

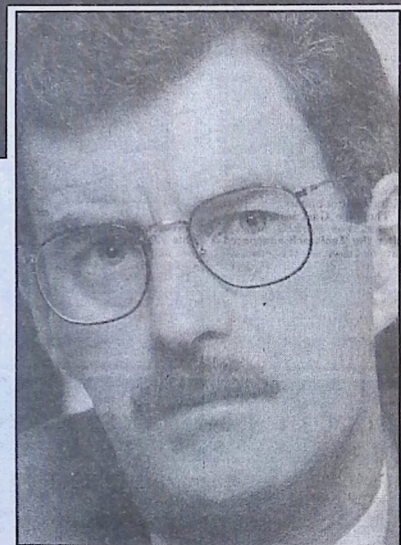
Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

inside:

The Lebanon massacre—Israel's state terrorism—centre pages

Water Charges; Low Pay; Public sector jobs; Beef scandal; Sleaze...



Labour's sold us out!

IT'S TIME FOR A REAL SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

"WE HAVE a problem with public perception," Roisin Shortall, a Dublin Labour TD told *Questions and Answers*.

This analysis is fairly typical from Labour TDs. They think that a few more PR agencies can put the party's

problems right. In reality the problem goes far deeper.

After the Labour vote in Dublin West fell below that of Sinn Fein, Labour TDs gathered for a crisis meeting

and gave Spring one month to come up with solutions.

But not one TD has been able to put their finger on the exact problem: the party has a well earned reputation for

betrayal.

In 1992, it won the support of thousands of new voters because it had begun to use some mild left wing rhetoric. It promised to break

the 'Golden Circle' and denounced Fianna Fail corruption.

TURN TO PAGE TWO

Quarter of Children denied basic rights

BARNARDOS, the Irish child welfare charity, published a report in early April which shows that huge numbers of working class children have failed to benefit from recent economic growth.

The report, *Children First*, describes how "children in Ireland today face even greater challenges... than was the case 20 years ago".

□ 4 in every ten children live in homes where their basic needs of food clothing and living space are not adequately met.

□ 400 young children are living on the streets in Dublin alone.



□ Only 2% of children had access to publicly funded child care in 1995.

□ 26% of those who live below the poverty line are children.

□ Over 10% of Dublin families with young children have no access to a GP doctor.

All in all a quarter of Irish children are "deprived of their basic right to an acceptable standard of living"

NO Unions: Coillte

This government talks a lot about social partnership but it is also supporting a non-union policy in one company.

Last month, Louisiana Pacific opened a 45 million timber processing plant at Bellview in Waterford in conjunction with the state owned company, Coillte.

The American company is refusing to recognise unions. And Coillte

which owns a 35% stake in the new operation is supporting this policy. This anti-union policy did not deter the Bruton brothers. Both of them, John and Richard, turned up for a big nosh that opened the operation.

Research held back for profit

Drug companies are holding back new research into lung disease tuberculosis because they cannot see enough profit in it.

"The last anti-TB drug was rifampicin in 1963. There are some potential drugs which companies are not developing although they are very promising in laboratory tests" says Dr Paul Nunn of the World Health Organisation.

He even says the drug companies: "do not realise how much the market for anti-TB treatment will expand".

Governments in wealthy and developing countries are not responding to the risk," says the director of the WHO tuberculosis programme.

His conclusion comes with the publication of a WHO report in March

which shows that more people are dying of the lung disease than in the 19th century.

Last year tuberculosis killed three million people worldwide and the death toll is set to top 30 million over the next decade.

At its previous peak at the end of the 19th century TB killed 2.5 million people a year.

Many of the deaths are concentrated in developing countries. Poverty is the biggest reason why people become susceptible to TB bacteria.

But it is not 'just a disease of poor countries. There is a resurgence of TB in the West as well.

Boom in super-salaries

Ruairi Quinn has been warning low paid civil servants that there is little money in the kitty. But in his last budget he cut the tax on company cars to Ireland's over paid executives.

New figures reveal the shocking level of greed that now exists at the top of Ireland's leading financial institutions.

■ In Irish Life, two executive directors, David Kingston and Peter Fullam, got an average pay package of £216,500 each last year.

■ In Allied Irish Banks, the bosses got an average of £356,000.

■ In Irish Nationwide Building society two executives got £340,000.

■ In Irish Permanent, the bosses got £283,000 each.

■ In the First National Building Society, it was £279,000. With figures like these no wonder even the Irish Independent has been warning that Ireland is heading into a 'summer of discontent'.

Labour attacks bail rights

Fine Gael wants to remove our right to bail. And now Dick Spring of the Labour Party has announced that he agrees with their plans.

But all the evidence shows that denying people bail does not prevent crime.

In 1993 Gardai figures show that only one and half percent of reported crime was established by the courts to have been committed by people on bail.

When it comes to crimes against the person, which worry people the most, "bail bandits" account for only a handful: 2 percent of detected

rapes and 1 percent of detected assaults.

In England and Wales, "tougher" bail laws of the sort Nora Owen wants are in place. There the courts refuse bail if they think they have "substantial grounds" to believe the accused will re-offend on bail.

Yet more people on bail offend there than in Ireland. And one quarter of English prisoners are on remand

— four times the Irish rate.

More than half of these will be either acquitted or given a non-custodial sentence.

The Coalition's plan to change the bail laws would boost the prison population by a staggering 600. Almost all of these would be poor working class youth accused of crimes against property.

A large proportion of them would be eventually be found innocent, but could have spent months imprisoned without trial.

The Irish Council for Civil Liberties argues that the new bail proposals undermine the princi-

ple of "innocent until proven guilty".

The ICCL also points out that the press have been more willing to comment on accused people being Travellers. In Britain and the US the same stereotypes are created of blacks being "lawless".

The roots of crime are to be found in unemployment, poverty and hopelessness. The "get tough on crime" lobby want to disguise this fact. It suits their class interests better than tackling poverty or getting the beef barons to pay for their crimes.

Bray women's clinic squeezed out

WOMEN in Bray will find their Well Woman Centre has closed because the Eastern Health Board would not give it money for free family planning services to medical card patients.

Some local GPs did not want the centre when it opened in 1994. The Health Board then decided that neither the GPs nor the Well Woman Centre would be subsidised for helping medical card patients to plan their families.

Now the centre has been declared "financially unviable". Meanwhile in Coolock, GPs, as well as a Well Woman Centre receive subventions and co-exist quite happily.

It is a scandal that women are deprived of access to contraception and family planning. For medical card patients it is even more serious since they are registered with one doctor -- who may be opposed to contraception, such as Dr Janina Lyons on Dublin's Northside.

Even there few workers can afford the £17 the Well Woman Centre charges for a consultation. But obviously the EHB thinks that people on medical cards haven't got the same right to choose from already scarce family planning services as private patients.

inside the system

Barring orders have become the poor person's judicial separation'

"Barring orders have become the poor person's judicial separation" proclaimed an Evening Herald headline.

For once they were right. In the week when two members of the British Royal Family swept into

a court and came out two minutes later with a formal divorce, the Law Reform Commission issued a report which slams the Irish legal system.

Those who cannot afford the huge sums demanded by solicitors and family law experts are subject to

"delays, brief hearings, inadequate facilities, overhasty settlements".

Expensive

For many couples, legal representation is often too expensive so they do without.

Often they go to the district courts for barring orders leaving the more efficient circuit court system for those who can afford to pay.

NYPD Blues

It seems the popular American Television series *NYPD Blue*, featuring New York police, is aptly named.

Life has got so depressing that the Police Department has had to send out 50,000 suicide prevention

videos in an effort to combat a record level of suicides in the force.

Encouraging enterprise

In America its called 'corporate welfare'. In Ireland its called 'encouraging enterprise'. Wherever it is called, it is all about the rich sponging for more subsidies.

The International Financial Services Centre in Dublin is a good example. Cash rich companies like AIB, Morgan Grenfell and Chase Man-

hattan play as low as \$4.50 an hour to telesales personnel, secretaries, and clerical workers.

But they get away with a tax rate of 10%

and benefit from IDA subsidies.

No wonder that the general manager of the sharks' paradise, Denis Molumby could boast,

"Companies can operate from Dublin at up to 30% of the cost of a similar undertaking in London"

Beef baron evicts workers

UP TO ten hotel workers from the Talbot Hotel in Wexford are furious. They have been sacked and were forcibly removed by security guards who even tried to take their company shirts off them.

The sacking follow the hiring of security detectives.

They claim that the workers, some of whom worked in the hotel for 20

years, were eating company food and taking unofficial breaks.

The hotel is owned by Slaney Meats beef baron, Bert Allen who, no doubt,

will be campaigning for full transparency in that industry.

The workers union, SIPTU, is now organising a strike ballot.

Air taxi gimmick for politicians

The latest idea is an "air-taxi" service. For a cost of around £1 million, cabinet Ministers will sleep safely knowing they can book an 'air taxi' at short notice to help with that important government business which is just cannot wait..

Radio daze

Anyone scanning the airwaves for a good radio channel would do well to skip past Atlantic 252 on long wave.

The Meath based station, partly owned by RTE, has been trumpeted as a hip cool station.

But the management do not allow their DJs to sit while they are broadcasting because they claim it makes them more zippy.. Some broadcasts could last for up to three hours.

Maybe it should be known as profit greedy 2521.

Things they say:

"Some bosses will spend £10,000 - £15,000 to kit out their office. The sky is the limit if you want to make an impact."

—Harry Norton, of Norton Office Supplies.

"A punchbag which cheers when you hit it and a helicopter that flies off its handle when you thump it are particularly good ice breakers at successful board meetings,

—Graham Mulcahy of Regalino's, a company which specialises in gifts for executives.

"My experience is that people in national and republican areas want police. They are law abiding people"

—Gerry Adams

More people die of cold in Ireland than in Finland or Canada, where parts of the countryside can be covered in snow for weeks on end.

This is the startling finding of the Combat Poverty Agency in their report on Fuel Poverty.

The plain truth is that hundreds of pensioners are in danger of hypothermia -- death from lack of heat -- because they can't afford the bills. And the latest ESB 'drive to efficiency' means that electricity costs are set to rise.

what we think

Labour's sold us out

Continued from page one

But the leaders of the party were committed to running Irish capitalism.

In opposition they could attack the corruption of the rich—but in government they found that legal and sometimes illegal scams were necessary for this class to compete on the world markets.

Even in boom conditions, the capitalist class demanded still more sacrifices from workers to be 'competitive'. A party committed to running their system had no alternative but to go along with it.

Scrambling

Today, Labour TDs are scrambling around looking for different ways of re-building their base. Pat Upton, the Labour TD for South Central believes that they can copy the strategy of Tony Blair.

He forgets that Blair is popular, not because of his right wing policies run by PR agencies—but because the Tories are hated so much.

Other TDs believe that they can even ride the law and order wagon. Spring has called for an end to the right to bail while Bhamjee has even suggested that a prisoner, Brendan O Donnell be encouraged to commit suicide.

They forget that if they try to steal the clothes of Fianna Fail or Fine Gael, people are more likely to look for the real article.

None of these solutions will save Labour. The question now is where is the alterna-

tive to Labour to come from.

In many countries in Europe, the disillusionment with Labour and so called Socialist politics has fed into bitterness from which extreme right and fascist parties have grown.

None of this can be ruled out in Ireland in the future.

Impact

But for the moment, groups like the Christian Principles Party or Nora Bennis National

Party make no impact.

They are tied up with the crisis in the Catholic Church.

This means that there is a unique opportunity over the next period to build an alternative from the left. It is vital that this opportunity is grasped.

That alternative has to break completely with the methods of Labour.

It has to be built around working class struggle rather than waiting for elections. And it has to seek to overthrow capitalism rather than manage it.

The fur coat bigots

DAVID Trimble has announced that he will be marching again in Drumcree this year.

Martin Smyth, the Unionist MP and Grand Master of the Orange Order, says that they will have to break the law to march down the Ormeau Rd in order to insult Catholics.

Whip up

The fur coat brigade of Unionism are out to whip up sectarianism.

The media have always tried to imply that bigotry seeps into Northern Ireland from 'uneducated' sections of workers. Amongst republicans there is also a view that Protestant workers are



particularly backward. This is ultimately the reason for seeking to establish a consensus with

such 'progressive' elements as Albert Reynolds or Bill Clinton.

The reality is very differ-

ent. The Unionist upper class have an immediate and direct interest in maintaining sectarian division.

Elite

Without a regular intensification of the feelings of sectarianism, the Unionist Party would wither.

In any new settlement, the middle and upper classes will have to make room from their counterparts from the nationalist community in the elite positions.

Working class division has also been the condition through which they manage to enjoy unusually high privileges—even compared to their counterparts in Britain.

Their children can go to state funded grammar schools.

Clashes

Their employees earn even less wages than workers in Tory Britain.

For workers, sectarianism is more contradictory. It clashes directly with the need for a united workers fight against the employers and the Tory cuts.

This does not mean that class unity will arise automatically from economic struggles.

But it can create favourable conditions whereby sectarianism can be challenged more directly.

The key though is building a socialist presence which can counter the arguments of Trimble and the bigots at every turn.

800 march against water rates



EIGHT hundred protesters turned out for the national demonstration against the water charges in Dublin in April.

Unions banners from SIPTU and ATGWU and the Dublin Trades Council were prominent.

The campaign against the charges is increasing support in some areas as the councils try to intimidate people with warning letters.

In Walkinstown, nearly 200 people showed up to a demonstration in support of Larry Doran who has been threatened with disconnection by a judge.

This type of action will be crucial in the months ahead. When the corporation order in scabs to disconnect water in Waterford they had to face hundreds of any demonstrators who drove them out. They have never tried to disconnect any water supply since.

This example will need to be repeated throughout Dublin in the coming months.

WINING AND GOLFING AT THE EXPENSE OF WORKERS

MEET Eddie O Connor. He has spent the last nine years as Chief Executive of Bord na Mona slashing 2,000 jobs.

But O Connor knows how to look after himself.

* O Connor earns £65,000 a year but gets another £20,000 in expenses.

* He and other executives of Bord na Mona have access to a time share villa in Portugal as a reward for their 'productivity'.

* O Connor's gold club membership was paid by the company.

* £2,000 was spent on wine for executives like O Connor to guzzle.



Eddie O'Connor

Set-up

Now Bord na Mona has to pay over £240,000 to the Revenue Commissioners for the 'tax efficient' schemes they set up for executives like O Connor.

Another case of the Irish rich who think they are above PAYE.

By the way, O Connor was a former supporter of the Communist party of China and the person who appointed him was Brendan Halligan, the former General Secretary of the Labour Party.

★ 1995 was a difficult year for the Bishops. Child abusing priests, misuse of church funds, defeat on the divorce referendum....

But one area is looking rosy enough to bring a smile to even the most harassed clerical face.

Financially, the church is booming. As a result of selling off surplus land — more than 40 sites were sold since 1990 — the Dublin Diocese has become a profit making business.

At the end of June the Dublin parishes recorded a profit of £2.7 million. According to chief Financial officer, John Wilson, they are entering "a new era of fiscal realism".

Taking leaf out of his book are the Sisters of Charity who received £8 million for a site in Dublin Southside. The site used to house St Anne's Primary school but this was closed down before the sale.—Now that is real 'fiscal realism'

★ A high tech Hong Kong based company, Benelux, has just put over one third of the workforce at its Limavady plant on protective notice.

Six months ago, Benelux which makes CD cases, got a £10 million grant to set up its factory in Co Derry.

At the time Ministers and politicians were falling over themselves in the clamour to welcome the company.

Six months later they are silent and 70 workers are left to carry the can, the Tories continue to reward big business in

Northern Ireland while at the same time running down the health service.

The Industrial Development Board have just given another gift of other 10 million to the US company Seagate which refuses to recognise unions and pays its workers abysmal wages.

Meanwhile one hospital trust has announced that it will have to sack 100 health workers.

£20 million would go a long way to keeping those jobs but the Tories prefer to give the money to fly by night multi-nationals.

behind the headlines

Handouts for the farm lobby

Even before the BSE crisis began, *The Farmer's Journal* was warning about a 'crisis' in the beef industry.

The 'crisis' the Journal referred to was a European Union decision not to increase export refunds or abolish weight restrictions. For the farm lobby, there is a 'crisis' every time the EU decides that less hand-outs are available.

When the BSE scare hit the headlines, the calls to help the farmers reached a crescendo. One Fine Gael TD even claimed that more farmers would die of suicide than people who got brain disease.

And the call for more subsidies is already working. Within days of the BSE scare, the strangely named 'rendering industry' had managed to squeeze over £2 million out of Ivan Yates in a temporary subsidy.

The 'rendering industry' had simply refused to dispose of waste products from the beef plants because the market for bonemeal -- made from bits of left over flesh -- seemed to be falling apart.

They claimed that thousands of jobs were being put at risk and so they had to have a subsidy. Even though Jimmy Somers of SIPTU claimed the figures were highly exaggerated, the Coalition coughed up immediately.

Subsidies to farmers have in fact doubled since 1993.

Myth

The agri-business in Ireland trades of the myth that it exists to protect poor farmers who are the backbone of Ireland.

Yet figures show that only one in five farmers have low incomes. The majority are well off with the big farmers earning over £100,000 a year.

Take John Bruton. As well as having one job as Taoiseach of Ireland he is also a big farmer from Meath. When he had to reveal his assets for the Dail records, they showed that he was worth over £1 million.

As the *Sunday Business Post* admitted, "Farmers are privileged in owning the land and are doubly privileged in having their income subsidised by ... price fixing and direct state subsidies"

Agriculture throughout the European Union is highly regulated, with prices kept artificially high.

Despite calls to cut back on the Common Agriculture Policy, the strategy of subsidising big farmers continues.

Beef, for example, can be bought on the world market at about 60% of the price it fetches in Ireland.

Milk is also protected with farmers getting 'quotas' or milk producing rights worth £2,750 million a year. *Farmers also get a premium for keeping ewes -- a measure which has been helping to strip many Western hills of precious vegetation, causing soil erosion.*

A western farmer with say 1,000 ewes gets £25 a ewe under this scheme. So he gets a cheque for £25,000 even before they sell a lamb.

Subsidies to farmers have in fact doubled since 1993. And yet the secret of the EU policy is not to use the subsidy to reduce food costs -- but to actually increase prices.

In the past, huge amounts of food was placed into intervention to keep prices high. It was then dumped on Third World markets at prices below which poor peasants could produce for.

The Philippines island of the Negros, for example, was reduced to near famine because farmers could not compete with the price of EU sugar that was dumped on the area.

The intervention system for beef has been re-opened in response to the BSE crisis -- to make sure that farmers' profits are not hit.

Working class people in the cities pay twice for this insane system of agriculture: their taxes make the subsidies possible and their wage packets are reduced by dearer food.

Socialists are for an end to this form of capitalist agriculture. A socialist society would immediately take the big farms into public ownership and use the best scientific methods to produce healthy food at cheap prices.

It would hope to convince small farmers that their future lies in co-operative farming because it allows them time off, improves their conditions and gives them a genuine share in wealth of society which private ownership of small patches of land can never provide.

A new plan to institutionalise sectarianism:

NOW LABOUR GIVES BISHOPS POWER TO SACK TEACHERS WHO ARE NOT CATHOLICS

THE LABOUR Minister for Education, Niamh Breatnach, is bringing in a new law to give Bishops the power to insist that teachers in denominational schools should practice and adhere to religious beliefs.

In Catholic schools, all teachers will be expected to believe, obey and practice the morality of the Catholic Church.

90% of secondary schools are owned and controlled by the Bishops. So too are the vast majority of primary schools which are owned by the Catholic Church or other religious groups.

Union of Ireland have said that they will reject "the attempt to give the churches the power to dictate the religious views of teachers."

Insist

The I.N.T.O's General Secretary says that "we will insist and demand that teachers have a right to a private life .. We will not have them threatened with dismissal on the basis of private life issues."

The real issue for the teachers unions is whether they plan to turn this good verbal reaction into a real opposition movement that will force Breatnach to back off.

The new law does not just affect teachers. All the indications are that Breatnach new law will allow the church authorities to dis-

Veto

If this law goes ahead, it would mean a religious veto on teachers who are paid for directly by the Department of Education.

It would officially institute sectarian discrimination. Protestant or non-Catholic teachers could be driven out of schools controlled by the Bishops.

Already the Teachers



Teachers take to the streets over pensions last year

criminate on religious grounds against accepting some teachers into their schools.

Shameful

One teacher told *Socialist Worker*; "This is the most shameful move that Labour has ever made. They say that they are being forced into it because of the 1937 constitution. But why don't they take the issue to the country and get it changed like happened in the divorce referendum."

Another teacher told us, "Many people do not realise the levels of hypocrisy that already exist in schools. Teachers who are applying for jobs often have to get references from their local

parish priest.

They have to pretend that they are living according to the moral rules of the Church hierarchy. Officially a teacher can still be sacked if they are divorced or are pregnant outside marriage.

Spied On

We thought all this had died away quietly. But Breatnach new law will give the whip hand back to parish priests. Teachers will feel that they can be spied

on in their private lives" The propagandists for the Bishops say that the Church have a right to run their schools because people have a choice over what sort of education .

But there is no real choice for the thousands of people who belong to no religious group in Ireland.

Ireland is one of the few countries in the world where the state does not use taxpayers money to provide a proper education system that is open to all citizens.

Teachers say end church domination

TEACHERS oppose being forced to teach religion but fear they will be discriminated against if they refuse.

This was discovered in a survey of teachers conducted by the INTO earlier in the year.

More than half of teachers felt that primary teachers should not be obliged to teach religion and less than half are teaching religion willingly.

Only 3 percent of teachers who don't want to give religious

instruction have informed the school authorities.

The main reasons for not informing their heads are fears over employment, job mobility and career prospects.

The survey also found that large numbers of teachers oppose church control of schools.

Two-thirds believe the state should own the school buildings and 70 percent say the churches should relinquish control of Boards of Management.

Who runs our schools?

■ There are only primary 14 schools in Ireland which are not controlled by a church. They cater for less than 3,000 pupils.

■ Nearly all secondary level schools are run by the churches.

■ In Community schools, the Bishops to nominate someone to sit on an interview board that hires teachers.

■ The Church does not pay for the salaries of teachers.

These come from the state. Yet the state still allows clerical managers to dictate what is taught.

■ In 1995, the Dublin Diocesan Parishes only spent £1.5 million on the primary schools it controls.

Yet they received £26 million in offerings and collections.

■ For this tiny sum of £1.5 million they get the right to implement the motto of the Jesuits: "Give me a boy before the age of seven --and he is mine for life."

The belt of the crozier

Breatnach's new law the Bishops to bring back the days when they could sack teachers for their lifestyle. Among the teachers they drove out of schools were:

■ **JOHN MCGAHERN:** The Irish novelist and short story writer used to work as a primary school teacher in the 1960s. But he was living with a woman who was not his wife. As a result, he was pushed out of the teaching service for 'moral turpitude'.

■ **EILEEN FLYNN:** She was a teacher in New Ross who worked in a convent school in the 1980s. When she became pregnant outside marriage the nuns sacked her. The courts then supported the right of the nuns to enforce their 'moral ethos'.

Italy: Right defeated in 'Olive Tree' victory

'We can trust the Left' says banker

THE RESULT of April's Italian general election has been feted as a victory for the left.

Commentators hailed the victory of the Olive Tree Alliance as a "new era", saying it put the left into office for the first time since World War Two.

They also tried to whip up a red scare because a future government may have to rely on the votes of "Marxist" Communist Refoundation Party MPs.

There is little doubt that the result is a crashing defeat for Silvio Berlusconi, the media tycoon who headed the right wing coalition that included fascists in the National Alliance of Gianfranco Fini.

It is a far cry from the March 1994 when Berlusconi was swept to power, his face filling every television screen and every newspaper. This time round he was skulking in his luxury villa refusing to talk.

But no one should believe that it was the policies of the Olive Tree Alliance that defeated the right.

Berlusconi has been sent off into the political wilderness because of the militancy of the Italian working class.

Not Left

It was mass strikes that brought down Berlusconi's government at the end of 1994. It was hatred of the right that has put the centre-left in office.

That the Italian currency shot up on Monday is an indication of the politics of the Olive Tree Alliance. It is far from left wing.

As the bosses paper the *Financial Times* says, "Italy has never had a government dominated by the left, and it is certainly not going to get one this time round."

"If the centre left Olive Tree alliance gains a majority, it will be because it has taken the centre with it". Olive Tree MPs quickly

distanced themselves from the Communist Refoundation, saying they would try and win over right wing MPs rather than rely on "extremists".

The main party in the Olive Tree Alliance is the PDS, the ex-communist party that has transformed itself into a party modelled on the British Labour party.

The first statement of PDS leader Massimo D'Alema was to say the party would drop its traditional hammer and sickle insignia.

Worried

It was so worried about being thought left wing that D'Alema stepped down from the alliance leadership and pushed forward Romano Prodi.

Prodi is an economics professor and ex-director of the Italian public sector holding company IRI.

During the campaign he gave an interview to a popular Catholic family magazine attacking Berlusconi, not on his right wing politics, but on the basis that his two marriages showed him to be in



breach of "Christian principles".

Also in the Olive Tree is Lamberto Dini, the man that was government "caretaker"

for a year after the fall of Berlusconi.

Dini is the ex-head of the Bank of Italy—the Italian central bank.

It was Dini who pushed through the welfare "reforms" Berlusconi had failed to achieve before then entering the Olive Tree alliance.

It is no wonder that a recent poll put confidence in the institution of parliament at a rock bottom 4.6 percent of the population.

New government won't champion workers' bitterness

THE OLIVE Tree alliance is likely to sow disillusionment by attacking those workers who voted for it.

Gianfranco Fini and the fascist elements in and around the Freedom Alliance is still poised to take advantage of workers despair.

An indication that the thugs in Fini's ranks are still operating was shown in the bombing of left wing and union offices in Rome in the run up to the election and attacks on

Olive Tree canvassers. With the right out of power hardliners in the Freedom Alliance will be arguing strongly for a return to "street politics".

Anger

But bitterness could also turn to anger favouring the left.

When the PDS embraced the free market the Communist Refoundation split away.

Refoundation leader Fausto Bertinotti has said that al-

though his party is in the Olive Tree alliance he will not go along uncritically with government policy.

But there will be massive pressure on him to back Prodi, in case he is accused of bringing down the government and letting the right back in.

There is an alternative to politicking at the top. That is relying on the strength from below.

A significant layer of workers far to the left of the PDS

vote for the Communist Refoundation.

They will be the best trade union militants in the factories, the unions and the localities.

Many of them will not be happy with Refoundation MPs voting with the likes of Prodi and Dini.

It is this force on the ground that will be crucial in fighting both the austerity measures of the centre left and the politics of despair of Fini and the fascists.

ONE BANKING analyst said on hearing the result: "The left wing is perceived as much more disciplined on the budget deficit—especially with the inclusion of Dini".

Italian capitalists want any incoming government to slash public spending and further drive down wages.

Backed

At first they backed Berlusconi, but cut their links with him when he became a liability.

The Olive Tree's priority is not the workers who voted for it but the money markets. It has pledged to try and get Italy into a future single European currency.

In their sights is the national debt, which is amongst the world's highest, at 123 percent of the gross domestic product.

The money markets want any government to revive privatisation plans which had to be dropped under Berlusconi due to worker's resistance—the best known example being the state airline Alitalia.

Brazilian police slay 23 landless peasants

BRAZILIAN POLICE murdered 23 landless peasants last week in a brutal massacre that has shocked the country.

One of the dead was a three year old child, and an official government pathologist admitted that nine of those killed had been shot "execution style" by police.

The massacre came after police attacked a protest by members of the MST movement of landless peasants in the Amazon state of Para.

Land is a key political and social issue in Brazil. Peasants are being forced off land by powerful landowners and big business.

Mass occupations of fallow land have become in-

creasingly common as the landless fight back, but have been met with brutal repression.

Human rights groups say over 1,000 peasants, rural workers and their union leaders have been killed by

police and thugs hired by landowners in the last 10 years.

Repression

But the repression has not broken the resistance.

April saw the land protests continue, with 10,000 landless people occupying a large landed estate in Parana state in the south of Brazil.

Meanwhile workers in Brazil's huge cities have also been fighting back, with a national strike by the country's 600,000 civil servants over pay in April.

Norway hotel strike sends rich packing

NORWEGIAN WORKERS have been teaching a lesson to anyone who says hotel and catering workers cannot be organised and have no power.

The rich guests at ten of Norway's top hotels were told to pack their bags and clear off last week after workers went on strike over pay and shut the hotels down.

The strike is costing the hotel owners some ++2.4 million a day in lost revenue.

Hotel bosses want to impose a pay freeze but the workers union is demanding a 6 percent rise. The strike was set to spread to another 21 key hotels this week unless the employers retreat.

Sri Lanka tea workers plan strike

ONE SIGN of hope amid the savage civil war in Sri Lanka emerged this week as 600,000 tea plantation workers were set to strike over pay.

Sri Lanka is the world's largest tea exporter and an effective strike would cost the powerful tea companies some £7 million a week in lost revenue.

The low paid tea workers are fighting for a pay rise and guarantees on a minimum number of days work each month

France: Chirac's racist plans

FRANCE'S right-wing government plans to introduce even more savage racist laws.

A parliamentary commission of MP's headed by figures from president Jacques Chirac's RPR Tory party wants black, Arab and Eastern European people visiting France to be compulsorily fingerprinted.

The plan is supposed to combat "illegal immigration", but will simply mean a stepping up of the already harsh harassment of blacks and Arabs in France.

The plans also seeks to scrap the automatic right to French citizenship for people born in France and end medical help for those whose immigration status is deemed "illegal".

The move comes after the government has recently stepped up its attacks on black and Arabs, including using high profile charter flights deporting people and evicting refugees from a Paris church.

MAY DAY: Celebrating a century of workers' struggles

by GINO KENNY

FOR OVER a hundred years, demonstrations and rallies on 1 May have marked workers' organisations and solidarity.

May Day is the symbol of international workers' struggle right across the globe.

It was in America in 1886 that the first such demonstrations were organised in support of workers' demands for the eight hour day. 1886 was a "the year of the great uprising of labour".

An enormous strike wave struck America, and the number of strikes in that year tripled, with the character of the strikes changing radically.

Throughout the depression years of 1880s, strikes had been mostly over opposition to wage cuts. With the beginning of economic recovery, the strikes were fought over issues such as hours of work, hiring and firing.

Ever since the 1830s labour reform societies had pushed for the establishment of the eight hour day. As the American historian Norman Ware pointed out, what was "little more than a gesture... because of the changed conditions of 1886, became a revolutionary treat"

Support

The May Day strike movement got little support from workers' organisations at the beginning.

But waves of strikes, made many workers join organisations such as the Knights of Labour.

The great sentiment about this organisation was its idea of solidarity among all workers, whether black or white, skilled or unskilled, man or women.

Massive eight hour demonstrations were held throughout major industrial cities of Chicago, New York, Cincinnati and Baltimore.

Even before 1 May, a quarter of a million workers throughout the country, were involved in the eight hour movement. 30,000 already had been granted the demand.

By the second week in May, some 340,000 workers had participated, 190,000 of them by striking.

The strikes continued to spread through May so that by the end of the month 14,000 factories were on strike. Workers marched on factories still working to the demand the workers join them and very often with success.

So great was the treat to the

bosses that the full bloody might of the state militia was used to kill strikers into submission. It reached its height in Chicago, the centre for the movement.

The May Day movement in Chicago had already won concessions on their demands, but on the 3 May it was brought to a bloody end by the police, killing four strikes and rounding all the movements leaders up. They were eventually hanged, despite protests from workers' organisation and socialists around the world.

From the beginning, the movements cut across all national and racial lines. One commentator said of the movement in Virginia "harmony prevails between white and black workmen."

Marched

In Texas, blacks and Mexicans marched and ate together. The black leader of the local Knights, Manuel Lopez of the first Mexican American union branch, said of the solidarity he felt "This is the first time such a thing has happened in Texas"

Events in America sparked workers revolts across Europe, for the basic eight hour day, and as Frederick Engels said of the movement,

"European and American proletariat are mobilised as one army, under one flag, for one aim, the eight hour day"

In this country, people like Jim Larkin and James Connolly, held the real traditions of what May Day stood for. Workers' organisation in Ireland have celebrated and held the true meaning of May Day.

It's only since 1994 that May Day was a workers holiday in Ireland.

It was marked by the I.C.T.U with a carnival style march, with one cowboy Albert Reynolds leading the celebrations.

May Day deserves more than carnival style marches. The courage of workers struggles we have seen from Packard to Dunnes, has shown workers the path forward. From its origins in 1886 to the present day, workers across the world will celebrate and unite in common struggle.

LEBANON MASSACRE

Israel's state terrorism

In late April Israel launched a series of murderous attacks into its northern neighbour, Lebanon.

"Operation Grapes of Wrath" culminated in the a massacre of over 100 civilians sheltering in a United Nations camp in Qana.

This followed more than a week of relentless and indiscriminate attacks as Israeli aircraft, helicopters, ships and artillery blasted Lebanese towns, cities and villages.

The attacks included the blowing up of a clearly marked ambulance crammed with women and children.

In the days leading up to the attack on Qana, more than 400,000 people had lost their homes or were fleeing the terror.

Some of these had poured into the United Nations camp in Qana, defenceless civilians seeking shelter from the Israeli attacks.

Israel's apologists have claimed the bombing of the camp was a mistake. This is a lie:

* The UN headquarters, which has existed for 18 years, is clearly marked and visible from the air as a UN installation. It is marked on military maps.

* Israel's armed forces are among the best equipped in the world. They boast of being able to hit, win pin-point ac-

curacy, individual houses in Southern Lebanon with laser-guided weapons.

* Journalist Robert Fisk reports that Israeli shells continued to rain down on the Fijian UN camp after UN official had contacted the Israeli armed forces to tell them of the carnage.

Israel claims the attack was in response to Hizbollah rocket attacks on Northern Israel.

But the Hizbolla rockets, which had caused a number of injuries but no reported deaths in the days leading up to the massacre, were fired in response to

a mounting Israeli re-

southern Lebanon. Israeli prime minister says he wants Lebanon and its Syrian back Hizbollah.

In reality Peres want

History of Invasion

ISRAEL has repeatedly attacked Lebanon.

In 1978, Israeli tanks roared over the border in a bid to "crush terrorism". Ever since then Israel has occupied a "security zone" in southern Lebanon which Hizbolla is now fighting to liberate.

In 1982 Israel launched a full scale invasion of Lebanon, eventually laying siege to the capital, Beirut.

More than 20,000 were butchered, including 800 Palestinian women and children in Sabra and Chatila refugee camps.

They were slaughtered by Lebanese fascists under the eyes of Israeli commanders.

Israel again said the invasion was about "crushing terrorism". Its forces withdrew from most of Lebanon in 1984 but only after they had laid the country to waste.

As they withdrew, a bitter civil war for control

of the wreckage claimed thousands more. In 1993, with the civil war over, Israel once again, killing over 120 civilians and 300,000 to flee.

Demanding

Now the Israeli authorities are demanding the Lebanese government and its Syrian ally out Hizbollah terrorism".

Hizbollah only emerged after the 1982 invasion.

It has a mass following for its campaign to drive Israel out of the territory it occupies in Lebanon.

That is why even Lebanon's prime minister will be no peace until Israel withdraws its troops and the stooge South Lebanon Army the "security zone".

The attacks that led up to the assault

ISRAELI politicians justified the attacks on Lebanon by claiming that Hizbollah rockets wounded five civilians in the days running up to their assault.

Israeli officials forgot to mention that the Hizbollah rockets were fired after three Lebanese civilians were killed by the Israeli army and the South Lebanon Army -- an Israeli proxy.

Two young Lebanese men were killed a month earlier in the village of Yater in an attack for which Israel "apologised".

Then two weeks later a boy was killed by a bomb planted in the neighbouring

village of Bradchit, which local people believe was detonated by the Israelis.

Mortar

Among the Lebanese dead over the last three years are seven civilians killed by an Israeli tank at Nabatea, a five year old girl and a woman killed by an Israeli mortar battery killed in the village of Shaqra, two men killed by a helicopter gunship as they built a water tower in the village of Yater and two families of ten people killed when an Israeli jet fired a missile into their house near Zahrani.

At least 12 other civilians have been killed in southern Lebanon over the same period according to journalist Robert Fisk.

'They

IMMEDIATELY arrived of the small Lebanon community in Dublin organised a protest at the Dublin Moss Leinster House Israeli embassy.

One man with a phone eventually contacted his family in Lebanon, others round in the hope of news of the safe family and relatives.

Outside the Israeli embassy in London, English, a Lebanese family addressed the crowd. "The Israelis are fighting terrorism"

MASSACRE:



Rescue worker holds the body of a child killed in Israeli shelling of refugees in Qana

a mounting Israeli reign of terror in southern Lebanon.

Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres says he wants Lebanon's government and its Syrian backers to control Hizbollah.

In reality Peres wants to get re-elected

in next month's elections.

Israel goes to the polls on May 29 with the prime minister campaigning under the slogan: "Israel is strong with Peres". The onslaught on Lebanon is designed to outflank the far-right opposition Likud in anti-Arab hatred.

Even before the massacre at Qana, the Israeli attack had caused the biggest refugee crisis in the Middle East since the Iraqi Kurds fled Saddam Hussein after the 1991 Gulf War.

Then Western governments denounced the Israeli regime, imposed sanctions and rushed aid to those fleeing tyranny.

But until the Qana massacre, Western governments made no criticism of Israel's actions. Even now they only call it a ceasefire.

The US is Israel's biggest backer. Clinton has therefore not called Peres an international terrorist.

And behind the scenes Clinton has been encouraging an Israeli attack on Lebanon.

In the aftermath of the Hamas suicide bombs earlier in the year, a summit of world leaders gathered in Egypt which set up an "anti-terrorism coalition".

Clinton specifically invited Peres to include Hizbollah among the "enemies of peace" -- even though the Lebanese group was not involved in the suicide bombings which prompted the conference.

we think West's hypocrisy over Arab deaths

THE GOVERNMENTS of Israel and the West say they want peace in the Middle East.

Events in Lebanon over the last weeks have shown exactly what they mean.

The world leaders who condemn car bombs in Israeli towns and cities are muted when Israel launches its own terrorist attacks.

Western leaders say it is wrong to kill Israeli civilians.

But when Arab men, women and children are butchered it is a different matter.

Israel and its backers tell us they want peace but they really want total military and economic domination of the Middle East.

Israel has already imposed its will on Yasser Arafat's PLO with a deal which gives the Palestine Liberation Organisation control over just 30 per cent of the Israeli occupied territories.

The Palestinians are denied control over external security, foreign policy, borders, immigration, main roads, water or electricity.

Now Israel wants to use its military might to prise Lebanon out of Syrian control and impose an equally unjust settlement there.

Israel's attacks on Lebanon coincided with the signing of a joint military treaty with Turkey -- a clear threat to Syria.

Retaliation

Israel has proved once again it is prepared to unleash unspeakable destruction to impose its will.

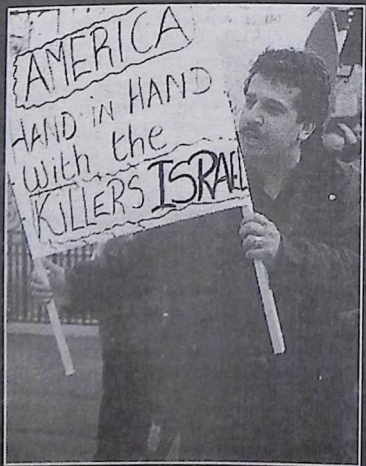
But every attack on an Arab neighbour, and every Palestinian resident of the occupied territories who is jailed, tortured or killed, only guarantees retaliation.

The Middle East will remain a disaster for both Arabs and Jews while Israel continues to dominate its Arab neighbours and to repress the Palestinians who live under its rule.

There will only be real peace in the region when Arabs and Jews live alongside each other in a democratic, non-religious Palestine.

The current peace process does not even start to provide this.

It simply entrenches the status quo and guarantees more wars, more bombs and more suffering.



"We are all against terrorism. But they are fighting and killing are the people of Lebanon. What terrorism did children killed in the ambulance commit?" Another Lebanese demonstrator said: "Years of war have destroyed the electricity in my country. The Irish ESB has a contract to restore power. And now the Israelis are destroying it again. Why? Because they don't have electricity in Israel? No because they want to destroy my country".

invasion

aimed thousands more lives. a civil war over, Israel invaded over 120 civilians and forcing

demanding

authorities are demanding the tent and its Syrian allies "root out terrorism". emerged after the 1982 Israeli

allowing for its campaign to drive territory it occupies in southern

Lebanon's prime minister says peace until Israel withdraws its force South Lebanon Army from

'They're killing my country'

IMMEDIATELY news arrived of the massacre, the small Lebanese community in Dublin organised a protest from the Dublin Mosque via the Leinster House to the Israeli embassy. One man with a mobile phone eventually contacted his family in Lebanon, others crowded round in the hope of news of the safety of family and relatives. Outside the Israeli embassy in broken English, a Lebanese man addressed the crowd: "The Israelis say they are fighting terrorism."

What do socialists say?

What is capitalism?

THE AIM of socialism is to abolish capitalism. But what do we mean by capitalism?

Capitalism is not a form of government or a political outlook, but a definite economic system.

Even if the Labour Party stood up for working class people or we had left-wing TDs in government, Ireland would still be capitalist.

When Marx analysed economic systems he used the term "mode of production" to emphasise that the most important characteristic of an economy is how production is organised and run.

Or to put it another way an economic system is defined by its "relations of production", the social relations people enter into in the process of production.

What then are the relations of production that define capitalism?

The major means of production are possessed by a small minority who produce in competition with one another.

But the majority of the population can gain access to the means of production only by selling their labour power.

In other words at the root of capitalism lies the relationship between capital and wage labour, boss and worker and from this arise all the main features of capitalism as a system.

The capitalists are locked in competition. If they don't compete successfully they go out of business.

So every capitalist firm is always striving to maximise its profits, so as to increase its investments, ex-

pand its operations and further increase its profits.

For the capitalist this is an endless cycle. There is no respite-compete to accumulate, accumulate in order to compete.

As a result capitalism, which began in western Europe, has expanded relentlessly till it has filled up the globe and created a world society ruled by the drive for profit.

At the same time, when one firm loses out, it or its market share is taken over by a more successful one.

Over time this leads to the concentration of capital in units that are larger in size, but fewer in number. The world economy is dominated by giant multinationals.

In the final analysis, however, profits can be increased only by increasing the surplus extracted from the labour of workers.

This means making workers work longer and harder, or for lower wages.

Capitalism therefore leads inevitably to growing inequality.

It means the accumulation of wealth at one pole of society and misery at the other-huge developments in productive capacity alongside the growth of unemployment, famine and starvation.

Capitalism is not the natural order of things. It has arisen historically only over the last 500 years or so-a relatively short period of human history.

Classes

Before that there was exploitation and oppression and society was divided into classes, but most production was for immediate consumption, not for sale or profit.

Most people had



CAPITALISM is not the natural order

some, limited, ownership of the means of production-peasants had small plots of land, artisans had their tools and workshops and so did not have to sell their labour power to an employer.

To turn these small producers into wage labourers the peasants had to be forced off the land by enclosures and artisans had to be squeezed out by competition.

Capitalism was anything but natural. It was created by human action and can be overthrown by human action.

Neither does nationalisation in itself abolish capitalism.

If the nationalised industries are run, as they have been, by capitalist managers and operate within a wider capitalist economy the laws of capitalism continue to apply.

They still have to compete and accumulate and they still have to exploit their workers.

This applies even if a whole national economy is state run. Russia, for example, was state capitalist, not socialist.

Only the working class by taking control of production, first in one country but ultimately internationally, will create socialism.

— JOHN MOLYNEUX

Interpreting the 1916 Rising:

Blood Sacrifice or revolution?

This year marks the eightieth anniversary of the Easter Rising. KIERAN ALLEN looks at some of the new myths being created which disguise the Rising's real significance

Writing in *The Observer*, Fintan O'Toole claimed that there was one highly significant fact about the 1916 Easter Rising: three of its leaders had been involved in the theatre!

This was produced as evidence to argue that the rebellion was a great pageant where a small number of fanatical poets and artists enacted their desires for a blood sacrifice.

Ever since the Northern conflict broke out, the rulers of Southern Ireland have encouraged a revisionist version of history. They wanted to hide the fact that their own state was born through violent revolution. What better way than to present the leaders of 1916 as fanatics and mystics who belonged to the past.

The revisionist campaign against the 1916 has been relentless. On the fiftieth anniversary of the rising, RTE was commissioned to show a major series *Insurrection*. It has never been repeated since. Instead the books of a series of revisionist historians from Ruth Dudley Edwards, FSL Lyons, John A Murphy have been pushed on the school and college curriculum to help create the new myth.

This interpretation of history has been opposed by the republicans. But they have never been able to argue against it effectively because they too see leaders of the 1916 rebellion as martyrs.

Republicans believe that in 1916 a small number of individuals set out to sacrifice their own lives in order to change history. This myth about 1916 is then used to justify the tactic of armed struggle.

Both myths start from the fact that the rising was unpopular and that people of Dublin came out to spit at its leaders after the rebellion failed. In reality, the reaction to the rising differed according to social class.

In Cork, the employers federation denounced the rising as a 'shameful outrage'. In Galway a 'committee of public safety' was formed from the leading businessmen of the town.

But among the working class there was far more support for the rising.

The Canadian journalist McKenzie who was in Dublin at the time claimed that "in the poorer quarters the sympathy was with the insurgents".

The reason was that the roots of the rebellion had far deeper social causes than the particular views of Padraigh Pearse.

The real blood sacrifice at the time lay in the carnage of the First World War. On the battlefields of the Somme, thousands of British and Irish soldiers were dying in pursuit of a few feet of ground. In one day alone, the British side, including Irish regiments such as the 36th Ulster Division, lost 20,000 men.

Initially support for the war had been high in Ireland and other European countries. The defeat of the 1913 strike meant there was considerable demoralisation in the working class and the Home Ruler leader John Redmond could boast that proportionately Ireland supplied more soldiers than any other part of the empire.

But disgust at war soon set in. And as



The Irish Citizens Army and (top) James Connolly

the Russian leader Lenin pointed out, the crisis in the world imperialist system created the conditions whereby the revolt of small nations would take place.

The key thing for socialists he argued was not to reject these revolts because of the 'prejudices and reactionary fantasies' of the middle class leaders. Instead socialists needed to anti-colonial movements as allies in their fight against capitalism.

Defending the 1916 rebellion, he wrote,

"To imagine that social revolution is conceivable without the revolt of small nations in the colonies and Europe, without revolutionary outburst of the petty bourgeois with all its prejudices... to imagine all this is to repudiate social revolution."

So one army lines up in one place and say "we are for socialism" and another, somewhere else says, "We are for imperialism" and that will be social revolution.

"Only those who hold such a ridiculous pedantic view could vilify the Irish rebellion by calling it a putsch."

The background of the First World War

played a major role in the Irish rebellion. Between November 1915 and January 1916, the British government debated introducing conscription to Ireland.

They only finally rejected the plan after a secret police report indicated that "a planned uprising in the event of conscription being introduced was perhaps the one project in which many Redmondites would be in agreement."

It was during the conscription crisis that the first practical plans for the rebellion were drawn up.

Ever since the start of the war, James Connolly had been campaigning for an uprising both to encourage a continent wide revolt against war and to prevent the partition of Ireland which he believed would produce a carnival of reaction.

His public campaign for a rising was directed principally at the republican forces. The defeat of 1913 had demoralised a significant section of left wing workers. The loose socialist parties that Connolly had helped to build did not share his hard line opposition to the war. Connolly's approach therefore was to

campaign for a rising would be led by republicans.

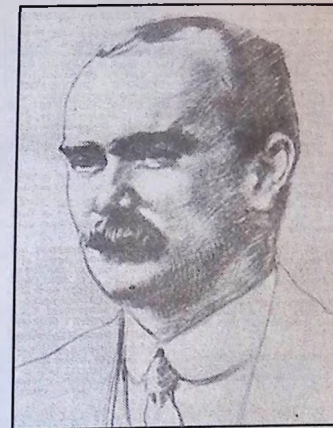
The conscription crisis of January saw both the IRB and Connolly come to an agreement on a joint strategy.

The original plans for the rising showed that it was a serious attempt to shake the British empire. 20,000 guns were to be landed by the *Aud*. It had been hoped to mobilise 16,000 Irish Volunteers.

On the side of the Empire, there were only 9,000 British soldiers stationed in Ireland and 9,500 members of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

Military plans for the rising were based on the belief that insurgents would take the neighbouring towns outside Dublin and make a tactical withdrawal from the city possible.

Two blow heavy blows were struck against this plan. The first was accidental and little could be done. The *Aud* was sighted by the British navy and had to be scuttled. But the second stemmed from the political weakness of republican methods.



The Irish Republican Brotherhood had always operated by conspiratorial methods whereby they sought to manipulate movements like the Irish Volunteers that were headed by respectable middle class allies like Eoin McNeill. Instead of fighting openly for rebellion, they believed that this movement could be bounced into action.

The strategy stemmed from the republican conviction in the need for alliances with constitutional nationalists. It meant that they could work with people like McNeill -- and not have to argue against their politics.

As on many occasions since, the republican fantasy about being 'able to use' these moderates was proved wrong. McNeill openly sabotaged the attempt at rising.

Leaders like Pearse and Connolly were then caught in cleft stick. If they called of the rising, they would still be tried and probably shot for treason in war time. If they went ahead, it would be with reduced forces, with the almost certain expectation of failure.

They choose the latter course and Connolly acknowledged that 'they were going out to be slaughtered'.

This was simply a realistic assessment of event and should not be taken to imply that he supported the idea of a blood sacrifice.

He had in fact previously denounced such talk, as that of a 'blithering idiot'.

The rising was a much less impressive affair than was originally planned. But still nearly 1,500 insurgents took part, including 150 from Connolly's citizen army. The ferocity of the British response showed just how terrified they were. They reduced the centre of Dublin to a rubble and were mainly responsible for the deaths of 318 civilians, including the pacifist Francis Sheehy Skeffington.

The rising was also composed of contradictory elements.

Connolly told his supporters to "hold onto your rifles as those with whom we are fighting may stop before our goal is reached. We are for economic as well as political liberty."

It would have been better if he had issued a separate socialist proclamation and had tried to mobilise sections of the ITGWU in its support.

The failure to do this made it easier for Griffith and de Valera to smother his ideas and set up the 'gombeen' state that became the 26 counties.

Nevertheless, socialists should defend the idea of the rising as a blow against imperialism. This does not mean ignoring the fact that it was, as Lenin argued, 'premature'.

Conditions had not fully ripened for a mass revolt at that time. The tragedy was that the rising occurred between after the defeat of workers in 1913 and before the great upsurge of working class struggle from 1918 onwards.

But for all that the leaders of 1916 stand head and shoulders over the puny revisionists today who want to stay quiet when capitalism starts to bang the drums of war.

Inspiring memoir of a fighter



Peter O'Connor's book *Soldier of Liberty* is a great read. In the earlier part of the book Peter recalls his childhood in Waterford. He joined Fianna Eireann when he was ten and at 17 was transferred to the IRA.

The 1930's are recalled as "tough but exciting times". The unemployed were angry and restless and there were many boisterous marches. They carried the slogans "Work or Maintenance" "Bread, work or blood".

During his years as a member of the IRA, O'Connor felt "Republicanism was lacking something." When he encountered the Revolutionary Workers Groups, he realised he had "found what he was looking for."

O'Connor recalls the clerical reaction which existed in Waterford at the time. A left wing teacher, Frank Edwards, who taught at the Mount Sion CBS were sacked. The power of the Bishops was so strong that they even hounded his mother, a devout Catholic from her job as public health nurse and refused her communion at the altar rails.

O'Connor set up a Workers Study Club, in the city. Groups of workers would meet to study the works of Connolly, Marx and Lenin.

Practical

These were no abstract study groups. Their politics were linked to practical work such as supporting strikes. In 1934 a militant building workers strike led to street fighting with scabs and Peter's brother and his father played an active role.

He was in Bodenstown in 1934 when Protestant workers from the Shankill, carrying a banner "Break the connection with capitalism" were stopped from laying a wreath on the grave of Wolfe Tone by a section of the IRA.

"I was furious," he says "and regretted not being near enough to defend their right to lay the wreath".

Like many of his generation O'Connor knew the emigrant ship. Arriving in London in 1934 he and other Waterford comrades joined the British Communist party.

He recalls being involved also in the fight against the rise of Fascism. He was on all the big anti-fascist demos of the time, including resisting Mosley's march through the East End.

On hearing of the Franco rebellion O'Connor volunteered to fight with the International Brigades. On arriving in Spain from over the Pyrenees his group broke into The Internationale.

Battles

The book recalls the various battles and experiences of O'Connor and his comrades in the fight against France and Fascism. It underlies the commitment and bravery of a gallant band of anti-fascists who were never to return home.

The one disappointing aspect of this short memoir is that there is no real political evaluation or summing up of a life in socialist politics, or any analysis of how and why Franco won in Spain.

Since the demise of Stalinism in 1989, I have heard Peter acknowledge that "there were problems" with the political tradition to which he belonged. But there is no reference to what these problems were in this book.

As a socialist growing up in Waterford in the 80's, I and many others were inspired by the work of Peter O'Connor and his comrades. There is no doubt that the bravery and commitment of Peter O'Connor will continue to inspire new generations of socialists.

Despite the criticisms I made, any socialist would be proud to have the book on their shelf and at only £2.00 it's a steal. Grab it while you can, and will be a collectors item by the summer.

A soldier of Liberty - recollections of a socialist and anti fascist fighter - By Peter O'Connor. price £2 published by MSF 15 Merrion Square. Dublin 2.

-Johnny Cluno

film:

When the state kills

'Dead Man Walking' are the ominous words shouted by the Prison Guards as they bring the Prisoner on Death Row to the Death Chamber.

By the time these words are shouted in the film of the same name any doubts about whether the death penalty is a justifiable punishment are completely banished.

The final words of Sean Penn who plays Matthew Poncelet before he dies explain the attitude the film director, Tim Robbins takes with regard to the death sentence "All killing, whether illegal or legal is wrong".

Case

The other protagonist in the film is a nun Sr Helen Prejean, played by Susan Sarandon. She becomes interested in the case because Matthew Poncelet basically makes a last minute plea for help and she answers this call.

The film tries to portray the worst scenario case - a man who has carried out the most horrendous crimes. It portrays the victims' relatives in the aftermath of the crime and in a series of flashbacks right to the end never lets up on the terrible crime that was committed.

The message of the film is that Matthew Poncelet is guilty of the worst crimes imaginable but he still doesn't deserve to die. The death penalty is wrong.

The prisoner in the film is a



Dead Man Walking is a film based on a true story of one of the 3,000 prisoners on Death Row in the US

poor white man. This is an important point. There are no rich people on Death Row in the States.

However the film doesn't touch on a very important issue with regard to the death penalty. Most people on Death Row are poor black men. In a country where only 12% of the population are black almost 40% of prisoners on Death Row are black.

This is not because black people commit more crimes than white people.

Racism

It reflects the racism which pervades the whole of American society including the justice system. A black man is more likely to spend time in prison than he is to go to college.

My one criticism of the film is

that it does not even touch on this issue. Robbins in his attempt to appeal to middle America and appear "reasonable" does not hit

hard enough at a system which fails most black and white people and sees a solution in the barbarity of the Death Penalty.

SUPPORT BRIAN ROBERSON

Brian Roberson is a black prisoner on Death Row in Texas at the moment. He is also innocent of the crime he is accused of. Unlike OJ Simpson or many other rich people white or black he was unable to afford a hot shot legal team.

His mother has sold her house to pay his legal bills. Although he is only 31 years of age, he has been on death row for nine years.

Brian's own father was murdered in 1974 and murderer was got a 13 year sentence but was released after 3 years. The murderer just happened to be white.

There is an appeal fund set up in Ireland if you wish to help with Brian Roberson's Defence fund. You can send donations to: "Brian Roberson Defence Fund", Bank of Ireland, Walkinstown, Dublin 12, Code: 900287, A/C No: 70695063

book:

The woman who walked into doors

Roddy Doyle was one of the first Irish writers to move beyond the established fiction landscape of Catholicism, countryside, first love and family to focus on the vast swathes of urban Dublin, thrown up by industrialisation and the corporation's housing policy.

In Doyle's books working class people formed more than the episodic appearances usually granted them in Irish literature.

Instead they constituted the heart and the voices of his popular Barrystown trilogy and of the Booker prize winning "Paddy Clarke Ha-Ha-Ha".

Roddy Doyle has said "I wrote *The Commitments* because there are probably a million people living in the suburbs in Dublin who did not exist in a TV context or literature... I believe in an equality of people..."

Yet some readers found it difficult to believe in Doyle's characters. His work was sometimes seen as simplistic, as a caricature of working class life, all easy hu-

mour and raw cheerfulness - a cartoon strip land of rides, rows, and giggles.

His latest book *The Woman who walked into Doors* is, however, a distinct departure from the earlier work. Whereas before the laughs were ten a penny, here they're few and very far between.

Paula Spencer is the the woman who is walked into doors (and floors and walls and lighted fags and fists) by her husband Charlo, two characters who first appeared in Doyle's hard hitting TV series *Family*.

Paula's story is the voice and mind of the book and her memories its story. It is a life of deprivation, despair and brutality told by "a thirty nine year old widow woman

with a hollow leg, a wreck of a woman with gaps where her teeth should be and a hole where her heart should be."

She is a survivor and a courageous one, having endured close to twenty years of relentless and brutal attacks from her husband. She still endures the daily grind of a cleaning job and a tortuous dependency on alcohol.

Piecing together the remaining bits of her past, Paula discovers "... That I was poor, that I'd no right to hope I'd hope I'd started out with. I was going nowhere, straight there.... watching my children going nowhere with me".

This is perhaps the book's flaw, a consistent and harsh denial of hope. Its a depressing read but as a graphic portrait of social and martial breakdown, it's also a compelling and challenging one.

—SIMON BASKETTER
Roddy Doyle "The woman who walked into doors" Jonathan Cape £14.99

The Crossroads Conference

The place of Irish music today was hotly contested at the recent crossroads conference in Temple Bar. While people like Michael O Suilleabhain of RTE's River of Sound talked about musical innovation, they were bitterly attacked by the "purists" of the old school, who clung to the nostrums of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann about the sacredness of past traditions and how outrageous it was to tamper with them.

Tony MacMahon, a producer of programmes on traditional music in RTE, launched a blistering attack on O Suilleabhain, which went on for more than an hour.

The 1950s composer Sean O Riada once said that a Ceili band had all the musicality of "a bluebottle buzzing in an upturned jamjar". Tony MacMahon created much the same impression. The only relief from his rantings came when he had extracts played from River of Sound, just to show how bad they were. Except that for many in the audience, they weren't half bad at all and were in fact quite enjoyable.

Much of MacMahon's, and the traditionalists general argument revolves around the idea that Irish Music is part of our unchanging national culture, handed down since the time of St. Patrick or thereabouts. It is something that we should seek with trepidation in the glens and valleys of the "hidden Ireland" (location unknown but suspected to lie somewhere between Michelstown Creamery and Kinsale harbour)

We should approach the music in much the same way that archaeologists approach the corpses of ancient mummies in the Egyptian desert, with great care and attention before carting them off to museums and displaying them for visitors under signs exhorting us, the ignorant and uninitiated, not to touch the exhibits.

The purists would like us to please not touch the music. The popular success of artists like Sharon Shannon, who has used reggae and other rhythms in her music, and the whole Riverdance phenomenon, which blatantly introduces changes to the old style of dancing, are an affront to the purists not least because American, black, reggae and even jazz rhythms are mixed with Irish. As one purist thundered "jazz cannot be mixed with Irish music because it is the music of black Africa."

These people take their spiritual guidance from the "back to the 1950s" lobby in Irish society, seeing the mongrelization of our musical traditions as the thin end of the wedge, where Irish people begin to challenge all of the pseudo-traditional values that have been foisted on them since the time of DeValera. Three cheers for Sharon Shannon.

—CATHERINE CURRAN



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—

"No choice but to be militant"

FIVE HUNDRED sacked dockers in Liverpool port continue to fight for their jobs. GERRY QUIGLEY is a Derry docker who attended the recent International Dockers' conference in Liverpool.

Here, he speaks to *Socialist Worker* about the conference, the dispute and its lessons for workers here. He started by telling us about the day SWP members in Derry brought one of the sacked dockers to the Derry docks.

GQ: I was unaware of a dispute in Liverpool until Nov, 1995 when I was sent for at work and told there were people waiting to see me at the gates. When I went out it was Freddy Roberts, a docker from Liverpool. Freddy told me how 80 men who had been sacked in one part of the docks had put up a picket line. The other 400 dockers refused to cross, as any trade unionist would, and they were all sacked. That happened on 29th Sept, 1995.

Freddy invited me to the International Dockworkers Conference in Liverpool, myself and a workmate attended as a show of solidarity with the dockworkers in Liverpool. The only other Irish dockers there were from Drogheda. We were subsequently told that dockers in other ports hadn't had their invites passed onto them by the union. None of the Irish dockers were there as official delegations, but as rank and file workers.

Jack Hayman of the International Longshoreman's Union was there from San Francisco. He represented 35,000 dock workers from Alaska to Honolulu. But right away, we were given the same welcome and respect as him. There were delegates from Canada, Aus-

tralia, New Zealand, every part of Europe.

SW: Why was the conference organised?

GQ: The Liverpool dockers had known from an early stage in the dispute that the casualisation of the docks in Britain and the Tory anti-union laws would mean that other ports would be able to give them very little support. They knew the only way they could hit the employers was to internationalise the dispute.

Initially, they sent fares and letters to Australia and elsewhere. They physically sent people to Australia, the US and elsewhere to look for solidarity. They got a good response and boats from Liverpool are being blacked all over the world.

SW: What came out of the conference?

GQ: What came out of it was that the employers are organised on a global scale. What they're trying to impose everywhere is the same—they're trying to get more work out of us for less pay. The employers are obviously well organised and they don't recognise any borders. So we have to do the same.

The only difference between a docker in Germany and a docker in Derry is the language. The same with the employers. The employer is an



employer no matter where he/she is and a worker is a worker no matter where he/she is. And everyone grasped that right away.

All the dockers got to talk and say, this is what the employers are trying here and this is what they're trying there.

I spoke about the dispute we had in Derry, which was a carbon copy of the dispute in Liverpool. Afterwards the two dockers from Drogheda said to us "they're always ramming Derry down our throats, you know, everything in Derry is just great". Well, now they know different. This was the first International Conference since 1947 but we agreed we'll have one every year or at least bi-annually.

SW: What struck you most at the conference and what lessons did you take away?

GQ: I was struck by the solidarity and camaraderie between the men, although some of them hadn't known each other before the dispute started.

But the dispute was bonding them together, you could see that. They knew they were working class and they're proud of that. They had a confidence about them, they know who they were because of this dispute.

I don't know anyone who wants to be militant just for the sake of it. It's because you've been put in a position where you have no choice but to be militant. People just want to go to their work and earn a weekly wage to support their family. No one wages up in the morning and says "I think I'll take on a tiny employer and see who comes off worse".

But the dockers in Liverpool were given no choice; when you look at these men, they've lost their jobs, they've lost I don't know how much in wages. But they've shown the time comes when you have to stand up and say "I'm not having it any more. If you're going to sack him, sack me, but I'm not prepared to work for the conditions and terms you're offering."

The main lesson for working class people is if you stand up and show a bit of backbone, it's not too late. I was talking to men who were 56 years old and were offered 49,000 to walk away from their jobs but they were saying no. They won't sell either their jobs or their principles, they won't cross a picket line.

Donations and messages of support to: Liverpool Port Shop Stewards Committee, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS

Derry May Day Celebration in support of Liverpool Dockers
Friday 3rd May,
Playhouse, Artillery st, 8.00pm
£3/£2: All proceeds to Liverpool Dockers

SWP branch meetings—all welcome

BELFAST

Meets every Wednesday at 8pm Penny Farthing Bar Central Belfast 1st May: The British General Strike of 1926; 9th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

CORK

Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Dennehy's Pub, Cornmarket St. 2nd May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly; 9th May: The British General Strike of 1926.

DERRY

Meets every Tuesday in Badgers Bar at 8pm 31st April: The British General Strike of 1926; 7th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

BRAY

Meets every Monday at 8.30pm in Mayfair Hotel. Wednesday 1st

May—Dublin May Day Rally—see below for details (note change of venue/date/time); 6th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

DUBLIN NORTH-WEST

Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in The Old Brogue, Dorset St. Wednesday 1st May—Dublin May Day Rally—see below for details (note change of venue/date/time); 7th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLLOCK

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in the Artane/Beaumont Family Recreation Centre, Kilmore Rd. Wednesday 1st May—Dublin May Day Rally—see

below for details (note change of venue/date/time); 9th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

DUBLIN DRIMNAGH

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Bentley Pub, Drimnagh Road. Wednesday 1st May—Dublin May Day Rally—see below for details (note change of venue/date/time); 7th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

DUBLIN NTH CENTRAL

Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in Conways, Parnell St. Wednesday 1st May—Dublin May Day Rally—see below for details (note change of venue/date/time); 8th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

DUBLIN RATHMINES

Meets every Wednesday at 8pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond Street. Wednesday 1st May—Dublin May Day Rally—see below for details (note change of venue/date/time); 8th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

DUBLIN STH CENTRAL

Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St. Wednesday 1st May—Dublin May Day Rally—see below for details (note change of venue/date/time); 9th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

DUBLIN TALLAGHT/CLONDALKIN

Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm, Clondalkin Sports & Leisure centre, Wednesday 1st May—Dublin May Day Rally—see below for details (note change of venue/date/time); 8th May: The Revolutionary politics

of James Connolly

DUN LAOGHAIRE
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Smyths Pub. 2nd April: Wednesday 1st May—Dublin May Day Rally—see below for details (note change of venue/date/time); 7th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

GALWAY

Meets every Thursday at 7.30pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square. 2nd May: Israel; US bootboys in the Middle East; 9th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly

MAYNOOTH

Meets every Thursday at 6pm in Class Hall D, Arts Block, Maynooth College.

WATERFORD

Meets every Thursday at 8pm in ATGWU Hall, Keyser St. 2nd May: May Day Public Meeting: Why we need an alternative to the Labour Party; 9th May: The Revolutionary politics of James Connolly.

★ 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

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Name

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May Day Rally

Why we need a revolution in Ireland

Speakers:
Eamonn McCann and Richard Boyd Barrett

Wednesday 1st May 8pm
ATGWU Hall
Middle Abbey St.
Dublin

Bookstall opens 7pm

May Day Rally

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

Nurses: Anger grows at the deal

Psychiatric nurse take action last year



ANGER IS growing amongst nurses at the pay deal that their union leaders are trying to foist on them.

At meetings around the country union officials have got a roasting for trying to recommend a #1,000 pay cut for young nurses.

"When the meeting was held in our hospital, there was just moral outrage. You had senior nurses denouncing the union leaders for daring to cut the wages of the lowest paid. They have completely misjudged the situation."

In one hospital nurses noticed that there was no lock on the ballot box. It was a level of their mistrust at the union leaders that considerable ques-

tions were asked.

One union—the PNA—has come out against the deal and is recommending a NO vote.

Campaign

Student nurses are also up in arms at the deal. Union leaders have not informed them properly that they have a right to vote. But a campaign is now under way in Dublin to encourage them to get out and vote no.

Alongside the anger at the pay cut, nurses are also rejecting the deal because:

ibility will lead to a loss of bonuses for Sunday working.

* it gives management the right to bring in appraisal schemes which increase stress.

* the pay scale for nurses has also been lengthened.

All the signs are that the deal will not be thrown out. It is vital then that nurses start to build up their organisation at rank and file level. There should be proper shop steward committees in job that seek to represent the members rather than just

The officials have to be told that they are there to serve—not dictate to the members.

PACKARD ELECTRIC: Laid off workers mount protests

Workers at Packard Electric in Tallaght reacted angrily to the company's refusal to honour an agreement in April.

Last summer workers at the plant reluctantly accepted a deal that involved lay-offs and longer hours.

The deal was only accepted as it was understood that if the 400 workers laid-off were not taken back by April this year they would be given a redundancy deal of five weeks for every year's service.

However the company has told it workers that it will require redundancies but it refuses to say how many and it has still not said how many of those laid off



Laid-off Packard workers protest last year would be taken back.

Supported

Laid off workers mounted a protest outside the factory from 12 until 2.00pm in April. 150 or more workers turned up and were in angry mood.

They were supported by

workers from inside the plant during their lunch break.

The workers had planned to protest outside Leinster House the following day but union leaders called off this protest.

They planned to protest outside Opel cars—another subsidiary of GM—the following week.

In the face of rumours that the plant it to be closed, Socialist Workers Party members in Packard circulated a leaflet in the factory calling for action.

One laid off worker told *Socialist Worker*, "There is no point waiting. We should hit the company with a picket to force a response."

Many of those still at work would support such action. One worker told *Socialist Worker*: "All the workers should stick together. We've given way to much. This might be our last chance to stand and fight."

"I'm disgusted at the way the union leaders are not leading a fight—the workers in GM in the States showed how it could be done!"

CIVIL SERVICE: Overtime ban puts wind up Quinn

AN OVERTIME ban by CPSU members is already forcing Ruairi Quinn to retreat from his hard line position on an embargo on civil service jobs.

As action in the Department of Education began to bite, Quinn suddenly announced in a radio inter-

view that the embargo would be gone by the end of the year. He then entered talks with

the union and intimated that the whole scheme could be replaced if

The overtime ban has had great support amongst CPSU members. At present many clerical assistants are coming out of work with just over #100 to pay rent, buy food and travel to work. Most workers with families have to receive Family Income Support.

The one outlet these low paid workers had was the prospect of promotion. Clerical Officers would hope to move up a grade and earn an extra #3,000 to #4,000 a year after some time at Staff Officers.

But Quinn's embargo destroyed all these hopes. He announced that only one in three positions would be filled.

"We had an embargo in the mid 1980s and it became clear that the only posts being filled were those of Principal Officers. Those on the bottom of the scale knew it would be the same this time. That is why they were so willing to take action."

Sacrifice

The action has been fairly effective because the civil service depends so much on overtime. Even though rates are often low—with time and a quarter for the e first three hours—most staff will take it because they need the money.

"We would far prefer to have a decent wage than systematic overtime. It was a big sacrifice for some of our low paid members to have to forgo it for the action."

But they felt very strongly about what was happening.

Unfortunately, the CPSU has not been joined the other unions in their action.

The PSEU which organises higher grades is run by a very right wing leadership whose strategy is to gain a cosy relationship with the government. The IMPACT union have voted o

Nevertheless, the CPSU organises thousands of members itself and the action has put the wind up Quinn.

There are however dangers ahead. Quinn will want to cap civil service numbers and will seek unpaid productivity for the extra work required when the government bring in new schemes.

The union needs to stand ready to escalate if the embargo is not removed.

Strike goes on at Airmotive

CRAFT WORKERS at Airmotive continued their strike as *Socialist Worker* went to press.

Over 80 workers are demanding pay increases for the "approvals" status of the plant.

The workers, members of TEEU, AEEU and SIPTU, have widespread support among the rest of the 430 workers in the company.

The Labour Court has refused to support the workers' claim and this has encouraged the management to take a tough line. It has refused to entertain the claim and threatened to lay off the rest of the workforce but has yet to act on this threat.

The company hoping to hold out until the workers have been worn down enough to accept a lousy deal.

The strikers need to spread the action in order to keep the initiative. They should be organising solidarity among other workers of the Aer Lingus group including TEAM workers.

They also need to organise pro-active support in the plant in order to hit the company hard.

PILOT'S ROW PICKET

Five workers at the Pilot's Row community centre in the Bogside have been sacked by the Western Education and Library Board (WELB) in a case which has serious implications for community and public sector workers throughout the North.

The five, have taken unfair dismissal cases and are maintaining a strong protest picket at the centre each day. The Board justifies the sackings on the basis that the workers had smoked cannabis at a weekend in An Teach Ban in Downings, Co. Donegal.

An Teach Ban is a large house used by community groups from the North for all kinds of residential outings.

While the centre is the brainchild of the Pilot's Row workers, it has no financial or organisational links with the centre or with the WFLB which employs the workers. Of the 13 people present that weekend, four say they saw five others smoking cannabis.

The five have angrily denied this and suggest the allegation is rooted in misunderstanding and factional resentment.

The four others present have supported the account given by the five accused and denied the allegation of the four accusers.

The WELB jumped at the chance to sack the five accused workers.

Many people in the Bogside think their eagerness had a lot to do with the open way in which the centre was run by the five.

It was unusual among community centres in that it was open to being used in whatever way the local community needed.

Events commemorating Bloody Sunday and the Battle of the Bogside were held there each year, much to the annoyance of Board management. In spite of the clear political agenda in the sackings, Sinn Fein representatives have been notably absent from the picket line.

But the implications of the sackings go beyond the Bogside.

As a Derry Trades Council statement said: "Even if the allegation did have any truth in it, the Board was going far beyond its authority in presuming to take disciplinary action - much less impose sackings."

"The allegation was that these five people smoked cannabis...on private premises, in their own free time, in an all-adult company and in another jurisdiction."

"The implications of this for teachers, social workers, nurses, community workers etc. are obvious - and extremely disturbing."

ESB: One third of workers vote against deal

UNION leaders are co-operated closely with management in the ESB to hide the real level of opposition that exists against the plans for 2,000 redundancies.

On RTE news bulletins and in the newspapers it was reported that 96% of

workers had voted to accept the deal. Listeners and readers were left with the impression that this figure represented the number Yes votes overall.

In fact, it simply indicated that most of the different category grades had accepted the deal. The union leaders and management are still refusing to reveal the overall size of the YES and NO.

Despite that, *Socialist Worker* has learnt that:

* approximately 3,000 ESB workers voted NO to the deal. This represents over a third of the staff.

* Amongst the day worker category the vote for acceptance was only 53% to 47%. This was despite the fact that the 20 ATGWU negotiators recommended acceptance.

* In the instrumentation section, one single vote swung the margin for acceptance.

Where was high levels of support for the deal, it was because management had to give considerable concessions.

Promise

In the fitters section, for example, an old contract agreement dating from 1981 was 'bought out' with a promise that fitters would get an hourly bonus for each outside contract worker employed.

The vote for acceptance followed extraordinarily carefully prepared plan by the union leaders and management. Few things were left to chance.

Most of the voting occurred over the Easter holiday period. A barrage of propaganda was sent to the workplaces beforehand and then many voted on the exact terms individually without much workplace discussion.

The main architect of this whole arrangement of Peter Cassells, the General Secretary of the ICTU. Recent press reports have indicated that he may be interested in getting a 'major job' in Europe.

When account is taken of the fact that the fact that up to 2,000 workers may have regarded themselves as applicants for the voluntary redundancy package, it shows that there will be considerable anger amongst remaining staff.

ESB workers should now give full backing to workers in the power station and the drivers who voted No over concerns at manning levels. It was originally stated that all categories would have to accept the deal for it to go through.

The management should not be allowed intimidate those who voted NO into changing their mind.

UCG strike threat

ADMINISTRATION Staff at University College Galway threatened strike action over an unpaid 3% wage increase partly backdating to April '94.

The dispute has been going on for 7 months but any strike action has been delayed pending the outcome of Labour court recommendations.

This offers no satisfactory resolution and the 156 union members were forced to reject the Labour court recommendation.

Staff approached management demanding a betted deal from management on threat of strike action.

At the last minute management came up with an offer (to pay the PCW one percent) and negotiate over the other 20% but certain conditions were attached to this including the suspension of the job evaluation scheme and other specific points that would effect individual members (detrimentally).

SIPTU members decided to ballot on this offer Wens and Thurs this week.

SIPTU recruited some of the 20 - 30 non union members involved and the feeling is that the non - union members would abide by any actions taken (they wouldnt break the line)

Socialist Worker

inside:

**The Lebanon massacre—
Israel's state terrorism—centre pages**

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

AS BIGOTS TRY TO WHIP UP SECTARIANISM

Unite to defend our health and social services

WITH HEALTH and social services under threat of the worst cuts yet, the need for unity between Protestant and Catholic workers is greater than ever before.

The three per cent cut in spending imposed by the Tories has even top NHS management saying this is a cut too far.

Everyone knows services have already been cut to the bone.

Wards have been closed and patients rushed home while they still need nursing care.

Now, managers are saying that some operations—including removing tonsils, gall bladders and similar routine procedures won't be available on the health service.

Social services have already been cut but more is on the way.

Older people have had home helps for as little as half an hour a day, now they may be left with no home help at all.

All health and social services in Northern Ireland are now operating as Trusts.

More money is going on managers

and accountants than on nursing and other social care workers.

Between 1989 when Trusts were first introduced to Britain and 1992, the number of nursing jobs fell by 5,850.

Undermine

At the same time, the number of senior managers in hospitals rose by 262 percent from 4,610 to 15,590.

The "suits" hope to use Trust status

to help cut costs and undermine union representation.

Already some trusts in the Eastern Board area are attempting to get workers to sign individual contracts of employment — often with worse conditions — without reference to their union officials.

The health unions have put in a united claim for a 6.5 percent pay rise for NHS staff.

Linked But they've been told there

will be no pay rise for health workers this year.

Management have linked the cuts to the pay claim.

Oppose

Health workers need to remember that link and fight AGAINST the cuts and FOR better wages.

So far, the trade unions have relied on community campaigns to oppose

the cuts.

But these campaigns are helpful only in so far as they give NHS workers the confidence to fight back and strike to defend their jobs and our services.

Experience in England shows strikes can work.

When nurses and porters in University College Hospital in London went on strike and occupied an empty ward in their hospital, they managed to save a number of other wards from closure.

OPPOSE TRIMBLE'S SECTARIANISM

A GOOD, militant campaign in defence of health and social services would have another important effect: it would help bring Catholic and Protestant workers together at a time when the elections to the new forum threaten to divide us further.

The bigots are determined to ensure that we all retreat into our separate sectarian camps — all the better to help them do well in the elections.

Privatise

Straight from voting with the Tories to privatise Northern Ireland Railways, David Trimble was first to kick off the election campaign.

He announced he would be back at

Drumcree this year, ready to defend the right of Orange bigots to coat-trail through Catholic working class areas.

Workers of all religions and none know that sectarianism weakens our ability to fight the cuts AND brings the possibility of a return to all-out violence closer.

We mustn't let the bigots divide us. Instead we must unite to defend our health and social services.