

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

## Inside:

**Why is the North on the brink again?**  
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**What are they doing to our food?**  
—CENTRE PAGES

■ **LOSS OF 800 JOBS**  
■ **HUGE CUTS IN EARNINGS**

# SUPPORT THE C.I.E. WORKERS

## ORGANISE FOR A NATIONAL TRANSPORT STRIKE

**THE CIE management are out to break the unions. They have issued an ultimatum demanding huge cuts—and are not even prepared to talk to the unions.**

The cuts will destroy the lives of thousands of working people. 800 public sector jobs will go at a time when the dole queues are still too long.

The earnings of CIE workers will be slashed as overtime earnings and shift pay allowances are cut.

According to one CIE worker, "It will mean that many workers will just not be able to pay their mortgages. I can see CIE workers having to give up their houses if these cuts go ahead".

### Slogan

But CIE workers are not taking this lying down.

They have voted overwhelmingly for strike action.

The slogan 'An Injury one is an injury to all' is being taken to heart.

As soon as the attacks start

in Bus Eireann, other workers are ready to take action.

CIE workers should also look at what is happening in France. Here the same sort miserable attacks on workers are happening. But people are not taking it lying down.

Here is how the *Irish Times* described the mood in the country.

"In the present strained climate, French workers are resorting more and more readily—some would say too readily—to strike action.

"When a passenger in a Mar-

seilles bus refused to put out his cigarette bus drivers went on strike in the northern part of the city"

### Action

Last Thursday a million workers came out on strike. The main core of the strikers came from the transport workers.

They learned that massive national action got results at the end of last year when the country closed down.

They know that it is better to repeat the medicine for the poli-

icians who always think that workers should make sacrifices while the rich get super profits.

A national transport strike in Ireland would also terrify this government.

It would force them to get their rotweiler, Michael Lowry, to back off. It would show where the real power in this country lies. This is why we should for it.

■ **TURN TO PAGE ELEVEN**

# Hepatitis C victim was 'hounded by the state'

**THE SCANDAL** surrounding Hepatitis C goes to the heart of how the state operates in the interests of the few and against the well-being of the many.

1,600 women and men have been infected with Hepatitis C through contaminated blood products over the past three decades.

## Painful

Hepatitis C is a disease which can and has

killed—Donegal woman Bridget McCole's painful death recently being the most public case.

Bridget McCole was given the disease by a state agency, the Blood Transfusion Services Board (BTSB), and was hounded by the state until she died. The scandal centres on

the belief that successive heads of the BTSB and various ministers for health must have known that in giving women and men Anti-D blood products over the years, there was a strong possibility that the products were unsafe and potentially lethal.

## Unsafe

It's as far back as 1977 that the contamination first

became known.

Now a woman who believes she was infected in 1977 says she gave blood donations until late 1993—even though the BTSB had tested her for Hepatitis C since 1991.

## Announced

The state has lied consistently on the matter—in court the state's defence

team even prepared to deny the BTSB manufactured or supplied Anti-D!

And various heads of the BTSB have recently been given massive golden handshakes on retirement—with no questions being asked about how much they knew of the contamination.

Minister for Health Michael Noonan has now announced a judicial inquiry into the scandal.

But whatever judge presides over it, the full truth may never come out.

The state is running scared.

## Angry

They know they have a lot to hide and so much to lose. And people are rightly very angry that our health service and blood transfusions have been used, literally, to kill people.

**Ex-minister's  
£3 million  
pension  
scoop**

**FORMER Taoisigh** are getting annual pensions of up to three and four times what many people still at work get paid.

Ex-Taoisigh who received huge sums last year were Albert Reynolds who got £41,230, Charles Haughey, £37,105, Garret Fitzgerald, £34,013, Jack Lynch, £27,829 and Liam Cosgrave, £27,829.

The payout also included ministerial pensions for people who are still TDs.

Fianna Fail leader Bertie Ahern received £27,204 last year, while Des O'Malley and Gerry Collins got £19,105 each. Collins is still double jobbing as a TD and MEP.

These TDs still benefit from the old scheme that was abolished in January 1993.

The new scheme means ex-ministers still in the Dáil or Seanad only get their ministerial entitlements at age 55.

Labour's leading lights are also being looked after. Last year Dick Spring received a pension of £942 while Ruairi Quinn—who is urging pay restraint on low paid civil servants—got a nice top-up of £712.

According to Frank Kilfeather in the *Irish Times* (12th October), Spring and Quinn "would be examples of TDs who decided that remaining in the old scheme was more to their long-term advantage".

# Hacienda crook fined £25,000

**A MAN** who owns two mansions was recently convicted of dealing in illegal drugs which could have affected the health of thousands of people.

But he got away with a £25,000 fine.

Law and order politicians are keeping quiet about this one because the man is a beef baron and the drugs were illegal growth promoters.

The convicted man is Frank Mallon, one of the biggest cattle breeders in the country. He owns Lifford Meats in Ballyjamesduff, Ire-

land's 'most efficient' meat factory.

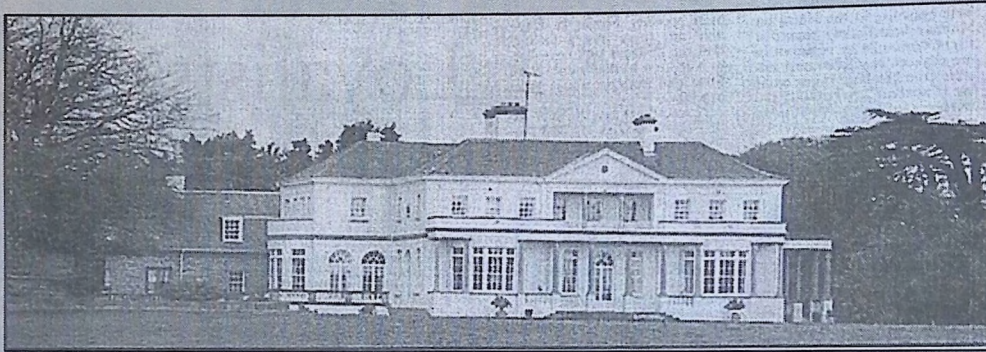
He was found guilty of using illegal growth hormones to increase the value of his cattle from 10p to 25p per pound.

Mallon lives at Balrath House, a hacienda-style residence near Kells where he has a 500 acre farm.

## Weekends

He also owns an £800,000 house in Stephen's Green in Dublin which he uses at weekends.

When Department of Agriculture inspectors visited Mallon's farm at



■ Mallon's hacienda at Kells

Kells in May 1993 they found a 'cocktail' of growth hormones.

Mallon did not comply

with an order restraining him from removing his cattle from the farm.

He admitted to inspec-

tors that seven animals had been taken and slaughtered despite the order.

Mallon is regarded as

being in 'the same league' as Larry Goodman—in more ways than one it seems!

## inside the system

# CIA drug dealers

by ALAN MAASS  
**THE CENTRAL Intelligence Agency (CIA)** organised a drug-running operation that supplied cocaine to street gangs in Los Angeles during much of the 1980s, according to a newspaper report.

In an extensive three-part series published in August, the *San Jose Mercury News* reported that CIA operatives oversaw a drug network that sold tons of cocaine to dealers in Los Angeles—and then funnelled the profits to the contra army fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

As the *Mercury News* put it, the CIA drug network "opened the first pipeline between Columbia's cocaine cartels and the Black neighbourhoods of Los Angeles, a city now known as the 'crack' capital of the world."

CIA agents arranged the alliance between the Los Angeles dealers and financiers and couriers from the contra army, a gang of mercenaries organised mainly by the U.S. to overthrow Nicaragua's elected Sandinista government.



■ Contras funnelled drugs to LA

The drug network was just one of several methods developed by U.S. officials to fund the contras.

## Gang wars

When Congress barred official aid to the contras in 1984, the infamous basement White House, run by Lt. Col. Oliver North, went into overdrive to find illegal funding sources for the mercenaries.

One method was to funnel profits from the illegal sale of weapons to Iran, which also broke a US

congressional ban.

That scheme blew apart in the Contragate scandal, which shook the Reagan White House in 1986.

The CIA drug network had deadly consequences at both ends.

## Influx

Drug profits raked in by the contras financed a war of terror against Nicaraguan workers and peasants which claimed the lives of tens of thousands.

And the influx of cocaine fueled the bloody gang wars in

Los Angeles during the 1980s.

"Thousands of young Black men are serving long prison sentences for selling cocaine—a drug that was virtually unobtainable in Black neighbourhoods before members of the CIA's army brought it into South Central [Los Angeles] in the 1980s at bargain basement prices," the *Mercury News* wrote.

So the same people who brought us the "war on drugs" and "three strikes and you're out" oversaw and profited from the drug trade.

## QUINN'S DAIL BAR QUIP

**AT THE** recent opening of the refurbished Dáil bar—at a cost of only £400,000—Ruairi Quinn made a few choice comments.

The Labour Party, he said, was the first party with a defined policy for food, that being smoked salmon, and they needed a nice ambience in which to enjoy it.

# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

"WHAT IS the lowest wage you are willing to work for?"

Question to all potential claimants of the Job Seekers' Allowance in Britain and the North.

**BEWARE:** An answer of anything over £150 a week (about £75,000 a year) is likely to lead

to an 'instruction' to lower your sights.

"What is the lowest wage you are willing to work for?"

Question by Commons Employment Committee to Cedric Brown of British Gas.

Answer: "£470,000".

# Ahern's Thatcherite 'thinking'

**FIANNA FAIL** is planning the privatisation of semi-state companies like Telecom and the ESB.

Bertie Ahern announced the new 'Fianna Fail thinking' under the guise of a plan to 'democratise' the semi-states.

Management, workers, customers, suppliers and financial institutions would become the new shareholders of the companies.

But Ahern is simply dusting off the phoney doctrine of 'popular capitalism' preached by Margaret Thatcher in Britain in the 1980's.

It resulted in the selling off of British Telecom, British Gas and more recently water, electricity and the railways.

The policy has destroyed jobs and services and enriched a minority of wealthy shareholders.

Tommy Broughan of Labour and Eric Byrne of Democratic Left have accused Ahern of 'courting the business sector' and 'dancing to the PD tune'.

But Labour and DL are already paving the way for wholesale privatisation by selling off part of Telecom Eireann and overseeing cuts in ESB and CIE.



■ Ahern, planning sell-off

**we think**

# What sort of partnership is this?

"It is damaging our competitiveness and should be altered".

So said the spokesperson for the bosses' organisation, IBEC, Turlough O'Sullivan about a recent piece of EU legislation.

He wasn't talking about proposals to give every worker a £10 a week rise or cut their hours to 30.

No. Mr O'Sullivan was deeply upset about a plan to limit the working week to 48 hours!

After November 23rd there will be rules stopping truck drivers spending more than 48 hours on the road.

Junior doctors will no longer be able to spend up to 60 hours without sleep before helping in operations.

It could very easily mean the end of civilisation as we know it.

Mr O'Sullivan is seriously worried that these terrible rules will mean that Irish industry loses out to the British.

He wants more 'flexibility' so that a few industries might be let opt out of the 48 hour rule.

But in many industries workers are already working weekends at ordinary pay rates, breaking demarcation barriers, putting up with contract work—all in the name of 'flexibility'.

There seems to be no end to the number of hoops the employers want us to jump through.

Yet these are the people that our union leaders are trying to form a social partnership with.

The idea that we are all in the one boat with the bosses as our captains is popular in Irish politics.

Every political party in the Dáil favours 'partnership'.

They claim that everyone from the floor sweeper to the managing director benefits from these arrange-

ments.

But if the employers cannot even accept a 48 hour week at the end of the twentieth century, what hope is there that capitalism can ever have a human face?

The reality is that the social partnership arrangements in Ireland

have all been about increasing the rate of exploitation.

They are designed to give the employers a free hand so that they can intensify the regime of work in order to squeeze the maximum profit out of us.

This is one reason why Irish in-

dustry has shown spectacular growth in productivity while thousands languish on the dole.

## Battles

Far from looking for partnership with the likes of Mr O'Sullivan we

should be preparing for the battles against them.

The picket lines at the Royal Dublin Hotel and the looming fight in CIE tells us more about the realities of Irish society than all the sweet waffle about 'partnership'.

# Boycott adds to sectarianism

**IN RATHFRILAND in Co Down 60 secondary pupils are boycotting a local shop for the sole reason that the owner is Catholic.**

In many small towns in Fermanagh Protestant businesses are being boycotted because of a claim that their owners took part in Orange marches.

But as even *An Phoblacht* admitted 'by their nature many of the rumours are now impossible to substantiate'.

Economic boycotts began at the end of the summer in the rural areas where sectarian divisions are more directly visible.

## Tactic

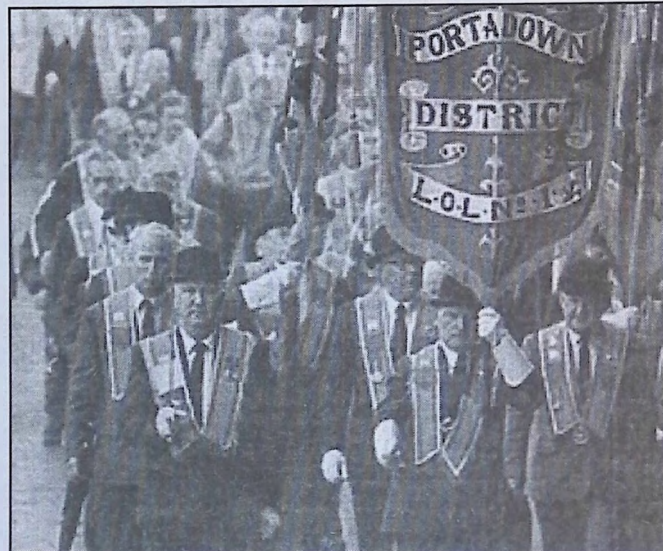
Shops in these areas are more easily designated Catholic or Protestant by the family owner.

In Derry or Belfast, by contrast, it is hard to tell which religion a shop like Marks and Spencer belongs to.

And even if it were the proponents of a boycott would have difficulty drawing neat lines as Catholic and Protestants often work side by side in these stores.

However, socialists oppose the boycott tactic not simply because it cannot work but because it pits one community against the other.

At the heart of the tactic is the



■ Socialists argue that Orangeism is a poison which should be opposed by all workers.

idea that all Catholics or Protestants, whether rich or poor, have to stick together against the other side.

## Victims

It is even implied that it is a 'good thing' to frequent the shop

or pub of a capitalist who pays as little as £1.50 an hour — provided he is on 'your side'.

Unionist politicians have taken up the call for a boycott with great eagerness.

Pretending to be victims of a Catholic conspiracy, groups like

'Business and Professional People for Ulster' have called for a boycott of 26 county goods.

Anything that helps to bind Protestant workers to 'their own' bosses is seen as a bonus.

On the republican side there is a profound ambiguity on the subject.

They deny, probably correctly, that they have orchestrated a boycott campaign and even warn against its sectarian undertones.

## Poison

But *An Phoblacht* also ran the banner headline 'Boycott—exposing the rotten state' and talked of the growing 'economic power' of nationalists.

The reality is that republicanism is retreating from the idea of uniting 'Catholic, Protestant and dissenter'.

The republican movement sees itself as the representative of the Catholic community and has little to say to Protestants.

This is why it is willing to go along with forces like the Catholic Ancient Order of Hibernians who have always engaged in sectarian headcounting.

It is only socialists who argue that Orangeism is a poison which should be opposed by all workers.



As confrontation looms between workers in CIE and the Coalition, more and more people are asking if there is an alternative to the Labour Party and Democratic Left.

These parties have turned on their own supporters and go along with almost anything big business wants.

In the North, there is a growing mood of sectarianism which has been whipped up by Unionist politicians who are fearful of losing their privilege. Republicanism cannot offer any way out of the crisis and so it flits between bombing and seeking



friends in the establishment. Only a strong socialist movement can take the desire for workers' unity forward.

In this situation the Socialist Workers Party is once again launching a major recruitment drive. Regular buyers of

the paper will be encouraged to join the party and get active. Posters and displays will be organised in city centres to show what the party stands for.

Even before the new recruitment campaign started it had become

obvious that there is a major new audience for socialist ideas. During a party building drive in the universities, 50 students signed up for the Socialist Worker Student Society in UCD. In Maynooth over 20 have joined. Queen's

university got off to a good start with 20 people attending the first SWSS meeting on What is Socialism.

And workers are also joining the SWP from some of the major struggles that are taking place. A special Socialist Worker bulletin was produced for the huge CIE workers march and hundreds of copies were distributed.

Several left their names for getting more information about the party. On the Irish Ferries march, 50 copies of Socialist Worker were sold to the 400 marchers. Again several workers wanted to find out more about the politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

Now is the time to go for growth. Major struggles are looming in Ireland.

It is vital that there is a strong socialist alternative which can encourage the fight and point to a different alternative to the market driven madness.

A CIE worker said: "I joined the SWP because I'm sick of the constant process of sell-outs by the trade union leadership. I felt it was time to stand up and fight what I see as the low wage conspiracy—the bosses want the maximum amount of labour for the minimum reward—They want contract labour and zero-hour contracts right across the board. In the SWP I feel I can do something about it. The working class is fighting a whole system of exploitation and we need to be organised to do it."

Another new member said: "I joined first of all because I want to change things and the SWP is the only party that is fighting for real change."

"And secondly I thought the SWP analysis of the events in Drumcree during the summer was fantastic. It was to the point in offering a solution which didn't shore up sectarianism and wasn't just more of the same wishy-washy liberalism."

## Join the SWP!

Fill in and return to  
SWP, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8 (01) 872 2682

- I would like to join the SWP  
 I would like more details  
 I want to receive *Socialist Worker* regularly

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# AFTER THE IRA LISBURN BOMB

## Why is the North on the brink again?

**THE IRA bomb at the British Army headquarters in Lisburn has once again raised fears about a return to all-out conflict.**

Although it is difficult to know what strategy the IRA is pursuing it was most likely a desperate bid to pressurise Britain to remove its conditions on talks.

After the bombing, politicians were fulsome in their praise of the Combined Loyalist Military Command for not breaking their ceasefire.

Andrew Hunter from the Tory backbench committee on Northern Ireland proposed that sentences for loyalist prisoners be reduced, and that some be released.

He added, "I am aware that others will react to this and say that concessions are being made to terrorism". But he thought his proposal should still go ahead.

If the Tories had taken these sorts of measures months ago there might still be an IRA ceasefire.

But in the 18 months of the IRA ceasefire there was barely a move on the prisoners.

Not a single prisoner was released and very few transfers even took place from British jails.

The only thing the Tories did was to restore the 50 percent remission which political prisoners had until 1989.

On that basis, two thirds of political prisoners will still be in jail in the year 2,000.

While Private Lee Clegg was released from a murder sentence after just two years, prisoners like Paddy

Kelly were denied proper medical treatment and he was only transferred to Ireland when he was near to death.

Anger over these issues is the primary cause of the breakdown of the ceasefire.

The IRA first dropped its armed struggle after it was assured that talks could begin quickly on the North.

It knew that the British government had talked to its representative secretly while the IRA campaign was in full swing and believed that full scale negotiations could commence.

But Unionist politicians like Paisley and Trimble were fearful that any negotiations would open up the prospects of the Catholic middle class getting a share in their privileges.

They also saw that the ceasefire was creating a mood for working class unity and a questioning of the 'fur-coat brigade'.

With the connivance of the Tories they used the issue of de-commissioning to stop the talks going ahead. In no other conflict whether it was Bosnia, Palestine or South Africa was one side ever asked to de-commission before negotiations began.

The IRA bomb in Lisburn is the bitter fruit of these squandered opportunities.

Far from letting Major and the Unionist parade around like peace lovers, we should point the finger of blame at them for taking the North once again to the brink.



Aftermath of the Lisburn bomb

## Armed struggle: a failed strategy

**FEW republicans believe that the renewed bombing campaign in the North will bring a United Ireland any nearer.**

Its only purpose is to get Sinn Fein a seat at the talks which will produce, in Adams' words, an "interim settlement".

Any bombing campaign will inevitably produce incidents like the Shankill bomb and the Enniskillen bombing which killed large numbers of innocent Protestants.

Such a development would be disastrous, it would inflict suffering on innocent people and further deepen sectarian divisions.

It would strengthen loyalist thugs like Billy Wright who have been waiting for any excuse to launch an assassination campaign against Catholics.

Many Republicans argue that the only language Britain understands is the "language of force".

But the lesson of the last 25 years is that the armed struggle has failed.

To continue this tactic in the face of this obvious failure is the politics of despair and the cul de sac.

Any victories, that have

been won against the sectarian state have not been achieved by armed struggle but by mass struggle.

### Resistance

The day after internment was introduced in 1971, the Civil Rights Association issued a statement calling for "mass resistance on the streets, the building of barricades" and for a "general strike in Britain and Ireland".

It was this orientation on mass resistance that

brought down the Stormont Government in 1972, NOT armed struggle.

The Lisburn bombs have further divided Catholics and Protestants and sent a message to those who want to fight the state that they have no role other than to contain their anger and wait for the next "spectacular".

For all these reasons socialists say the bombings of the British army HQ at Lisburn were a spectacular failure.

## THANKS FOR NOTHING

ACCORDING to press reports 200 members of the West Belfast UVF recently got together to discuss whether or not to end their ceasefire.

The press have heaped praise on them because they held fire. But their aim is to blackmail both governments into carrying out more repression.

This hypocrisy shows how the press and the main parties deal with the North. If 200 IRA men were discovered to have met there would have been an outcry.

The area would have been saturated with the RUC and British army to get clues which might help arrest them.

No one mentioned what the UVF threat really entailed. A resumption of war would have meant the assassination of innocent Catholics to put pressure on the IRA.

Far from praising their 'courageous leadership', we should denounce their terrible blackmail.

## Bruton, the IRA and the Nazis

**"THE STRATEGY of the ballot box in one hand and the gun in the other was, after all, first originated by the Nazis."**

So argued John Bruton when he made his infamous claim that Sinn Fein and the IRA were fascist organisations.

A week before Bruton's speech, spokespersons for loyalist organisations were also arguing that the Provos were a fascist movement.

After throwing out his insult Bruton never bothered to explain what he was doing negotiating with Nazis a few months before.

But logic was never farmer John's strong point. The only merit in his speech was the way it brought out the novel way Fine Gael defines fascism.

According to Bruton, it means any organisation that does not play fully by the rules of the parliamentary game.

Yet on this reckoning, almost every Irish political party has had a fascist past. The hero of Fine Gael, Michael Collins, developed a powerful guerrilla force to deal with British agents while his political wing was contesting general elections.

Proinsias de Rossa once belonged to an organisation that carried out 'special activities' or bank raids to finance election campaigns.

Combining military struggle with participation in elections has been a perfectly respectable way of entering the political establishment in Ireland.

No doubt Gerry Adams hopes that one day he can also trade in the guns for the Armani suits, permanently.

Bruton's statement reflects a recent pattern whereby leaders of the Western world use the term 'fascism' to denounce some of their opponents.

During the civil war in Bosnia, the Serbs were commonly demonised as fascists to distinguish them from the 'good' warlords on the Croatian and Muslim side.

In the run up to the Gulf, Saddam Hussein was called a 'new Hitler' even though he ran a ramshackle army that had once been funded by the Western powers.

All of this plays down the real horror that was at the heart of Nazism.

Nazism was all about crushing every sign of independent organisation in society in order to grease the wheels of big business. It was not simply another form of dictatorship. Fascism sought a mass social base by whipping up a frenzied middle class movement which wanted to kick the hell out of Jews, homosexuals, communists or whichever scapegoat that was most useful.

### Methods

Some of the Nazi supporters even believed they could create a different society through these methods.

But from the outset the Nazis worked hand in glove with big business.

Hitler, for example, only came to power because the army officers and business men like Thyssen backed him to the hilt.

Hitler's determination to rebuild German capitalism brought violence on a scale that was unknown in previous history.

Eight million Jews, gypsies and socialists perished in the death camps.

The warning of the Russian revolutionary Trotsky that the horrors of fascism would multiply with the development of capitalism was more than confirmed.

The Provos have carried out some terrible acts of violence. But comparing scale of their violence with Hitler is a real insult to the millions of Jews, gypsies and socialists who died in fascist death camps.

Nor is it the case that the Provos are building a mass movement that will terrorise immigrants or left wingers to help out big business.

Although they are not always consistent in being non-sectarian, it is simply a misreading of their politics to claim that they want to drive the Protestants of Ireland into the sea.

Moreover, Nazism and fascism inevitably involved imperialist expansion.

It was a political movement that wanted to restore the myth of racial superiority in order to allow big business to gain more 'living space' across the globe.

For all their confusions and weaknesses, the Provos have a very different base. Theirs is a movement which wins support because it has opposed the settlement which British imperialism imposed on Ireland.

They stem from a section of the working class who want to oppose the oppression which the Northern state wrought on them.

Comparing them with Hitler, the leader of a mighty imperialist power, is just laughable.

The reality is that republicanism combines many sorts of elements. In the eighties, there were probably more who regarded themselves as 'socialist republicans'.

But because they wrote off Protestant workers and had little to say to the organised labour movement of the South, they declined.

Today the Provos are led by would-be respectable politicians who care more about getting the ear of the White House or Albert Reynolds and want the old radical rhetoric about overthrowing the Southern as well as Northern states dropped.

Bruton's speech was a singular example of irony because Fine Gael itself was formed from an alliance with Ireland's only mass fascist movement, the Blueshirts.

The former Fine Gael leader, A Costello once explained that "just as the Blackshirts were victorious in Italy, the Brownshirts in Italy... the Blueshirts will be victorious in Ireland".

But you can be sure that even this would not make farmer John blush.

—KIERAN ALLEN

## Letter

### RUC contributes to extremes

THE POLICE Federation says the RUC is 3,000 men short but some of us think it should be disbanded entirely.

The RUC exists to put down any dissent against this sectarian state and acts against the interests of the majority, both Catholic and Protestant.

The force even refused to countenance minor reforms like not flying the union jack over barracks.

Now the Police Federation's magazine—the aptly named *Policebeat*—claims the force is undermined when it comes to dealing with the 'extremes of Northern Ireland law and order'.

Nothing convinces me that it was lack of manpower which prevented the RUC from stopping Orange bigots marching through Drumcree!

If anything the police are contributing to the extremes they complain about.

Harry McPartland, Belfast

## international news

## AUSTRIA:

# Rise in Nazi vote as Labour slumps

**ELECTIONS IN Austria last weekend saw the Social Democratic Party, the equivalent of the Labour Party, slump to its worst share of the vote ever.**

Worryingly, the party which saw the biggest increase in its vote was the Freedom Party led by Nazi Jorg Haider.

## Gained

In elections to the European Parliament, the Freedom Party gained almost 6 percent on its performance in last year's general election to get 27.6 percent of the vote. The Social Democrats, led by chancellor Franz Vranitzky, came second with 29.1 percent narrowly behind the Conservative People's Party which polled 29.6 percent.

In simultaneous regional elections Haider's party won 28 percent of the vote in the capital Vienna.

That was less than the Social Democrats' vote, but it deprives the Social Democrats of overall control of the city for the first time since the fascist coup of 1934.

## Stark

Jorg Haider is now the most successful far right politician in Europe.

His rise stands out as a stark warning of what can happen when a Labour Party type government makes savage cuts and is not challenged from the left by a clear socialist alternative.

The Social Democrats and the Conservatives have taken turns in power since the Second World War and often ruled in coalition.

Austria escaped the worst

aspects of the world recessions of the 1970s and 1980s. That led many Labour politicians in Europe to regard it as a model for low unemployment, decent welfare and a stable economy.

But since the late 1980s unemployment has climbed steadily and governments have launched attacks on living standards.

The current government of Social Democrat Franz Vranitzky has ruled since last December's general election

in coalition with the Conservatives.

## Welfare

Earlier this year Vranitzky pushed through swingeing cuts in welfare, student grants and pensions to reduce the budget deficit to below the limits for joining the single European currency.

This brought students onto the streets and caused widespread disaffection with the two major parties. But trade

union leaders failed to build on the mood to resist the austerity plan.

Haider has been able to tap into that discontent as the only major force which is both outside the government and opposed to the drive towards a single market.

Most of those who voted for Haider did so because of his verbal opposition to joining the European Union.

But the core of the Freedom Party are hardened Nazis, some of them veterans of

the Second World War.

Haider's parents were active members of the Nazi party during the war.

He made a speech last year to veterans of the Waffen SS, the Nazi regiment which played a major role in the murder of six million Jews.

## Praised

He addressed his audience as "dear friends" calling them "decent men" of "spiritually superior" character.

He has praised Walter Reder, the Austrian SS officer responsible for the murder of civilians in the Italian town of Marzabotto.

In a speech to the regional assembly in his power base of Carinthia, southern Austria, he called Hitler's employment policies "sound".

The Freedom Party has run a vicious campaign against the Slovene and Gypsy minorities in Carinthia.

The hard core Nazis want to turn their electoral support into real forces on the street which can be directed against immigrants and trade unionists.

A taste of the terror they would like to unleash was seen last year when a series of letter bombs were sent to civil rights lawyers and Social Democratic politicians.

But Haider is a long way from achieving his goal.

There is a widespread mood that Haider is a Nazi who must be stopped that could be turned into a mass anti-Nazi campaign.

And if workers fight back against the continuous attacks, Haider can be sidelined.

## SOUTH AFRICA:

# Top murderer for apartheid regime walks free

**IN A devastating example of how little has changed in South Africa, former defence minister Magnus Malan, one of apartheid's top murderers, was cleared by a court last week.**

Malan, who spent his whole life ordering torture and assassination to stop blacks getting the vote, sickeningly celebrated his acquittal as a "victory for truth and democracy".

Malan was accused of being involved in the murder of 13 people, seven of them children, in a black township near the city of Durban in 1987.

The court accepted that the killings were carried out by a hit squad of vigilantes from the right-wing Inkatha organisation.

## Admitted

They had been armed and trained by the security forces.

Malan admitted he had recruited Inkatha groups to attack Nelson Mandela's ANC.

But he claimed he had no idea this would lead to anything but legitimate activities.

Yet a year after the Durban killings Malan said, "Wherever the ANC is, we will eliminate it."

There are still no juries in South Africa, so Malan was cleared by a single white judge, Justice Jan Hugo.

If Magnus Malan can



■ How much has changed since Mandela's agreement with de Klerk

walk free, what hope is there of anyone being brought to account?

## Career

Malan is soaked in blood. He began his career encouraging right wing

groups in Angola and Mozambique.

He sat on the State Security Council which oversaw some of the most brutal assassinations.

He was part of the misnamed Civil Cooperation Bureau which master-

mind death squads.

He fuelled the township wars launched by Inkatha.

Unfortunately the ANC's lack of reform of the judicial system, and its desire to work with apartheid's leading supporters allows people like Malan

to go free.

As a woman in the public gallery during the case said, "There are plenty of dead and damaged people, but no guilty people."

"No one supported apartheid. Pretty soon we will be talking about 'alleged apartheid'."

## NEW ZEALAND:

## Right and left vie in election stalemate

**POLITICIANS OF the right and left in New Zealand are jockeying to put together a government after Saturday's general election.**

Neither the National (Conservative) Party or the Labour Party have enough MPs to form a government on their own. Both sides will be looking to the populist New Zealand First Party to tip the balance in their favour.

The National Party has ruled New Zealand for the last six years.

It took over from a Labour Party that was viciously right wing.

Under finance minister Roger Douglas, Labour in office tore apart the welfare state and "out-Thatchered Thatcher" with its worship of the free market, wholesale privatisation and attacks on the unions.

Labour was voted out as result, and the Conservatives carried on the attacks.

Today one in five adults and almost a third of children live below the poverty line.

Although the economy has grown 11.5 percent since 1992, wages have fallen by 2.1 percent.

The response of the Labour Party in opposition has been to continue its pro-market policies and move even closer to the National Party.

But Labour's right wing march led to the formation of the Alliance Party, a left wing split from Labour on the same lines as Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party in Britain.

The Alliance is a coalition of ex-Labour activists, trade unionists, Maori rights groups, Greens and small business people.

It puts forward a programme of full employment, expanded welfare and education, worker and Maori rights and progressive taxation policies. It has won considerable electoral support as a result.

The Alliance polled 10 percent of the vote, but that is down eight percent from the 1993 election. The Alliance is hamstrung in its efforts to be a real left alternative to Labour because it accepts that New Zealand workers need to be internationally competitive.

It refuses to pledge to scrap hated union busting laws and fails to wholeheartedly back or mobilise workers in struggle.

As a result the Alliance has also been hampered in its ability to challenge the populist New Zealand First, led by charismatic Maori leader Winston Peters.

It is against "foreigners", wants to stop immigration from Asia and says that "native" New Zealanders should come first for jobs and housing.

## What kind of socialist party do we need?

ON A recent march of 2,000 busworkers, there were several placards that denounced the sell-out of Labour and Democratic Left.

The main reformist parties in Ireland have entered a crisis in their relationship with the working class. This is reflected in the decline of their base. A recent conference of the Dublin Region of the Labour Party could only muster an attendance of 150. The numbers at the national conference of Democratic Left was even less than that figure.

More significantly, inside the union movement there are few organised supporters of these parties. Many full time officials retain their membership of the Labour Party but no longer have a base of political activists arguing for them.

One consequence of this is a tremendous volatility in working class politics. A few years ago, Fianna Fail faced major difficulties. But today they have once again started to win a hearing from workers when they manage to sound more radical than the Labour party.

Alongside this volatility, however, there is a politicised minority who are looking for a left wing alternative. The question is what sort of an alternative. Here it is worth looking at the lessons of the past.

### Denounced

In the eighties, when Labour was in and out of coalition, many looked to the old Workers Party which then included people like Pat Rabbitte, Eamonn Gilmore and Proinsias de Rossa. These denounced the sell-outs of the Labour Party and played a major role in building a PAYE tax movement.

But there was a central weakness at the core of their politics: their entire focus was on electioneering and Dail representation. At the height of the tax campaign in 1981, for example, they opposed calls for more stoppages, arguing that the votes of workers were more important than strikes.

In the unions, they were often more associated with covering for the sell-outs of union leaders than with leading a fight against them. Workers Party members were encouraged to keep their heads down and maintain a friendly relationship with top union leaders.

There are already signs that this disastrous strategy could be repeated by some of those seeking to build an alternative to Labour.

The group Militant Labour has gone through another name change and dropped the word 'militant' in favour of the term 'Socialist Party'.

According to the party's leader, Joe Higgins, the reason for the change of name is that many associate the term militancy with terrorism.

This is doubtful. Most

busworkers who are facing horrendous attacks know the difference between someone who advocates a national transport strike and is proud to be a militant trade unionist and someone who proposes bombing the CIE headquarters.

In reality, what has happened is that the Militant group has decided to focus almost exclusively on elections. This has effectively meant turning their backs on promoting a militant alternative to the union leaders. In key struggles such as the Dunnes strike and Packard, they followed these leaders in recommending acceptance of poor deals.

The comparison with the Workers Party is also uncanny when it comes to the North. Despite claiming to be left wing both organisations have defended the right of Orange marches to go through Catholic areas. In practice this means falling for the ideas of accepting 'two cultures' in the working class—rather than openly denouncing bigotry whatever guise it takes.

Attempting to rerun the experience of the Workers Party is the surest way of turning straight into a dead end. The sad experience is that those who magnify the role of the TD over the strength that comes from workers own struggles can rhetorically denounce capitalism but are void of a political strategy to overthrow it.

### Struggles

The Socialist Workers Party has long decided that the way to change Irish society is to politicise and encourage mass struggles from below. We may contest the next general election but will openly state that we see the election campaign and parliament itself as only a platform for spreading socialist propaganda. In themselves these tactics can never provide the vehicle for decisive change in society.

We believe that the general strikes that happened in France before Christmas are a pointer to the future.

They raised in the sharpest way the question of who really runs society: a tiny elite who always want cutbacks and 'flexibility' to preserve their privilege or the millions who took their strike action on to the streets.

The weakness of the French strike was the absence of a large revolutionary socialist core at the heart of the movement. Many wanted to fight—but few had a clear view of what the real alternative to the agonies of the marketplace.

Building a party can take these type of struggles forward is the key to the future.

# BSE, salmonella, listeria

# Produce rotten

FOOD IS one of the biggest industries in the world.

In their pursuit of profit the food companies are subjecting millions of people to either starvation, bad diets or food poisoning.

Around the world some 3,000 people a day are dying from eating contaminated food. In August, for example, a food poisoning outbreak in Japan affected 6,300 people in one town alone.

The US government's food agency says there are between 24 and 81 million cases and 10,000 'needless' deaths from food poisoning every year.

One Australian government expert has said that the incidence of food poisoning in some Western countries "may be second only to the common cold".

In Britain, diet related diseases kill more people annually than smoking, drugs, accidents and AIDS put together.

Irish politicians claim that food produced here is 'natural' and 'fresh'. But already huge conglomerates such as Kerry Foods and Dunnes Stores are increasingly dictating what we eat.

For years growth promoting hormones were given to cattle to increase their weight before slaughter. Tons of bonemeal were also imported into Ireland for cattle who may have later contracted BSE.

Anyone who thinks that the Irish beef industry is immune from the pressures that come with the profit system should question how they can trust an industry which brought us the Goodman scandal.

People in Ireland suffer from food poisoning and the effects of poor diet just like everywhere else.

Salmonella, listeria and E. Coli are three of the food bugs which have emerged here in recent decades:

■The main form of salmonella found in Ireland is salmonella enteritidis.

The number of cases in humans rose from 58 in 1987 to 173 in 1988 and to 324 in 1990.

In a survey for *Consumer Choice* two years ago, investigators bought forty uncooked whole chickens and a similar number of uncooked chicken portions from shops in Dublin and Cork.

### Vomiting

They found that 42 per cent of the samples contained either salmonella or campylobacter, a bacteria which can cause diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pains and fever.

The problem was mainly caused by producers not taking proper precautions during slaughtering and processing. Shops were also failing to store the chicken at proper temperatures.

■*Listeria* is found in pre-cooked and frozen meals and is particularly dangerous for pregnant women.

Earlier this year Ms Linda Kinsella of Santry in Dublin was awarded almost £8,000 by the Circuit Civil Court after being poisoned in 1993 by coleslaw bought in Crazy Prices.

Ms Kinsella was seven months pregnant when she ate the coleslaw and experienced vomiting and diarrhoea.

Dr Ronald Russell, a microbiologist, told the court that listeria was found in many

foods, including coleslaw and soft cheeses, and could damage foetuses.

The bacteria is linked to miscarriages and there are claims that it can cause meningitis.

■The *E. Coli* bacterium, found in salami, has been detected in some children in Ireland who were suffering from gastrointestinal illness.

### Outbreaks

E. Coli infected 447 people in the US between November 1992 and February 1993, killing three children. Outbreaks have also occurred in Europe, Asia and Africa.

Earlier this year, Dr Geraldine Duffy of the National Food Centre in Dublin reported that in a survey of salami, one in eight samples contained the bug.

"This result for a ready-to-eat product is very high," she wrote, also pointing out that there was no official monitoring programme for E. Coli, either in Ireland or Europe.



You are what THEY eat

# Poverty causes poor diet

POLITICIANS often claim that 'ignorance' is the main reason why people do not eat properly.

The solution, they argue, is to have more advertising campaigns to encourage healthy eating.

But a survey last year in Ireland gave the lie to this notion. Pharmaton surveyed 1,000 people and

found that the main reasons people did not eat balanced diets were lack of time, poor appetite, cost and weight worries.

### Energy

Stress, overwork and low incomes mean that many working class people have neither the time, nor the energy nor the money to eat properly.

And pressure to conform

to capitalism's image of the 'perfect body' leads many more—especially young women—to undernourish themselves.

David Silke of Combat Poverty has reported that illness rates were higher among the poor and mothers often went without necessities to feed their children.

Little has changed since a 1980 survey by Mary McSweeney of Trinity College Dublin found that lack of money was a major obstacle to healthy eating.

Twenty three per cent of mothers surveyed said money was the main difficulty for mothers with young

children, "in particular the expense of meat, fresh fruit, cheese and baby food".

### Bread

Almost two thirds of people in the 'non-skilled manual' category said they would spend more money on food if they had more house-keeping money.

People in the 'manual' categories tended to eat white bread rather than wholemeal bread. Even though wholemeal is cheaper to make, producers capitalise on its healthy image by selling it at a higher price.

# CEREAL LIES

THE MAGAZINE *Which?*, produced by the British Consumers' Association, recently surveyed 141 brands of breakfast cereal and found that only three were genuinely healthy.

More than two thirds of the cereals failed on at least one health count.

They included Kellogg's Cornflakes and Rice Krispies which were found to be high in salt.

### Warned

Kellogg's Common Sense features a heart-shaped bowl on the box, implying that it is good for your heart.

False medical claims like this

are forbidden by law.

The magazine also warned against claims that some cereals aid slimming.

"Perfect Balance, produced by Weight Watchers from Heinz, contains only marginally fewer calories (318 per 100g) than Kellogg's Bran Flakes (320 calories) and up to 30 per cent less fibre.

"Despite ads showing slyph-like bodies...Special K (Kellogg's) contains the same number of calories (and double the sugar) as Kellogg's Cornflakes."

# ...steria...

by DAVE McDONAGH

# Products of a ... system



## The search for profits

**CAPITALISTS will stoop very low to make profits regardless of the effect on people at the receiving end:**

■The use of kid's 'pester power' is encouraged with some TV ads even implying that you are somehow a 'bad parent' if you deprive your kids of the latest chocolate treat.

Every parent knows the annoyance of sweets being placed at supermarket tills, in full view of kids.

### Target

Advertisers deliberately target children to get them hooked on an unhealthy diet.

Many ads shown during children's viewing hours are for sugary or fatty foods.

■Some companies carry out consumer surveys to promote products, in which a selection of people are interviewed in a way which slants their answers in favour of the product.

The results are then presented as 'science'.

■Over seventy per cent of the food we eat is processed in some way.

Food companies and supermarkets know that the demand for food is limited.

Humans can only eat so much, and that is only when we can afford it.

Food manufacturers ensure profits by increasing the 'value added' in food.

### Replace

They continually replace fresh food with processed food.

But the processing often destroys essential vitamins and nutrients, and puts potentially harmful amounts of fat, salt and sugar in their place.

■Another way to make bigger profits is through *adulteration*.

Ross Young Foods of Lincolnshire in England were recently found guilty of 'bulking

out' their scampi fries with water, synthetic cellulose and emulsifier.

The mixture was similar to wallpaper paste!

A spokesperson for British food scientists put the blame for poor standards on "deregulation, technological change, increased competition and the search for profits".

But can we ever trust the food we eat?

How do we know whether the latest scare is being played down or exaggerated by powerful vested interests?

The answer lies in who controls the food industry.

Under capitalism a tiny number of huge multinationals compete for control of what we eat.

## THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

IT IS ninety years since the publication of *The Jungle*, the classic socialist novel by Upton Sinclair.

The book revealed the horrors of the meat industry in Chicago and within six months of its publication in 1906, America's food laws were changed.

In the novel, visitors to a meat plant are told that nothing is wasted.

"They use everything about the hog except the squeal," says their guide.

A government inspector sits checking the pig's carcasses for TB but behind the scenes corruption is rife.

When unfit carcasses appear on the line the inspector's attention is diverted by the boss. Damaged cattle are dealt with at night when the inspectors have left, and are scattered among the rest of the meat to avoid identification.

Unknown to the people of Chicago, 163 inspectors have been appointed at the request of the meat packers and they ensure that all diseased meat is kept in the state.

When tubercular beef is found ready for sale in the city, the packers use their influence to have the bureau of inspection abolished!

Ninety years on, BSE cover-ups and the activities of Larry Goodman show that the law of the jungle still operates.

## What do socialists say?

### Is Marxism anti-democratic?

**ASK Ruairi Quinn, Emmet Stagg or other mainstream Labour politicians to define their political philosophy and they will probably say they are "democratic socialists".**

Leave aside for the moment whether such people can really be called socialists, why do they insist on the "democratic"?

The answer is to differentiate themselves from revolutionary socialists, Trotskyists and Marxists of all stripes—who by implication are undemocratic.

The argument that Marxism is anti-democratic has two aspects to it.

On the one hand there is the experience of Stalinism in Russia and elsewhere, which it is claimed proves that Marxism leads to tyranny, on the other the identification of democracy with parliament.

In this way all those who reject the parliamentary road to socialism or even support serious extra-parliamentary action can be branded as undemocratic.

### Ideology

The idea that the parliamentary system equals democracy and democracy equals the parliamentary system is one that the Labour Party shares with Fianna Fail or Fine Gael.

It is a key element in bourgeois ideology—the view of the world developed by the ruling class to justify its power.

In dealing with this idea we must first point out that while parliamentary rule was a step forward from the absolute monarchy that preceded it, there is no necessary connection between parliament and democracy.

Britain has been ruled by parliament since the days of Cromwell. But for two hundred years it was elected exclusively by wealthy landowners.

Not until the late 19th century did the House of Commons allow any representation of working people and not until 1928 was it elected on the basis of one person, one vote.

South Africa under apartheid had a parliament, but it was a parliament that denied the vote to the vast majority of the

population. In both these cases, and almost everywhere else, the right to vote for the masses was conceded only after struggle, often violent and revolutionary in character.

Marxists are the first to fight for democratic rights and against every attempt to restrict or undermine them.

However, even with universal suffrage, parliamentary democracy continues to serve the interests of the capitalist class. The parliamentary system turns politics into the elite activity of a select few. Only those actually in parliament, or standing for it, are considered to be "in politics".

The role of "ordinary" people is restricted to putting a cross on a ballot paper once in a while. Between elections they have no power to control or remove their so called representatives.

This leaves the politicians free to promise what they like at election time and do what they like afterwards. At the same time any action by working class people to influence the decisions of parliament—for example through a political strike—is branded undemocratic.

It is an illusion that parliament runs the country. In reality it is largely a talking shop. The decisive power in capitalist society is to be found in the boardrooms of big business, the banks and the stock exchange. These are where the fundamental decisions about investment, production and employment are made.

After that power is concentrated at the top of the state machine, with the heads of the armed forces, the police and the civil service. In none of these institutions is there the slightest semblance of democracy. Parliamentary democracy combines equality in one sphere—voting—with enormous inequality in every other sphere.

The ocean of inequality inevitably corrupts and distorts the island of equality. The rich use their immensely greater resources to "influence" the votes of the rest of us.

Parliamentary democracy masks the reality of exploitation and power in capitalist society. So when Marxists criticise parliament and argue that it cannot represent the interests of the working class it is in the name of more, not less, democracy. We argue that there can only be real political equality if we have economic equality.

That means tearing up the roots of inequality which lie in the ownership of the means of production by a minority. It means putting an end to class rule. We want the peoples' elected representatives to control society. That means bringing all the major means of production into our hands so that the economy can be democratically planned.

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### Division

We want to end the division between a politically active minority at the top and a passive majority at the bottom.

We want every "ordinary" working class person to take an active part in shaping society.

That means placing every factory, industry, school, hospital and so on, under democratic workers' control. It means replacing the army and police with workers militia and elected officers.

It means replacing parliament with a system of workers councils. In these, all representatives would be elected from work places and other collectives on the basis of political debate and subject to recall by those that voted for them.

Thus, far from being anti democratic, Marxism stands for the defence of all the rights that working people have won for themselves under capitalism.

Marxists are also for the fullest extension of democracy to the whole of the state and society—an extension which capitalism will not give us.

— JOHN MOLYNEUX

## A Question of Class

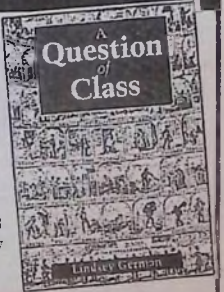
**WE ARE told that class divisions are a thing of the past—that we are moving towards a "classless society".**

This book demolishes the myths and shows that inequality and class divisions are as fundamental today as they have ever been.

Lindsey German is the editor of the monthly *Socialist Review* published by the Socialist Workers Party in Britain. She is also author of *Sex, Class and Socialism*, now in its second edition.

£3.50

Available from SWP branch bookstalls or from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel (01) 872 2682 Add 60p for post.



# NEW BOOK ON THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION



WORKERS AND peasants were not duped by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1917

**A** NEW BOOK on the Russian Revolution is being hailed as a great new history that shows just what a disaster the revolution was.

Orlando Figes' *A People's Tragedy* is on display in all the major bookshops and is also highly recommended by reviewers in many newspapers, including the *Guardian*.

But Figes' book is an attempt to update the old right wing Cold War attack on the Russian Revolution for the 1990s.

It repeats many lies and myths about the revolution.

Ordinary people, according to Figes, were the victims of the 1917 October revolution, duped or coerced by Lenin and Trotsky.

This approach inevitably divides the revolution into the innocent but ignorant masses and the devilishly cunning and brutal leaders who tricked the workers, soldiers and peasants into following them.

But the Russian Revolution is a magnificent example of ordinary people remaking their world.

In February 1917 the Tsar was overthrown by workers bitter at endless hours of exploitation in the workplaces of a war economy, poor peasants tired of the age old rule of aristocratic landlords and soldiers who had seen a catastrophic loss of life in the trenches of the front line.

They created workers' soldiers' and peasants' councils to organise the revolution. But the soviets, as these organisations were known, did not become the government.

Moderate socialists, the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, who at first led the soviets, were content to let the pro-capitalist Provisional Government run the country.

But the government would neither give the land to the peasants, bring peace to the trenches nor allow the workers to run the factories.

The story of how the people themselves, led by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, took power in a second revolution in October 1917 is one of the greatest in working class history.

Yet, according to Figes, people's support for the Bolsheviks was based on ignorance. So the soldiers "could not understand why their officers were telling them to fight when the Soviet leaders had agreed on the need for peace. The question of a democratic peace was much too complicated for them to understand."

Peasants were seizing the land from the landlords. They formed soviets and voted on how to divide up the land.

The Provisional Government tried to halt the land seizures and the moderate socialists supported them.

Figes is horrified that the peasants took no notice and treated the decisions of their

## A travesty of the truth

own assemblies as if they were the same as government laws.

"They did not understand the difference between a general declaration of principle by their own peasant assembly, which was in effect no more than a public organisation, and the full promulgation of a government law."

"They seemed to believe", tut-tuts Figes, "that, in order to 'socialise' the land, it was enough for a peasant assembly to pass a resolution to that effect."

Figes does not seem to consider that this is precisely what defines a revolution—people take power into their own hands and decide things for themselves. If the peasants had just waited for the government they would almost certainly never have got the land.

This is a fact which the peasants and the Bolsheviks understood increasingly clearly in 1917.

**WORKERS FARE little better in Figes' estimation. In the middle of 1917 an angry group of workers burst into the Petrograd soviet and demanded that the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries stop prevaricating and take power from the Provisional Government.**

One of the workers demanded that the chairman allow him to speak.

Figes describes him as a "hysterical worker" who was "confused" and who "shouted incoherently". Judge for yourself. Here is what he said:

"Comrades! How long must we workers put up with treachery? You're all here

debating and making deals with the bourgeoisie and the landlords ... You're busy betraying the working class. Well, just understand that the working class won't put up with it.

"There are 30,000 of us all told from Putilov. We're going to have our way. All power to the soviets! We have a firm grip on our rifles! Your Kerenskys and Tseretelis [moderate socialist leaders] are not going to fool us!"

This turned out to be a very accurate prediction of the course of the revolution. But the chairman of the soviet simply told the worker, "Don't interrupt our business." The worker left the hall.

For Figes this proves that he "was powerless to resist" because "centuries of serfdom and subservience had not prepared him to stand up to his political masters—and in that lay the tragedy of the Russian people as a whole."

The core of Figes' case is that the masses were too stupid to understand the message of the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, and so they were susceptible to the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

But this is despite the fact that he cannot completely hide the mountain of fact which shows that workers, soldiers and peasants flocked to support the Bolsheviks because only their policies reflected the masses' aims.

As a result Figes' explanation of the revolution constantly contradicts the events he describes.

For instance, on page 460 we are told, "The October revolution was a coup, actively supported by a small minority of the population."

But on the previous page we have read

that "the revitalisation of the soviets ... coincided with their radicalisation from below, as factories and garrisons recalled the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries in favour of those Bolsheviks, Anarchists and Left Social Revolutionaries calling for the assumption of Soviet power."

In August 1917 the Bolsheviks had already won control of the soviets in Ivanovo-Voznesensk (the Russian Manchester), Kronstadt (the key naval base outside Petrograd), Ekaterinburg, Samara and Tsaritsyn.

In September Riga, Sartov and Moscow followed. Then came Petrograd, where Trotsky replaced the chairman who had ordered the Putilov workers from the room.

This was the mass base of support for the revolution, even though the government had so few supporters by October that very little force was needed for the soviets to take power.

**FIGES HAS equal difficulty maintaining the second Cold War cliché—that Lenin was a dictator of a monolithic Bolshevik Party.**

It is not that he doesn't try. On page 391 we are told:

"Lenin was the first modern party leader to achieve the status of a god: Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler and Mao Zedong were all his successors in this sense."

"Being a Bolshevik", according to Figes, "had come to imply an oath of allegiance to Lenin."

Yet on page 392, just three paragraphs later, the truth slips out.

"In fact the party was quite undisciplined," Figes admits. "It had many different factions and the leadership, which was itself divided, often proved unable to impose its will on them."

"The Bolshevik rank and file were not simply Lenin's puppets", Figes now argues.

"The idea that the Bolshevik Party in 1917 was a monolithic organisation tightly controlled by Lenin is a myth—a myth which used to be propagated by the Soviet establishment, and one which is still believed (for quite different motives) by right wing historians in the West."

Yet it is precisely this myth that Figes continues to propagate for the rest of the book.

And for all his attempts to distance himself from some of the right wing historians of the revolution, he is, in one sense, worse than them.

Figes' case against the Bolsheviks is often maintained less by historical argument than by personal innuendo.

For instance Lenin, we are told, was a "physical coward", a "demagogue", someone who never admitted that he'd married his wife in church (so that she could accompany him in exile), "ignorant of everyday work", a "cultural philistine" who used "crude and violent language" and had, "no place for sentiment in his life".

These are just a few drops from the torrent of personal abuse which pours out of many pages in the book.

In one passage we are even told, "Lenin did weight training to build up his muscles. It was all part of the macho culture (the black leather jackets, the militant rhetoric, the belief in action and the cult of violence) that was the essence of Bolshevism."

The supposed Bolshevik fashion for black leather jackets is something of a fetish for Figes. He mentions them no less than seven times. In contrast there are just three references to, and no quotation from, Lenin's central pamphlet of 1917, *State and Revolution*.

Other Bolshevik leaders are damned by the same method. It is somehow supposed to be relevant, for instance, that Alexandra Kollontai, the Bolshevik Commissar for Social Welfare, had a partner younger than she was.

"She was old enough to be his mother", sniffs Figes.

All this, plus a welter of historical inaccuracies and incessant repetition, make Figes' book virtually worthless as a guide to the single most important event of our century.

■ *A People's Tragedy* by Orlando Figes, Jonathan Cape, £20.

■ For more accurate accounts of the Russian Revolution see *Ten Days that Shook the World* by John Reed and *In Defence of October* by John Rees, *International Socialism* 52.

by JOHN REES



# MARXISM

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FRIDAY					
		6.00-7.15		8.00-9.30	
ROOM A		Art and Revolution (Illustrated talk) Niall Meagher		Can there be a settlement in the North? Eamonn McCann	
ROOM B		Keynes, the market and the crisis of economics Alan Kelly		Why are women still oppressed? Lindsey German	
SATURDAY					
	10.00-11.15	11.45-1.00	2.00-3.15	3.45-5.00	7.00-8.30
ROOM A	The Far Left from 1968 to today Richard Boyd Barrett	Marx's theory of class Lindsey German	Trade unions, their leaders and the rank and file Brid Smith	Globalisation—does it mean we cannot change the world? Kieran Allen	Michael Collins Pat Stack
ROOM B	Marx and Religion Mamie Holborow	The politics of abortion Goretti Horgan	'Scientific' racists and the myth of intelligence Paul O'Brien	The English Revolution and the Irish People Brian Manning	The politics of sport Jim Larmour
ROOM C	Social class and educational failure Deirdre Cronin	Working class resistance under Hitler Kevin Wingfield	What is so great about Shakespeare? Cathy Bergin	Trotsky and the Revolution betrayed Conor Kostick	U.S. elections—do they mean anything for American workers? Owen McCormack
SUNDAY					
	11.00-12.15	12.15-1.30	2.30-3.45	4.00-5.00	
ROOM A	Israel, imperialism and the politics of the Middle East Colm Brice	Forum: Drugs and Crime Vincent Browne; Mary Smith and community worker	Lenin and the 1917 revolution Pat Stack	<b>Final Rally:                      Socialism in the nineties</b> Speakers include KIERAN ALLEN (editor Socialist Worker)	
ROOM B	Marx and Freud Catherine Curran	Revolutionaries, elections and parliament Joan Gallagher	When Protestants broke from loyalism Linda Moore		
ROOM C	Mao Colm O Riain	Darwin and the theory of evolution Dr Peadar O'Grady	The Politics of the SWP Rivchard Boyd Barrett		



**Full programme, tickets (£6.00—£2.50 unwaged) & further information from:**  
**Marxism 96, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel (01) 872 2682**

MARXISM 96 is the biggest socialist event of the year. Hundreds of socialists from all over the country will come together to discuss how we organise to fight against a system that puts profits before people. This year's Marxism is particularly important. Parties like Labour and Democratic Left have completely betrayed those who voted for them in the last election. They have introduced water charges and stood by as workers in Packard and

Semperit have seen their jobs butchered by multinationals. They have attacked workers' conditions in the civil service and are now going for transport workers in Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann, and Iarnrod Eireann. Trade union leaders, instead of leading a fight against these attacks, are looking to sign up for another sweetheart deal with the government and the bosses. In the North the Tories have allowed Trimble and Paisley

to whip up sectarianism and wreck the peace process. The Republicans' strategy of either the armed struggle or relying on US politicians and the Southern government has brought us no nearer a solution. James Connolly said the working class were the "incorruptible fighters for Irish freedom." Socialists believe it is only through the struggles of workers themselves that we can bring real change. And workers are looking to

fight back. Dunnes workers and Royal Dublin Hotel workers struck against low

chance to start organising to build this resistance. The best speakers on the left will look at the experience of struggles past and present. If you want to see a real fightback in this country Marxism 96 is the place where you will get the ideas

and the organisation to start doing it. Come along.

**'The people who have stood out against sectarianism are the SWP—I want to hear more about their ideas at Marxism 96'—Veronica, Belfast.**

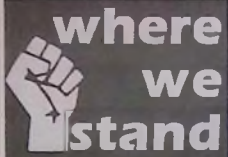
pay. Bus and rail workers are fighting against plans to axe their conditions. In the North thousands of Protestant and Catholic workers are looking to fight against low pay and attacks like the Jobs Seekers Allowance. Marxism 96 is a

**'Marxism 96 has the ideas we all need to back up the fight for a better world—I'll certainly be there'—Sinead, Dublin**

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Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

**FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM**

The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system.

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

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

**FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:**

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

**FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION**

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

**FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:**

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army. Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class. Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states. We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

**FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:**

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

**FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:**

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

# Royal Dublin Hotel:

# A strike that must be won

**WORKERS** at the Royal Dublin have entered their seventh week on strike and are determined to stay out until they win their demands.

The hotel which has been dubbed 'Dublin most exclusive poverty centre' was paying some workers an hourly rate of £2.50 an hour. There is no security of employment and many are expected to do shift work for a wage that is below the poverty line.

The company is using some of the dirtiest tactics seen in Dublin in recent years.

It has hired scabs to take over the jobs of the strikers. Spanish students have been actively recruited under the guise of learning English.

It has sacked three workers on the picket line already. It has paid a 3% increase to scabs and backdated it to June even though strikers never got this puny award.

## Contempt

Royal Dublin always treated its staff with utter contempt. At one stage workers were encouraged to win the prestigious ISO Quality 9002.

"They even had some people cleaning chandeliers with a tooth brush, telling us that the quality mark was in our interest. But when we actually got it, we were given a thick manual that contained new instructions on what we had to do. Work loads were increased -- but we were expected to take on new tasks for no extra money. That was our reward for slaving away" one worker told *Socialist Worker*.

Despite the media blackout, the strike is now beginning to build up solid support. Collections have come in from busworkers, civil servants, lecturers and

more are in the pipeline.

"The corporation workers have been great. They have refused to collect the rubbish since the strike began. Management have to bring it out in their own cars" said another worker.

The workers are demanding a basic rate of £5.50 an hour. It is something that the hotel can well afford.

## The heavies

AN OMINOUS development in the strike has been the appearance of six heavies who were hired from the first day of the strike.

They hang around the doors of the hotel in a clear attempt to intimidate strikers.

"They listen in on our conversations. They go up to potential customers and try to persuade them to come in. They have even taken to carrying in the suitcases".

The heavies come from a security firm called Cityguard who are now acting as a US style strike breaking outfit. One elderly striker has already been assaulted by one of their associates.

The trade union movement should publicise details of this firm and ensure that it never works on union premises again.

ONE of the supporters who visits the picket line is a retired union official, Jim Larkin, the grandson of the famous Big Jim. He told *Socialist Worker*: "My family have spent over 200 years in the labour movement. This strike reminds me of the Liverpool dockers. There are now employers here and in Britain who are out to tear up the social fabric of society by paying people low wages. Tell your readers that this is a strike for all of us. No one should pass the picket -- it could be your conditions next."

## Who is the scab

Can you identify this scab leaving the Royal Dublin Hotel after stuffing his face? CLUE: Often spotted in Dail Eireann. Answers on a postcard to *Socialist Worker*.



## O'Reilly forces news blackout of the strike

ALMOST every Friday the Evening Herald runs the following add to recruit scabs: Royal Dublin Business as usual. Excellent conditions and service.

Yet the Independent group has barely carried any reports on what the strike is about. The reason is that Tony O'Reilly, who has a major financial interest in most Irish newspapers has some direct

connections, with the owners of the hotel.

One of the nominal owners of the hotel is one Brendan Gilmore.

This is a long time associate of O'Reilly who has often helped in his fi-

nancial negotiations.

A minority stake in the company is held by O'Reilly's wife.

The name Dr AJ O'Reilly even appears as one of the major shareholders.

The rich are using every tactic they can to win this strike. It is high time that our side did the same.

## SIPTU must step up the action

WITH a hotel opening every month in Dublin, this strike could set a precedent for the future.

If O'Reilly's hacks win, it could mean non union slave wage conditions in other hotels.

If SIPTU wins, other hotel managers will not so easily try to break the union.

## Humiliated

SIPTU now needs to get its finger out.

The largest union in the country should not be humiliated in this strike.

There are 37 strikers involved in the dispute. If SIPTU organised a £1 week levy through its branches they could survive for months.

There should be a clear instruction to boycott firms which are breaking the strike.

There should be a major national demonstration in Dublin to break the media blackout and publicise the facts of the strike.

## SWP BRANCH MEETINGS ALL WELCOME

### BELFAST

Meets every Wed at 8pm Central Hall Rosemary St.

### CORK

Meets every Tues at 8pm in Dennehy's Pub, Cornmarket St.

### DERRY

Meets every Tues in Badgers Bar at 8pm

### DUN LAOGHAIRE

Meets every Tues at 8pm in Smyths Pub.

### ENNISKILLEN

Meets every fortnight Contact national address for details

### GALWAY

Meets every Thursday at 6pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre

### MAYNOOTH

Contact 8722682 for details

### WATERFORD

Meets every Thurs at 8pm in ATGWU Hall, Keyser St.

### DUBLIN NORTH-WEST

Meets every Tues at 8:30pm in The Old Brogue, Dorset St.

### DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK

Meets every Thurs at 8:30pm in the Artane/Beaumont Family Recreation Centre, Kilmore Rd.

### DUBLIN DRIMNAGH

Meets every Tuesday at 8:30pm in the Black

### Forge(formerly The Bentley), Drimnagh Rd

### DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL

Meets every Wed at 8:30pm in Conways, Parnell St.

### DUBLIN RATHMINES

Meets every Wed at 8pm in O'Connells Pub,

### Richmond St.

### DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL

Meets every Thur at 8pm in the Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

### DUBLIN TALLAGHT/CLONDALKIN

Meets Tues Tallaght Welfare Society, Tallaght Village.

★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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# CIE: Organise for a national strike

**'We should do a France'**

THAT IS how one Irish Rail worker at Heuston put it. He was referring to the massive general strikes that happened in France before Xmas.

**WORKERS** throughout CIE have voted massively in favour of strike action to defend their jobs and pay.

The three companies Bus Eireann, Irish Rail and Dublin Bus are trying to push through 'Viability Plans' with drastic cuts in pay and conditions.

In Dublin Bus, management say they must save £8 million. Among their demands are:

- Scrapping the city's remaining two person operations.
- Hiring part time seasonal staff on 'competitive wage rates'
- Eliminating bonuses and overtime payments. This would bring real hardship for many workers who rely on these payments to get by.

## Bosses

In Irish Rail, the bosses say they want cuts of £30 million. Among their demands are:

- 800 job losses in engineering, freight, clerical and inter-city services.
- Cuts in overtime and shift allowances
- More worker flexibility to cover for redundancies.

The most vicious attacks are being faced by drivers of Bus Eireann. Wage cuts would result in an average loss of £85 a week.

Many drivers are being told that they are 'surplus' in their own garages and must move. One driver who works in Ballina is even being told to report to Dublin in future.

Drivers are being told to fuel and clean their own buses in future.

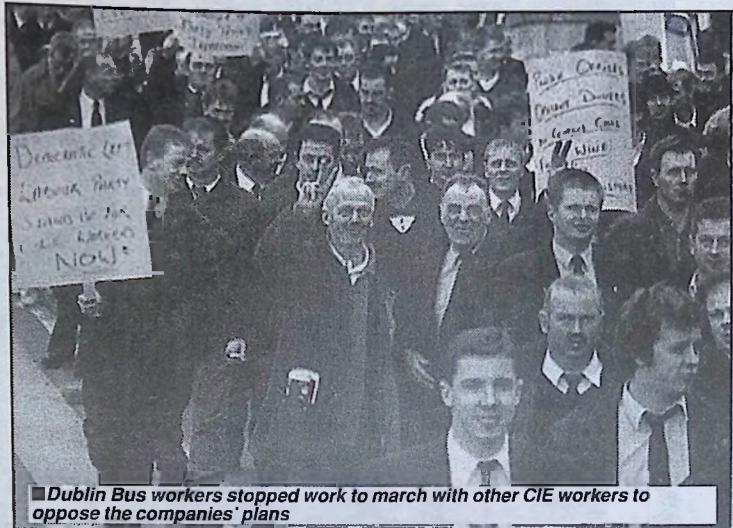
## During

A driver with almost 40 years service has even been told that he must clean out the depot's toilets during his break. Others are being assigned duties like sweeping the yards in between journeys.

Workers have responded magnificently to these attacks. In Dublin Bus, 94% of National Bus and Railworkers Union voted for strike action. In Bus Eireann only 11 workers out of 600 voted for action. Similar majorities were recorded in SIPTU.

Over 600 workers turned up to a meeting in the NBRU Hall in the Dublin. When its General Secretary, Peter Bunting called for unity between CIE workers he was given a standing ovation. Speakers who called for all-out strike across the company got a huge cheer.

On Friday 11th October over 2000 bus and railworkers marched to the CIE headquarters in Heuston station in a joint union demonstration. Most of the buses in Dublin stopped for a few hours while the demonstration took place.



Dublin Bus workers stopped work to march with other CIE workers to oppose the companies' plans

## The government wobbles

The scale of the action has shaken the Coalition government. Junior Minister Emmet Stagg has even denounced the 'declaration of all-out war against the workers of CIE'.

The *Irish Times* correspondent Padraig Yeates, who is close to the Democratic Left leader de Rossa, has even quoted a 'government source' who said 'a national strike in the run up to Christmas would be politically disastrous'.

Bus Eireann will be

out CIE. This is why workers should insist that the unions call a national transport strike if the cuts go ahead.

Workers have voted overwhelmingly for action and the mood for this type of unity exists. The scale of the attack warrants an equivalent response.

A national transport strike would paralyse the country and make it impossible for the government to use army strike breakers.

## Private

In the past they have used scabs among the private contractors to break the strike.

But the one thing that can stop them is solidarity action through-

## IRISH FERRIES

# 'They made £12 million profit so far this year but treat us like dirt'

Early in October several hundred Irish Ferries workers joined a lively march to Leinster House organised by an Action Group to fight the company's attack on jobs and conditions.

The Irish Ferries plans to shut down its Rosslaire-Le Havre service for the winter laying off 200 temporary and permanent workers from November 1996 until June 1997.

On their return to work they will be required to work two weeks on and one week off instead of the current two weeks on and two weeks off.

In addition their working week will be increased from 42 hours to 56 hours with no extra pay.

The workers will lose holiday and sick pay, temporary workers will suffer pay cuts and the company will pay no pension contributions over the winter break.

Irish Ferries workers are furious at this attempt to undermine their jobs and conditions. One worker told *Socialist Worker*, "They want us to be forced out so they can hire

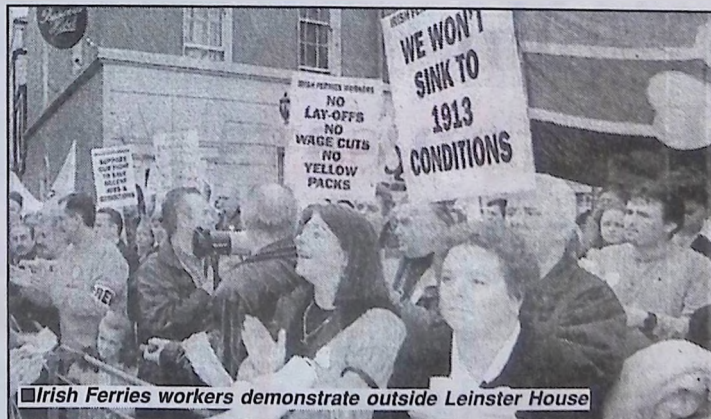
'Yellow Pack' crews from the third world with terrible conditions.

"It makes you sick. They made £12 million profit so far this year but they treat us like dirt."

Another worker said, "Myself and a few others have been on the line for ten seasons and were going to be made permanent this month—that's how long it takes. Instead management called us up and told us we can go to hell. I see no prospect of being made permanent."

Irish Ferries was formed when the Irish Continental Line was privatised. In 1992 Irish Ferries bought B+1 (the Dublin - Holyhead route) for a nominal £7.5 million while the government wrote off £39 million in debt.

Irish Ferries promised to integrate and develop the services but they have al-



Irish Ferries workers demonstrate outside Leinster House

lowed the Continental route to be run down.

Irish Ferries is the agent in Ireland for the Channel Tunnel and P and O.

One of the workers told *Socialist Worker*, "Passenger numbers are down, but we keep hearing of people being told there is no room on the

## Yellow Journalism

THAT WAS James Connolly's term for the gutter press. Already papers like the *Sunday Tribune* have been printing headlines like 'Bus Eireann drivers earn £35,000 a year'.

The small print informed the readers that the paper had found only two workers who got this figure.

## Owners

Next time the *Tribune* might like to run a headline about one of its own owners. We suggest "O'Reilly earns £70,000 a day"

## Don't be tied to the Industrial Relations Act

THE BIGGEST obstacle to a national transport strike now are the worries about the Industrial Relations Act.

This Thatcherite piece of legislation was introduced by the Fianna Fail leader Bertie Ahern with the connivance of some of the top union leaders.

It is understandable that NBRU members should be worried about its provisions as the union has previously been injuncted in Irish Rail.

But a myth has also developed that no real strike action can be officially called

because of this act. It is simply not true.

There is no reason why workers who have voted overwhelmingly in all three companies cannot begin strike action simultaneously.

## Seize

The union leaders should immediately name the date for this action to begin.

If CIE go to the courts to try to injunct the union, it should be faced down.

Throughout the garages several workers are already talking in these terms.

They know that others groups of workers in Irish Ferries and Aer Lingus are facing similar attacks to themselves and that a concerted movement is required.

Pressure to build for this type of action can only come from below. A strong network of rank and file militants is needed to keep the pressure up for serious action. A leaflet which promoted this type of network has already got a warm response.

Any attempt to seize the assets of a major transport union would bring a huge wave of solidarity from trade unionists.

In the sixties anti-strike legislation was defeated in the ESB when workers struck in defiance of it.

In the early seventies the Industrial Relations Act in Britain was rescinded after dockers defied it with a national strike.

The union have always had to stand up against the threats of these laws.

Now is not the time to be browbeaten by them.

## POST WORKERS VOTE TO CONTINUE STRIKE

ACROSS the North postal workers are voting on a new offer from Royal Mail.

But it makes no real concessions to the staff.

The same old demand for 'teamworking' is contained in the new proposals.

This would mean workers being forced to harrass each other in a drive to squeeze out more productivity.

At the Tomb Street depot in Belfast, management tried to call workers together to push across their propaganda for ending the strike.

But workers were having none of it and refused to give them a hearing.

industrial action after an overwhelming ballot in favour of the workers on the Le Havre route if there is no move from the company.

The Irish Ferries Workers Action Group has approached and received the support of the workers on the Dublin Holyhead route.

Le Havre sailing!  
"Instead they are being booked onto the Dublin sailing and then onward to the continent via the Channel Tunnel or P and O."

Another worker said, "It's as though they have a secret deal with P and O."  
The workers are planning

# Socialist Worker

## Fight the Jobseekers Allowance!



# Tories hit the poor to drive down pay

THE MOST savage attack for 50 years on those unfortunate enough to lose their jobs came into effect on Monday of last week. The Jobseekers Allowance has replaced unemployment benefit and income support.

It halves the time people can claim non means tested benefits from 12 to six months.

People who have paid national insurance contributions all their working lives will be robbed of half their benefits.

By the end of this month alone 25,000 people throughout Britain and Northern Ireland will lose their benefits.

Everyone will have to sign a "jobseekers agree-

ment" which will force them to prove they have applied for jobs.

### Clothes

They will have to obey "Jobseekers's Directives" which can force them to change their hairstyles or the clothes they wear to become acceptable to future employers.

Anyone who does not obey the strict new rules will have their benefit cut.

The Tories claim they want to cut crime. But the JSA will leave thousands of people so impoverished they will have no choice but to turn to crime if they want to survive.

Anyone made redundant will be forced after 13 weeks to take up any job, regardless of pay and conditions. Even if they refuse a job that pays just £1 an hour—they will get their benefit stopped.

The Tories want workers to be so fearful of losing their jobs, they will put up with longer hours, worsening conditions and low pay.

## Facts you should know

**Is your partner working more than 24 hours a week?**

You could have all your benefits stopped this week if you claim means tested JSA.

Have you been made redundant? Have you managed to save some money for the future?

You could lose your benefit after six months if you have savings of £8,000, and some of your benefit if you have over £3,000.

**Do you want to go to college to improve your chances of getting a job?**

You had better think again. Your benefit could be stopped if you study for more than sixteen hours a week.

Anyone studying will still have to prove that they are looking for work and are prepared to stop studying—or their benefit will be axed.

**Are you under 25?**

Then you could be at least £10 worse off under the JSA. Under the old system if you had worked you would be entitled to £46.45 a week unemployment benefit.

The maximum anyone under 25 can claim under the JSA is £37.90—even if you have worked and paid National Insurance contributions.

**Are you disabled or too ill to work?**

Tough. That's the message to 200,000 disabled people and ill people. They have been forced off incapacity benefit because of a tough new medical test, but will now have to prove they are "available to work" under the JSA.

**Have you ever forgotten to sign on or got the day muddled up?**

Now you can have your benefit suspended unless you show "good cause". Anyone who gets their signing on time wrong could be hit.

**What happens if I lose my benefit, is there a safety net?**

Not for thousands of people. The Tories have toughened up the rules to claim hardship money.

If you do not have children you will no longer be entitled to hardship money.

Even you are pregnant or have children to feed, you will now have to prove that you are in need, instead of being automatically entitled to help.

Anyone signing on is expected to take any job which meets current "Labour market conditions"

What this really means is everyone will be forced to take any job—paying poverty wages, with unsociable hours and even in a different town or city.

## The unions should take action

NIPSA the union representing civil servants across the North has condemned the JSA as 'unjust' and 'an attack on welfare claimants'.

But in Britain itself the unions have organised strike action against the JSA. On Monday and Tuesday of last week thousands of Benefit Agency workers struck against the way the JSA is being introduced.

The real question is why hasn't NIPSA moved in Northern Ireland. A strike would show that claimants and staff are on the one side. It would show that the workers have no responsibility for the Tory policies.

## WE CAN FIGHT

Dole cuts have been reversed in the North before. In the 1930s, the money paid on 'Outdoor Relief' schemes were cut to starvation levels. Protests grew as Protestants and Catholics united against the cuts.

Rioting broke out in both the Shankill and the Falls. It was a moment when working people stepped beyond the community pressures and united for a common class interest. And it scared the Unionist government at Stormont so much that they backed down.

## GET ACTIVE

■ If you or any of your friends have their dole cut, contact *Socialist Worker* sellers immediately.

■ If you want to help build an active fight against the JSA, work with your local SWP branch to get some action going.

□ I want to help build a fight against the JSA. I am willing to spread leaflets, put up posters and get involved in protests

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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