... has been... entation was... ed, not in the... of democracy... allow the fascist... Front steal... from the... onal right wing... s. The NF's

# National Culture:

by KIERAN GLENNON

# A common identity?

All around the world, people are used to thinking of themselves in terms of nationality. I'm Irish, you're British, they're American, and so on.

Part of the definition of nationality is the idea that all members of a particular nation share a common culture.

Each nation is seen as having its own language, music, dress, literature, and so on, which marks it out as being different from other nations.

As the national culture is "part of what we are", it seems important to preserve it against being swamped by a bland, uniform, Anglo-American culture.

Should Socialists take sides in the struggle between national culture and "Coca-Cola culture"?

The whole notion of nationality is a fairly recent one. The rise of nationalism went hand in hand with the rise of capitalism.

As the importance of trade grew from the sixteenth century onwards, having a common form of communication made it easier to do business.

Similarly, the process of administration was made easier if everyone spoke the same language. These factors fuelled the growth of the first capitalist states, like Britain, France and Holland.

In the countries conquered by these states new middle classes grew, who saw their future as lying with capitalism. Where their path forward was blocked by a conquering state, they fought against it to create a state of their own to protect their interests.

So the land owners and merchants in North America fought for independence from Britain in the 1770s.

In other cases, the middle class felt stifled by the stagnation of society around them. The best way for them to escape that backwardness seemed to be to create their own nation-state and use it to promote economic progress.

Building their own state machine could provide them with influence over political decisions and access to government careers and contracts. Most importantly, with its tariffs and trade barriers, it could protect "their" market against foreign competitors.

To further their claim for an independent state, they needed to show they constituted a separate nation.

Poets, writers and teachers were encouraged to stress the national tradition.

Where there was no national language, as in Italy, one particular dialect was elevated to national status. In other countries, there were cultural revivals.

In Ireland in the late nineteenth century, the Gaelic League was set up to restore the Irish language. By then, it had largely been abandoned for English.

The GAA was set up to promote national sports. The idea of a Celtic revival was pushed by W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory.

An Irish national identity was created which defined being Irish as being Gaelic and Catholic.

In some cases, the desire to establish national separateness went to ludicrous lengths. The founder of the Gaelic League, Douglas Hyde, denounced trousers as an English imposition!

Fostering a sense of national identity had an extra benefit for the new capitalist class.



It encouraged a sense of solidarity between bosses and workers. The apparent bond of nationality hid the fact that exploiters and exploited have opposing economic interests.

Understanding nationalism as being artificially created by and for the ruling class helps us approach the question of national culture

## Split

Culture, in the sense of art, music and literature, reflects how people live their lives. However, because society is split into opposing classes, not everyone lives their life in the same way.

There is one way of life for the working class, and a very different one for the ruling class.

This led Lenin to observe: "There are two nations within every modern nation...there are two

national cultures within every national culture".

Because the bosses are in control economically, their outlook on the world gets precedence. This applies to all areas of society - what kind of state we live in, what laws we live under. The same goes for culture.

Lenin wrote that "The elements of democratic and Socialist culture are present... in every national culture, since in every nation there are toiling masses. But every nation also possesses a bourgeois culture in the form not merely of 'elements', but of the dominant culture".

This means that what is presented as national culture reflects the ruling class outlook. That outlook stresses the fact that we are all Irish, rather than pointing to the fact that Ireland is divided into classes.

In literature, the Irishness of the au-

thor is more important than the class content of the book. James Joyce's book "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" describes the experiences of a well-off Catholic in Dublin at the start of this century.

James Plunket's "Strumpet City" describes the struggle of the Dublin working class in the 1913 Lock-Out. Nowadays, Joyce's book is regarded as an example of magnificent Irish writing. Plunket's book is practically forgotten.

## Reality

A similar process goes on with music. The Commitments reflects the harsh reality of working class life on Dublin's northside. But the Chieftains are the semi-official ambassadors for Irish music.

Traditional music is seen as part of the national culture, whereas rock and

pop music is "foreign". It doesn't matter that they are what most young people listen to.

Many children go to "Irish dancing" classes when they are young. But as they grow up, they go to discos and raves, not ceilis.

At every All-Ireland final, the captain of the winning team is introduced to the President, and makes his victory speech in Irish. But working class boys also play soccer on the streets. Dublin has the largest Manchester United fan club outside of Manchester.

From these examples, we can see that the picture painted of "national culture" is a false one. It does not reflect the reality of workers' lives nowadays, but instead it paints a rosy picture of the past.

When politicians jump on the bandwagon to endorse U2 or the Irish soccer team, they are recognising the changed reality.

The book "Peig" describes the life of a girl living in the Blasket Islands earlier this century.

Roddy Doyle's "The Snapper" shows the impact of teenage pregnancy on a Dublin working class family in the 1990s. It is far more relevant to most schoolchildren's lives, but "Peig" is the one taught in schools.

The reason it is set far enough into the past to be safe, so it is part of our national literature. "The Snapper" is dangerously topical, so it is classed as just another modern novel.

The people who give the most support to "national culture" are often the ones who shout loudest about the need to preserve traditional values. They are the most opposed to progress and to any challenge to the old society.

They are the people who screamed in horror when The Pogues first appeared on the music scene.

The Pogues mixed traditional Irish music with the angry rhythms of punk and new wave. The culture vultures were shocked at this "bastardization" of Irish music.

To them, cultural purity was more important than the fact that The Pogues expressed the frustration of thousands of young Irish emigrants, driven abroad to look for jobs.

Culture is a reflection of peoples' lives. And because people across the world face the same system of exploitation, different cultures are coming together more and more.

It is no longer unusual for Irish people to eat Chinese food, or to listen to Jamaican reggae music.

These trends mirror a world where divisions between nations are becoming more and more blurred.

The conservatives who praise Irish "national culture" as being superior are in effect trying to deny these trends.

They want to maintain the illusion that the world is divided into nations, not classes.

Socialists argue against this illusion. Because capitalism is a global system, it has to be fought internationally. That fight requires a working class that is united, not divided.

It is not a question of defending Irish culture against Coca Cola culture.

Just because Irish culture was oppressed does not make it progressive. And American culture is not uniformly reactionary—witness radical films like "Roger and Me" and "Bob Roberts".

A socialist society would build on the useful aspects of every culture—and reject the reactionary notions of the past.



MARXISM '92:

# Socialist forum attracts over 300

November's Marxism 92 was the largest and most successful event of the Irish left for decades.

Over three hundred people came to the weekend of discussion and debate on socialist ideas.

On Friday night, Dublin's ATGWU hall was full to overflowing to hear Arthur Scargill, President of National Union of Mineworkers, speak with the SWM's Mary Smith on the future for socialism.

Scargill pointed out the lunacy of the Major's pit closure programme.

As a source of energy, coal from British pits is cheaper than gas or nuclear power, which is heavily subsidised.

Scargill argued that the job of socialists is not to manage the system. "To be a socialist is to resist", he said to enthusiastic applause.

Throughout the weekend well-attended meetings discussed a wide spectrum of topics from Women's Rights: Fighting the Backlash to Malcolm X to the Crisis of Unionism in the North.

Early on Sunday morning 180 people packed Eamonn McCann and Declan Kiberd on Can Irish nationalism be a radical force.

An enthusiastic final rally heard Kieran Allen, editor of *Socialist Worker* and Orla Costello, President of Trinity College students union, speak on the World in Crisis—the Socialist Alternative.

Twenty-five people joined the SWM over the weekend.



## Dash for growth

The audience for socialist ideas have never been greater. The pessimists who spoke of the "death of socialism" could not have been more wrong.

Right across the world there is a growing anger at the failings of capitalism. That anger is now being reflected in a major growth of the SWM in recent months.

A meeting in UCC on the Rise of Fascism in Europe saw several people join the SWM afterwards.

One person said, "I was actually in Rostock this summer. I was going to visit a friend. I never saw anything like the Nazi attack on the

### Why I joined the SWM

Alan, a student from Dublin said: "I joined the SWM because I want to fight against the mundane conformity and oppression of life within the system. I want to play my part in the struggle for a political and cultural revolution to liberate all those politically, economically and morally enslaved." And fellow student Dierdre added: "I joined the SWM because it had become extremely obvious that absolutely no change can come about through the Dail—we need a revolutionary socialist party."

Jim, a Belfast shop steward, said "I joined because I was looking for a socialist alternative that wasn't distorted by Stalinism and not held back by reformist politics." Anne, a striker at the O'Connell Court dispute in Cork said: "The SWM opened my eyes and showed me that you can speak out and go for help—that the support was there. The union didn't show me that. SWM is like a chain linking into hundreds of other people—all of them helping hands."

immigrants hostel. The police stood just back. I had never thought much about politics before but what I saw turned me into a socialist"

Another person who joined said, "My mother was jailed for not paying her wa-

ter rates. It made me really angry that she was jailed while Larry Goodman who swindled millions was let off scott free"

In the space of three months the SWM has grown by one third. New branches like those in Galway have been established on a stable footing. The SWM is now building the largest revolutionary party that has ever been seen in Ireland.

But the race is on to grow even quicker. The currency crisis means that there are major attacks ahead for working class people. Those

who are unemployed and who can no longer emigrate desperately want change in Ireland.

The Labour Party has so far capitalised on this anger. But the future of socialism cannot be left in the hands of Dick Spring.

There is now a desperate need for a fighting left alternative to Labour. That means building a revolutionary party of several hundred strong.

If you agree with the WHAT WE STAND FOR, fill in the form to join the SWM.

### SWM MEETINGS

BELFAST meets every Monday at 8.00pm in Central Hall, Rosemary Street.

CORK meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in Anchor Inn, Georges Quay

DERRY meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in Badgers Pub, Orchard Street

DUBLIN meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in Conways Bar, Parnell Street

WATERFORD meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in ATGWU Hall, Keyzer St

GALWAY meets every Monday at 8.00pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square

To contact the SWM in Bray, Dundalk, Kilkenny, Limerick, Navan write to SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Telephone (01) 722682

## Take your friends a copy of Socialist Worker

*Socialist Worker* has built itself a reputation as the fighting socialist paper in Ireland.

Now the drive is on to increase the regular sales of the paper.

Martin Reade, member of the Youth Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, says:

"*Socialist Worker* gives political expression of the hard rough realities of the lives of ordinary people"

Albert McCready, an ATGWU shop steward at Nissan says:

"I look forward to reading *Socialist Worker* each month. Its news and analysis of events at home and around the world is of great service to the labour movement"

If you believe that a *Socialist Worker* should be seen by more people, why not take a few copies for your friends or workmates? You only pay for copies you actually sell. Fill in the slip and send to: *Socialist Worker*, PO Box 1648, James's Street, Dublin 8 or telephone (01) 722682

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## What we stand for

What we stand for  
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. It has to be overthrown. The machinery of the capitalist state—parliament, courts, army, police etc—is there to defend the interests of the capitalist class, not to run society in a 'neutral' fashion. To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

### FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:

The SWM welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class. Workers' revolutions are needed to win real freedom in the East.

We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

### FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry.

We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

### FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army.

Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class.

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

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

### FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:

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

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

### FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:

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

## Join Us!

If you would like to join the SWM or receive more details, send this slip to: SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 722682

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## BOOK REVIEW:

# Power in the darkness

*The Case of Comrade Tulayev*, by Victor Serge (Bookmarks)  
Reviewed by PAUL O'BRIEN

Bookmarks have republished "The Case of Comrade Tulayev" by Victor Serge. First published in 1948, a year after his death in Mexico, it is by far his finest novel.

After his exile to Siberia for his oppositional activities to the emerging Stalinist bureaucracy, unable to communicate his ideas and politics through the official press, he began a series of semi-autobiographical novels, which were published in France:

"Men in Prison" based on his years in French prisons, "Birth of our Power" the story of the Barcelona rising of 1917 and "Conquered City" about Petrograd in the aftermath of the Russian revolution.

But it is in one of his last works "Comrade Tulayev" that we see the most complete statement of his revolutionary ideas.

The story is set in Moscow in 1939, the revolutionary fervour of 1917, has long been defeated.

The Stalinist counter-revolution is firmly in control. Defeat of the socialists in Spain is certain and world war is imminent. Comrade Tulayev, an important party functionary has been shot dead by an unimportant clerk.

The killer had no motive except an impulsive act of revenge and desperation following the death of his lover.

The murder of Tulayev starts off a kaleidoscope of events ranging from Moscow to Siberia and the barricades of Barcelona.

It is the story of those caught in the web of events as the Stalinist terror machine lumbers into gear.

Each character has a place not just in the story but also in the history of the period, and the characters of the revolutionaries are drawn with such care, as if Serge is saying—to destroy human beings such as these is indeed a crime.

The book works at two levels, one, as a story that involves and grips you as Serge develops the characters and events in a way that can stand comparison with the Steinbeck's and the Hemingway's of our time.

It draws you into the story in a way that makes you want to read on but also another part of you wants to put down, because you know the awful consequences of where the story is leading, the imprisonment and death of those suspected by the Stalinist police.

But the book also works as the best explanation of the Stalinist terror that I have read. Unable to accept that Tulayev's murder was not political, the Stalinists assume it is a plot.

The Trotskyists are at the centre of it. As the search for the plotters fails, so the increasingly desperate functionaries turn on each other in their attempts to justify their failure.

The ripples of suspicion reach out to engulf not just the oppositionalists but also the bureaucracy itself.

Serge writes from the viewpoint of an uncompromising revolutionary, and this is what makes his books different and incomparably more important than Arthur Koestler's "Darkness at Noon" or Alexander Solzhenitsen's "The First Circle".

Both of these start from the position of outsiders, people who flirted with revolutionary politics, but were never centrally involved in working class politics.

Both enjoyed financial and intellectual success in the West, while Victor Serge died poverty stricken in Mexico city. A Victor Serge praised by the ruling class would be a contradiction—his novels are too relevant to contemporary politics to be made respectable.

Despite the horror and defeats which Serge lived through what makes his writings so relevant and inspiring today is the hope and inspiration which shine through even the darkest moments of our history.

Despite the hopelessness of the situation described by Serge in "The Case of Comrade Tulayev" it is fundamentally a book which reflects Serge's confidence in the future.

Victor Serge wrote his autobiography "Memoirs of a Revolutionary" in 1943, in which he summed up his life as follows:

"The future seems to me to be full of possibilities greater than we have glimpsed throughout the past. May the passion, the experience and even the faults of my fighting generation have some power to illuminate the way forward."

With the help of his writings to understand our past we will change the future.

## 'The Crying Game' reviewed by BEN YEATS In from the margins

Neil Jordan's new film, *The Crying Game* proves again this film makers willingness to take on the kind of sticky subject matter that Hollywood makes an industry of avoiding.

When a black British soldier is kidnapped by the IRA in exchange for a republican prisoner, a relationship develops between Jody and his captor, Fergus.

Instead of the usual boring stereotype, Fergus is presented as a thoughtful and sensitive character.

A trust and understanding grows between them when he insists on spending the night talking with Jody.

On the run, Fergus ends up in London, working on a construction site for an anti-Irish boss, a path well worn by Irish immigrants.

Fulfilling a promise, Fergus goes to see Dil, Jody's girlfriend.

She works in an equally grotty hairdressers.

This film is full of unexpected and delightful twists and turns.

To tell more will ruin the



*The start of a beautiful relationship?*

plot.

But to mention briefly, in a form we've come to expect of Jordan, he subtly sets us up to challenge the accepted 'norms' of love and life.

First with Fergus and Jody and then with Fergus and Dil.

My sharpest criticism is this, if Fergus escapes the typical stereotype, his comrades do not.

### Macho

They fall predictably to the hard macho male and the twisted woman.

This is an upfront film that deals with people and things more usually condemned to the margins of storytelling.

If you're not afraid of Pandora's box of tricks and films with something to say, go see it and enjoy the ride.

## The Abortion Papers reviewed by Marnie Holborow

# The years of defiance

"The pregnancy alone would have been enough to banish me to some hostel in the city, to wait out the nine months in fear and self-loathing, to have to feel grateful for the patronising benevolence of the nuns who were kind enough to take me in."

"And to wait silently and without reproach, the time when I would have my child taken from me. I couldn't face all that."

"No I couldn't live with the fear and the self-loathing so I chose to abort and whatever your morals I know it was the right decision for me."

This is from the story told by the Irish Women's Abortion Support Group to illustrate what it is like for a young woman with an unwanted pregnancy.

It is one of the many aspects of the reality of abortion in Ireland that the "Abortion Papers" brings together.

The articles show graphically the way in which the wishes and needs of women have been trodden underfoot by the state - North and South - and the Catholic hierarchy.

It also shows how Church and state have increasingly been unable to get away with it, and how their anti-woman moves have been resisted.

As the "Abortion Papers" point out, there has been a widening gap in recent years between what the state and church pronounced and what women actually did.

Abortions have continued to rise despite the 1983 prohibition. Contraception has been more and more widely practised despite the church's official position.

Indeed, the fertility rate (the number of births per 1,000 women during their childbearing years) has *dramatically* fallen from 4.0 in 1970 to 2.3 in 1987.

### Assert

This year that defiance surfaced dramatically, first on the streets in the X case and then again in the recent referendum. People were prepared to go against the government and assert the rights of women.

Some contributors to the "Abortion papers" highlight this defiance. Yet the feminist per-

spective that unites all the contributors to the book, paints the wrong picture of women's oppression. It also fails to take the fight forwards.

The feminist theme is strong throughout the articles of this book, specially from the editor Ailbhe Smyth: "Abortion is crucially about male ownership of women".

"It is about the exercise of male power".

"In patriarchal society, there is the problem of the role of men in women's lives which is at best ambiguous, at worst fatal."

"Men rape, murder, abandon, dominate, disenfranchise women".

Yet, few women can identify with that picture. It is not only men that keep women down. Ursula Barry is right in her article to point out the number of oppressive females that make up the far-right anti-abortion groups.

In the run-up to the referendum, they delighted in wheeling

out "Feminists for Life" and female legal experts. Dr Lucey and Marie Vernon - not to mention Niamh Nic Mhathuna of Youth Defence - have played a crucial political role immobilising anti-women opinion in Ireland.

These women try to re-assert the "natural" role of women as mothers and housewives. Nic Mhathuna's literature even demanded "Jobs for Fathers"!

It is these ideas that have taken a knocking recently as the reality of women working have begun to challenge these "natural" views.

It is not for nothing that the challenge to those traditional ideas came this year at a time when people were challenging a number of other "natural" ideas in Irish society.

The vote for the Labour Party and the more liberal referendum votes are not a coincidence. They are part of the major crisis that Irish society is going through.

The patriarchy view misses out on this connection. By focusing on men and believing that they are the cause of women's oppression, feminists cannot see how men can be part of the fight against women's oppression, alongside women.

Women's rights will not be won by the likes of Monica Barnes and Frances Fitzgerald. They are members of a party which props up the Irish rich.

In reality, working class men are allies in the fight—not enemies.

**The Abortion Papers**  
edited by  
**Ailbhe Smyth**  
(Attic Press) £11.99

# Waterford Glass: Workers reject Plan

## Time to turn the tide

WORKERS at Waterford Glass are continuing to resist management's plans to slash their wages and conditions.

In November, workers turned down the Labour Relations Commission's proposals by a margin of 2 to 1.

The LRC proposals differed only very slightly from those pushed originally by Galvin and the Glass management.

The proposals would have meant:

- wage cuts of between 15% and 40%
- 500 redundancies
- attacks on the sickpay and disability schemes
- an end to rostered over-

time for non-craft workers.

The management put a tremendous effort into winning support for their plans. Local managers toured the shop floor trying to pressurise workers.

They had hoped to divide the Waterford and Dungarvan plants. But even in a secret ballot, the Dungarvan workers voted to reject the deal.

### Pretensions

Workers at the Glass have now got good reason to question the neutral pretensions of the Labour Relations Commission and the Labour Court.

Ever since 1987, these institutions have sided with the bosses and acted as their mouthpiece.

Workers should have no further trust in them.

Management may now use the Xmas holidays to threaten workers about a re-opening of the plant if their plans are not accepted.

But the Glass workers could also turn the tide by taking a lesson from the British miners struggle. The miners became a huge focus of anger by calling for solidarity from other workers for their struggle.

The Waterford Trades Council should call a Day of Action with stoppages in support of the Glass workers.

This could be the basis for a huge demonstration in Dublin to pressurise the new government to save the glass industry and start acting on the unemployment problem.



Waterford Glass workers are facing massive attacks

## Magnificent Solidarity

Right in the midst of their own struggles the Glass workers have once again shown why they are a

legend in working class solidarity.

At the end of November three workers from the O

Connell Court strike in Cork travelled over to meet the Joint Negotiating Committee of the glass work-

ers.

Having heard their case, the JNC voted to give them £600 to help them in their struggle.

The O Connell Court strikers also met shop stewards from some of the hospitals in Waterford.

Now their are plans afoot to build a support group for the strike in the town.

As the old slogan put it: "The Workers United, will never be defeated".

## SUPPORT THE BEWLEYS STRIKE

FIFTY workers in Bewleys, Tallaght went on strike last month over low pay.

The strike started on Saturday November 21, over management's refusal to pay double time for Sundays. However, the boss has consistently refused to pay the £3.47 an hour minimum rate for the catering industry.

Instead, workers are taken on at £2.20 an hour. When business is slack in the cafe, workers are simply sent home, thus losing pay.

Management resorted to a number of tactics to try to break the strike. Local unemployed people were offered scab work at £1.75 an hour. Many turned down the offer rather than pass pickets. The

shop tried to entice customers in by offering three cakes for £1.

Despite these moves, the cafe was totally empty when *Socialist Worker* talked to the strikers.

15,000 catering workers are covered by minimum wage legislation. However SIPTU official Norman Croke said not one of the outlets in The Square was complying.

### Denied

He said "Where workers are being denied their legal conditions, we'll take them on, without necessarily resorting to the long process of the law."

This was the second strike in The Square shopping cen-

tre in recent months over low pay. A few months ago, workers in Tommy's went on strike over low pay and unfair dismissals.

One of the Bewleys shop stewards said the cafe had lost nearly £15,000 since the strike began. She pointed out that if the company was that profitable, it could well afford to pay decent wages. She said the strikers were determined to stay out until they won.

The best way of ensuring victory would be to spread the strike to other branches of Bewleys. Workers in Grafton St, Westmoreland St and other Bewleys are suffering the same conditions. A strike involving all outlets would be more likely to force Bewleys to back down.

## Hatchet man Saul

Niall Saul, has taken over a job as head of personnel at Waterford Glass. Saul previously worked at Packard Engineering.

There he organised a helicopter to lift out supplies from the factory dur-

ing a strike.

He also played a key role in the banks' attempts to break the IBOA.

### Lecture

For his pains, Saul is reputed to earn £150,000 a year.

He is in no position to lecture workers about the joys of wage cuts.

More importantly, despite his macho image, he has failed to break the unions in either Packard or the Banks.

He will fail again.

## Issues for the labour movement

by DAVE McDONAGH

# Why 'Buy Irish' won't guarantee jobs

IRELAND's two largest trade unions, SIPTU and the ATGWU, have launched "Buy Irish" appeals in the run-up to Christmas.

The ICTU are co-sponsoring a similar appeal with the ESB and the Chambers of Commerce.

The Union leaders' argue that if we buy 'Guaranteed Irish' goods for Christmas, we will help to save Irish jobs.

This argument is mistaken for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it implies that unemployment exists because Irish people are buying too

many imported goods and not enough Irish goods.

This is not borne out by statistics.

An OECD report for Ireland for 1990-91 shows that Ireland has become a net exporter of goods, in the same period as unemployment has risen.

Twenty years ago there were less than 100,000 people unemployed. Now there are 300,000 out of work.

In the same period there was a five-fold increase in the volume of goods exported from Ireland.

During the 1980's, when unemployment doubled, exports moved ahead of imports.

In 1981 the volume of exports was less than 75 percent than that of imports.

By 1990 the volume of exports was greater than the volume of imports.

Workers are not losing jobs because there are too many imported goods on the market. They are losing jobs because of the recession.

### Survive

The recession has thrown millions out of work across the globe. Ireland is tied into the capitalist system that produced the recession.

Capitalism is an increas-

ingly international system. No individual country could survive on the basis of "self-sufficiency".

And if Ireland stopped importing British or French goods, then Britain and France could easily stop importing Irish goods.

If Irish workers stick to buying Irish, what's to stop French workers buying French or British workers buying British?

We would be back to square one, competing with workers from other countries.

Which brings us to the second part of the argument.

By supporting a Buy Irish

campaign we would be lining up with Irish bosses against foreign workers.

In practice this is exactly what the ICTU is doing.

Its co-sponsors in the Buy Irish appeal include the Chambers of Commerce.

Chambers of Commerce are business organisations with a record of being anti trade union.

When workers at Packard struck against a "no-strike" agreement six years ago, the Tallaght Chamber of Commerce ran a campaign against them.

The Chamber laid on special buses to a union meeting to make sure workers voted to end the strike and give up

basic union rights.

Waterford Chamber of Commerce attacked the Waterford Crystal strikers in 1990.

The Chamber issued a statement to banks asking them to foreclose on mortgages for Crystal factory workers.

### Lining Up

Fifteen hundred jobs have gone in the factory in the past five years, no thanks to Waterford Chamber of Commerce!

Not only are SIPTU, the ATGWU and the ICTU lining up with the bosses on

this campaign — they have picked the worst time possible to do so.

There is huge anger against the corruption of the Irish rich and the failure of their system.

While workers are rejecting the bosses' party, Finanna Fail, it is crazy for Union leaders to line up with F.F.'s big business pals.

The way to fight unemployment is to fight the system that causes it. That means taking on the Irish rich — not joining them in a show of "seasonal goodwill".

It also means uniting with workers in other countries — not competing with them.

# Socialist Worker

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### As single mums are hounded, meet...



# THE REAL SCROUNGERS



**FORMER** Northern Ireland overlord, Peter Brooke has rushed in to help the Royal scroungers. Brooke and the Tories want workers to pay the £60 million damage at Windsor Castle.

But while there is plenty of money for the royal scroungers, single parents throughout Northern Ireland are being systematically harassed by the DHSS. After April 1993, single parents on Income Support have to disclose information about the "ab-

sent parent". But DHSS officials have already started to call people in for interview.

If a lone parent refuses to provide the name, it could mean a reduction in benefit of 20 percent.

### Poverty

All money collected by Child Support Agency from absent parents will be taken off the lone parent's income support.

There are 35,000 lone parents living in Northern Ireland on or near the poverty line. The Tories

child support order is a cynical attempt of claw back on welfare payments to them.

The Tories hope to cut by one third the £1 billion spent on welfare provision.

That way they will be able to help out the model British family - the Windsors. It has been a real annus horribilus for the family and the bills keep rolling in.

\* Last year's royal garden party cost £213,650.

\* A few flutters on horse racing - to support the British Bloodstock industry, of course - costs £0.5 million.

\* The Royal Yacht alone cost £9.2m last year. And now they are going to have to pay tax!

Unlike the rest of the plebs, the Windsors can come to a "voluntary arrangement" over their tax bill. For the Windsors dignity has to be preserved at all costs.

But there is little dignity for Northern Ireland's single parents. Those who have been interviewed by DHSS officials found the experience humiliating and degrading.

They were asked very personal questions such as the details about the date and place of conception. They are being pushed into choos-

ing whether to become dependent on estranged partners or lose vital welfare benefit.

### Enemy

Thatcher claimed that single parents are a "threat to our way of life". That is why the Tories ensured that benefit to single parents was cut by 11 percent since 1979.

Socialists take a different view. Our real enemy are the royal parasites.

In Northern Ireland, the Windsor family have been used by the bigots as a symbol to divide work-

ers. Paisley and Molyneux tried to instil the idea of loyalty to the monarchy in the minds of Protestant workers in order to con us that we were a privileged race.

But the real privileges were kept for the parasites.

For masses of Catholic and Protestant workers, the Tories offer only wage cuts and unemployment benefit.

To kick out these Tory rabble Catholic and Protestant need to unite and turn their anger on the Royal parasites and their hangers on.