

Socialist Worker

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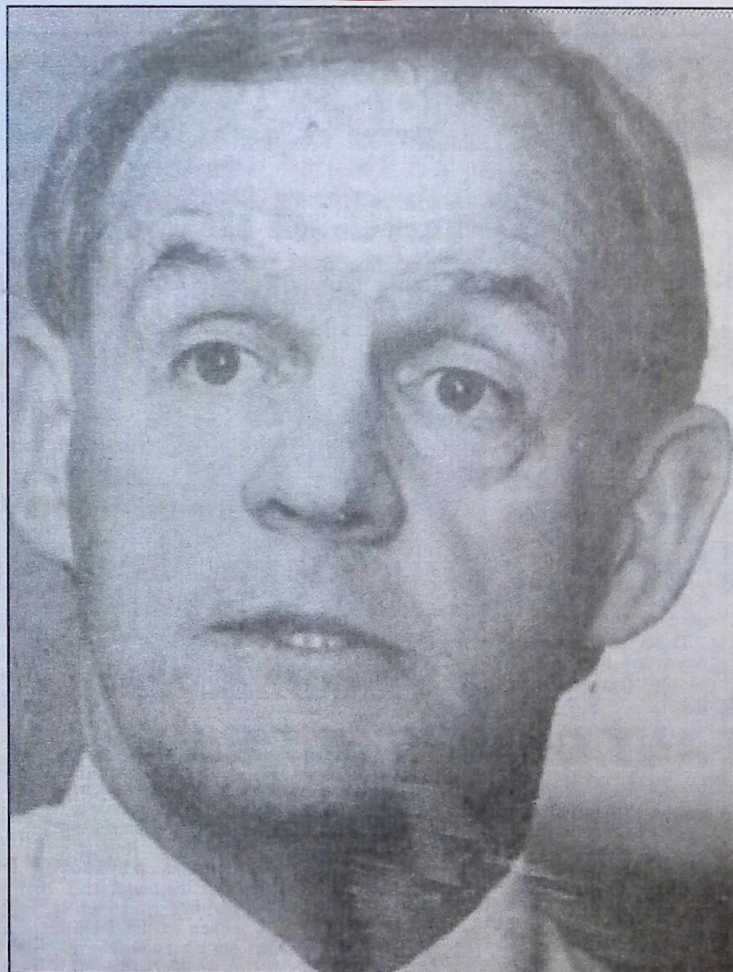
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Why won't Yates take the fine off Goodman?

MAKE LARRY PAY UP!

'THE MAJOR CULPRIT' SAYS YATES



Larry Goodman

"AS FAR as I am concerned he is the major culprit in the tarnishing of the beef industry", is what Agricultural Minister Ivan Yates said of Larry Goodman.

He is right. At the heart of the major frauds and scams which dominated the Irish beef industry in the late 1980s and early 1990s were Larry Goodman's companies.

But if Yates knows who the culprits are then why are PAYE taxpayers going to be asked to pay the bulk of a huge EU fine of over £70 million because of the fraud.

Thirty million pounds has already been paid for a Beef Tribunal that was a whitewash. And now they want PAYE workers to fork out more! It is ludicrous.

The only people who gained from the Beef Tribunal were the lawyers who raked in huge fees and Judge Hamilton who got a promotion soon afterwards to the Supreme Court.

Cover

The reality is that Yates' attack on Goodman is only a cover for his own inactivity.

Even after the miserable beef tribunal, the Coalition government did not make the slightest move to haul Goodman before the

courts.

They wanted to hide the fact that the Department of Agriculture colluded with his activities all along.

They never even thought about bringing in a special law to confiscate his assets so that the fine could be paid from his profits.

Instead they waited until the end of February 1996 before starting the first proceedings against Goodman. This concerns a case in Rathkeale where two Goodman executives were found guilty of fraud in 1994.

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The judge ruled that the two had made no personal gain from the fraud and had conspired with "persons unknown to carry it out".

But despite pointing the finger at senior figures in the Goodman group, this law and order government never bothered to investigate who really gained from the fraud that was valued at over £1 million in this one factory alone.

Games

It is high time the farcical games that are played in Ireland's Golden Circle were stopped.

The Coalition should be told that Irish workers will not stand by and let Goodman and his cronies get away without paying the fine.

His assets should be seized and used to pay for the fine.

A sum like £70 million should be used instead to pay the nurses a decent wage and to take on the extra staff that would cut down on waiting lists.

But it is going to take huge pressure from workers to force this government to take this course of action.

I'M LARRY PAY UP!

GOODMAN and his various companies are not content with getting PAYE workers to pay the EU fine, he also has the nerve to demand £8 million for legal fees for the time he appeared before the Beef Tribunal.

Goodman personally wants £3.6 million to pay his lawyers.

The Fianna Fail link

Goodman is closely linked to Fianna Fail. He attended the weddings of Albert Reynolds daughters and was a regular visitor to the Fianna Fail Ardfeiseanna.

He paid more in donations to that party than he paid in taxes to the Irish government throughout the 1980s.

Branded

No wonder then that Fianna Fail Agricultural spokesperson, Brian Cowan leapt to Goodman's defence when he attacked Yates for 'slugging him off'.

Cowan or the rest of the FF front bench had nothing to say when ordinary travellers were recently branded by the *Sunday Independent* as responsible for rural violence.

But when it comes to sticking up for their rich backers, they jump like puppets.



Judge Hamilton (left) promoted while journalist Susan O'Keeffe (right) was victimised for revealing the beef scandal.



And three of his companies want another £5.8 million in legal fees.

Circle

And who does Goodman hope all these fees will be go-

ing to?

Why none, other than the present Attorney General, Dermot Gleeson who also happens to be John Bruton's close associate.

Now that is a nice little circle.

How Goodman worked the scams

Goodman was an expert at working the EU intervention system. The EU buys meat at inflated prices to help sustain the bigger farmers and the meat companies.

It stores the meat in huge freezers and then sells them off to non-EU countries at knock-down prices.

Throughout the EU it is mainly workers who pay higher taxes to give these subsidies to agricultural interests to produce dearer food.

Goodman found two ways of working scams with this system:

□ He sold rotten beef into intervention. According to

Brendan Solan who worked at the Goodman plant in Cahir some of the bad meat that was sent to intervention had "larvae and bluebottles actually stuck to it".

□ Meat was supposed to be de-boned and a minimum of 68 per cent meat sent into intervention. Goodman's companies always sent in the minimum of meat and kept the 'trimmings' -- despite the fact that this was illegal.

What you can do

As soon as the EU announces its fine there should be major protests to force the beef barons to pay.

Socialists should be pressing students union, community groups, trade unions to mount a series of demonstrations to force the government to take action.

To help get this going, move this model resolution.

"This meeting resolutely opposes the notion that PAYE workers should shoulder the bulk of the EU fine because of the fraud in the Irish beef industry.

It now calls on Dail Eireann to enact special legislation to pass the bulk of the fine onto the beef companies.

We call on the ICTU to mount major demonstrations to help enforce this policy and shall support any demonstration called in the meantime."

Guns and Beef

THE NEW scandal over the activities of Goodman coincides with the findings of the Scott report in Britain.

It has now been revealed that the Tories in Britain deliberately increased and subsidised their arms sales to Iraq because they saw Saddam Hussein as a 'friend of the West'.

They wanted to make sure that they were well equipped to defeat the Islamic regime of Iran during the terrible Iran-Iraq war.

The Irish state was also involved in bolstering up Saddam Hussein, despite the claim to neutrality.

But whereas the Tories supplied guns, the Irish contribution came in the form of meat

for the troops.

In 1988, after 4,000 Kurdish men, women and children were murdered by Saddam's chemical weapons in Halabja, Fianna Fail ministers authorised £145 million for Export Credit to Iraq.

This scheme guaranteed companies like Goodman's that if the Iraqis defaulted on their bills for the meat—the Irish government would pay up.

It was a scheme that was designed to help the friends of Western imperialism—and to allow companies like Goodman's to make fantastic profits.

inside the system

Mother Teresa backs royal divorce

REMEMBER Mother Teresa of Calcutta?

Last year she intervened to support the anti-divorce campaign.

She claimed divorce would lead to the end of Irish civilisation as we know it.

But, she's now said she's pleased Di and Charles are to divorce. "It's good it's over. Nobody was happy anyhow."

It seems you need royal blood to get Mother Teresa's blessing.



ANY COLOUR BUT BLACK

WORKERS at Ford cars could not believe their eyes when they opened a Ford advertising brochure to find that the faces of four black workers had been doctored to look white.

The company at the Dagenham plant in east London was forced to issue a personal apology

and compensation to Keith Thomas after his face and arms were replaced with those of a white man.

Racist

As Keith says, "To actually make me white, it was a racist act".

The insult was com-

pounded when workers realised that the photo in the brochure had been first used in the 1991 advertising campaign to promote the multiracial nature of the workforce.

Anger at the Dagenham plant boiled over when workers walked off the job for three hours, costing the company £2.8 million.

★ MORE AND more young people are being treated to slave wages and conditions North and South.

The number of complaints made to both governments about young people being employed illegally has soared - a six fold increase over three years in the South.

Publicans wishing to rake in ever more profits are the main problem, with lounge staff as young as 11 and 12 being paid pittance.

The government say they're going to bring in legislation to deal with it. Just like their promise to abolish water charges!?!

Murdoch's son and heir

LACHLAN Murdoch, son of billionaire Rupert, thinks he is so rich because, "it's not just that you have a higher IQ than the next guy, but it's the energy".

The Murdoch energy and intellectual brilliance must be evident in Lachlan's method of relaxation.

Grasp

Unable to grasp the concept of rock climbing on rocks, Lachlan practices climbing on a fibre glass wall he has installed on the side of his garage.

"The wall is probably the best diversion, in that you go in and climb hard and it's something a bit different, and it's completely 100 percent Lachlan", he said.

And with a speech pattern like that, he does not even get a two bit part in Neighbours.

Methadone programme overdue

THE government has announced a new anti-drugs programme which will cost £6 million a year.

The government plans to expand the methadone programme for drug addicts.

At the moment only ten GPs in the Eastern Health Board area provide the heroin substitute methadone for people trying to come off heroin.

The minister for health Michael Noonan has admitted that there are currently 2,000 addicts waiting for treatment.

Drugs campaigners have been calling for the extension of the programme to include more GPs for years.

Clinics

Up until now methadone distribution has been largely confined to drugs clinics, resulting in huge waiting lists and the growth of a black market for methadone. A £40 bottle of methadone can sell for £100 on Dublin streets.

But although the government has been aware of the problems it is only now that

they have decided to take any action by including up to 200 more GPs in the programme.

The plan has faced opposition from many GPs who say that drug addicts will scare other patients away from their clinics.

They say that there will be a need for extra Gardaí to protect them.

Opening

At the same time there has been opposition to the alternative—opening up drugs clinics in local areas like Blanchardstown and Dun Laoghaire.

But it is vital that heroin addicts be given easy access where they live to whatever treatment they need.

Many working class kids are addicted to hard drugs and denying them access to clean needles or methadone programmes will do nothing to solve the drugs problem.

we think

What can all-party talks deliver?

THE BRITISH government has finally announced all-party talks for June 10th.

It will be nearly two years since the original IRA ceasefire. Two wasted years when Major put his own desire for staying in office first—and the prospects for peace in Ireland second.

The splits within the Tory party and the links between some of his MPs and the Unionist leader David Trimble led him to invent ever new obstacles.

But now that the date for all-party talks has been set, the real issue is their possible outcome.

The talks will not aim to eradicate sectarianism from Northern Ireland. All the participants accept that Catholic and Protestant have different identities and think it is only a question of how their hatreds will be managed.

They will not discuss how working class people of all communities could fight together to end poverty wages and unemployment. All the parties, Sinn Fein included, will either oppose or scoff at the

very idea.

Nor will there be any question of looking at how the arrangements of partition created *two* sectarian states on this island.

At most, Catholics will be told that they can 'aspire' to a united Ireland when they become a majority population in 20 or 30 years time.

Access

In other words, any settlement which emerges is one which will re-structure and institutionalise sectarianism.

The Catholic middle class may be given new access to

the top posts within the state.

The Southern government will probably play a more active role in the Northern state to guarantee the status of this class.

There may even be separate local police forces to police the Catholic poor.

And all of this will take place within a context whereby the party structures, police force, the education system, the debates about day to day politics centre on the *difference* between Catholics and Protestants.

This is not a recipe for permanent peace.

At most it can produce an

arrangement which brings Adams and his wing of republicanism into conventional politics.

Conflict

In the longer run, it leaves all the material from which the conflict was kindled intact.

Instead of waiting for their outcome of talks which could last two or three years, we need to forge a different set of politics to the 'two traditions'.

One that is based on class and the need for workers unity against our rulers in both parts of Ireland and Britain. Peace in Ireland could depend on it.



Peace demonstration following collapse of IRA ceasefire

A non-political peace movement?

TENS OF thousands of people took to the streets on Sunday February 25th to demand peace.

It showed the revulsion many feel to a return to armed conflict.

The tragedy was that the leaders of STOP were determined to use that movement for their own ends.

Criticism

Despite the fact that polls show that the majority of

people hold Major responsible for the breakdown of the ceasefire, they made no criticism of the Tories.

They refused to call for all-party talks.

One of the key figures, Chris Hudson—an official of the Union of Communication

Workers—even called for interment.

All of this occurred under the banner of a 'non-political' peace movement.

Hiding

It shows that those who claim to be non-politi-

cal are always only interested in hiding their real politics.

The coming months will reveal that the real agenda of the leaders of groupings like the Peace Train and STOP is repression—not peace.

PENSIONER CHALLENGES WATER DISCONNECTION

Now fight in the communities!

LAST MONTH Judge Peter Smithwick ordered the disconnection of the water supply of Laurence Doran, a pensioner from Walkinstown, who was refusing on principle to pay water charges.

Laurence, a former Guinness worker, insisted on putting his case for non-payment in the court.

He made it clear that he, as a PAYE taxpayer, had already paid for this service and pointed out that the super rich and big farmers were getting away with paying little or nothing.

His speech was met with applause from the packed courtroom. The big crowd of anti-water charges campaigners earlier had reason to applaud when one case was thrown out because South Dublin County Council had summonsed the wrong person.

They made the rather sexist assumption that the man is always the owner of the family home!

When the judge made the disconnection order against Laurence Doran members of the crowd shouted their outrage.

The judge, incensed by all the interruptions that morning, ordered that the courtroom be cleared.

Protested

A week later, two hundred people protested outside Swords District Court. Seven people who refused to pay water charges of £127.50 had orders to disconnect their water supply made against them and were each told to pay costs of £100.

It has become very clear that the charges will not be beaten in the courts. It is a very slow, cumbersome and expen-

Non-payment still solid

IN THE most recent figures released the councils admit that of 160,000 households billed for water charges at least 40,000 have paid absolutely nothing while 44,000 have been granted waivers. Anti-water charges campaign-

sive procedure for the councils but they are intent on pursuing people and trying to break the mass non-payment campaign.

The protests, both inside and outside the courts, are very important because they express the angry resistance to the charges that exists on estates all over Dublin.

But organising on the ground against disconnections is the key. As one anti-water charges campaigner put it, "It's back to the local communities now, which is where we're strongest".

ers claim that the figure for waivers includes whole estates around Dublin that have been automatically written off because the councils believe that they will never succeed in collecting the charges there.

TAX: WHO PAYS MORE?

ACCORDING to official figures, the average tax paid by PAYE workers last year was £4,087 - 25% more than in 1989.

Farmers had an average tax bill of £1,031, while the self-employed paid £3,795.

Workers in the PAYE sector will hand over an extra £200 million in tax to the government this year.

How not to organise

A SEMINAR on "community development" which was open only to Protestants was held in Derry at the start of March. The organisers of the seminar, the Ulster Community Action Network (UCAN), were quite open about their sectarian motivation.

From the beginning, they said their plan was to bring "all sectors of the Protestant population—business, voluntary and community", together to fight for better treatment of disadvantaged Protestant areas.

In short, UCAN wants working class Protestants to unite with their upper-class co-religionists in order to strengthen their hand in competition for resources with working class Catholics.

UCAN is led by Glen Barr, the former trade union leader who helped organise the Ulster Workers' Council strike of 1974.

Fringe

This was a sectarian strike against any power sharing of Catholics and Protestants.

UCAN's spokesperson in Derry, David Nicholl, is also a candidate for the fringe-loyalist Ulster Democratic Party (UDP).

At the start of the 90s, UCAN tried to organise a march against poverty among Protestants on Empire Day—but they were unable to pull it off.

What UCAN stands for is not Catholic and Protestant workers standing together fighting for their rights but in effect organising Protestants against Catholic areas.

The local SWP branch in Derry took up a petition against the decision of the council to welcome this seminar.

They also called for workers to unite against sectarian politicians

Huge numbers of Catholics and Protestants signed.

THE SISTERS THAT HAD NO MERCY



Sister Xavier: the children called her 'Sister Severe'



"THE FIRST thing I saw was the ad the Sisters of Mercy put in the *Sunday World*. They were supposed to be apologising for the way they treated us. But I think the ad was there only because they have been found out."

The revelations about the brutality which the nuns inflicted on children at the Goldenbridge orphanage have brought back harsh memories to Maggie Blake.

Maggie was put into the Sisters of Mercy Orphanage in Templemore in 1940 and stayed there for the next fourteen years.

"They only took you in after your third birthday. My mother had 'conceived in sin' as they put it then. My memory is not clear but I think I spent those first years at the county home in Thurles.

Shaved

"Single parents were put into these institutions. They shaved the heads of the women so that they could not go out.

"They worked in the laundries. Magdalene

laundries as they called them.

"In the orphanage, they treated you differently if you were a 'proper orphan' or if you were 'conceived

Dunces class

"I knew from an early age that I could never go to secondary school".

in sin'.

"It wasn't just the violence, which wasn't that bad sometimes. After all everyone was beaten by the nuns then. It was more subtle.

"And that is what happened. I did my primary cert when I was eleven. I got first in Maths and came somewhere in the top ten. But they still put me in a 'dunce's class.

"You weren't there to study, it was just to keep us occupied."

Every so often an Inspector for the Industrial Schools came to visit

Maggie's school. The nuns were told beforehand the date of the visit and a show was put on.

"We got lovely clothes for the day and were told to go out skipping in the garden.

"But after Mrs McCabe, the Inspector was gone, they were taken back. It was the same at Christmas. You got a few toys—but they had to be handed back on the 6th January."

Much of the time was spent in harsh physical work.

"They were training us to be skivvies. We had to wash the nuns clothes, boiling and ironing them. They even forced us to wash their sanitary towels.

"All the girls from my class later went out to work as domestics in the hospitals.

"I was sent to the Sisters of Charity in Waterford—but a lot went to St Vincent's in Dublin".

The thing that Maggie remembers most is the hunger.

"I know what it is like to be hungry. They would sometimes often give us a plate of breadcrumbs for breakfast.

Mice

"When you got the slice of bread, you could sometimes see the mice tracks on it.

"On Saturdays you got this disgusting sheep's blood, I can even remember the smell of it now".

"Beside the orphanage, the nuns had a big garden with fruit trees but we never saw any.

"Me and my friend used always like to go to feed the hens.

"That way you could always pick up a bit of extra food, maybe a half eaten egg or a bit of bread"

For Maggie the experience was one of constant humiliation.

"We were dressed in these terrible clothes. We only got a clean pair of knickers every fortnight.

"It was awful when you had your period. Everything to do with personal hygiene was terrible.

"There were no doors in the toilets. On Saturdays, we all had our baths—70 of us would jump in together into

three baths.

But for all the humiliation of the body, the nuns were determined to enforce religion.

"I always say that I don't need to say the rosary any more. I had mass and the rosary every day I was in that orphanage.

"We were always singing hymns for the conversion of Russia.

"I knew more about Cardinal Minzsenky and him in the American embassy in Hungary than anything else."

"The nuns were frightened of the little girls touching each other.

Horsewhipped

"One night in a middle of a great storm two girls were found in bed together. They were just horsewhipped, the poor creatures."

Maggie says that she is

not as angry now as she was in the past and has come to terms with much of the experience.

But she has no time for the calls for forgiveness for the nuns.

"We only survived because we looked after each other.

Hypocrisy

"What makes me so sick now is the hypocrisy of it all. They say that they never knew about it. But that is rubbish.

"I remember in 1983 when we were campaigning against the anti-abortion amendment, I got up in front of this priest in Cork. I asked him about his concern for children and spoke about my experience.

"But they didn't want to know. They were too concerned about the unborn to worry about the scars they left on the living"



It was class hatred

ON SEVERAL programmes the real horror that the Sisters of Mercy inflicted has been revealed.

But what has been ignored has been the class hatred of the nuns for the children in their charge.

The Sisters of Mercy were supposed to be set up to help the poor. According to one Sister Angela Bolster, the founder of the order even "anticipated Karl Marx".

But only the upper middle classes got into the nuns. Every novice had to bring a dowry with her to be accepted into the order.

It usually amounted to a few hundred pounds. If she did not have one, she became a "lay nun" who worked in the kitchens.

The nuns were trained to treat the poor with contempt. This explains why they were brutal and even at times sadistic.

Margaret Quinn was the daughter of a labourer who

went to the Sisters of Mercy in Clonakilty in Co Cork.

"They hated us. We were put at the back with the travellers and the 'industrials'—the kids who came from the industrial school.

"We were always being beaten with the red leather. But the daughter of a local teacher was never slapped in her whole school life. She was from a 'better class' to us".

Divisions

Maggie agrees. "My best friend was a tinker girl, as she was known then.

"When her mother came to see her on fair day, she was let into the hall—but never the parlour. That was for a better class of people.

"If you looked at any classroom, you immediately saw the social divisions.

"At the back: the children of the unmarried, the travellers, the children of the unskilled. They did not even want to teach us. At the front: the children of

the doctors, the teachers.

"The Sisters of Mercy were snobs. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

"The only people who were decent to us were the lay nuns. They worked in the kitchen and they might give you a bit of extra bread. The rest hated us because of the class we came from."

The nuns have tried to hold control of Irish education by saying that they and the Christian Brothers provided education for the poor.

The recent revelation shows that they held the working class in contempt.

And it is not just about the past. These orders still control many of our school and child care homes.

As Margaret puts it, "It is time to get them out of education. They want to apologise now and get back to normal.

"But there is nothing normal about celibate nuns and priests dominating our schools and using them to put across their warped view on the world"

Don't let it happen again

THE CHILDREN who found themselves in convents, children's homes, industrial schools were sent there by the Irish state.

It is now time that the state took some responsibility for what happened.

At a very minimum they ought to listen to what the victims are saying and set up an inquiry.

To facilitate this inquiry, the church should be compelled to open its files for examination—including all letters of complaint against priests and nuns which have not been investigated by health boards.

Nobody should be fooled by the pleas for compassion for elderly nuns. Their victims are still living with the scars inflicted in childhood.

It is vital that the real truth of these events is fully exposed.

And it is not just about the past.

During the 'glasnost' era in Russia in the 1980s, many wanted to use the period of openness to learn about the Stalinist legacy in order to ensure it never happened again.

In Ireland the crimes of the institutional church have been just as hidden.

Unearthing them today is part of an important battle to remove control of children's education and welfare from the priests and nuns.

International news

Israel unleashes repression after Hamas suicide bombs

THE ISRAELI government response to the horrific Hamas suicide bombings has been to unleash mass repression against the Palestinians.

The families of the bombers have been rounded up, their houses destroyed, and the borders with the Palestinian self rule areas of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank sealed off.

More repression will undoubtedly follow.

That will do nothing to address the fundamental flaws in the peace process which mean that so many young Palestinians are prepared to turn themselves into human bombs.

The peace plan means that the Palestinians are excluded from 70 percent of the country that belonged to them before 1948. A million Palestinians driven out during the wars of 1948 and 1967 have no right to return.

Hundreds of thousands

to become a suicide bomber.

All five of his brothers are in Israeli jails. The refugee camp he was bought up in was a constant target of Israeli troops stationed at the army base bordering it.

Today the words on the lips of every Israeli politician, backed by every western leader, are war, retaliation and revenge. This will not stop the bombing.

It will lead to the deaths of more Jews and Arabs.

There will be no peace in the Middle East without justice. There will be no peace until all Palestinians are allowed to return to their land and Arabs and Jews live together on an equal basis, sharing equal rights.

of Palestinians still live in squalid refugee camps—denied a place to live or any basic human rights.

Refugee

Three years ago hundreds of Palestinians were killed and 300,000 forced to flee when Israel bombed refugee camps in southern Lebanon.

Two thousand Palestinians were killed during the course of the recent Intifada uprising.

These are the conditions that led Ibrahim Sarahna



Scenes of death and devastation after a Hamas suicide bomb in Tel Aviv in early March

Labour thrown out in Australia

THE AUSTRALIAN Labour party crashed out of office last Saturday, humiliated at the polls.

Thirteen years of Labour rule evaporated as nine cabinet ministers lost their seats. Australian prime minister Paul Keating admitted defeat just 90 minutes into the count.

The defeat was being seen as the most devastating in the party's 100 year history. The party lost more than 30 seats.

A right wing Conservative coalition of the Liberals and National parties is now in office.

Labour's failure was nothing to do with enthusiasm for the right wing parties.

It was because of Labour's record in office.

The Australian Labour party was proud to abandon any show of socialism. It was proud to have friends in big business like Rupert Murdoch.

It made a virtue of "modernising the economy" by privatising the utilities, cutting the welfare state and making people work harder for less.

Attacks

Paul Keating, first as treasury minister, then as prime minister, was the architect of these attacks on workers.

He resigned as Labour leader on Saturday and told party workers that, "whatever our opponents might say, Australia has changed inexorably for good, for the better".

But Australian workers were sick of the changes that have been imposed on them.

Kim Beazley, Keating's likely successor, admitted as much when he said, "much of the turn against us were those who have experienced the weight of the restructuring of the Australian economy over the last decade." Labour's record speaks for itself:

- Unemployment is now at over 8 percent, with youth unemployment 30 percent, in a country where until recently it was assumed everyone would have a job.
- Between 1976 and 1991

BUT NEW GOVERNMENT FACES WORKERS' ANGER

THE RIGHT wing coalition toned down its agenda to get Labour votes.

In the past people stayed with Labour because the alternative was regarded as too terrible.

As a result, Labour won the last five general elections.

This time the right wing posed as the friend of the "battlers"—the ordinary man and woman.

They said they wouldn't attack health provision—Medicare—and posed as moderates who would not upset people's lives.

Racists

They tried to keep the lid on racists in their ranks such as Queensland National party boss Bob Burgess who called citizenship ceremonies "dewogging ceremonies".

But now, having swept to office, there are indications that a confident right wing will go on the attack.

New prime minister John Howard says he has an, "emphatic mandate for change".

average household income for the poorest 5 percent dropped by 23 percent. For the richest 5 percent incomes rose by 23 percent.

- The succession of "Accords"—agreements with the unions to hold down wages in a trade off to "help the most needy"—have seen workers' wages cut by more than 10 percent.
- The "needy" have not benefited, they have been attacked. Labour abolished benefits for the under 18s. It introduced a Job Search Allow-

ance to force people off the dole.

- Labour "targeted welfare" and cut off more and more people through increased means testing.

Sell-Outs

- It introduced a graduate tax for university students and increased fees.
- It cut back on family allowances and introduced the equivalent of the Child Support Agency.
- It abolished free prescrip-

Labour party activists are devastated by the result. They fear that the right wing government will attack the unions.

Australia's union leaders are compromised after working with Labour to keep down wages and hold back struggle.

However, although the election result is a blow, the situation is not entirely bleak.

There are signs of a recovery in the militancy of the working class.

There was a one day general strike and blockade against anti union laws in the state of Western Australia last year.

In the Australian Capital Territory, a state centred on Canberra, there is a Liberal administration that wants to cut \$120 million from public spending.

Almost every group of public sector workers took strike action in the build up to a state wide stoppage against the cuts.

This is the kind of action that provides an answer to both Labour's betrayals and Conservative attacks.

...and in Spain

ANOTHER Labour government fell at the beginning of March.

Spanish prime minister Felipe Gonzalez and his PSOE Socialist Party lost the election after 13 years in office.

But the victory of the PP Conservative party, led by Jose Maria Aznar, was much narrower than opinion polls had predicted.

The PP got 39 percent of votes, with the Socialist Party getting 37.4 percent.

The United Left, dominated by the Communist Party, got 11 percent of the votes.

That means the combined vote of the United Left and the Socialist Party was over 48 percent of the vote.

The remaining 12 percent went to various nationalist parties which have Conservative economic policies.

The result means the PP will be dependent on parliamentary deals to rule and this is a recipe for instability.

The reasons for the Socialist Party defeat are clear.

Felipe Gonzalez came to office in 1982 amid euphoria among millions of working class people.

After decades of a brutal fascist regime under General Franco, the Socialist Party victory was a huge step towards democracy.

Gonzalez presented himself as a young, dynamic figure who promised to "modernise" Spain, securing democracy and bringing real

benefits to workers and the poor.

Some reforms—education, the welfare state, rights for minority nationalities and limited abortion rights—were implemented.

But reform soon evaporated as Gonzalez sided with the bosses and began attacking those who had voted for him.

Unemployment has doubled in the last 13 years. It now stands at over 20 percent, the highest of any European Union country.

The Socialist Party pushed through "labour reforms" making it easier for bosses to sack people and to put workers on insecure temporary contracts.

Corruption

As a result, the proportion of Spanish workers on temporary contracts has gone from 4 percent when Gonzalez was first elected to 34 percent today.

Years of working within the bosses' system has also seen Socialist Party leaders become mired in corruption.

And Gonzalez himself has been caught up in a scandal about links with shadowy state death squads used to kill activists in the ETA Basque organisation.

But despite all these factors the election defeat was much less severe than many expected from the opinion polls.

Millions of working class people did turn out, with little enthusiasm, to vote for Gonzalez because they

feared the right and the PP. Such fears are understandable.

The PP was founded by a former interior minister under Franco's regime and is riddled with former Francoists.

Socialist Party leaders normally don't talk about the 1930s civil war which saw Franco come to power.

But faced with electoral defeat Gonzalez rediscovered some left wing rhetoric and played on the PP's links with Franco.

PP leaders were also forced to deny they plan a Thatcher style programme of welfare attacks and privatisations.

This was not only because they feared the electoral consequences of being open about their aims.

The revolt in France against similar attacks before Christmas scared many Spanish bosses.

One leading Spanish industrialist warned a fortnight ago that if the PP pressed ahead with welfare cuts it risked, "getting into the same trouble as the French".

The narrowness of the PP victory will increase such worries among Spanish bosses.

Spanish workers have the capacity to fight off such attacks.

Only two years ago a huge general strike saw workers flex their muscles.

If the new Conservative government and Spanish bosses try more attacks on workers, that strength will have to be used in the months ahead.

The IRA: Between armed struggle and conventional politics

Special report
KIERAN ALLEN
CATHERINE CL

THE IRA and the republican movement is entering a new period of crisis.

For the last two years it has tried to enter conventional politics by working with right wing politicians in Fianna Fail and the Irish American establishment.

It had hoped that they would nudge the British ruling class forward to accepting a united Ireland.

But while Bill Clinton wanted Irish crowds for the footage on his election video, he is no more interested in ending discrimination against Northern Catholics than he is of tackling racism in the US.

The London bombing was a signal that many IRA members believed that the 'pan-nationalist' strategy was going nowhere.

any real gains?

But the return to armed struggle was also a desperate and futile act.

Bankruptcy

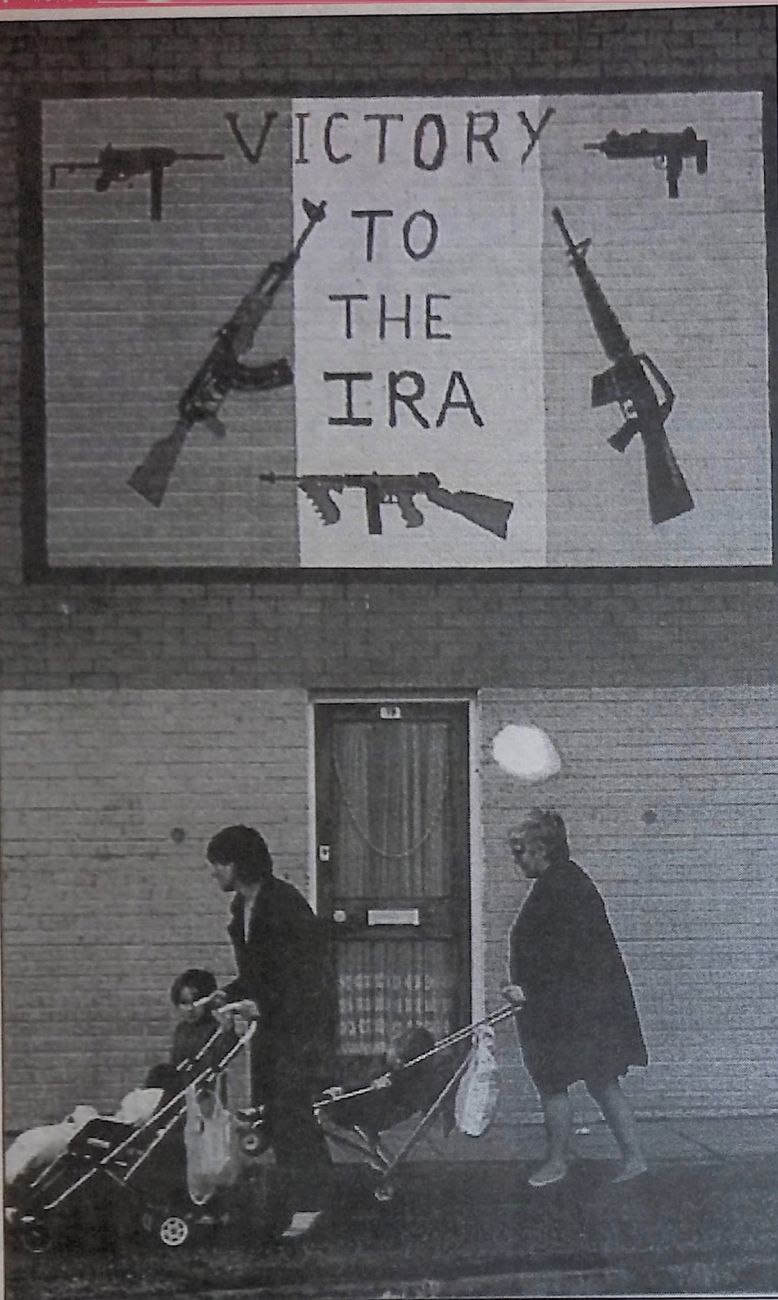
The death of two London workers and one IRA volunteer in order to speed up a demand for "all-party talks" was an expression of total political

bankruptcy.

The strategy of bombing was tried for 25 years and did very little to bring an end to the bigotry and poverty that many republican supporters suffer.

Today the organisation is being forced to make a choice between its two recent strategies.

They have to decide whether



The fifties campaign

THE FAILURE of the bombing campaign in Britain once again led to new tensions within republicanism.

In July 1946, the ex-chief of Staff of the IRA, Sean McBride decided to launch a new party after a campaign to save the life of an IRA prisoner, Sean McCaughey who was on hunger strike, failed.

De Valera had refused to release McCaughey despite the fact that even the Unionist government had begun to release IRA prisoners.

IRA members who joined Clann na Poblachta were expelled and the new party was denounced as the Third Free State Party.

Ganged Up

Once again the leaders of the 'radical' republican Clann na Poblachta turned out to be the worst of conservatives when they got into the Dail.

They ganged up with the Bishops to throw out Noel Browne's Mother and Child scheme which would have introduced free health care.

The IRA, meanwhile, decided to prepare itself for a campaign against the Six Counties, while adopting a social programme that was conservative and right-wing in the extreme.

Sinn Fein even declared itself against the idea of a welfare state.

There was little attempt to relate to the problems facing workers in the South or in the North, as it was argued that the ending of partition in Northern Ireland would remove the economic recession in the South.



Lisnaskea RUC barracks after IRA raid in

This culminated in the campaign of bombing between 1956-1962.

In "Operation Harvest", flying columns from the South were to cross the border and sabotage communications, destroy police barracks and ultimately create "liberated areas".

Operation Harvest only showed the impossibility of waging a guerrilla-style war in the countryside without the support of the population.

By the end of that particu-

lar operation, six RUC and eleven republicans were dead. Again, this campaign brought only increased state repression.

Internment

Over 250 people were interned in Northern Ireland and there was a massive mobilisation of police and 13,000 B-Specials - the forerunners of the UDR.

Internment was also introduced in the Republic in July

A history of division

THE TRADITIONS of the modern day IRA were set when the movement regrouped after being defeated in the Irish Civil War in 1923.

The movement then was far bigger than anything since with an estimated 30,000 members in 1926. But despite its base among the poorer classes, the republican movement was never interested in pursuing any form of class struggle.

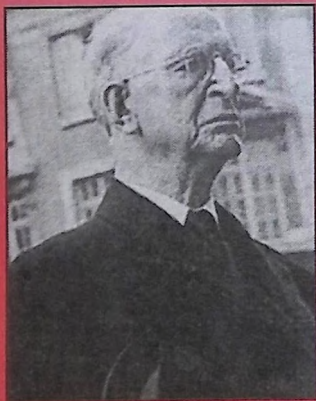
As the writer Sean O Faolain put it, "the policy of Sinn Fein has always been that simple formula: [National] Freedom first, other things after."

Because it turned its back on class struggle, the choices it faced were similar to today: either armed struggle or conventional politics.

In 1926, the major republican leader, de Valera, took the road into conventional politics when he split away to form Fianna Fail. Initially, the more left wing elements looked to FF because it made a direct appeal to those who wanted to change social conditions.

But soon de Valera showed that the electoral barn was not just a tactic but an attempt to win the support of the native capitalists and to integrate the republican movement into the political life of the Free State.

By 1927, he was saying, "The sinister design of aiming to bring about a sudden revolutionary upheaval is altogether foreign to our



■ De Valera

purpose."

The surviving IRA organisation still craved after an alliance with FF. In 1932, for example, IRA members were instructed to canvass for De Valera.

Exception

With the exception of a grouping around Peadar O'Donnell, who broke away into the short lived left wing Republican Congress, the militarist element remained tied to conservative social policies.

The IRA chief of staff at the time argued for Irish unity because "to get the clean, Gaelic, Christian mind of Ireland in revolt against the beastliness of English Imperial Pa-

ganism should be the task of every right-minded citizen of Ireland".

But this did not stop De Valera proscribing the IRA as an illegal organisation.

As his government began to take an increasingly hard line against the IRA, membership in Dublin almost collapsed, falling from 490 in 1934 to 93 in 1936.

The IRA now lurched back into an intensified armed campaign. Under the leadership of Sean Russell, the IRA declared war on England and launched a bombing campaign in January 1939.

As preparations for World War 2 mounted the IRA were convinced that this campaign could force Britain's rulers to the negotiating table. Bombs were placed at electricity lines and tube stations. A wave of sympathy emerged when two IRA men, Barnes and McCormack, were hanged in Birmingham.

But still the campaign only led to increased repression both in the Republic and in Britain, with military courts, executions and deaths on hunger strike in the Republic as de Valera attempted to wipe out any threat to the stability of the Southern State.

This repression almost destroyed the organisation. By 1948 the General Headquarters staff estimated that the organisation had only 200 activists and some hundreds of sympathisers.

Both the military campaign and the entry to conventional politics had left a legacy of failure.

Between single national

Special report by
**RAN ALLEN and
BERNIE CURRAN**

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In 1957, after the IRA had killed an RUC man in Co. Armagh. Nearly 200 were interned.
The campaign did nothing to mobilise people's resistance to the state either North or South.
In the 1959 British elections the Sinn Fein vote had slumped by half, while they only got 3% of the vote in the 1961 general election in the Republic.
The turn to a purely military strategy had once again proved a terrible failure.



1972: British snatch-squad armed with Billy clubs

From struggle to a dead end

THE modern IRA is the first movement since the 1920s to have a mass working class base. It could not have survived, undefeated for 25 years, without it.

Despite the myths developed in the Southern and British media, it was never a criminal gang run by 'godfathers'.

It never built its base by intimidation. Rather the IRA grew because of the way that the British government and the Unionist Party tried to suppress a mass democratic movement for civil rights.

That movement had simply demanded equal access to houses and jobs and the disarming of the sectarian RUC.

When the British government introduced internment in 1971, it proved to most Catholics that they had no commitment to reform.

By the end of that year there were 1,000 volunteers in the Belfast Brigade of the IRA alone.

But if republicanism grew because of the resistance they offered to oppression, they lacked a strategy for taking the struggle forward.

As early as 1969, the republican leader Jimmy Drumm argued at Bodenstown that "we find that a successful war of liberation cannot be fought exclusively on the backs of the oppressed in the six counties nor around the physical presence of the British army."

But despite the fact that other leaders like Adams have since been repeating the need to broaden their base beyond Catholic areas of the North, they have never succeeded.

The armed struggle itself was a major factor contributing to the isolation. It drove thousands of Protestants who were sympathetic to the Civil Rights movement back into the hands of Unionist politicians.

This approach to Protestant workers was supported by a claim that they were simply 'one reactionary bloc'.

In the 1970s influential anti-imperialist writers like Michael Farrell even claimed that many Protestants would drift towards fascism and a possible civil war.

The bombing campaign also alienated many workers in the South, who despised the British army, but saw no purpose to a campaign that bombed city centres.

Again the political arguments of the republicans contributed to their isolation from Southern workers. They claimed that because the South was a 'neo-

colony' of Britain, workers and 'progressive' national capitalists had an interest in aligning together.

This meant that they had very little to say to workers who were in struggle against these employers. Instead the republicans tended to repeat the old FF slogan of protectionism for Irish industry.

In recent years, the movement has turned more and more to seeking an alliance with Fianna Fail as a way of breaking out of the isolation.

The strategy of the 'pan-nationalist front' meant dropping all talk of opposing the Southern state.

Instead of fighting for an 'Eire Nua' (New Ireland) which would overturn the Free State, the republicans sought to work more closely with the Dail politicians to pressurise the British rulers.

But just as their forerunners in the past have failed, so too will the new advocates of conventional politics.

This is because the ending of the oppression against Northern Catholics will only happen as a part of a battle to remove both sectarian states on this island.

Protection

This meant that they had very little to say to workers who were in struggle against these employers. Instead the republicans tended to repeat the old FF slogan of protectionism for Irish industry.

In recent years, the movement

The alternative

RIGHT ACROSS the world, former guerrilla leaders from Adams to Arafat are retreating from their radical pasts and are seeking to become conventional politicians who work within the status quo.

The militant nationalists who oppose them try more desperate methods of armed struggle to prevent the compromise.

But from Hamas in Palestine to the present day Army Council of the IRA in Ireland, they also continue to hold out the prospect of negotiations at some time in the future.

In other words, they follow their more moderate rivals, but at a slower pace.

The reality today is that oppression can no longer be fought on the basis of militant nationalism.

The oppression of Catholics in Northern Ireland arises from the capitalist arrangements that were set up with partition. Protestant workers have not benefited from those arrangements.

The division in the working class meant that poorer wages and worse conditions were established on this island. It was the right wing and the employers who benefited from what Connolly called the 'carnival of reaction.'

Moving forward today means recognising that simple fact. The most important division in Ireland today is that of class. Catholic workers have far more in common with Protestant workers than with right wing nationalists in Fianna Fail and the SDLP. Far from being their enemies, they are potential allies.

Pressing for workers' unity does not mean ignoring oppression or the presence of the British army. But it does mean that argument on these issues will have to be won in the course of common struggle.

That will require a socialist presence in both sections of the working class. The recent ceasefire has shown how that has become possible. Whatever happens in the coming months, that possibility must be firmly grasped.

what do socialists say?

Is the Communist Manifesto still relevant?

by **KEVIN WINGFIELD**

FOR MORE than sixty years the term "Communist" has meant the regimes of Stalinist tyranny that existed in eastern Europe and Russia.

After the collapse of "Communism" it is now easier for socialists to unearth the real communist tradition.

And appearance of a cheap new 60p edition of the *Communist Manifesto* provides an excellent starting point for the ideas of Marx.

For Marx, and his lifelong collaborator Frederick Engels, Communism meant working class people taking over running society and freeing themselves and all the oppressed.

In those days people who called themselves "Socialists" were frequently middle class dreamers who believed that by tinkering with the system or appealing to the better side of the bosses, the social ills of capitalism could be improved.

As Engels wrote later about this period: "The section of the working class, however, which demanded a radical reconstruction of society, convinced that mere political revolutions were not enough, then called itself Communist."

Revolution

Marx, who was born in the German Rheinland in 1818, became radical as a student. Like many of his generation he wanted to see the ideas of the French Revolution of 1789—democracy, an end to the unlimited rights of kings, the removal of the power of the church—extended to Germany.

But as he immersed himself in political activity, writing and journalism, he saw the emergence of the working class revolts.

In England in the 1830s and 1840s in the newly industrialised cities, the Chartists were organising. This was a mass working class movement demanding democratic rights.

Marx became more convinced that the working class could become the emancipators of all humanity if it succeeded in a revolutionary overthrow of the capitalists.

He joined an international **OUT NOW**



New edition of the Communist Manifesto, 60p from Branch bookstalls and Socialist Worker sellers

association called the League of the Just whose slogan was "All men are brothers".

Although quite radical, it believed that workers were too brainwashed to act for themselves and an elite group would seize power on their behalf.

Through argument and discussion, Marx and Engels transformed the League into an open revolutionary organisation dedicated to the working class taking power for themselves.

Its name also changed to the Communist League and its new slogan became "Working people of all lands unite!"

Marx and Engels were commissioned by the Communist League to write its manifesto in late 1847.

Struggles

Two questions divided the working class movement at the time: Which class of people would bring about socialism and could the friction between the classes be overcome?

The *Communist Manifesto* came out with clear answers. It opened with the famous passage: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

"Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in the revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."

The idea therefore of appealing to the good side of the bosses, hoping for a reform of society where the interests of capitalists and workers could be reconciled, was contrary to all the experience of history.

Published in London in February 1848, the *Communist Manifesto* coincided with a revolutionary wave across Europe.

In February King Louis Philippe of France was overthrown and the Second Republic declared. In the following weeks uprisings broke out in Vienna, Milan and Berlin. As Engels later wrote:

"Everywhere the revolution was the work of the working class; it was the latter that built the barricades and paid with its lifeblood."

But the liberals who led the revolution were more fearful of the workers below them than they were desirous of ridding themselves of the aristocracy above them.

In Paris in June 1848 the liberal republicans even unleashed their army on their working class supporters, murdering hundreds. In Ireland, republicans like John Mitchell welcomed the mowing down of the 'red rabble'.

It was in this atmosphere that the *Communist Manifesto* appeared. Its words were to carry the flame of revolt forward.

'Miracle economies'?

by PAUL MCGARR

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE ASIAN TIGERS

WESTERN politicians are constantly hailing the economies of east Asia, especially the four "Asian Tigers"—South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

These economies have been transformed, it is argued, through hard work, low taxes and the free market.

What is the reality behind the hype?

THE FOUR Asian Tigers, according to some figures, have achieved economic growth rates Western politicians can only dream of.

Each state has been transformed. Previously rural and undeveloped societies have become major industrial economies with giant cities.

There can be few people in Ireland who do not have some consumer product—be it a shirt, a pair of trainers, a microwave, a TV or a computer—from one of the Asian Tigers.

But the hype surrounding this economic "success" story ignores some very basic facts.

The way pundits and politicians talk, you could be forgiven for thinking these economies were of a size comparable to, say, Britain.

Britain's economy, however, is almost double that of all the four Tigers combined! South Korea has the biggest economy of the Tigers—only 30 percent of Britain's.

Taiwan's economy is less than a fifth of Britain's.

The other two—Hong Kong and Singapore—are much smaller.

They are little more than city states,



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT has created a powerful new social force in South Korea—the working class

whose combined output is somewhere around a tenth of that in Britain.

But contrary to the pronouncements of the Western leaders, none of the economies are a testimonial to the working of the free market.

A massive level of state direction has been central to their economic development.

Hong Kong's special relationship with the giant Chinese economy has been key to its growth, but in South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan the state has played a key role in regulating the economy.

In each, the state has marshalled the resources and investment, allowing firms to target particular niches in the world market.

South Korea has focused on areas like shipbuilding and later microwave ovens, while Singapore is a key manufacturer of computer disk drives.

South Korea and Taiwan's position as US allies in Asia during the Cold War also played a central role in initial economic transformation—giving both states access to the US market and military contracts.

China—an age of extremes

ALL THE contradictions in the development of the four Asian Tigers can be seen in an extreme form in China.

China is the key economy in the region. It has seen even more spectacular economic growth than the Tigers in the last 20 years and has been transformed into a major industrial economy.

Some Western pundits claim Chinese economic growth is due to the turn to the market which China's rulers introduced in the late 1970s.

In fact the success of the market turn was only possible because of the 30 years of brutal state capitalist control which preceded it.

For three decades the mass of the population were savagely squeezed as the state directed resources in order to build up industry and transport.

Since the 1970s China has developed at breakneck pace. But the regime maintains brutal authoritarian control and denies all democracy.

China shows starkly the contradictions of capitalist development.

The transformation of the country has been spectacular, with its economy quadrupling in size in the last 15 years. Cities have mushroomed and living standards for many have increased.

But the anarchy of capitalism has meant lurches from boom to soaring inflation and savage austerity plans.

The US bosses' paper the *Wall Street Journal* reports that economic growth has "provided tremendous opportunity for

some and a new breed of misery for others. Working conditions in some areas resemble those once described in 19th century Britain where Marx proclaimed social revolution."

Social inequality is huge.

Repression

Over 11,000 workers were killed at work in the first half of last year.

Government repression is savage, as anyone who remembers the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre knows.

But though the regime clamps down on discontent, it cannot stop it.

For in China, as in South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, economic development has created a new and potentially powerful social force—a huge new working class.

Censorship in China means strikes are often not reported.

But Chinese government minister Li Boyong admitted that in 1993-94 strikes, slow downs, collective appeal actions, demonstrations, parades and protests by workers numbered no less than 10,000 cases."

This year a Hong Kong businessman returning from a visit to China's Heilongjiang province reported a demonstration of "100,000 workers parading in the streets shouting, 'We need to live! We need to eat!'"

This struggle, combined with the waves of revolt which have rocked countries like South Korea, is the example workers in the West should look to.

Horror fuels success stories

THERE IS one component of the Asian Tigers' economic development that Western leaders who praise them are less keen to talk about.

All the states have authoritarian, often brutally repressive and undemocratic regimes.

South Korea was a brutal military dictatorship until 1988.

Taiwan was a one party state under permanent martial law until just a few years ago.

There has never been any real democracy for the mass of people in Hong Kong throughout its 150 years as a British colony.

Singapore has also been a savagely repressive state.

Political opposition and independent trade unions have been smashed or repressed in all the Tigers.

Although living standards and wages have improved for many workers today, they are still lower than in Britain.

Last year a worker in South Korea averaged 2,302 working hours.

In Hong Kong it was 2,222, Taiwan 2,136 and Singapore 2,044.

The figure in Britain was 1,880.

Workers in the Asian Tigers work up to nine hours a week more than in Britain.

The same picture is true for holidays. Workers in Britain get an average 22.1 days paid holiday a year, compared with just 7.8 days in South Korea.

Taiwan has repeatedly topped the world league for the number of workers killed at work.

More work, rotten conditions and less holidays: the bosses and politicians want us to follow examples like this.

Few workers will be attracted by the prospect.

In all the four Tigers there have been some moves towards greater democracy in recent years—in the case of South Korea as the result of a wave of militant workers' revolts.

But all the Tigers are still a long way from even the basic democratic rights we have in Britain or Ireland.

Trade union leaders and socialists in South Korea are routinely arrested and jailed, including members of the Socialist Worker's Korean sister organisation.

Trade unionists and socialists still face

real repression in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan.

Lack of democracy and a high level of exploitation are not optional extras to the Tigers' economic "success" story.

They have been central to allowing these economies to compete in the world market.

The process the Tigers are going through today is reminiscent of what happened in Stalin's Russia in the 1930s or much of Eastern Europe in the 1950s.

In the 1970s the then emerging industrial economies of Brazil, Mexico and Argentina underwent a similar process.

But economic slumps—and sometimes catastrophes—have overtaken all these regimes.

The double digit growth all the Tigers enjoyed in the 1980s has slumped to half its previous level.

And Japan, the model all the Tigers look to, is facing its fourth year of recession.

Many commentators are already beginning to worry that the spectacular growth of the Tigers could soon be a thing of the past.

Behind the headlines

Sad bad men in a corrupt world



IT'S MUSICAL chairs for the officer board of the Football Association of Ireland?

At news conferences, waiters give out pricey cocktails to these men and their colleagues.

At meetings, they're like the dinosaurs of Beijing—rotating positions amongst themselves in their spot green blazers; grins showing yellow teeth through clouds of cigar smoke; but quietly, under the table, sharpening daggers with stones for the night they all know will come.

El Presidente (at time of going to press at least)? None other than Louis Kilcoyne. Fidgeting with his Louis Copeland cufflinks, he's as much charm as Sister Xavier in jeans.

Educated at private Blackrock College, Kilcoyne is the youngest of five brothers who bought Glenmalure Park in Dublin from the Jesuits in 1986 for £160,000 and sold it two years later for £925,000.

He's also the man who hired PR guru PJ Mara to improve the FAI's image. Would you trust anybody coached by Charlie Haughey's ex-right hand bonzo?

Joe Delaney was honorary treasurer. His family bakery in Waterford was sold in 1991 to IAWS, with job losses following.

He's behind the mysterious loss of £110,000 from the proceeds of the FAI's 1994 World Cup ticket sales.

He said he had an error of judgement in dealing with someone who proved "less than trustworthy" and he repaid the money from his personal savings. How he managed to have personal savings of over £100,000 has not been asked.

They're not really upper-class twits, such as those who run Yorkshire cricket.

But rather ruthless businessmen who want to cream it off. Some of the others on the FAI 51-member council have the interests of the ordinary soccer player or supporter at heart. But even they defended the system of secrecy and "don't know, don't tell" shenanigans.

FAI council members had no problem with the perks of council membership, including trips to the US World Cup finals at a cost of £120,000.

Ticket Tout

The double-dealing allegations are everywhere. Three of them, including Kilcoyne, are claimed to owe £20,000 in World Cup tickets they did not pay for.

Chief executive Sean Connolly resigned recently. He's alleged to have sold unused tickets to a tout outside Lansdowne Road in 1990, and said it was "normal practice."

But what about the last Ireland/England game ruined by the Nazi BNP?

Imagine...500 tickets come back from the English FA unsold. So the FAI fob them off to touts, make a packet, and put the safety of fans at risk.

Over the past few years, the so-called bastions of Irish society have been red-carded.

First Fianna Fail, then the Church, "hidden Ireland", the beef industry, and many others, including the FAI. What next? The Irish Countrywomans Association found baking cakes with cocaine?

And who are the FAI looking at to clean up the mess? A certain Finbar Flood, deputy chairman of the Labour Court—the same Labour Court that told Packard workers to accept lay-offs, work extra hours for less holidays.

No surprise. He was managing director of Guinness Ireland when they were laying off hundreds of workers.

And meanwhile, back on the dark street, one of the five climbs up on a skip. "Stand down! Stand down!" they call.

"Never! Never!" he replies, before disappearing amongst the dust, rotting food and dog dirt.

Some big fella by the name of Mick McCarthy is across the street in a doorway sobbing uncontrollably.

"Managing Millwall was a doddle compared to this," he groans.

by DAMIEN McLOUGHLIN

film:

Little light at the end of the tunnel

A FILM dealing with the massive heroin problem in Edinburgh's housing estates which was trumpeted as the 'hippest movie of the year' was always going to attract a barrage of controversy.

One British newspaper accused *Trainspotting* of having a 'self-consciously irresponsible attitude to drugs'.

But while it does not preach, the film is in fact an anti heroin film.

Escapades

Based on the best-selling novel, by Irvine Welsh it follows the escapades of a group of unemployed mates, some of whom take heroin sometimes and some who don't.

The film-makers have said that they 'didn't want to make a Ken Loach type of film'.

Instead of showing the political causes of poverty and desperation that can lead to heroin addiction, it portrays the main character's problems as caused by his social circle rather than his social class.

Renton, the narrator, sees his own heroin use as a lifestyle choice—instead of "choosing sitting on a couch watching mind numbing games shows, stuffing junk food intae yir mouth", he chooses to drop out.

Trivialises

The problem is that it trivialises the causes and consequences of heroin addiction.

Renton's attempts to stay off junk are treated as comedy—in fact virtually every episode in the film has a punchline, including the death of one of his non-using friends from AIDS.

You get the impression that the film makers have put a lot of effort into making the whole thing look almost attractive.

The soundtrack is magnificent and



Who's turning their back on reality?

the sets are a very tasteful shade of squalor. This over-stylisation is reflected in the films promotion.

Some of the billboard adverts, feature characters in Calvin Klein-style gear and poses. The film's emphasis on individual lifestyle ignores much of the more serious content of the book.

Unlike the film, the characters in the novel don't exist in isolation.

In a series of loosely related episodes involving a much wider range of people, it is clear that addiction has deeper causes than mere lifestyle

boredom.

The book also shows the characters considering different explanations for their plight.

Defiant

There are signs of a political anger as well as resigned or defiant individualism.

The weaknesses exposed in the film are certainly there too. There is a belief that "society cannae be changed tae make it significantly better".

But whereas the film has a happy sentimental ending, you do finish the book with the feeling that the problem will not go away until the society which mass produces poverty and desperation has been changed.

The makers of *Trainspotting* have produced a limited and trivial look at a wide-ranging and entirely serious issue.

For a much better current film about the same issue, save your cash and rent *Fresh* instead.

-Richard Willmsen

exhibition:

The body politic

THE PROBLEM with galleries is that no one goes to them. Why not? They're free in, for crying out loud.

by NIAL MAHER

People who visit them are usually reminded of churches. They have this sort of churchy acoustic and they nearly always have bare floors. If you talk out loud you are the centre of attention. So you whisper.

It's implied that these are places of spiritual sustenance. It just puts people off.

Brian Maguire's show *The Body Politic* is on in the Kerlin Gallery in Annes Lane off South Anne St in Dublin until March 18th.

There are two principal strands running through the show—one about rising fascism in America and the other is about terrorism and the peace process in Ireland.

The painting style is expressionist with some work veering towards a childlike style of painting.

For Maguire, the American future is grim and violent as seen

seem to be sitting in jail.

Maguire's painting about Ireland don't sit well with each other, partially because of the artists contradictory views. In 'Irish Landscape '96', he has a rifle buried underground like a flower waiting to bloom.

His prison paintings show more sympathy and don't line up with right wing argument to keep 'em in.

The 'Bitter language of Victory' is perhaps Maguire's most disturbing painting, mixing sexual and political imagery to vaguely predict some national obscurity.

Overall Maguire seems to be claiming that the gun is part of the body politic.

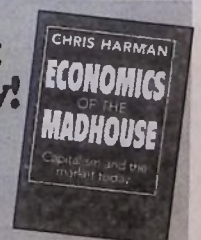
But what he fails to acknowledge throughout is that it is not just the property of political 'fringe' groups from white supremacists to the IRA. It is also the property of the mainstream.

Check out the British army, the Gulf War, or the Scott Report!

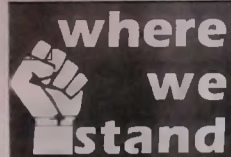
His subtle, and probably unintentional, suggestion that the IRA can be equated with fascists should also be dismissed as plainly incorrect.

Despite all that, I recommend you go to the Kerlin. Take a deep breath and plunge into the world of Brian Maguire. Thought provoking stuff.

Out
now!



Economics of the
Madhouse—Capitalism and
the Market Today
by Chris Harman
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Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM
The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system.

The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion.

To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:

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

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

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

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:

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

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

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

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:

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

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:

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

news & reports—politics; the unions—

Civil Service

MAGNIFICENT HALF-DAY STOPPAGE, BUT...

All-out action needed to stop Quinn's embargo

THOUSANDS of civil servants went on a half day stoppage last month against Ruairi Quinn's embargo on Civil Service jobs. It was a magnificent show of strength.

The union's Executive has now called for an overtime ban and a work-to-rule.

A CPSU consultative conference three days after the recent stoppage underlined the

enthusiasm for further action. One delegate argued that a work-to-rule should have followed on immediately after the stoppage:

"In the employment ex-

change where I work we were left floundering the following morning having to deal with the backlog of work."

Another delegate called for action from other unions: "IMPACT and PSEU members in my department were willing to come out with us. Why weren't they brought out?"

Flexibility

The conference also discussed the government's new proposals on pay and 'flexibility'. The deal would see the Clerical Assistant grade amalgamated with the Clerical Officer grade.

But Clerical Assistants would still have to wait up to twenty years to get to a maximum of £280.57 a week before tax.

One Social Welfare delegate said: "We are not being ad-

equately compensated for flexibility.

"The deal should be put to a ballot with a recommendation for rejection."

Another Social Welfare delegate added that, "a Clerical Assistant at the top of the scale will only get £2.53 a week extra before tax. The Staff Officer starting rate will be cut by £60 a week - they will now be dragged into the low pay trap."

Referring to the union's low pay campaign he added, "This is not a low pay campaign - unless the aim is to keep us low paid. Maybe it should be called a 'high pay campaign' instead."

CPSU General Secretary John O'Dowd agreed with calls to reject the pay deal but argued that he could win a better deal in talks with the government.

One delegate responded by saying, "I am sick and tired of officials telling me we can ne-

gotiate something. Let's take action.

"There should be a sub committee of the Executive putting together a plan of ac-

tion culminating in a massive demonstration. We should do it in conjunction with other Public Service unions. Let's make it a Public Service issue."

ALL-OUT ACTION NEEDED

DESPITE the determined mood several speakers ruled out the possibility of all-out action against the embargo. Some delegates argued that low-paid workers could not afford to stay out on strike. The top table were happy to agree. John O'Dowd said there was no plan for all-out action. Executive members said selective action presented a 'cautious but firm' approach.

But officials like O'Dowd see selective action as a way of signalling to the employers that they do not mean to go 'too far'.

There is a danger that a 'selective' approach - a stoppage here, a work-to-rule there - will drag out over several months while the embargo is put in place.

A decisive all-out strike could bring a swift victory. Any hardship could be alleviated by taking up collections among other groups of workers.

The Dunne's strikers were successful last summer despite being low paid. There may well be a lack of confidence among Civil Servants who have not taken all-out action in the past. But union reps need to start arguing now that all-out strike provides the only guarantee of defeating the embargo and winning decent pay.

Cork Corporation

AN UNOFFICIAL strike of corporation water workers took place in Cork last week. The twenty workers walked out in protest at the behaviour of one of their foremen.

All of the strikers had a story to tell, claiming harassment from the man concerned.

"It's getting so bad," said one striker, "that sooner or later, someone is going to hit him, but then it's us that will lose our jobs, not him."

Other corpo workers coming up to the pickets were aware of the problem.

"We're lucky in our job, not having a **** like him. At least you can talk to our foremen." The strikers mounted a picket at the refueling point for corporation vehicles.

No workers from any other section would cross the picket and as a result the effectiveness of the strike began to spread, with managers from the other sections phoning city hall to find out what was going on.

The strikers were proud of the stand they had taken, and were pointing out that although the particular issue that caused the walkout was the behaviour of the foreman, they had other grievances, such as low pay—basic before tax is just £270 a week, and old equipment.

"Before they broke us all up we used to all be in the same depot, and there was an unof-

ficial dispute nearly every week." Said one striker, glad to be re-establishing the tradition.

During the second day of the strike, officials from SIPTU, the strikers union, came down and put pressure on the strikers to lift the picket so that negotiations could begin.

Some of the strikers felt this was a mistake as the impact of the strike was growing and management could be forced to negotiate, picket or no picket.

But a return to work was agreed by the majority.

Dispute

The strikers did make some gains from the dispute.

The foreman concerned received a verbal reprimand and the union was promised a letter acknowledging their grievances. Even those that felt there was more that could have been won by sticking out were glad that they had made a stand.

"The best thing to come out of this, is the way that our picket lines were respected by the other sections."

In this respect the Cork corporation workers have given an important example of how to rebuild trade union strength.

Early Learning Centre

Management tricks backfire

The strike of seven Cork shopworkers continues into its thirteenth week.

The experienced sales assistants have been picketing the shop since December 6th in an attempt to win a pay increase and union recognition.

Since the strike began the shop in Cork has faced large losses as very few people have crossed the picket lines.

This week management betrayed their worries by announcing a pay increase for its staff in its other Irish shops and by spending over £8,000 on two full page advertisements in the *Cork Examiner* and the *Evening Echo*.

Before the strike the work-

ers had been told that there would be no pay increase before 1997.

Now the company has announced a 7.2% increase, backdated to September 1995, with further rises to come in May and September.

Efforts

This proves that the strikers were right to fight, and it should be pointed out to staff in the other shops that this increase has come out of the efforts of the Cork workers to establish the union.

The advertisements and a large window poster claim that experienced sales assistants now get 4.62 and 5.09 an hour. Even if this were true, the top rate would still be 60p below established union rates. But in any case the figures are false.

The top rates in the Early Learning Centre are only achieved by staff after taking a company award, which gives management discretion over the process. In any case the award does not apply in Ireland.

So the Cork strikers have produced a typical pay slip and photocopied it onto placards. It shows that the reality, for an

experienced staff member, is that she only takes home 257.61 for over 100 hours work.

The public believe the strikers rather than the multi-national and only four people crossed the picket line the following day—and one of those was a health and safety officer concerned at the practices of the Early Learning Centre.

So the strikers continue as determined as ever. Donations are still coming in but more are needed.

Please send them to Early Learning Strikers, c/o MANDATE, 1 Emmett Place, Cork.

SWP branch meetings—all welcome

BELFAST
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm Penny Farthing Bar Central Belfast Mar 13th: Israel and the Palestinians—Can there be peace?; Mar 20th: Going on strike—Can workers win?

CORK
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Dennehy's Pub, Cornmarket St. Mar 14th: Israel and the Palestinians—Can there be peace?; Mar 21th: Going on strike—Can workers win?

DERRY
Meets every Tuesday in Badgers Bar at 8pm Mar 12th: The Communist Manifesto—A manifesto for today; Mar 19th: The State and Revolution
BRAY
Meets every Monday at 8pm in Mayfair Hotel. Mar 11th: Israel and the Palestinians—Can there be peace?; Mar 18th: Going on strike—Can workers win?

DUBLIN NORTH-WEST
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in The Old Brogue, Dorset St. Mar 12th: Israel and the Palestinians—Can there be peace?; Mar 19th: Going on strike—Can workers win?
DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK
Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in the Artane/Beaumont Family Recreation Centre, Kilmore Rd. Mar 14th: The Revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx; Mar 21st: Do

animals have rights?
DUBLIN DRIMNAGH
Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Bentley Pub, Drimnagh Road Mar 12th: Five years after the Gulf War; Mar 19th: The Communist Manifesto—a manifesto for today.
DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in Conways, Parnell St. Mar 13th: The Communist Manifesto—a

manifesto for today; Mar 20th: Can economic planning work?
DUBLIN RATHMINES
Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond Street. Mar 13th: Who was Leon Trotsky; Mar 20th: The Communist Manifesto—a manifesto for today
DUBLIN SOUTH-CENTRAL
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St. Mar 14th: The future socialist society; Mar 21st: Going on strike—Can workers win?
DUBLIN TALLAGHT/CLONDALKIN
Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm, Clondalkin Sports & Leisure centre, Mar 13th: Israel and the Palestinians—Can there be peace?; Mar 20th: Going on strike—Can workers win?
DUN LAOGHAIRE
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Smyths Pub. Mar

12th: Israel and the Palestinians—Can there be peace?; Mar 19th: Going on strike—Can workers win?
GALWAY
Meets every Thursday at 6pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square Mar 14th: Mutton Island—What do socialists say?; Mar 21th: The crisis in the health service
MAYNOOTH
Meets every Thursday at 6 pm in Class Hall D, Arts Block, Maynooth College, Feb 15th: Mar 14th: Israel and the Palestinians—Can there be peace?; Mar 21st: Can economic planning work?
WATERFORD
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in ATGWU Hall, Keyser St. Feb 15th Mar 14th: Israel and the Palestinians—Can there be peace?; Mar 21st: The Communist Manifesto—a manifesto for today

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

If you want to join *Socialist Worker*, fill in this form and send it to: PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682

Name

Address.....

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

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

TEAM

300 TEAM workers came together for a meeting called by their shop stewards at the end of February.

The workers agreed to end the check off system for the collection of union dues and pay them into a fund that the shop stewards will later hand over to union head offices.

"It was a very pro-union meeting", one steward explained "But the move was designed to help make the unions more accountable. We don't want to give the officials the impression that they can just collect the money".

The workers also agreed to pay an extra £1.50 a week into their own fund for shop steward organised campaigns.

The meeting resolved to oppose the intimidation of shop stewards. One steward has been on continuous probation since the settlement in 1994.

More stewards are also to be elected from different sections to avoid management picking off individuals.

Ryanair

A SIPTU member unfairly dismissed by Ryanair has voted for strike action.

The Labour Court recommended last December that Ryanair reinstate the worker, a baggage handler, who was sacked last June.

But Ryanair has refused. Instead they have urged the worker to take his case to the Employment Appeals Tribunal. But he has not in fact been employed long enough to be eligible to do this.

Profit

Ryanair, which made a profit of over £2 million last year, refuses to negotiate with SIPTU, despite a 1988 recommendation by the Labour Court that it recognise trade unions.

Workers in Ryanair are among the lowest paid in the aviation sector in Ireland. Cabin staff have a start-off rate of around £4,000 a year and depend on getting a 10% commission on duty-free sales for the bulk of

their salaries.

The average pay for most new groundstaff in Ryanair is £7,000 with no extra shift pay. A ground handler in Aer Lingus earns about £5 an hour with £50 a week shift pay, while in Ryanair they earn as little as £2.50 an hour with no shift pay.

Worker

As one Dublin airport worker said, "the two biggest costs an airline faces are fuel and labour. There isn't much they can do about fuel costs, so it's not surprising that if they want to give a £49 fare to London they're going to be paying miserable wages."

Recently a number of workers, mainly cabin staff, have joined unions in Ryanair. This dispute can be an opportunity for all workers to fight for trade union recognition in the company.

Non-nursing staff

PENSION STRIKE SELL-OUT

SIPTU witch-hunt launched

STRIKE ACTION by Eastern Health Board workers has been called off by union officials suddenly.

The strikes were over an issue which concern one hundred and twenty thousand public sector workers who are paying weekly to a compulsory pension plan which was devised in 1956.

Subsequent revisions of the scheme in 1977 left many workers with a loss.

Today after 30 years service a domestic in the hospitals will receive only £17.35 a week.

The workers had planned a series of strikes to win a decent pension scheme. But after only one four hour stoppage, union officials halted the action.

Package

A package which was put together after intervention from the Labour Relations Commission is supposed to be the basis for ending their action.

But the package gives very little to workers.

□ Vital issues such as early retirement are not addressed. Today non-nursing personnel have to work until sixty five -- whereas other groups can retire below the age of 60.

□ The method of calculation of the pension has not been changed. The pension is still reckoned on the last three years of service-- when overtime earnings may have dropped.

□ There is no scheme for

part-time workers—only a means tested charity scheme.

□ There is no opt-out provisions for workers who want to leave this particular scheme.

□ Most of the important issues have been referred to a commission that will be chaired by a right wing academic Dermot McAleese from Trinity College.

Even then the recommendations will not be binding on the government.

The union leaders who called off the strike for this miserable package are selling out.

They should get a resounding NO vote when the issue goes to ballot.

THE SIPTU officials are so terrified of real debate on the deal that they have launched a witchhunt against some of their own shop stewards.

When shop stewards at St Mary's Hospital saw the package they decided to gather a petition to demand that a special general meeting of their branch be called to discuss the matter. They also produced a leaflet stating their case against the deal.

It made the union officials paranoid. They realised that a general meeting -- which under

SIPTU rules can be called by one sixth of members -- would be against their interest.

So they have set up an 'investigation' into the activities of St Mary's Section Committee.

They are trying to remove left wing shop stewards from office because they are in a different party to the Labour Party to which most of them belong.

As one steward put it, "Officials like Matt Merrigan must have been watching the Carlsberg ad. It is a shame. The members are the union. We have a right to communicate with other workers to argue against the acceptance of this deal".

TEACHERS:

Reject a bad deal

Over the next few weeks teachers, both at primary and secondary level, will be balloted on a deal being offered by the Department of Education.

more hours. And there is going to be much more of a Managerial structure within schools.

Teachers wanted early retirement because they work in a highly stressed job.

The last thing they need is to be told that they have to work more hours.

Pensions

Niamh Breathnach, the Minister for Education, gets a pension after only a couple of years as a Minister.

Yet she will not concede to the teachers demands. All teachers work extra hours without any recognition.

This deal is not only a bad deal now.

If it is accepted it will also give the green light to further erode the gains that teachers have made over the years, at a later stage.

Teachers

This is what happened to teachers in Britain who are now faced with working longer hours, lower pay and general worsening conditions.

This deal should be rejected.

Eircell victory

FÁS RECRUITS MADE PERMANENT

WORKERS in Eircell, Telecom Eireann's mobile phone subsidiary, won an important victory last month when nine FAS recruits were made permanent.

CPSU members in Eircell Marketing in College Green, Dublin had undertaken a work-to-rule and overtime ban to stop management's use of temporary FAS contracts to fill vacancies.

Management backed down and gave the FAS workers fulltime jobs after it became clear that CWU members were not going to undermine the CPSU action.

CPSU members in Eircell Accounts had also voted to join the dispute.

This victory puts Eircell workers in a strong position to defend their existing conditions under the new subsidiary arrangements.

It also gives a flavour of the type of decisive action needed to defeat job cuts throughout Telecom Eireann.

Dublin Corporation Workers vote to take action

GENERAL WORKERS in the corporation who are members of SIPTU have voted 3 to 1 for strike action in all departments of Dublin corporation.

They are protesting at plans of the management to introduce changes in work practices without any consultation with the union.

Nearly 1,000 workers are represented by SIPTU while another 2,000 members of IMPACT are likely to support action they might take.

Management's proposals have already been thrown out at a preliminary Labour Court hearing at the end of February.

Full Labour Court talks are due to take place in mid March.

If the changes that management want got through many flat complexes would be left without caretakers.

Craft workers in the Housing maintenance and other departments would be left without help.

There are only 250 general workers in the Housing Maintenance department at the moment to service 30,000 flats and houses.

Reduction

Any further reduction would mean a drastic reduction in services such as cleaning and repairing throughout the entire Dublin area. This is why all union members, craft and general, should support the SIPTU vote for strike action to defend jobs and services.

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

inside:

Labour loses in Australia & Spain —page five

What can all-party talks deliver? —page three

The IRA: Between armed struggle & conventional politics —page eight

FIGHT

£35 million cut from the Health Boards' budgets

THE TORY'S HEALTH CUTS

NORTHERN Ireland's health service is being brought to crisis point by the Tories.

Health Minister Michael Moss is demanding a £35 million cut from the health boards. He wants 900 beds removed from a service that has already been run down. He has ordered hospital managers to reduce non-emergency operations like hip replacements.

The Southern Health Board has admitted that it faces the "bleakest financial picture for years". It will be closing the Banbridge and Moyn hospital at the end of the year.

At Omagh Psychiatric Hospital in Co Tyrone patients were put in beds fitted between snooker table because ward closures meant that the hospital had to use the games rooms for new patients.

Demanded

In the Western Health Board, the Altnagelvin Hospital is due to become a trust on April 1st and the Tories have demanded cuts of £9 million from the board as a whole.

In Belfast, the McKenna report is demanding the closure of the Royal Maternity Hospital and all specialised health treatment for women at the Royal group

Demonstration:

STOP THE HEALTH CUTS!

Wednesday 27th March Assemble 12.30 Royal Victoria Hospital, Grosvenor Rd and City Hospital Called by Health Unions

of hospitals including the gynaecological department, fertility treatment and breast cancer treatment.

Slashed

Four hundred jobs are also to be slashed in the City Hospital.

The recent cuts have

been condemned by the Northern Ireland council of the British Medical Association.

Dr Raymond Shearer said, "There isn't enough slack in the system.

"They have withdrawn beds to such an extent that we've reached a critical point."

Catholic and Protestant workers unite!

THE SECTARIAN politicians are only interested in defending services that are 'on their side'.

Their whole outlook is based on arguing that any gain for one community must be a loss for the other.

So in Belfast, the nationalist politicians only talk about defending the Royal and the unionists only press the case for the City.

Antics

Today their sectarian antics around all-party talks are becoming a joke.

But if they ever get talks started, they will only pro-

duce a settlement that is based on modernising and maintaining the sectarian basis of all politics in the North.

Workers have to take a different approach.

The actions of the Tories shows that class is the main division in Northern Ireland.

Our motto has to be the old union slogan 'an injury

to one is an injury to all'.

Any politicians who tells workers that they have distinct and opposed interests to another section of workers should be treated for the bigots that they are.

Struggle

Any return to a bombing campaign or armed struggle will not just hinder workers unity but also play into the hands of politicians who want to keep workers divided.

That is why it should be opposed.

Throughout the North, there is a mood for workers unity.

The fight to defend the health service can be a start in turning that mood into a reality.