

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

50p

## inside

**Racist attack on Pearse Street:  
Community stands up to racism**



page 10

**The developers who pay for Fianna Fail** page 2

# CORRUPT TO THE CORE

# LET'S KICK

# OUT THIS

# ROTTEN

# GOVERNMENT

# TRADE UNIONS MUST CALL ACTION



**Victory to the Aldi strikers**  
—page 11

**Revolt against neo-liberalism in South America**  
— page 4

**Inflation shows Partnership is a con**  
— page 3

**Orange Order in crisis over Drumcree** —page 5

**GAY PRIDE: Out of the closet and onto the street** —page 9



## Owen O'Callaghan:

# The speculator who pays for Fianna Fail



Owen O'Callaghan FF Donor

**THE ACTIVITIES of the property speculator Owen O'Callaghan show how money talks in Irish politics.**

O'Callaghan became embroiled in controversy in 1995 when his company bought a site at Horgan's Quay in Cork from CIÉ for a cheap price.

When he was attacked in the Dail, three FF TDs leaped to his defence. All three received big donations from O'Callaghan. They included

- ★ Health Minister Michael Martin who received a total of £6,500 in payments.
- ★ Batt O'Keeffe who got £10,000 from O'Callaghan.
- ★ Mr Big, Liam Lawlor, who got £40,000 from the property shark.

O'Callaghan is one of the main backers of FF. At a secret dinner party in Cork, he donated £80,000 to the party. But he has every reason to be generous because he has gained a lot from his donations.

Charlie Haughey appoint-

ed O'Callaghan director of Bord Gáis. And Ahern did him an extra special favour.

A site which O'Callaghan partially owned in Athlone received a special tax concession from Ahern in 1994 - his very last day in office when no one else was around.

★ **THE GOVERNMENT is pressing ahead with building a £230 national stadium. And the most enthusiastic backer of the plan is Bertie Ahern.**

But the reason he may be so keen is because of a £50 million contribution from the tax exile JP McManus.

In 1989 Johnston Mooney & O'Brien sold a site in Ballsbridge to a company controlled by Dermot Desmond for £4 million and it was resold to the publicly-owned Bord Telecom a few months later for £9.4 million.

A High Court inspector found that J.P. McManus was "a true person interested in the success or failure" of the sale.

## Dublin North's mafia

**THE CONSTITUENCY of Dublin North is probably the most corrupt in the country.**

Dublin county councillors pushed through more land rezoning motions in that constituency than any other.

Fianna Fail TD for the area G.V. Wright in the early 1990s was a key contact for developers and their

## FG ON THE TAKE

**FINE GAEL has made a great fuss about wanting to clean up Irish politics but it is not forgetting its business friends.**

Fine Gael have just received £1000 from Bovale developments the company who bribed Ray Burke.

Co-incidentally, Bovale was the main company which funded George Redmond. Of course, it expects nothing in return for any of its donations.

agents seeking to persuade the council to make decisions that would give them huge financial benefits.

He has admitted he received at least £20,000 in eight donations from six developers and their agents.

## Cash

He got cash payments worth £10,000 from Frank Dunlop and a further £10,000 from O'Callaghan and others in less than two years.

Wright was the Fianna Fail whip on Dublin County Council, where FF councillors used to vote en bloc for developments.

The other TD in the area was Ray Burke who took hundreds of thousands of pounds in bribes from builders.

Wright is close a close friend of the Haughey family.

Charlie Haughey lives in the constituency and recently had land worth about £5million rezoned.

## inside the system

### THINGS THEY

*"The Socialist Workers Party is always there when I visit London. These people amaze me because they're always available any time of the day and night for a demonstration. It's extraordinary. I wish NATO's rapid reaction core was as available and could mobilise as quickly."*

■ **NATO press secretary Jamie Shea**

*"When we first appeared, darkened faces, sweat and aggression, brandishing rifles, the crowd stopped... turned to face us and raised hands. This is the way they were standing when they were shot."*

■ **A British soldier in his testimony to the Bloody Sunday inquiry**

*"Our honour is called loyalty."*

■ **Ernest Windholtz, boss of the far right Freedom Party in Lower Austria, repeats a Nazi SS motto**

## SECOND HAND MERC

**LOOKING FOR a second car? Well your local Fianna Fail ministers may be able to sell you their old merc.**

The government have just splashed out over £400,000 on a fleet of luxury Mercedes cars for Ministers.

## Decommission the DUP

**IAN PAISLEY'S DUP claims to be the strongest critic of the IRA's failure to decommission.**

It is therefore ironic that the DUP's William McCrea has been accused of asking the Loyalist Volunteer Force NOT to decommission.

A recent biography of David Trimble by local journalist Henry McDonald alleged that "a Unionist politician from the anti-Agreement camp" approached Portadown LVF leader Mark Fulton in 1998 "to seek to persuade that organisation not to decommission any of its weapons" as it might help Trimble's pro-agreement Unionists.

A motion by Labour MPs, including Harry Barnes, in the



The same old song

British parliament last week claimed that the politician in question was Rev William McCrea, former Mid-Ulster MP and now member of the Assembly.

McCrea is notorious for his links with Billy Wright's LVF.

Before Wright's murder McCrea appeared on a platform with him in Portadown in protest at a UVF death threat against him.

## BOOSHIT!

Management Today magazine is advertising a convention on "People and Profits in the New Economy". One of its "keynote" speakers is Anthony Coleman of the internet firm boo.com. Yes, the boo.com that just went bust.

## REYNOLDS THE E-PAWN

**FORMER Taoiseach Albert Reynolds sat on the advisory board of a company that was allegedly the first ever joint venture between the five top New York Mafia families.**

The company was known as E Pawn.

Reynolds had been promised a lot of money in share options, which he could cash next year. But poor Albert's shares may be worth buttons after the FBI taped conversations connected to some of E Pawn's dealings.

One of Reynolds main jobs for E Pawn was to link them up with FF businessmen in Ireland.

Up to last week, Marlborough Recruitment was due to enter a merger with E Pawn. Its directors, David McKenna and Des Richardson, have close links with FF. Des Richardson has acted as the party's fundraiser.

The rest of the media has shown sympathy for Reynolds because of these 'inappropriate' connections. *Socialist Worker* however is not so sure how 'inappropriate' they were.

## HOUSING:

# No answers from Bacon

**OVER 54,500 new houses are needed each year for the next five years to cope with the accommodation crisis in the Celtic Tiger.**

But the proposals from the right-wing economist-Peter Bacon offers little reassurance.

Bacon produced two previous reports on housing and argued that market forces could solve the issue.

He got it so wrong that he now has to issue a third report. Most of his new proposals are just long-term aspirations

Exempting first time buyers of second hand houses costing up to £150,000 from stamp duty will have no immediate effect on the housing market. The two percent anti-speculative property tax which is supposed to penalize investors will have hardly any effect.

The tax is to be administered on a self-assessment basis. It is an open invitation

to the rich to evade the tax.

Bacon has nothing to say about the price of land. In Dublin today eight wealthy individuals control the bulk of the land available for development.

If the government were serious about tackling the issue of housing there are a number of concrete things that they could set in motion immediately.

★ **Compulsory purchase orders** could be placed on development land and an immediate public housing building programme could begin.

★ **The assets of land speculators** like Bovale should be seized because they engaged in bribery.

★ **Rent controls** and security of tenure could be introduced to stop greedy landlords preying on tenants.

But the none of these proposals could happen as long as Fianna Fail politicians continue to safeguard the profit interests of their rich friends.



## what we think

# Price rises show up Partnership fraud

**PRICES ARE** soaring in the Celtic Tiger as inflation has jumped to 5.2 percent, its highest level in 15 years. This rate is three times higher than the average for the EU.

These price hikes make a mockery of the pay increases that were granted under the recent Partnership for Prosperity and Fairness. At the time Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy assured workers inflation would not rise above 3 percent for this year.

The trade union leaders joined in this chorus and SIPTU even produced a special economic assessment to back up McCreevy's forecasts.

Even though all of this has proved to be a nonsense, rank and file workers are supposed to pay the costs of their mistakes.

The official figures do not fully show how workers are loosing out because the Consumer Price Index has been deliberately constructed to underestimate huge costs. The full cost of mortgages or rents are not included even though these have shown the fastest growth. Childcare costs in Ireland are the dearest in the EU but their full impact is not reflected in official figures.

And even though inflation is high now, it is set to rise further. Last month the European Central Bank announced a further interest rate rise, which has not yet been fully passed on. Oil prices have also risen dramatically again. Huge rises are also due on health insurance.

All of this shows what a fraud social partnership is. Profit, prices, rents can all shoot through the roof but the only item, which is controlled, in the Celtic Tiger is wages.

Workers were conned into believing that inflation was under control - and when this turn out to be a fantasy we are still supposed to stick to a fraudulent agreement for three years.

No way.



## THE MINISTER FOR INFLATION

The solution of the union leaders is to plead with McCreevy to bring inflation under control. But this right wing Finance Minister has neither the means nor the will to do so.

Every capitalist boom brings a surge in prices. The system is not planned so when there is a sudden expansion there is a shortage of necessary resources, causing

prices to rise. On top of that the rich make huge profits and speculate in property, pushing up prices further.

In the past governments had some leeway by introducing subsidies or by adjusting interest rates. But neo-liberalism has meant that most government controls over the economy have been removed. And the most enthusiastic advocate of 'leave everything to the market' is Charlie McCreevy.

The ICTU answer is to call for

a reduction in VAT. But even if this occurred there is no guarantee that companies would pass on the reduction or that this would break the underlying inflationary trends..

The pleading to McCreevy is simply an excuse to avoid putting in extra wage claims.

### Comforts

The union leaders are so wedded to the comforts that social partnership brings them that they will allow their own members suf-

fer from the erosion of their pay packets.

SIPTU leader Des Geraghty justifies this passivity by claiming that higher wages bring more inflation.

But inflation has risen even though workers have been confined to tiny increases this year.

Traditionally wage increases are a response to inflation - not their cause. Failing to make a response does not mean inflation goes away - it just means workers tie themselves up while they are being robbed.

## Put in your wage claim

Workers should put in special claims to compensate for the price hikes. The teachers' union ASTI are putting in for a 30 percent claim and balloting for action from September.

Other groups such as the bankworkers have managed to win a special Dublin pay allowance for the extra cost of living in the capital. Pressure is also mounting in unions such as IMPACT for extra pay rises for lower grades.

The response of the union leaders in the public sector has been to talk about 'benchmarking'. This is a system that has been set up under the partnership pro-

gramme to pit workers against each other and to increase pressure on them to accept performance related pay.

Pretending that individual groups of workers will benefit from this system is like saying that competition between workers is good for the trade unions.

Rank and file trade unionists should follow the lead of unions like ASTI.

### Extra

The employers should be told that, as prices and productivity have risen, workers need extra pay.

The Celtic Tiger is set for a major winter of discontent. And it is time for the rank and file to start exercising their muscles now.

## JAIL THE CORRUPT POLITICIANS!

The trade unions  
must call action!

## PROTEST RALLY

**Saturday July 1st**  
**Assemble 3pm GPO, Dublin 1**

### Speakers:

Mick O'Reilly (ATGWU); Pat Cahill (ASTI); Des Bonass (Dublin Council of Trade Unions); Cian O'Callaghan (USI); John Gormley TD (Green Party); Kieran Allen (Socialist Workers Party); Joe Higgins TD (Socialist Party)





## - Argentina

# Revolt against 'Neo-liberalism'

A SINGLE horse and cart was the only transport moving in La Plata, Argentina, as the country was almost completely paralysed by a general strike in June.

The strike was in protest at government cuts in public spending and wages.

These policies are designed to placate bankers and the International Monetary Fund.

The leaders of the country's three rival union federations united for once to back the call, and between 85 and 92 percent of employees backed it.

School teachers, lorry drivers, bus workers, engineering workers, local government workers and construction

workers all stopped work.

Pensioners and unemployed people joined the movement, blocking bridges and motorways.

The government "adjustment" programme slashes services, increases unemployment and cuts wages by 15 percent.

Even the country's Catholic church appealed to the International Monetary Fund to show compassion in the face of rising hardship and hunger.

But the bitterness goes deeper than the immediate issue.

### Wave

The country's president, De La Rúa, was elected only a few months ago on a wave of dissatisfaction with his predecessor, Menem.

But De La Rúa has

continued with the free market "neo-liberal" policies of his predecessor.

The resulting bitterness forced the rival union leaders to call for action.

Unfortunately, no sooner had they made a show of strength with the strike than the union leaders agreed to enter once more into a dialogue with the government.

### Divide

Historically Argentine politics has been dominated by the divide between the Peronists, who hark back to the rule of the military leader Juan Peron after World War Two, and the Radicals, who opposed Peron.

Each got the support of different sections of Argentine business, but the Peronists got the support of the unions as well.

In recent years both parties have followed essentially the same economic policies as all sections of business have looked to link up with foreign multinationals, and to make Argentine work-

## - Ecuador



Storming the parliament in January

A MOVEMENT of indigenous people and workers came close to overthrowing Ecuador's government in January.

But people were fobbed off by promises from the country's generals.

Now attempts are being made to revive the movement.

Health workers, oil workers and teachers called for a national strike in early June.

It was in protest at the replacement of the country's currency by the dollar, and increases in the prices of electricity and gas.

Meanwhile the government has been attempting to break a four week long strike of 113,000 school teachers.

It seized two leaders of their union and threw them into prison, at the same time as offering a small salary increase in an attempt to weaken support for the action.

## - Nigeria

# Price rises spark fury

A GENERAL strike in Nigeria, Africa's most heavily populated country, has rocked the government and its international backers.

The strike was in protest at a 50 percent rise in petroleum product prices. The government of President Olusegun Obasanjo made some concessions in an effort to stop the strike starting.

But the Nigeria Labour Congress said it wanted all the price rises withdrawn.

### Apology

After five days of the strike the unions and the government agreed a 10 percent rise. Obasanjo had to make a public apology.

The higher fuel price

was part of Obasanjo's policy of deregulation and ending subsidies as demanded by the International Monetary Fund as a condition for a new \$1 billion loan.

IMF endorsement of Obasanjo's policies could also help Nigeria's campaign for relief from £20 billion of foreign debts.

### Successful

The strike was instantly successful.

It closed Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, and also the industrial city of Ibadan.

Most of Nigeria's 108 million people welcomed Obasanjo's election a year ago after a long period of military rule. But now they find he is governing for the rich.

## - Germany

# Mass anger against pay cuts

PUBLIC SECTOR unions in Germany were locked in talks with the government over possible pay strikes as Socialist Worker went to press.

The unions represent over three million workers. The last major public sector strikes in Germany were in 1992, under the Tory government of Helmut Kohl.

Rubbish piled up in the street, public transport ground to a halt and other services were hit for 11 days. This time workers are protesting against a government led by the Social Democratic Party

(SPD), the equivalent to the Labour Party.

The ÖTV and DAG public sector unions voted heavily for strikes. This followed strike votes by the teachers' union and the police union.

### Pressure

Union leaders are under great pressure to fight for a 5 percent pay increase. Members of the ÖTV and DAG overruled their leaders, who recommended accepting a smaller pay rise.

The votes have thrown the government, a coalition between the SPD and the Greens, into panic.

German leader

Gerhard Schröder has fought to hold wages down over the last two years. He has tried to woo big business. But he has been forced to take account of the bitterness of German workers who see a recovery and rising profits for major corporations while unemployment remains high and wages are held down.

So Schröder had to step in last year to stave off tens of thousands of job losses in the construction industry after a major company went bankrupt.

The public sector workers' campaign strikes at the heart of the government's careful balancing act.

If Schröder bends

ers suffer as they do so.

Union leaders have continued, however, to encourage the illusion that one is better than the

other.

The strike showed that the real division in Argentina, as elsewhere in Latin America, is one

of class.

It comes after similar strikes, demonstrations and riots against "neo-liberal" policies in

Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia and Guatemala.

In them all, there is a reawakening of class-based protest movements.

towards the unions, he will generate opposition from big business.

But if he takes on the public sector workers, he risks alienating working class support, which the SPD has only just begun to regain.

He was hoping union leaders could sell a compromise deal to save him having to come down on one side or the other.

Schröder is pushing a programme of tax cuts through the German parliament.

It will reduce the top rate of income tax from 51 percent to 45 percent and slash taxes on company profits.

The government has also launched a major

assault on pensions.

It wants to raise pension contributions to 22 percent of earnings while cutting pension payouts from 70 percent to 64 percent of average earnings.

It is looking to force people to retire later.

The conservative CDU has tried to tap into the disillusionment these Thatcherite policies have created.

It has swung sharply to the right and tried to win support by scapegoating asylum seekers in a recent important regional election. But they have not broken through.

The mood of public sector workers shows the potential for a focus to the left of the government.



# Eamonn McCann

## The Assembly, choice and Willie McCrea

**IF WILLIE McCrea had never been born it would be necessary to circumvent him.**

But then, if McCrea had his way that wouldn't be possible. The ranting fundamentalist who stood shoulder to shoulder with Billy Wright in Portadown and who once told us that heaven rejoices every time a "rebel" dies, would like us to believe that he's "pro-life". In McCrea's book, it's only after people are born that it becomes permissible to kill them.

And he's not the only one. As the debate on abortion at Stormont on June 20th showed, both the Ulster Unionists and the SDLP take the same essential line.

*Sinn Fein and the Women's Coalition at least make a stand against the howling bigotry of the anti-choice extremists. But neither supports the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act to the North. Thus, remarkably, the only Assembly party giving unequivocal backing to a woman's right to choose and the extension of the Act is the PUP.*

This despite the fact that every poll shows opinion in the North more or less evenly split on the issue.

This should give supporters of the right to choose cause to ponder whether the Assembly is the splendid institution many of them seem to imagine.

The Assembly, following the pattern of the Agreement, creates, in effect, two separate electorates, defined by religious affiliation. The major parties compete with one another over which is the more authentic and vigorous representative of one or other community. The result is constant pressure to conform to "traditional" ideas and an unwillingness to stray too far from what's seen as acceptable to whichever community a party "belongs" to.

### Challenge

The system might have been purpose-built to prevent the emergence of new ideas or any challenge to the "two communities" model of politics.

The irony is that abortion, of course, isn't a new issue at all, but older than any of the ancient orders which define conventional politics in the North. But on abortion, as on much else, if we are to move beyond the old order we'll have to mobilise outside the confines of the Assembly, on the streets rather than at Stormont.

The cold statistics — 1,600 women a year minimum travelling to England for terminations — as well as opinion poll results and all personal experience, suggest that there's a sizable pro-choice constituency to be mobilised. But it cannot be mobilised in support of a party based on the interests of one community vis-a-vis the other.

*This creates both opportunities and responsibilities for socialists and for others who see themselves as standing outside the sectarian paradigm.*

The "pro-life" crowd has had an easy ride in the North. They are rarely confronted as they distribute their dishonest propaganda outside shopping centres or gather to harrass and intimidate women using family planning centres. Outfits like the Women's Coalition not only fudge the issue, they actively oppose any perspective which involves openly facing up to the "pro-lifers".

*Others argue against mobilisation for fear of embarrassing Republicans—or collapse back onto the disreputable argument that people who want to break the link with Britain can't be expected to campaign for the extension of a "British" act. In fact, the 1967 Act governs practice in the "British" National Health Service, over the Irish operation of which Ms. Bairbre de Brun is simperingly pleased to preside.*

If the DUP hadn't raised the issue, abortion wouldn't have surfaced at Stormont at all. Forty women a week would have continued to trudge to England to exercise their right to control their own bodies, while parties and political activists who regard themselves as ultra-progressive sing dumb and do nothing.

Abortion is one of the defining issues for progressive and socialist politics in the North. It's time for all those who are pro-choice in theory to join the SWP and others in building a practical campaign for a woman's right to choose, and against ludicrous hate-mongers like Willie McCrea.



Where have all the marchers gone?

# Orange Order in crisis over Drumcree march

**THE PLANS for a standoff at Drumcree this year have exposed a deep crisis in the Orange Order.**

The Education Committee of the Orange Order, seen as its moderate wing, resigned en masse after a meeting of the Grand Lodge voted to refuse to speak to the Parades Commission about the Drumcree march.

A leading member of the committee, Rev Brian Kennaway, said "If the Orange Order doesn't change its ways, it will be finished in ten year's

time." Kennaway spoke of the "constant haemorrhaging" of members over the Drumcree issue.

The Orange Order in Portadown has applied for four marches between 2 July and 9 July, clearly aimed at stoking tension.

### Encouraged

They have been encouraged to think that the British Government might allow the parade down the Garvaghy Road this year as a "concession to Unionists".

Peter Mandelson and Tony Blair's office have been involved in behind the scenes manoeuvres to resolve the Drumcree issue.

**Drumcree has become a symbol of the steep decline in the Orange Order. The crisis in the Orange Order has its roots in the fracturing of Unionist power in Northern Ireland.**

The hardliners in the Orange Order have wanted to use Drumcree to rally support for unionism.

*In 1995 and 1996, Unionist politicians like Ian Paisley and David Trimble associated themselves with the protests.*

Unionist Party members manned roadblocks with loyalist paramilitaries all over Northern Ireland.

But instead, Drumcree has become a symbol of the steep decline in the Orange Order.

An attempt at a standoff in 1998 collapsed when the Quinn children in Ballymoney were murdered in a wave of petrol bomb attacks on Catholic houses, associated with the standoff.

The Orange Order has struggled ever since to distance itself from the murders, but it is clearly worried about the connection.

The crisis in the Orange Order has its roots in the fracturing of Unionist power in Northern Ireland.

In times past, it was possible for the Orange Order to offer working class Protestants access to jobs and a head start in the queue for housing.

Most Protestant workers saw little return for their loyalty, as they continued to live in terrible housing conditions and work in low paid jobs.

But there was at least a basis to the illusion of a common interest between themselves and Protestant bosses.

Now there is nothing of the kind. Unemployment blights Protestant areas.

### Inefficient

*The gap between rich and poor Protestants was shown dramatically when John Taylor blamed the workers in the Harland and Wolff shipyard for the threat of closure, saying they were too inefficient.*

The Orange Order can only offer the empty symbolism of Protestant unity and channel the despair of ordinary Protestants in a right-wing direction, fuelling resentment towards Catholics.

That is why their protests attract the thugs of the LVF in Portadown.

But the real alternative to poverty among Protestant workers is to focus the anger on Trimble and Blair.

It is they who preside over a system that exploits all workers.

Breaking out of the sectarian dead end will require socialist politics.

The crisis in the Orange Order shows how big the opening for these politics has become.

## Precious bigots attacks women's rights

**PRECIOUS LIFE is a small group of anti-abortionists who are behind the DUP's attempt to ban abortion in Northern Ireland even though it is legal throughout the rest of the UK.**

They intimidated the Ulster Pregnancy Advisory Association (UPAA) into closing in 1999.

Now, they say the fall in the official numbers of Northern Ireland women having abortions in Britain is due to their 'exposing the truth about abortion'.

UPAA referred 1100 of the 1600 women with NI addresses officially recorded throughout the 80s and 90s.

As a result of their closure some women may have been unable to arrange an abortion on time.

The Family Planning Association's demand for pregnancy counselling now is so great that there have been delays of 2 to 3 weeks in getting a first appointment.

No doubt, some women have seen the gory photos of fully formed fetuses and decided if THAT is abortion, they want nothing to do with it.

But Precious Life, like Youth Defence in the South, do not 'expose' the reality of abortion

### information

Nine out of 10 abortions in Britain are before the 12th week of pregnancy when the foetus can hardly be seen. Up to nine weeks women living in England can take a pill, RU486 which causes an early miscarriage that looks like a heavy period.

Precious Life don't give people this information.

Difficulties getting information and money means NI women are three times more likely to have abortions after 20 weeks than the norm in Britain.

The official figures for NI abortions in England have never been accurate, because so many give English addresses.

With UPAA gone, hundreds of women make their own way to England and, unsure of the legality of their situation, give an English address.

No woman should have to pay extra costs because of the activities of the DUP and Precious Life.

Abortion should be provided freely by the NHS in Northern Ireland.



## AIDS crisis

# Drug companies sick profits

US PRESIDENT Bill Clinton has recently declared that AIDS and HIV are the biggest calamities facing humanity. He is right - but his government is making it worse.

The United Nations estimates that a total of 33.4 million people are living with HIV globally and 95 percent of them are in the developing world. Sub-Saharan Africa has taken a disproportionate toll, with a total of 22.5 million cases at the end of 1998.

A report in 1998 suggested that over 700 AIDS related deaths occur each week in Zimbabwe.

AIDS is now the leading cause of death in the developing world, causing twice as many deaths as malaria. In Zimbabwe 60 percent of all hospital beds are currently occupied by patients with an underlying HIV infection and by 2005 60 percent of the health budget will be required to meet the needs of patients with HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects the poor and disadvantaged. Poverty increases a person's susceptibility to the disease.

In South Africa Mark Heywood who is the head of the AIDS Law Project at the University of Witwatersrand says "The HIV and AIDS epidemic in South Africa affects primarily African people who are poor and particularly among poor black people."

"That is a reason why there isn't a significant response from big business, for example. Because big business is still very much in the hands of white people - of rich white people. And I personally believe that big business has inherited and maintains this callousness, this disregard, this lack of concern for African life that was built up under apartheid. Politicians who do not want to face up to the issue exacerbate the problem. The South African President recently said that there was no proven link between HIV and Aids."

In Zimbabwe the priorities of the Mugabe regime is for arms spending rather than healthcare. But the main culprit is corporate greed.

In recent years new drugs have been invented which can suppress some of the symptoms of AIDS. They have become available to wealthy patients in the US and Europe and have prolonged their life and reduced their suffering.

But the drug companies have capitalised on the situ-

by **SIMON BASKETTER**

ation by charging huge prices for these drugs.

In response, a number of developing countries have sought to gain access through a system known as compulsory licensing. This means that the state gives permission to local companies to manufacture the new drugs by paying a modest royalty to the multi-national, which holds the patent.

In Thailand, Medics Sans Frontiers has shown that the price of a drug called Fluconazole which could treat a fungicidal infection in the brain fell from \$14 dollars a day when Pfizer had controlled its manufacture to just \$2 a day when a compulsory licence order was introduced.

One in five AIDS victims in Thailand suffers from this infection. And the daily minimum wage in the country is just \$5 a day.

However the US government put Thailand under huge pressure not to interfere with the profits of Pfizer.

It has been the same story in South Africa. Al Gore, the Democratic contender for the US Presidency has surrounded himself with lobbyists from the pharmaceutical industry.

When he announced his candidacy, AIDS activists protested outside the building because Gore had tried to force the South African government to abandon compulsory licensing. One of the drugs that South Africa wished to manufacture was Taxol which could help in the treatment of cancer.

The drug was developed through subsidies from the US tax payer but was then handed over to Bristol Myers Squibb who took out a patent on it. They protested vigorously when South Africa wanted to produce a generic brand of the drug and got Gore to do their dirty work for them.

It is estimated that drug treatment for AIDS in South Africa costs an average of \$12,000 a year. But the average wage in the country is \$2,600.

So behind all of Clinton's 'statesman' like speeches there is a huge hypocrisy.

And that hypocrisy is born from a system that has always put corporate greed before human need.

**The United Nations estimates that a total of 33.4 million people are living with HIV globally and 95 percent of them are in the developing world**

## Call centres:

# 21st Century slaves

NOVEMBER 1999 may not stick in your head as an important date in the workers' movement. But it was a significant month as it saw the first major industrial action in the tele sales industry, or as its workers put it, the "dark satanic mills of the twenty-first century."

**'How you can tell an adult he's not allowed to go to the toilet is beyond belief'**

Workers in thirty seven BT call centres across Britain downed tools - namely headsets, scripts and the painkillers needed to cope with the job, in protest against low pay, long hours and bullying by management.

Bullying is a big issue in tele-sales. Management often demands that all calls be completed in 258 seconds.

They have strict regulations on break-times, and even forbid workers to go to the toilet outside of their official breaks.

**'I have a degree in English and Media Studies. This is not the career I imagined myself ending up in'**

"How you can tell an adult he's not allowed to go to the toilet is beyond belief," said Jeff Morgan, who works in BT's Glasgow call centre.

Jeff was victimised for wearing a rosette supporting workers involved in action against the company.

He was singled out for his involvement in the Communication Workers Union. This is not surprising. Call centres or tele sales centres are notorious for being anti-union.



**"Destroying the workers body and poisoning their mind"**

And with a government in this country that shares that philosophy, it's no surprise to see the industry growing at a rapid rate here.

Dotted around the M50, from

the Airport to Citywest in Tallaght, which Pat Rabbitte fell over himself to praise, call-centres are growing up like mushrooms overnight.

They now employ thousands of Irish people and recruit widely

among students, mothers returning to the workforce, and increasingly among young graduates who are fast becoming disillusioned with the promises of the Celtic Tiger.

"I have a degree in English and

Media Studies. The career I imagined up in," said Laura, call centre in East V. She spends every looking for another

# WHITE COLLAR SLAVES

**IF YOU believe the spin of Mary Harney or Charlie McCreevy, call-centres are part of the new economy where workers are satisfied with their white-collar careers and old labour practices no longer apply.**

This is a very attractive idea, both for the bosses and the bureaucrats within the trade union movement who have given up on the idea of industrial action. But it is far from the truth.

Just because we have swapped spanners and shovels for tele-

phones and PCs doesn't change the relationship between workers and capitalism. We are still selling our labour, often at an extremely low rate. Unifi, the union for financial workers in Britain estimates that most of the pay-packets in the industry are half the national average wage.

## Entitled

Although some may earn £17,000 a year, the majority earn between £10,000 and £13,000. Some pay as little as £8,000. That's just over £150 a week.

The same is true in Ireland. Jobs are advertised as paying £7 or £8 an hour but this is the maximum achievable including bonuses. In a

bad week, workers in some Dublin call-centres come out with just £160 after tax, having worked 45 hours.

ICT, an American company with its European headquarters in Dublin, made \$120,000,000 in profits 1999. But its staff are only paid between £4 and £6 an hour.

BT earned £15.9 billion in 1999 but refused to pay its call-centre staff the extra 15-minute break they were entitled to under European law. Highlighting this was one of the things that got Jeff Morgan in trouble with management in the Glasgow call centre.

The idea that these jobs are somehow less alienating than jobs in a shipyard or a mine is also untrue. Sue Ferrie from the London School of Economics said:

"The tyranny of the assembly line is but a Sunday School picnic compared with the control that management can exercise in computer telephony."

When Marx wrote of the workers under capitalism that it was "destroying their body and poisoning their mind", he was thinking of children cleaning looms and men and women working 18 hour days down the mines.

But the quote describes exactly the condition of the white-collar worker at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In call-centres, the same tasks are mechanically repeated. There is no scope for individuality. It is not unheard of for workers to be fired for deviating from the script. Many complain of repetitive strain

injury and blindness from staring at a monitor. Others develop from sitting in the same well as this, there is mental alienation that it is possible to suffer from having a conversation. Sickness rates are high and staff turnover is high as 80% of Management praise flexible working practices that allows students to earn extra money but what this means is that staff are forced into getting no break.



by PAUL McCARTHY

# My sweat shops

## what do socialists say?

### Why immigration controls are racist

**THE NEXT time you are at Dublin Airport take a look at the people targeted by immigration officials. Nine times out of ten, the face will be black..**

David, who has lived in Ireland for over 18 years, described his regular fate at Dublin Airport to Socialist Worker. "I have to travel abroad a lot because of my job and every time I come back it is always the same. No whites in front of me will be stopped.

#### Interrogate

But I will be stopped and they interrogate me. Where are you coming from? How long are you planning on staying in Ireland? I have to carry my passport with me all the time even if I am just going to London. One time that wasn't enough and I was held for 3 hours."

David's story is not uncommon due to racist climate being whipped up in Ireland and Europe against asylum seekers. When politicians talk about controlling immigration they are not talking about white Americans, Australians or Europeans. The real targets of immigration controls are always black people.

Experience around the world has shown that once a government tightens immigration laws, racists become more confident and attacks against black people increase.

In October 1999

Jorg Haider's far right anti-immigration Freedom Party captured 27 percent of the vote, making it the second largest in Austrian politics. Austria has consistently tightened its immigration law over the last five years and has opposed EU membership for a number of former Eastern European countries claiming that it would be "flooded" by asylum seekers.

Nazi parties like Haider's Freedom Party grow in environments where immigrants are seen as a problem. They seek to build influence by deflecting people's anger away from those at the top of society.

Despite this it is sometimes argued that what we need is fair, non-racist immigration controls, which will keep numbers in check..

But this makes a dangerous concession to racists. Firstly it is a myth that there are huge numbers of people just waiting to come here. Ireland has taken in approximately 12,000 asylum seekers over the last three years. This represents just 0.2 percent of all refugees internationally. One of the world's poorest countries, Tanzania in West Africa, hosts over a million refugees. This is one for every fifty local people, compared to one for every thousand people in Ireland.

Demands for immigration controls concedes that immigrants are a burden when the opposite is clearly the case. Every immigrant has the ability to work and produce wealth for the society we live in. The cost of their own education is born by their own country and when they

move to Ireland it is effectively a transfer of wealth.

Europe has a chronic labour shortage and the Celtic Tiger has a bigger one than most. If capital is free to move around the world and built factories and offices wherever it wants, then why should not labour be free to follow it?

Immigration controls are only ever used against the poor. If you are rich you can travel the world without any difficulty. Fianna Fail politicians may hate refugees but they'll sell a passport to anyone with enough money.

Charles Haughey and Ray Burke oversaw a scheme where you could buy an Irish passport for £1 million.

#### Invested

One businessman who obtained an Irish passport for his wife and son later invested £1.1 million in C&D foods, the company owned by former Fianna Fail Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds.

Reynolds is also a close personal friend of the former Mexican dictator Carlos Salinas who lives here in order to avoid charges connected with drug dealing and murder.

The purpose of all immigration controls is not to defend tax payers from 'bogus' immigrants but to imply that there is a 'national community' where Irish people have to be protected against foreigners. But the main protection we need is against the Irish rich who rob us blind while trying to divert our anger onto immigrants.

by SINEAD KENNEDY

## Picking up where the bombers left off

**SO WHERE did this industry come from? Some economists drool over a post-industrial fantasy, imagining millions of happy workers in glass towers in London, Hong Kong or Singapore.**

In fact, the call-centre capital of the world, and the birthplace of the industry, is Nebraska. Right in the middle of the American plains, Omaha and Lincoln have the highest concentration of telesales and telemarketing workers anywhere.

What is attracting the 'pioneers' of the new economy to a part of the world usually associated with farming and 'old' industry? Nebraska has the best telecommunications network in the US.

Why? Because it is also the location of the Strategic Air Command - the centre from which atomic destruction would be unleashed on the world in the event of a nuclear war.

Set up in the late 1940's and developing further in the 50's as the Cold War set in, the SAC required the construction of communications that could survive a nuclear attack. From an air-base out in the cornfields, the US military keeps one jet in the air at all times, from which the command to fire missiles may be given.

#### Disillusionment

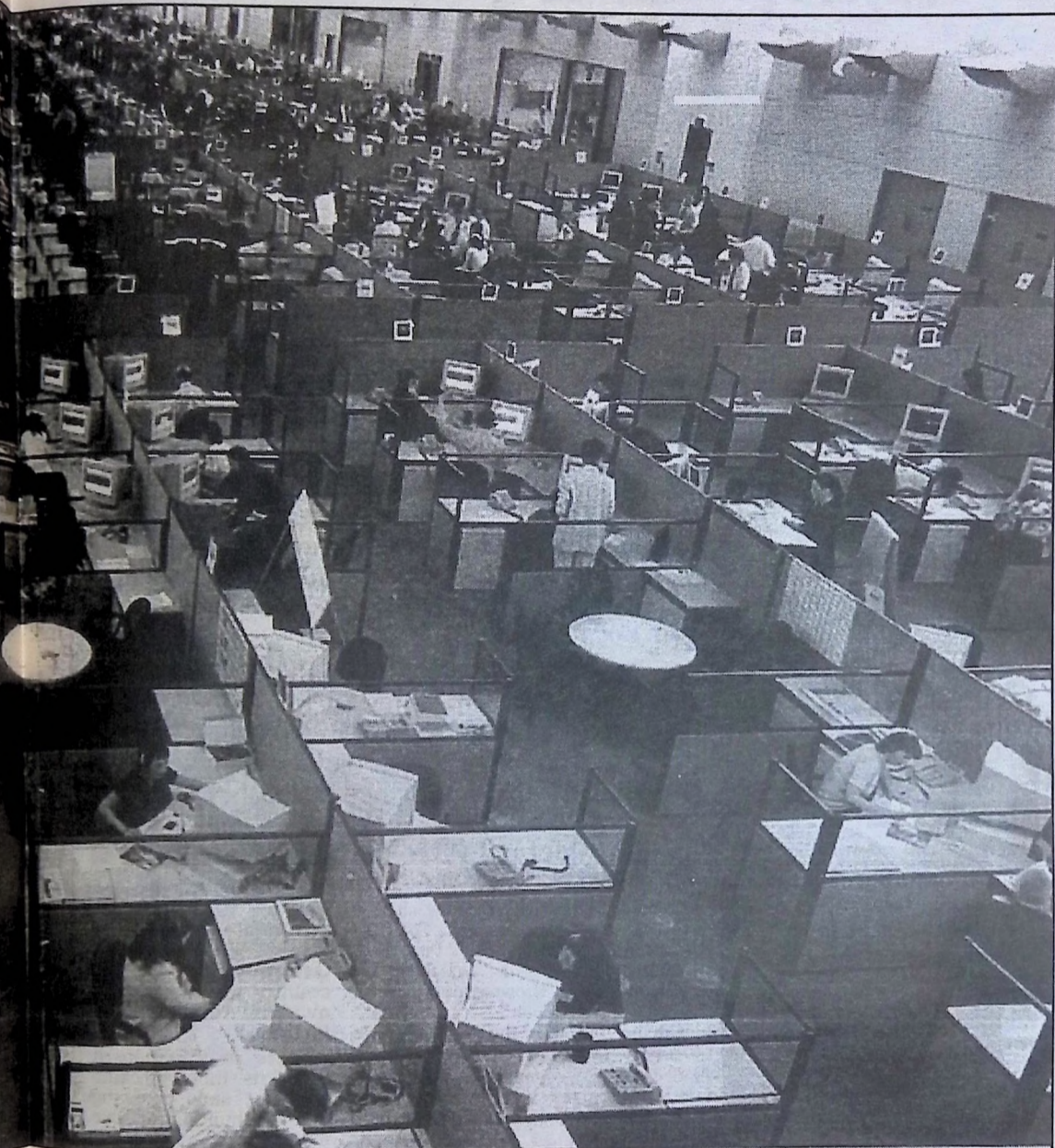
As détente and the easing of tension with the USSR set in, part of the network became available for commercial use and the banks were not slow to step in. Socialist Worker spoke to one man who used to work there and now does the same job in Dublin!

"Those places are about rip-

ping people off. Workers and customers. The job I did was selling credit to people who really couldn't afford it. We would call them up, offering low rates and usually throw in some free gift, worth absolutely nothing. The amount of families who ended up in debt was frightening. Some people we called were so lonely they'd agree to anything just to have a conversation."

The disillusionment of these workers is beginning to turn against management and many are talking of the need for unions. SIPTU and the ATGWU should be outside these telecentres with leaflets encouraging workers to join. They should guarantee to stick by them until they win their rights.

Winning union recognition would be a major victory for workers all over Ireland. Winning the workforce of the high-tech industry to socialist politics will be crucial for the left international-



ers returning increasingly...  
Media Studies. This is not the career I imagined myself ending up in," said Laura, who works in a call centre in East Wall. She spends every spare second looking for another job.

**SLAVERY**

injury and blinding headaches from staring at a monitor all day. Others develop back problems from sitting in the same position, in inadequately designed chairs. As well as this, there is the immense mental alienation the job entails. It is possible to spend all day on the phone to people without ever having a conversation. Sickness rates are double the average of the financial industry and staff turnover is sometimes as high as 80% every year. Management praises the idea of flexible working hours, claiming this allows single mothers or students to earn extra cash. But what this often means is staff are forced to work unsocial hours, or part-time workers get no break.

assembly line...  
note of the work...  
describes exactly...  
s, the same tasks...  
for workers to be...  
of repetitive strain

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

**Socialist**

Ideas to change the world  
New Labour, refugees and  
racism; PLUS film, book and  
arts reviews.

£1.50 from your Socialist Worker seller or from P.O. Box 1648, Dublin 8



## Right-wing politics in crisis, so...

# Why does Labour fail?

**T**he government is discredited by a wave of corruption scandals. There is huge discontent about the way the Celtic Tiger has led to a growing class division. Yet the Labour Party is still languishing at the bottom of the opinion polls.

Even after the merger with Democratic Left, there is no sign of a break through.

Some argue that this shows that Ireland is a conservative country, which is too accepting of corruption. If Labour cannot grow in support now it is simply because the whole political culture is stacked against it.

But this is a travesty. Seventy years ago, the future Fianna Fail leader, Sean Lemass, explained the central weakness of the Irish Labour Party - they never gained mass support because they were afraid to seem too radical.

*Lemass claimed that "the outstanding characteristic of the Labour Party is that it is the most respectable party in the state ... So long as they cannot be accused of being even pale pink in politics they seem to think they have fulfilled their function towards the Irish people".*

Throughout the most recent scandals, Labour has pulled its punches. It has never denounced Bertie Ahern as a liar. It has not openly called for jail sentences for Haughey, Burke or Lawlor. It has not called for the Criminal Assets Bureau to seize the assets of banks, which organised a conspiracy to avoid tax.

The reason for this strange silence is that Labour itself is implicated in the crooked networks of the political establishment. The party leader Ruairi Quinn presided over the tax amnesty for rich cheats when he was Minister of Finance.

During the inquiry into the DIRT scam, there was nothing to distinguish his record from the more right wing finance ministers.

Key Labour figures such as Quinn himself and Pat

by KIERAN ALLEN

Rabbitte have taken substantial donations from big business.

Labour is frightened that if it pushes too hard on corruption, some of the flak will fall back on itself. It is also committed to managing Irish capitalism and does not want to de-stabilise the situation.

**T**he inevitable consequence of this super-modernisation, is that Labour does not break the electoral allegiance of thousands who have voted FF.

It has been a similar story throughout the party's history. The party was initially founded by James Connolly but the machinery of the new organisation was put in place after his death. In 1925, its then leader Tom Johnson proclaimed that he would only lead a party that broke with Connolly's revolutionary tradition.

In clumsy language he wrote that he was 'a community-ist and a nation-ist before I am a trade unionist'. The party had to 'preach the gospel of faithful service - for the uplifting of the nation materially and spiritually'.

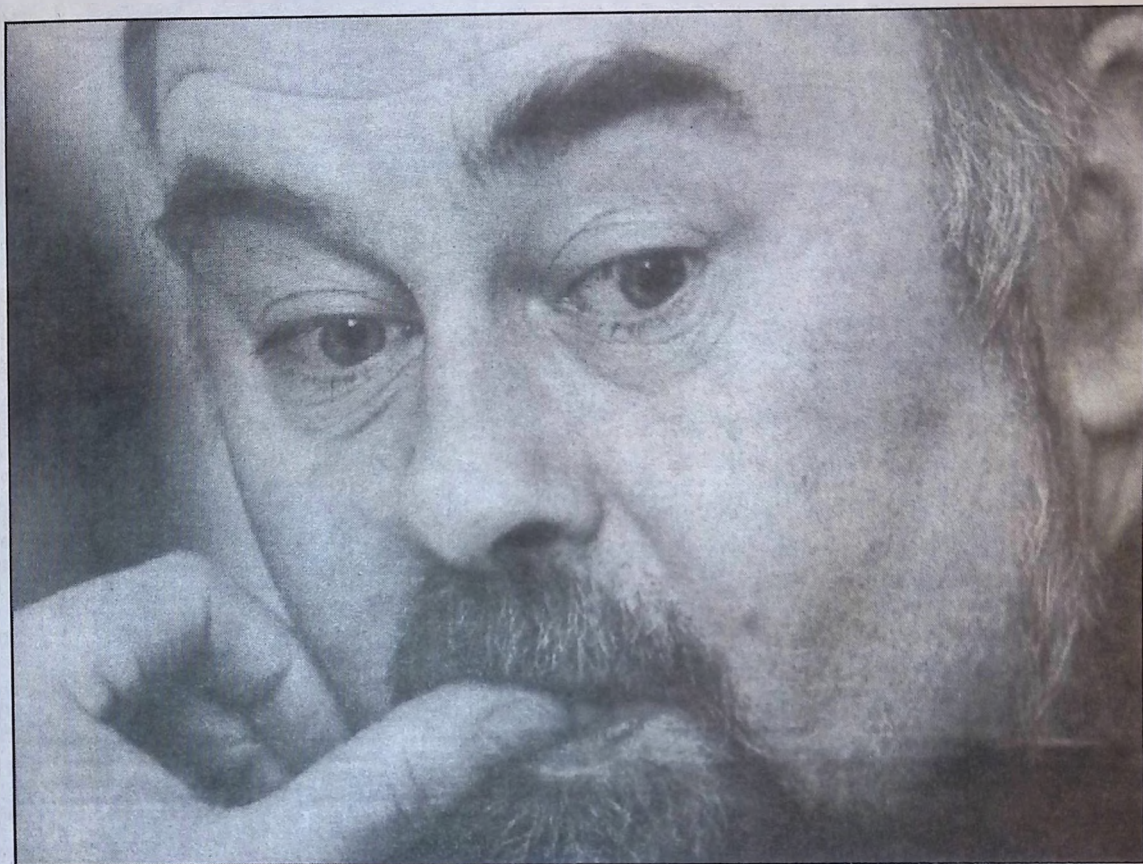
At one level this meant adapting to the growing popularity of FF which was trying to develop a radical image.

In 1929, the Labour Party paper, the Irishman claimed that "there is no doubt of the attitude of deputy de Valera towards the trade unions. He is and has been fully sympathetic". In 1932, Labour backed the first Fianna Fail government.

But Labour also choose the worst of all possible worlds. It was both supportive of FF but yet managed to sound less radical than them.

At the end of the 1920s, FF built up considerable support in rural areas by backing the campaign not to pay annuities - left over loans for the purchase of land - to Britain.

Labour however



Ruairi Quinn wonders if anyone will turn up to the next golf classic

denounced this campaign as illegal.

Tom Johnson wrote, 'the purchasing tenants had no justification in law or morality for repudiating their liability to pay annuities'.

*Some political commentators such as the former television presenter Brian Farrell argued that Irish political allegiances were set by the civil war and as Labour lost out on this main 'cleavage', it was doomed to a marginal role in Irish politics thereafter.*

But in almost every country the voting allegiances of workers shifted after they went through the experience of mass struggles.

In Britain, the allegiance of workers at the end of the 19th was predominantly to the Liberal Party. But the upsurge in working class struggle prior to WWI helped to shift millions to Labour.

**I**n Ireland the legacy of nationalism meant that the union leaders and Labour politicians did their best to prevent these mass struggles occurring.

Workers were told that they had a role to play in building up the national economy and should show loyalty to their own state.

By the 1940s, the leaders of Ireland's main union the Irish Transport and General Workers Union had formed an unofficial allegiance with FF.

They co-operated with the party in trying to drive British based unions such as the ATGWU out of the country. They also worked with FF and the Bishops to smash any openings to the Left.

Even before McCarthyism stalked America, they launched a red scare which meant the Labour Party split into a National Labour Party, which was essentially an adjunct of FF and a super moderate Labour Party which was too timid to voice any radical sentiment.

**I**n 1947, a huge wave of industrial struggle broke out. Across the countryside, workers belonging to the newly formed Federation of Rural Workers staged sit-ins and formed camp councils.

FF's paper, the Irish Press, ran a banner headline 'Class Conflict cannot continue says De Valera'.

Even though Labour was timid, the rise in class conflict helped to break the allegiance of thousands to FF.

But then Labour and Clann na Poplachta a populist

radical party threw all that away by joining a Coalition government with Fine Gael and crushing a scheme by Noel Browne to provide a free health service simply because the bishops were opposed to it.

A similar pattern occurred in the sixties.

A huge wave of militancy stopped attempts by US multi-nationals such as EI in Shannon from banning unions.

In the ESB workers defied the law and were jailed - but their own management were forced to order a fleet of taxis to bring them home.

At first the militancy translated into huge support for Labour when it used left rhetoric and claimed that "The seventies would be socialist".

*Membership grew from 9,100 in 1966 to 15,300 in 1969 and in the local elections in Dublin in 1967, the Labour vote quadrupled.*

But once again the union and Labour Party leaders got cold feet and denounced union militancy when they thought it went 'too far'.

After maintenance workers picketed out hundreds of workplaces, the union leaders denounced the 'anarchy' and co-operated with FF to bring in National Wage agreements to limit wage rises and introduced the notorious two tier picket system.

**B**y 1973, Labour again rushed into Coalition with Fine Gael claiming that the country was in a crisis over the Northern conflict.

Once in Coalition, it spent its time attacking workers and presiding over the build-up of state repression.

*Predictably, FF was able feed off the disillusionment with Labour. It maintained its working class support and presented Labour as shifty and cowardly on 'the national question'.*

FF was also able to gain from the implicit support it received from the union leaders. ITGWU leader Michael Mullen forged a close alliance with Haughey and took part in his patronage network.

When Haughey took over as leader of FF, he was led into the FF Ard Fheis by an ITGWU band piping 'A Nation Once Again'.

The whole history of Labour shows that it did not fail because Irish workers have always been conservative.

Rather when workers began to shift left, they found that Labour was more frightened of their militancy than they were desirous of breaking conservative political allegiances.

All of which is good reason to make sure there is a strong socialist party that stands to the left of Labour.



# in my view

## Pride: On to the streets

THE STONEWALL Inn at 51 Christopher Street in New York was a gay bar. On the 28th June 1969 cops raided the bar and arrested employees for selling liquor without a license.

It was a regular event. The Mafia run bar was raided when the cops didn't get enough of a pay off. But what had started as a raid ended in a full-scale riot.

Riot cops charged the crowd but the police never expected gays to fight back. At one point, the police turned to find themselves confronting a chorus line of dancing drag queens singing "We are the Stonewall Girls," while people dropped bottles from roof tops onto the police. The next day crowds gathered at the bar to see the debris, and graffiti that read, "Legalize Gay Bars" and "Support Gay Power."

For the next three days over 2,000 people fought the police on the streets of New York. Barricades were put up to keep the cops out of the areas near gay bars.

According to Sylvia Rivera, who was at the Stonewall bar and later founded STAR: Street Transvestites Action Revolutionaries, "It was street gay people from the Village out front, - homeless people who lived in the park in Sheridan Square outside the bar - and then drag queens behind them and everybody behind us.

"I remember when someone threw a Molotov cocktail, I thought: 'My god, the revolution is here. The revolution is finally here!'

"I always believed that we would have a fight back. I just knew that we would fight back. I just didn't know it would be that night. I am proud of myself as being there that night. That's when I saw the world change."

The Gay Liberation Movement was born. It chose its name in solidarity with the Vietnamese Liberation Front. During the rioting the Young Lords [a revolutionary Puerto Rican youth group] and the Black Panthers came to show support.

### Solidarity

The GLF also declared its solidarity with other revolutionary movements of the oppressed and exploited. It fought against the harassment of the police, but also against the exploitation by the bar owners. The message was summed up in the slogan "out of the closet and onto the streets."

Over thirty years later, despite the gains of the last three decades, oppression continues for gays and lesbians. Being gay is illegal in 74 countries. If you are gay or lesbian in Cuba, for example, you are likely to be sent to jail.

In Pakistan being gay can be punished by anything up to life imprisonment. In Saudi Arabia it can mean the death penalty. In six states in the US anal/oral sex between people of the same gender is a crime.

In Ireland liberation is also far from won. Surveys suggest that around a quarter of gays have been subject to physical assault. Discrimination at work is still rife. The church still runs the education and health systems and promotes prejudice against homosexuality.

Since decriminalisation in 1993, there has been a growth of the gay scene. But with this came a retreat from politics. The gay scene offers, for those who can afford it, the possibility to assert your identity. But the majority of lesbians and gays are excluded.

There is a division that dare not speak its name running right through the heart of the gay community.

There are both rich and poor gays; there are those with an interest in preserving the system and those with an interest in overthrowing it.

The so-called 'pink pound' is used to define a gay lifestyle. To be gay or lesbian is no longer supposed to be simply a statement of sexuality but a statement of lifestyle. But Pride commemorates a riot. We need more than a celebration of gay identity. As across the globe we are seeing a revival of the anti capitalist spirit of the sixties now is a good time to return Pride from a parade to a protest for liberation.

SIMON BASKETTER

## book

# An unsettled account



*The trade union movement has more Protestant members than the Orange Order*

**IN 1985 over a hundred thousand Protestants joined Paisley outside the Gates of Belfast City Hall. They were protesting about the Anglo-Irish Agreement.**

Fifteen years later when Martin McGuinness became Minister of Education for Northern Ireland only a handful of school students held streets protests.

Given the real changes that have occurred, you would think a book providing an 'in-depth examination of Protestants'

by MARK HEWITT

would provide welcome insights. Unfortunately, Susan McKay's new book does not.

Consisting of 60 interviews with a "wide range of northern Protestants," potentially we could have gained an insight into the dramatic shifts that have taken place. Instead we end up with a picture of a Protestant stereotype.

### Churches

Again and again each individual begins by outlining their rela-

tionship to one of the Protestant churches.

*You get the feeling that religion is the only thing that matters to Protestants. Next you get a usually bigotted selection of answers to questions about the Orange Order, Drumcree or some similar "controversial" issue.*

It maybe that McKay has indeed found every bigot in the North who wishes to vent their spleen. Overall those interviewed come in three categories.

There are the real "hardliners", those camping outside Drumcree church; for example Billy Wrights' second in com-

mand, Mark Fulton, who claimed his mentor 'knew that his job was to protect the Civil Rights and Culture of his people'.

Then a whole clutch of weird and wonderful church ministers have a go.

From the reverend who claimed "to vote yes in the Belfast agreement means voting against God" to the principal of an independent Christian school who boasted "In science we teach what God created. We do not teach sex education. We teach evolution as a theory that is wrong and we do not take part in education for mutual understanding!"

### Sectarianism

The final word goes to those not directly affected by the troubles, mainly comfortably off who look down on the naked sectarianism of council estates but wouldn't have their children marrying Catholics.

Like the business woman from Portadown who didn't have a bad word for Wright "Some people say he was a psychopath, but he was intelligent, and at least he was our psychopath"

McKays' account lacks a decent hearing of ordinary Protestants. Like the people who took part in the 2,000 strong Mayday parade in Belfast this year, the biggest in Britain and Ireland.

*Yet the trade union movement has more Protestant members than the Orange Order but it is the latter that dominates the book.*

Painfully lacking is the contradictions - the financial problems, the experience of working alongside Catholics, socialising - any description of life beyond the angle on sectarianism.

Omitting these aspects leaves the sectarianism unchallenged and unbeatable. Ultimately this is the conclusion of the book. Which is unfortunate because openings for the left in Northern Ireland have never been greater.

■ **Northern Protestants - An Unsettled People** by Susan McKay, Blackstaff

## theatre

# AN ANCIENT PLAY FOR TODAY

by CONOR  
KOSTICK

**Medea: jealous, vengeful, cunning, passionate, intelligent, ruthless. Some 2400 years after Euripides first presented his masterpiece to the Athenian public, there are still few female characters in drama that hold such a fascination Medea.**

When the play was first performed, the verse would have been sung to pipes. Deborah Warner, in her fine production, has followed this musical tradition by introducing the play with a lyric sung by Celia Ni Fhartha in the Irish language.

She challenges the audience to explore the play's themes according to their relevance to Irish society.

In the Athens of Euripides' time, women were considered second-class citizens. Medea emerges against this background, beginning with an articulate criticism of the imbalance that exists between the sexes in a speech that was recited at suffragette meetings in the early 20th century.

### Accept

She points out that women, once with husband, "must then accept him as possessor of our body", and exposes the double standards on fidelity "if a man grows tired of the company at home he can go out. We wives are forced to look to one man only."

Another issue of great relevance to contemporary Irish society appears as a sub-theme throughout the play. Medea reminds us that she is "a foreign woman", having

arrived in Corinth as a refugee. Jason, her ex-husband, tells her that she comes from "a land of savages".

One might leave this production wondering how Irish society compares with the 'primitive' Greece of two-and-a-half millennia ago.

The two great strengths of this production are the direction of Deborah Warner and the remarkable performance of Fiona Shaw as Medea.

She holds centre stage throughout, mesmerising the audience with her strong, idiosyncratic performance, as the supporting cast move about in her shadow.

One is unlikely to see better acting in Dublin, and one should go if only to enjoy her wonderful performance.

■ **MEDEA** is currently running in the Abbey Theatre, check local press for details





**where we stand**

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.

# Brutal racist attack on Pearse street Community stands up to racism



Standing up to racist thugs...

**DAVID RICHARDSON, his wife Laverne and son Christian were attacked by a group of six racist thugs as they walked to their son's home in Ringsend after a meal in a city centre restaurant. They had been celebrating their wedding anniversary and their son's 24th birthday.**

Mr Richardson (46) suffered massive blood loss from three stab wounds to his back and three to his chest. He received 18 pints of blood during surgery at St James's Hospital. He is still on a life-support machine in the intensive care unit.

They were attacked

after the gang began shouting racial abuse at them. Mr Richardson is white and his wife and son are black.

His son Christian said the gang were shouting: "Niggers out", "black bastards" and "monkeys", and throwing beer cans at them.

"It had been a brilliant night. We were walking back down Pearse Street and my dad was just saying how great it had been," Christian said.

"Then we passed a



...and the Government

group of kids outside a chip shop and one shouted: "Niggers out."

They carried on shouting as we walked up the street. It was a hail of abuse ...

"Then I heard my mum scream: 'He's got a knife.'

Suddenly there was blood everywhere. It was awful. It was the first time I had really encountered any racism in Dublin. It is usually a very friendly city."

David Richardson was attacked because of the colour of his family's skin.

The blame for this vicious attack doesn't just lie with the thugs who carried out the attack. It lies at the door of the Government who have been scapegoating immigrants.

As David Richardson lay in hospital Justice Minister John O'Donoghue criticised the attack and but then went to meet British Home Secretary Jack Straw to organise the fingerprinting and deportation of refugees.

The constant stream of false information and hysteria over immigration has created a climate where physical attacks on immigrants are rising at a disturbing rate.

But the Gardaí refuse to even keep records of racially motivated attacks and no precise information is available about the number of attacks on black people.

A recently published survey by the African Refugee Network found that more than a third of African refugees in Dublin had experienced verbal or physical abuse.

For instance Paul Abayomi a 16 year old Nigerian was attacked in Summerhill and pregnant women have been spat at, shots fired at African-owned

shops and vehicles damaged.

In stark contrast to the cynicism of John O'Donoghue was the response of local residents.

The Anti Nazi League immediately called a protest in response to the attack.

Some 200 people from local workplaces and the area, along with representatives of anti racist groups and political representatives, attended.

**Vicious**

"This attack was outrageous," one resident told Socialist Worker.

"The same media that has published racist filth about refugees, tried to say that the man was attacked because he was a tourist but it was in fact the most disgusting racism. I notice not many of them are down here to report on Pearse Street people coming out to condemn the attack."

Another resident said, "They want us to blame immigrants for the housing crisis.

That is not the fault of the refugees. The developers are flooding the area not immigrants. It is important people came out on the streets to protest."

Christian Richardson thanked the people of Pearse Street on the radio for their good wishes and support. *Socialist Worker* extends its good wishes to his father and hopes he makes a speedy recovery.

Fax (01) 872 3838  
Email swp@clubi.ie

or send to

**letters**

PO BOX 1648, Dublin 8

**Fight the power**

**THE RECENT Public Enemy gig was fantastic. A massive crowd came to see what Zak de la Rocha (Rage Against the Machine) described as "one of the forefathers of modern revolutionary music"**

The band played a pretty long and aggressive set. The main highlight was a rap by Chuck D in the middle of the gig that spoke of struggle, just moments after Professor Griff held up a copy of *Socialist Worker* with the headline of 'Jail Corrupt Politicians- Don't Blame Refugees' to the crowd.

There was a great response from the crowd when Flavour Flav spoke of unity between black and white in the struggle for change and the fight against racism.

In all a magical concert and heartening to see the response of the crowd.- **Fight the Power!**

□Niall Smyth, Dublin.

**CONGRATULATIONS ON publishing Linda's letter and highlighting the exploitation of women's unwaged work by the capitalist system.**

I am an old age non-pensioner myself, without a medical card. May I hope that your paper and party will continue to fight for the recognition that our work throughout our lives helped create the Celtic Tiger and that we are now entitled to all its benefits, in our own right.

□Margaretta D'Arcy, Galway.

**We need comprehensives**

**DAVID TRIMBLE says that grammar schools lead to better exam results. But better exam results at grammar schools are based on the exclusion and failure of the majority of children.**

All the recent research shows that a well-funded comprehensive system is the best for children of all abilities. The best exam results in the UK are in Scotland, where 96 percent of children go to local comprehensive schools.

The Tory government, supported by the Ulster Unionist Party, cut funding for schools and then blamed 'trendy' teaching methods for all the problems in education.

Disgracefully, Tony Blair's Labour government has done the same, maintaining subsidies to the privileged private schools and blaming teachers for poor results.

What we need is properly funded comprehensive schools not educational apartheid.

□C. Bryce, Derry.

**Join the Socialists**

(PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name.....

Address .....

Telephone .....Union.....

E-mail.....

- I want to join the SWP
- I want more information
- I want to get Socialist Worker fortnightly
- I want to subscribe to the SWP e-mail network

Return to SWP PO Box 1648 Dublin 8. Tel (01) 872 2682

**SWP branch meetings**

- **ATHLONE:** Contact 01- 872 2682 for details
- **BRAY:** Meets every Wednesday at the Mayfair Hotel at 8.30pm
- **BELFAST CENTRAL:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the WhytesBar.
- **BELFAST QUEEN'S UNI** Meets every Tuesday 1pm (see poster for details)
- **BELFAST SOUTH:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Queens Students Union
- **CORK:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in O'Donoghue's Pub, Drawbridge St
- **DERRY:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Badgers Bar upstairs, Orchard St.
- **DUNDALK:** Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details

- **LUCAN:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Courtney's Bar, Lucan village
- **DUN LAOGHAIRE:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Christian Institute
- **DUBLIN ARTANE / COOLOCK:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane / Beaumont Recreational Centre (opp. Artane Castle)
- **DUBLIN FAIRVIEW:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Fairview Inn
- **DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways Pub, Parnell St
- **DUBLIN KILLBARACK:** Phone 087 6235071
- **DUBLIN STONEYBATTER/CABRA:** Meets

- every Thursday at 8.30pm in Aghrim St Parish Hall, Prussia St
- **DUBLIN BALLYMUN:** Phone Kevin at 8622209
- **DUBLIN DUNDRUM:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Dundrum family recreation centre
- **DUBLIN RIALTO:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR
- **DUBLIN RATHMINES / RANELAGH:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm Upstairs in La Touche, 24 Earlsfort Terrace Dublin 2
- **DUBLIN HAROLDS X:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in O'Connell's Pub, Sth Richmond St
- **DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St
- **DUBLIN RINGSEND:** Meets

- every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Ringsend Community Centre
- **DUBLIN TALLAGHT:** Meets every Monday at 8.30pm in Jobstown Community Centre
- **ENNISKILLEN:** Phone 01 - 872 2682 for details
- **GALWAY:** Meets every Wednesday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square (beside Cuba) 8.30pm
- **LIMERICK:** Phone 01 - 872 2682 for details
- **SLIGO** phone 087 6329511 for details
- **TRALEE:** Phone 087 6329511 for details
- **WATERFORD:** Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.



CIE

# OPPOSE THE LOCKOUT

## Defend the right to strike

**THE GOVERNMENT is orchestrating a campaign of vilification against a small number of train drivers who are members of the Irish Locomotive Drivers Association.**

The union was formed as a result of dissatisfaction with SIPTU and the NRBU. The train drivers believed that these unions were selling their conditions short and trying to impose worse terms on them.

Lamoid Eireann are trying to push through a deal, which would force train drivers to work on Sunday and Bank Holidays.

### Overtime

Like many other managements they are using the idea of 'annualised hours' to remove proper overtime rates for these days.

ILDA drivers believe that they have a right not to work on these traditional rest days. But when they tried to work their normal rosters they were locked out by management.

### Heitons

**AFTER A ten-day strike, eighteen workers, members of SIPTU, and employed by Heitons, the builder's providers firm in Waterford, have come away with a great victory.**

Management conceded a £31 per week increase along with the terms of the PPF, which gives them parity with their colleagues in Cork.

Moreover, they resisted attempts by management to tie them up in a productivity deal in exchange for their demand for parity with other workers within the group.

One union activist told *Socialist Worker*, "The Celtic Tiger is booming for the bosses, particularly in the building industry, but they are not prepared to share the wealth that's being created".

This result comes after years of being fobbed off by the company, the LRC, and their union. The settlement terms are in clear breach of the PPF, and the strike, a positive example, of what can be attained by workers using their collective strength to achieve decent wages and conditions

### N.I. Term-time workers

**AROUND 150 term-time school workers and their supporters protested at Stormont on Tuesday 13 June, despite threats of the sack from local management.**

Term-time workers, mainly classroom assistants and special needs teachers, in the Southern Education and Library Board have been campaigning for the right to be paid during school holidays.

They have voted to take industrial action in support of their claim but the leadership of NIPSA has refused to allow them a ballot for industrial action.

Term-time workers from schools in Dunmurray outside Belfast said, "We've had an offer from the Board to equalize our pay over 12 months, the same pay that we're getting now.

In the past the founders of ILDA worked with other rank and file groups such as the Busworkers Action Group. A difference arose about strategies for changing the unions and a number of the train drivers set up their own breakaway union.

Socialists do not advocate their approach as a strategy. The NRBU after all was originally set up as a break away union but this has not stopped it becoming bureaucratised and even going along with privatisation.

The better strategy is to build rank and file groups inside existing union to be able to pressurise the leadership, replace them or on some occasions act independently of them.

Despite the difference in approach, however, workers have every right to join a union of their choice.

The government should not be able to order workers to be part of one particular union.

Under the pretext that small unions cause anarchy, the government is denying ILDA a right to negotiate with their management.

But if business people can break away from companies and set up small busi-

nesses, why should workers be denied the right to associate freely with who they want?

The company management have also sought victimise ILDA officers such as Brendan Ogle and Christy Holbrooke when they tried to represent their members. These actions led to a short unofficial stoppage last year.

In an ominous move, the company used the Industrial

Relations Act to sue ILDA for 'damages' as a result of one of the strikes they were involved in. A Company representative even claimed to the court that the union was a group of 'mavericks and malcontents' who had given workers impossible aspirations. Trade unionists should defend the right of the ILDA to organise drivers and oppose the attempt to sue them for damages.

### ATGWU

## Special conference on Partnership

**DELEGATES TO the bi-annual conference of the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union have passed an emergency motion which calls on the Executive of the ICTU to convene a special re-call conference on the Programme for Prosperity & Fairness.**

This programme which was only approved by an ICTU delegate meeting in March has in the short space of time since, fallen down on its commitments.

Shop steward Jimmy Kelly moving the emergency motion congratulated the union's leadership for its determined stance against the line of the ICTU and for supporting the Campaign Against Partnership.

He said that price increases on the latest statistics issued on 13th June show inflation figures the highest in 15 years. Predictions say it will annualise at about 6%. Food prices have gone up by at least 10% in recent weeks, health services up by 6.4%, house prices are rocketing and the latest forecast is that house prices will go up by 30% over the next 36 months.

The motion calls on the affiliated unions to the ICTU to have on the agenda for the special re-call conference,

★ The unions with-

drawal from the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness

★ Commitment to free collective bargaining.

### IMPACT

**DRIVING TESTERS in IMPACT were due to start industrial action June 23rd**

The action will see a ban on overtime (currently Saturday testing is regarded as overtime).

Testers will also refuse to test applicants who turn up late, cancel a test if the preceding one runs over time, withdraw flexibility which allows a tester to stand in for a colleague if he or she is unavoidably absent, and refuse to acknowledge changes in their testing schedule if communicated by telephone when a customer cancels a test.

A spokeswoman for IMPACT said the action had been prompted by the lack of consultation with testers by an independent review body appointed by the Department.

The testers also want the issues of the non-regulation of driving schools and poor facilities in some testing centers addressed.

The other reason for the dispute is that the workers are opposed to the expected attempt by the government to try and force through privatization.

### Liebherr Ltd

**PRODUCTION was halted at a Co Kerry engineering plant when 275 workers refused to pass pickets placed by striking electricians.**

Electricians in the Technical Engineering and Electrical Union (TEEU) at the Liebherr (Ireland) Ltd factory near Killarney began the action when the company refused to recognise the union.

### Aldi



## Bring Aldi to their knees

**WORKERS AT the German Supermarket chain ALDI are continuing their strike after the company sacked five workers for joining the trade union Mandate.**

The sacked workers are placing continuous pickets on the shop and are asking people to boycott Aldi until they agree to recognise Mandate.

The behaviour of management has been disgraceful through the strike. They have consistently harassed and intimidated the workers on the picket lines. One woman was pushed and assaulted by a member of management as she tried to prevent a lorry delivering goods to the shop.

But the workers have also seen many acts of solidarity. They estimate that about 50 percent of shoppers are refusing to pass the pickets and the strike is beginning to hurt Aldi. The company was recently forced to dump a supply of dairy products due to decreased sales, which is significant, given that Aldi works on the basis of a high turnover.

Another man who was offered a job with the security firm that operates in Aldi refused to take the job and pass the pickets.

Aldi has been in Ireland only about six months but in that time staff say they have had nothing but problems.

One of the strikes spoke to *Socialist Worker* about Aldi.

"We are only paid for the trading hours of the shop. We don't get paid for any of the hours we work before opening or after closing.

### Contracts

"Everyone is on 20 hour contracts but nobody works 20 hours. We work at least 40 hour, often a lot more. But it suits them to keep us on contracts.

"We are entitled to two weeks holiday pay but because our contracts are for 20 hours they only give us 40 hours holiday pay when we should be getting much more".

"They advertise in their window that they pay £7 an hour but that is a lie.

"They pay £6.25 an

hour and getting that out of them is a nightmare, they constantly leave us short. It was even worse before we had the union. That is why they are so afraid of us winning because they know things will have to change if they recognise Mandate."

"If they think we are giving up they are wrong. There may only be five of us but we are not giving up until we win. It's our right to join a trade union", she said

The strike was heading into its third week as *Socialist Worker* went to press and there is little sign that it will be settled in the immediate future as management are continuing to refuse to talk to the strikes.

Therefore it is vital that people do not shop at Aldi. "If people don't pass the pickets we know we can bring Aldi to its knees," said an Aldi striker.

Every trade unionist should take up a collection for Aldi in their workplace. It is an important strike and if the win union recognition it will be an important victory for the trade union movement as a whole.

### Maysfield

**MAYSFIELD Leisure Centre in Belfast is under threat from property speculators.**

The Laganside Development Project, which has been responsible for the rash of expensive yuppie flats along the river is now considering proposals to sell off the leisure centre.

Peter Black, ATGWU convenor for the leisure centre, told *Socialist Worker*, "Maysfield was built in the 1970's because it was recognised that this was one of the most deprived areas of Belfast. People

from all over Belfast, Catholic and Protestant, use the centre because it is in a neutral place. These people want to turn working class facilities into play areas for the rich."

They are expected to recommend one of these options some time in August or September.

Trade unions and campaigners will be organising to oppose any plans to close the centre. The final decision on the deal has to go through Belfast City Council.



# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

50p

## CAMPAIGN AGAINST SELECTION MEETINGS WHY THE 11 PLUS MUST GO

Conway Mill, Falls Road  
June 28th 7:30pm  
speakers include:  
John Price CAS  
Anne Fitzpatrick West  
Belfast Partnership and  
others

Markets Community  
Centre  
Tuesday June 27th 7pm,  
John Price CAS  
President University of  
Ulster Jordanstown Stu-  
dents' Union and others

Information: 02892 660011 [www.geocities.com/campaign\\_against\\_selection](http://www.geocities.com/campaign_against_selection)

Solidarity price £1

● Trimble backs Grammar Schools

● McGuinness won't act

# SCRAP THE 11 PLUS



**DAVID TRIMBLE** has shown his true Tory colours over the abolition of the 11 plus in Northern Ireland.

In an interview with the Sunday Life, Trimble said, "I have no intention of allowing our grammar schools to be turned into comprehensives. That development proved a disaster to the English educational system and it would be very foolish to repeat that mistake here."

### Failures

The 11 plus brands 70 percent of children as failures. Those who fail the exam are sent to secondary schools, which have larger class sizes and fewer resources.

Kids from families who can afford to pay for extra tutoring, who have space of their own to study, are more likely to pass. That is why over 70 per cent of kids who go to grammar schools are from middle class backgrounds. Secondary school students are seven times more likely to come from poor families.

The grammar school system is a preserve of the middle classes. This is the system that Trimble will fight tooth and nail to cling on to.

**We  
don't  
need  
this  
stress**

**THE 11 plus is under massive pressure. Vast numbers of parents are fed up with the stress and damage that it does to kids.**

A survey by the Newry and Mourne Confederation of Community Groups in April found that 88 per cent of parents are opposed to the 11 plus.

Sarah Meekin, the senior Clinical Psychologist at the Royal Group of Hospitals in Belfast, reports that "More and more children are referred to this department suffering from anxiety problems relating to the 11 plus."

This pressure has meant that Education Minister Martin McGuinness has commissioned a report and has openly said he wants to see the 11 plus go.

The report is due in September but McGuinness has already

hinted that he wants to retain some form of selection at 11 years of age.

This is a concession to the powerful grammar school lobby defended by middle class Catholics and Protestants. When the Labour government attempted to get rid of the 11 plus in the 1970's, the grammar schools organized mass rallies to defend their privileges.

### Pressure

Trimble is now insisting that the vote on changes to the 11 plus would have to be taken by the whole Assembly and not the education minister alone. This is bound to mean that any proposals will be watered down to maintain selection.

The statements by McGuinness and Trimble show that to get rid of the 11 plus and the educational apartheid that lies behind it, campaigners will have to put massive pressure on the

Assembly.

This is why the Campaign Against Selection is organizing lobbies of Stormont before the Assembly closes for the summer and plans a massive demonstration in November.

Trade unions, community groups, teachers and parents should back this campaign.

As John Price, a teacher in Belfast and secretary of the Campaign Against Selection, put it "This is a battle against privilege and inequality. Comprehensive education is based on social justice. All children are valued and learn to succeed together. It is about the principle that children should not be disadvantaged because of their background.

"Selection of any kind runs directly counter to that. That's why we can't settle for just another form of the same institutionalised discrimination. We have to fight to get rid of selection altogether."