

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

**Smash the Programme for National Recovery**

# Unions must break from Fianna Fail



Haughey



Cassells

PRESSURE is building up inside the trade unions for a withdrawal from the Programme for National Recovery—the three year deal negotiated between the ICTU and the Fianna Fail government.

The Programme has over a year to run but a special conference of the ICTU in January 1989 could decide to pull out.

Two unions—the Marine Port and General Workers Union and the ESB Officers Association have called for withdrawal from the Programme at their recent annual conference.

A third, the MSF called a special conference of its members in the the insurance sector to organise to win wage increases above the Programme's limits.

Inside the two major unions the ITGWU and the FWUI resolutions are being moved at section committee and branch committee level against the agreement.



The PNR was only accepted by a 53 per cent majority in the ITGWU.

In response to this pressure ICTU leader Peter Cassells has demanded a special meeting with Haughey. He hopes to wring some tax concessions in the next budget as a means of salvaging the PNR.

But no amount of manoeuvring can disguise just how much of a disaster

the PNR has been for Irish workers.

On every front workers have been the losers.

■ **WAGES:** Wages increases have been held at 2.5 per cent a year.

## PRICES

But the cost of living is now set at 4.5 per cent and is still rising.

Food prices have risen by 5.7 per cent.

Those with mortgages have found that their interest rate has increased by 2 per cent giving.

While workers are accepting wage cuts, the bosses are making bonanza profits. Company profits are set to increase by 17.5 per cent in 1989.

Industrial productivity is

also showing record increases as the employers use the promise of industrial peace to make drastic changes in working conditions. Last year industrial output per hour was up 12 per cent.

■ **JOBS:** One of the main purposes of the PNR was to win union support for the run down of the public sector.

Clause 11 of the agreement explicitly recognised that the government aimed at "achieving a reduction in the number of public service employees".

As a result 10,000 jobs were lost in the public sector with the unions openly encouraged and advertised the scheme for voluntary redundancy.

The union leaders justified this by claiming they had won agreement to job targets in other areas. But a recent Labour Force survey showed that total employment actually fell by 1,000 from April 1988 to April 1989.

On top of this 60,000 people have already emigrated in the two years the programme has been in operation.

Continued on page 11



GUILDFORD FOUR:

# The whole barrel is rotten!

THE release of the Guildford Four is a victory for socialists.

For so long the idea that the law is unjust has been dismissed as "leftist propaganda". Yet the British ruling class has now been forced to admit that the Four were victims of a major injustice.

In fact the timing was perfect. For weeks the Tories and their gutter press had been crowing about the lack of democracy in East Germany. Now they had to face up to corruption in their own system.

Needless to say they were quick with excuses.

The Four would not have been locked up if the IRA had not bombed innocent people. Yet the IRA would not have bombed innocent people if British troops had not been in Northern Ireland.

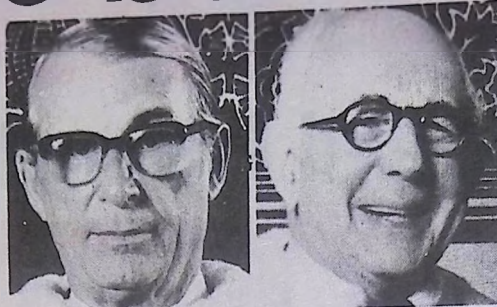
The police who framed the Four were "bad apples". In that case

there are plenty of bad apples where the British legal system is concerned.

The Birmingham Six are still in prison. Yet the police squad who



Gerard Conlon: Now campaigning for Birmingham Six



Guilty men: Lords Donaldson and Roskill, still judges

put them there have been disbanded because of similar frame-ups.

Recently the family of Blair Peach were awarded compensation, as it was

finally admitted that cops had murdered him on an anti-Nazi march ten years ago.

A campaign continues for the release of Winston Silcott, jailed for allegedly killing a policeman during the Broadwater Farm riots in 1985. Silcott, like the Guildford Four, was jailed on the basis of a confession which was challenged by the defence.

Also in London, officers face disciplinary action for assaulting striking printers at Wapping.

In fact the apple barrel is severely contaminated!

## IFPA PROSECUTED: No love for johnnies

A PROSECUTION against the Irish Family Planning Association over the sale of a contraceptive last January at Virgin Megastore in Dublin has been dismissed in court on a technicality.

Mr. Chris Robson of Gay Health Action said it was amazing that the Department of Health, in a leaflet, should encourage the use of condoms to fight the spread of Aids while on the other hand the DPP's office could take a prosecution against somebody for selling them.

The case was brought by an "anonymous" group but, as Christine Donaghy of the IFPA said, "we know who they are—the same group has fought against women's rights for twenty

years" and that they would no doubt try again to have the IFPA prosecuted.

### CRISIS

"In the light of the seriousness of the Aids crisis and the rising rate of unplanned pregnancies, the summons serves only to highlight the ludicrousness of the contraceptive laws that still exist in Ireland," she said.

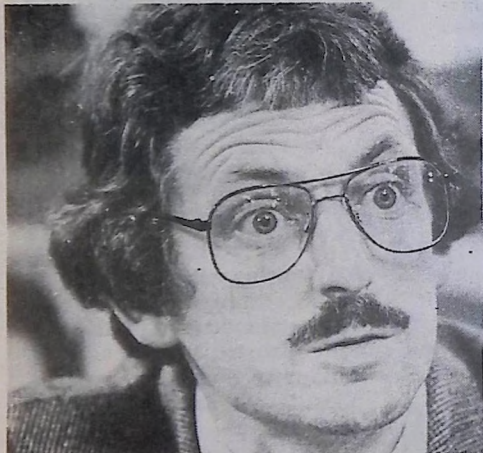
In the meantime, condoms will now be on sale in Virgin

not just on Saturdays, as they had been before the court case, but on weekdays as well.

In fact, condoms should be available in a far wider variety of outlets—for example, pubs and supermarkets—instead of being treated in the ridiculous, hole in corner way they are at present.

It would even make sense if, instead of adding to the likes of Richard Branson's huge profits, they were supplied free on the health service.

## Irish 'justice' is no better



Nicky Kelly: Framed up by Irish justice

IRISH politicians have been falling over themselves to express concern about British "justice". But Irish "justice" is not much better.

Nicky Kelly was jailed for four years after gardai forced him to confess to the Sallins train robbery. Peter Barry of Fine Gael is very worried about the British system yet he was part of the Cabinet which presided over the Sallins frame-up. Kelly's name has yet to be cleared.

In 1984 Joanne Hayes signed a confession at Tralee Garda Station to having stabbed a baby which was found on Caherciveen beach. Forensic evidence resulted in the charge being dropped yet the inquiry which followed let the gardai off the hook.

In fact police brutal-

ity is the order of the day on both sides of the Irish Sea.

This is particularly so when workers fight for their livelihoods.

The British miners' strike of 1984-85, the Irish post office strike of 1979, the Dublin Corporation strike in 1986 all saw police wading in to protect the rich from those who fought back.

Our rulers do not particularly want the wrong people put behind bars because it is too much of an embarrassment. But it happens time and time again because the rich train their police force to behave like thugs.

The police and judges are trained class fighters. That is what makes it so absurd when Labour Party and Workers' Party leaders point to the Guildford Four's release as proof that the "forces of law and order" are willing to reform themselves.

## Now release the Birmingham Six



The Birmingham Six, from top left: Patrick Hill, Hugh Callaghan, John Walker, Richard McIlkenny, Gerard Hunter and Billy Power.

GERARD Conlon, one of the four wrongly jailed for the Guildford bombings, has found that his troubles are not over yet.

Immediately after returning to the North after his release from jail, he was subjected to RUC and UDR harassment. He declared that he could no longer live in Belfast and has fled to London.

Nonetheless Conlon has promised to fight for the release of the Birmingham Six. The release of the Guildford Four is a tremendous opportunity to build a much bigger campaign on the issue.

Last month, the British *Guardian* carried an interview with a former prison officer who admitted that he had taken part in assaults on the Birmingham Six after their arrest.

He said he saw injuries on the men that could only have been inflicted by police as they beat confessions out of them.

The fact that the men were beaten by police has always been denied by the British authorities.

Even Lord Denning, who rejected the appeals of the Birmingham Six, has been driven to declare that he was wrong.

It is high time these men were released. Support should be won from trade unions in both Ireland and Britain. Trade union banners appeared on the recent Troops Out march in London. It is perfectly possible to win similar solidarity for the Birmingham Six.

## Welsh police in Dublin

EVEN before the RUC and UDR began leaking like a pair of old wellies, it was common knowledge that the Gardai were up to their uzls in collusion with the official wings of the UDA.

Now it's emerged that they've been enjoying relations with their Welsh counterparts as well.

The *Irish Post* reports that in August the South Wales Police turned up in Dublin to take notes at the 10,000 strong Troops Out demo as part of their investigations into the Welsh nationalist group, Meibon Glyndwr. Apparently they'd heard that some of them would be on the march.

This was only the latest development in the shift towards RUC-style policing by the South Wales police, who recently acquired a new Deputy Chief Constable, David

Brook Mellor, formerly top lackey to Jack Hermon in the RUC.

The nostalgic Mellor is attempting to re-ignite memories of Belfast in other ways too. He's forking out £250,000 on a helicopter patrol to keep the citizens of South Wales under constant observation and awake all night.

A member of Meibon Glyndwr said of the Welsh police trip to Dublin: "They must have got quite a shock if they also monitored the number of former British service men on the march."

## Obituary: Bernadette Dunne

IT is with great sadness we learn of the sudden death of Bernadette Dunne in London, at the age of 37. Originally from Limerick, Bernie and her family moved to London in the 1950s.

Bernie joined the Socialist Workers' Party at the end of the 1960s and was active in every working class struggle over the last twenty years. Bernie was a good friend and comrade to Irish socialists and will be missed by her many friends here.

To Malcolm, her son Brendan and her family we extend our deepest sympathies.



# WE THINK

## Is there a future for Marxism?

### The things they say

"Union officials have to be appointed as many decisions they have to make are controversial, and the permanent positions were provided so they would not have to worry about making unpopular decisions and then having to face re-election."

Tony Ayton, Branch Official, ITGWU, Kilkenny, in *Kilkenny People*.

A DELEGATION from the Soviet Communist Party attending the recent national congress of the Communist Party of Ireland carried with them a message acknowledging that the changes taking place in the USSR are causing "complicated changes" for other Communist Parties.

"In Moscow, the CPI is seen as old-style, and less than enthusiastic about the reforms sweeping the Soviet Union, Hungary and Poland," according to the *Irish Times*.

### Poor foot and mouth

LARRY Goodman, Irish beef baron, has lost up to £90 million of his immense personal fortune since September.

£50 million went on stock market jitters and he faces additional losses of up to £40 million export insurance credits on shipments to Iraq. The credits were cancelled because meat was found not to have originated in Ireland, as the company had claimed.

As well as this, a meat plant recently sold by Goodman is facing court charges over "irregularities"—misleading relabelling of containers—during the time it was owned by the Goodman company.

Speaking on radio about criticism of his group of companies by Labour's Barry Desmond, Goodman said: "Politicians take up too much of our time with their petty behaviour." In other words, ask no questions.

Stock market analysts say that all food companies have had difficulties this year because "the hot summer meant people ate less". Could it be because large numbers of people had less money to spend on food?

No worries at all on that score for Larry Goodman, in spite of losing £90 million. He's still rumoured to be the third most wealthy man in Ireland.

"COMMUNISM is finished. Democracy has come to Eastern Europe". Such has been the reaction of the Western media to events of the last few weeks in Hungary and Poland.

In Hungary rival parties are already openly campaigning for elections in a month or two. The ruling party has disavowed "Communism" after changing its name to the Socialist Party.

In Poland prime minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki comes from Solidarity and runs a government in which only three ministers are Communists.

In Russia, the great superpower bastion of "communism", Gorbachev is introducing changes which are hailed by western politicians and media as a timely realisation that socialism is unworkable and that the market is the key to economic and social stability.

Throughout Eastern Europe governments are held to be either embracing the western model, or desperately trying to hold



Polish Prime Minister Mazowiecki and Walesa

back sections of their populations from doing so. "class struggle", proclaims Francis Fukuyama of the American State Department.

This idea is reflected in the "new realist" thinking of the Left. From Proinsias de Rossa to Neil Kinnock, they rush to champion "market socialism" and compromise with capitalism.

China is inviting in

multinationals and trying to increase trade with the West, despite its claims that its butchery of protestors in Tienanmen Square was to prevent "counter-revolution".

### TRIUMPH

"History is coming to a conclusion with the triumph of liberal democracy and the end of the

So is socialism on the way out and Western style capitalism the way forward?

First, just how successful is capitalism, whether in performing according to the desires of its rulers or the needs of its populations?

Most of the major capitalist countries in the world—America, France, Britain etc—are trying desperately to bring some sort of stability and profitability to their economies by attacking workers' wages and rights and cutting back on all "non-essential" expenditure, such as health and education.

When a British minister has a row and resigns, the pound sterling drops like a stone.

In the Third World many capitalist countries have long passed crisis point. Massive debt and imbalances in prices for goods on the world market cause widespread poverty and starvation.

So what is happening at all? Both East and West are part of the same world economy, which is in economic recession and a crisis of falling profits. To compete with the West, the East is compelled to try to increase profits by screwing their own working

class.

Far from being socialist, the countries of the Eastern Bloc and China, and countries linked to them such as Cuba, are state capitalist in that the state runs the economy basically in the interest of profit and international trade rather than human needs.

The shift towards the "free market", privatisation etc within these countries is an attempt to make their stagnant and badly managed economies more competitive, partly through methods which will increase hardship to workers (such as more unemployment) with strictly conditional political liberalisation (glasnost) as the sugar on the pill.

So is there any alternative to two variants of the world system—"private" capitalism and state capitalism—which are coming to resemble each other more and more closely, both economically precarious and wasteful of both human and physical resources?

Revolutionary socialists are believe that the working class, hugely increased in numbers and potential strength throughout the world in the last few decades, can fight internationally and in solidarity with each other across different countries to bring about genuine socialism, i.e. workers controlling the economy and society in the interest of genuine human needs.

## Peace train on the wrong track

THE Irish Congress of Trade Unions has launched its biggest campaign to date against the IRA.

It has organised a national petition calling on the British and Irish government to take "take all steps necessary" to protect the Dublin Belfast rail line against "terrorist attack". It is an open call for more repression.

Branch Committee and Sections Committee activists have been asked to take up petitions on the issue. Federated Workers Union of Ireland General Secretary Billy Atlee has set a target of 20,000 signatures for his own union.

The initiative for the campaign comes from the Workers Party. They have taken a leading role in getting the "Peace Train" from Dublin to Belfast established.

Revolutionary

socialists should openly oppose and argue against the ICTU campaign in their union branches. This is not because we support the particular tactic of bombing the railway track. Quite the contrary.

We believe that the weakness of the whole republican strategy of elevating the military actions of a few IRA volunteers over all other political considerations. Instead of trying to build a mass workers movement against the British Army presence, the Republicans have consistently argued that their armed struggle must provide the "cutting edge" of the fight.

### RECORD

But the ICTU are not opposing the IRA campaign on the basis of showing an alternative way of fighting the British Army. In fact their whole record has been one of silent collusion with this

army. The Northern Committee of the ICTU was one of the few union federations in Western Europe to refuse to condemn internment in Northern Ireland.

When an Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union shop steward Aidan McAnespie was murdered by the British Army, the ICTU did not move a finger to protest at the continued presence of his murderers. They have done nothing to call for action to win the release of the Birmingham Six or the numerous Republicans who are due for extradition.

The very leaders of the ICTU who are now embarking on an openly political campaign against the IRA have refused to allow discussion of the Northern struggle inside their own unions.

Gerry Quigley, the ICTU President, has banned all discussion on the subject in the Irish National

Teachers Organisation.

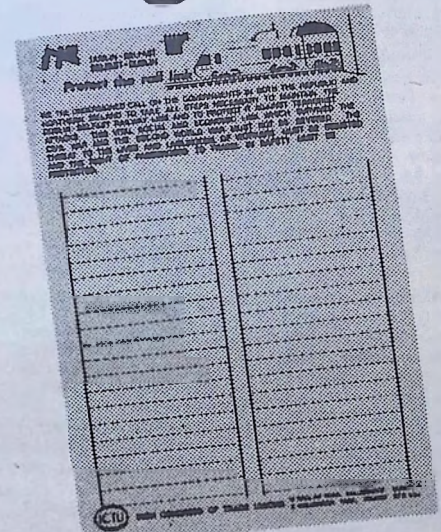
When Socialist Workers Movement members in the FWUI attempted to raise resolutions supporting the August 19th March against the British Army they were ruled out of order.

Instead of being prepared to openly discuss their support for the British Army, these ICTU leaders have hidden behind censorship and to hypocritical claims to be apolitical.

The SWM opposes the ICTU campaign for the simple reason that it puts the unions on the side of the British Army in their fight with the IRA. The unions must always start by attacking the violence of the British state.

### REPRESSION

Once you start by attacking the violence of the resistance fighters, you prepare the way for greater repression which in the long run will be used



against workers.

Workers Party supporters have already shown where this attitude leads. When Nicky Kelly was jailed in a Guildford type frame up, WP members actively opposed his campaign for release from prison.

In their campaign against the IRA the ICTU have joined up with the most reactionary elements in Ireland. Prominent members of the Unionist party, Fine Gael, Fianna Fail

and the Progressive Democrats have all been involved.

The theorists of the Workers Party believe that the broadest of broad fronts is justifiable against "Provos fascism". But the history of the Irish Left shows that those who build all class coalitions now against the "terrorist" threat, will also one day sit down in cabinet with the samw forces to protect the Southern state.



## INTERNATIONAL

## THE OTHER GERMANY

UNREST in East Germany continues to grow. It began with the mass exodus of people to the West and tiny demonstrations within the country for exit permits.

The turning point came on September 25 when the majority of people on the demonstrations weren't seeking to leave but were rather determined to stay and fight for change.

Thousands have marched in East Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Karl-Marx-Stadt, Jena, Plauen, Magdeburg and Potsdam in what have been the largest open acts of defiance since the abortive workers' uprising in 1953.

During the celebrations of forty years of barracks-communism in East Germany people chanted slogans such as "Liberty, equality and fraternity" and, of course, "Gorbi". But equally, slogans such as "we are staying" and the singing of the Internationale showed that most people weren't eager to copy the West.

In Leipzig, where the largest demonstrations have been held, first 8,000 then 50,000 and now 100,000 have marched. On October 23 state radio said that more than 100,000 had poured onto the streets of Leipzig, and some 10,000 plus were reported in Halle, two hundred miles south-west of Berlin.

Most significantly of all, from a socialist viewpoint, workers at the Wilhelm Pieck engineering and electronics works on the outskirts of Berlin announced in a statement on October 24 that they were setting up a new union, called Reform, because of dissatisfaction with the state-controlled FDGB.

In a statement issued to journalists and distributed to other factories, the workers said: "In the certain knowledge that the FDGB does not serve the interests of most of the workers, lacks their confidence, and sees itself as a partner of the Communist Party, we have decided to leave it."

Even Harry Tisch, leader of the FDGB, said that unions should show more independence. But as with the "official" union leaders in Poland who tried to win back some support from Solidarnosc with similar statements, it seems very unlikely that workers will forget the years of collusion of these "union" leaders with management in implementing their vicious attacks on workers' living standards.

So far the response of the bureaucracy to the unrest has been predictably confused: a mixture of repression and half-hearted reform.

First they closed the border with Czechoslovakia and tried to pretend there was no crisis in society generally, that it was just a case of a few criminal troublemakers—a sentiment echoed by Proinsias de Rossa in a recent radio interview.

Now parliament is to consider a new draft law aimed at giving people greater freedom of travel to the West.

But their response to the demonstrations has been

simple and brutal. Speaking of the clashes during the East German 40th anniversary celebrations, witnesses spoke of what they termed Gestapo-style actions by the riot and secret police.

Yet their fear of what popular unrest could lead to meant that two leading bureaucrats, Berlin's deputy police chief and a public prosecutor, made an unexpected appearance at a press conference called by the church against police brutality.

The most obvious shift so far is the retirement of Erich Honecker. But there are no clear policy differences between him and his successor Egon Krenz. At the most Krenz isn't as cold.

People are understandably sceptical about the man who was Politburo chief for security during the anniversary clashes.

In the West, obviously, we have to defend absolutely the right of East Germans to emigrate to the West just as strenuously as we do those of people from the Third World. At the same time we have to be very careful to expose the hypocrisy of the right and not to fall prey to Cold War ideology.

In reality, most East Germans will prefer to stay and fight because the West hasn't got much better to offer. The biggest problem faced by the emigrants will be the housing shortage in West Germany, which has been made much worse since Kohl's Christian Democrats came to power.

## ARGUING

For years racists in the Federal Republic have been arguing that there aren't enough jobs and houses to provide for the Turks, Yugoslavs and Poles who came as "guest workers" and now they are saying that the East Germans can be easily integrated.

This is not to say that East Germans aren't more repressed and on average worse off in material terms—they are. But this has nothing to do with the failure of "communism" and the superiority of capitalism. The Eastern states, based on repression and exploitation, are every bit as capitalist as the West, albeit a state capitalist.

In any event, the level of repression in East Germany is certainly no higher than that in "free market" NATO-member Turkey.

Compared to many market economies East Germany is quite affluent. It ranks in the top ten industrialised nations, ahead of Britain and Italy in terms of productivity per head.

Living standards are no lower than those in Greece,



Turkey, Portugal or Spain. It's more than a bit rich for the West to criticise East Germany for caging its citizens in when immigration controls in the West prevent many other East Europeans from emigrating. It takes two to tear down a border.

Comparisons with West Germany are out of place. The whole economy of Europe east of the Elbe has developed for centuries in a different way to that in the West, leaving it much more economically backward. When the Stalinists took over in East Germany the only real industrial area was around Leipzig and Halle, while West Germany contained Europe's single

biggest industrial area, the Ruhr.

Added to this was the massive plunder wreaked by Stalin's USSR upon all of Eastern Europe. East Germany lost 26 per cent of its pre-war industrial strength to Russia and the drain continued for many

## UNEQUAL

years as Stalin imposed unequal trading relationships on Russia's satellites.

It was the attempt of the East German bureaucracy to make up the gap with the West that saw consumer goods relegated to second place behind heavy industry. The economy grew,

but at the expense of working class living standards. Consumer goods were of poor quality and in short supply. It was this that led to the workers' uprising in 1953, two months after Stalin's death.

Eventually Russian troops and East German police crushed the rising, but Western troops also cordoned off the border to prevent workers from West Berlin joining their brothers and sisters in East Berlin.

The truth is the Western rulers are just as scared of political instability in East Germany as the East German bureaucrats are, especially if it once again takes a working class form.

■ JOSH CLARKE

## Who are the opposition?

NEW Forum, the umbrella grouping for the twenty or so opposition organisations in East Germany, is dominated by middle class intellectuals, but the movement has also raised working class demands such as against unemployment, as well as arguing for free elections, economic reform and ecological measures.

The main problem with the dominant ideas with New Forum is that they want dialogue with a reform wing of the SED (Communist Party), despite the fact that there is none. However, the mass meetings organised by New Forum at least create a space for people to discuss and argue together.

Naturally, there is a wide range of politics in the movement, from liberal critics of the regime to class conscious workers. Hopefully the

existence of new independent unions will make it easier to argue for a working class leadership to the opposition.

At the moment most people in the opposition want to reform the system but they don't look to Western capitalist for answers either. There is a vague concept of a "third way" in which self-management and ecology are important.

The notion of self-management is a very popular one among East European workers. It's a very powerful idea, even if it's sometimes mixed up with illusions in the market, as direct control by workers over production and their lives generally is at the heart of genuine socialism. It will play a great part in the future in the fight against the bureaucratic state capitalist regimes of East Europe.

In Brief  
SOUTH AFRICA

TENS of thousands marched throughout South Africa to celebrate the release of eight leading anti-apartheid activists last month.

The eight had suffered nearly 200 years in jail between them. African National Congress leader Walter Sisulu was released after 26 years in jail.

The ANC, officially banned by the state, called a march and rally in Johannesburg which attracted 15,000 people. ANC flags were flown, illegal speeches were made and placards depicting AK47 rifles and limpet mines displayed.

But FW de Klerk's "reforms" have not ended the terror against blacks. There are still nearly 800 political prisoners left in jail, including 15 serving life terms and 45 sentenced to more than 20 years. Over 70 political prisoners are still on death row.

## NAMIBIA

THE United Nations Economic Commission for Africa estimates that South African military aggression and economic destabilisation cost neighbouring states £7 billion in 1988—40 per cent of production in the region.

Since 1980 1.5 million people have died from war-induced starvation and the destruction of health facilities. Over half the dead were infants or children under five. Another 1.5 million people have fled their countries and over six million are internally displaced.

Namibia totters towards civil war as the former puppet rulers of the country, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, step up violence and intimidation—at Pretoria's prompting—ahead of elections planned for November 6.

## HUNGARY

THE Communist Party wound itself up and "bourgeois democracy" was officially proclaimed last month in Budapest. France was quick to offer an aid package.

This includes the creation of a new riot police, trained by French officers and modelled on the hated French CRS. Over the years, the French example of an "ugly" paramilitary riot police operating under government control and independently of the regular police and army has proved a useful safety valve.

With notorious brutality, the CRS broke the Communist miners' strikes in 1947, attacked student demonstrations in 1968 and 1986 and now has 14,000 men split into 63 companies.

## ENGLAND

AMBULANCE drivers in London were locked out for a few days last month during their wage dispute and police were deployed on ambulance duties.

But old habits die hard. Press photographers saw one woman patient brought into hospital in a police vehicle. When the cops saw the cameras they covered her head as though she was arriving for a trial in court. Not being able to see, she bumped into the door of the hospital and broke her elbow.

Rumours were circulating that numbers of patients, while being taken to hospital by the police, were admitting to illnesses they didn't have and being taken into hospital for lengthy periods of time!



**A**T THE end of September, hundreds of working class people in Waterford scored a victory in the fight against water charges.

Despite election promises to abolish water rates, the Fianna Fail controlled City Council has continued to collect the charges.

Local anger at this "double taxation" led to less than half of all households paying, despite Council intimidation. Matters came to head recently when the Corporation employed contractors to cut off the supply of those in arrears.

Bully boys in vans travelled to working class estates threatening and abusing residents and vandalising their stop cocks and piping. Women were invited into the back of the vans with obscene suggestions.

But the people of the Lismore Park/Paddy Browne's Road organised to fight back. When a van load of thugs began disconnections in the area, 700 locals besieged the contractors in their van which was surrounded for eight hours.

Gardai were unable to prevent the siege, which was only ended at 11.00pm when the City Manager, Michael Doody, suspended further disconnections for a period of three weeks.

Doody also conceded talks with representatives of the Combined Tenants and Residents Association for the following week.

The Association had also organised a protest at the Ballybricken Garda Station to protest at gardai being present at disconnections to intimidate the local people and protect the contractors.

Two weeks later a demonstration outside the city hall attracted 1500 people demanding that councillors honour their election pledge to abolish the charges.

Seamie Power, the protest chairman, denounced the local media campaign to smear the campaign. Local radio reports had described the Lismore Park siege as "mob rule", "a danger to the workmen" and a "disgrace to the name of Waterford".

The Waterford News and Star has been running a particularly vicious hate campaign against the protesters.

Other speakers on the night included Pat Kelly of the Combined Tenants and Residents Association, Jimmy Kelly of the ATGWU, David Lane of the Waterford Council of Trade Unions, Walter Long of the Tenants Association and representatives of the Women's Group.

Jimmy Kelly called on the campaign to stand firm in the face of intimidation: "We don't want any of our supporters to be intimidated by the gardai parking 'paddy wagons' outside their homes. We don't see them parking them outside the homes of business people or the people who back this law."

At the City Council meeting Labour and Workers Party councillors had demanded the abolition of service charges. Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Independent councillors blocked this motion but stalled on the question of charges for next year.

Unlike most of the rest of the country, where opposition to water rates has so far been largely ineffective, in Waterford the issue has been taken into the trade union movement.

Strong local trade union traditions—particularly in the glass factory and on the docks—has meant that the issue has been raised on the Trade Council. This has had a policy of calling for strike action should anyone be jailed for non-payment.

Unfortunately the trades council is now distancing itself from this defiant stand. At a recent annual general meeting, left wingers and militants were ousted in a coup. The present trades council is dominated by trade union officials and "moderates" from professional unions.

The Left parties also have not been giving the lead the campaign needs. The local Labour Party—with few activists involved on the ground—has been bending every effort to demobilise the direct action of local people. Instead they urge a cooling off period while some behind the scenes deal can be stitched up.

The Workers Party and Sinn Fein, with members actively engaged in the campaign, have given no distinctive lead but merely followed the mood of the moment.

Working class people in Waterford have shown the way to the rest of the country in the fight against service charges. They have shown that charges can be fought by local people physically resisting disconnections and involving the trade union movement.

In every area their example must be followed with large protests in the face of

# Workers fight to put water back in Waterford



Residents blockade contractors

disconnections and trade unionists actively taking up the question at workplaces where stoppages can be organised.

But more needs to be done. Delegations from local estates must visit workplaces and argue for a commitment from workers to take strike action if anyone is jailed for non-payment. Support from local authority workers must be won. Trade union branches must

pass resolutions against the charges and pledge support for those refusing to pay.

If the pressure is kept up, if mass protests are organised and if the fight is taken into the trade unions and workplaces, not just in Waterford, but around the country, local councils can be beaten and Haughey forced to provide finance from the pockets of the rich.

## Screwing the poor

THOUSANDS of people are being threatened with court cases and disconnection over service charges to placate the rich.

Local authorities must cover the cost of providing libraries, rubbish disposal, water and all the other locally provided services out of their budget.

The revenue to pay for these is met from the business rates, rents and a block grant from central government.

Since 1985 the value of this block grant has been savagely cut. Local councils are faced with having to slash spending by reducing housing maintenance or street lighting and increasing revenue by charging for water or refuse collections.

This amounts to "double taxation" because most workers already pay the highest

rates of tax in Europe through PAYE and VAT which is collected by the central government.

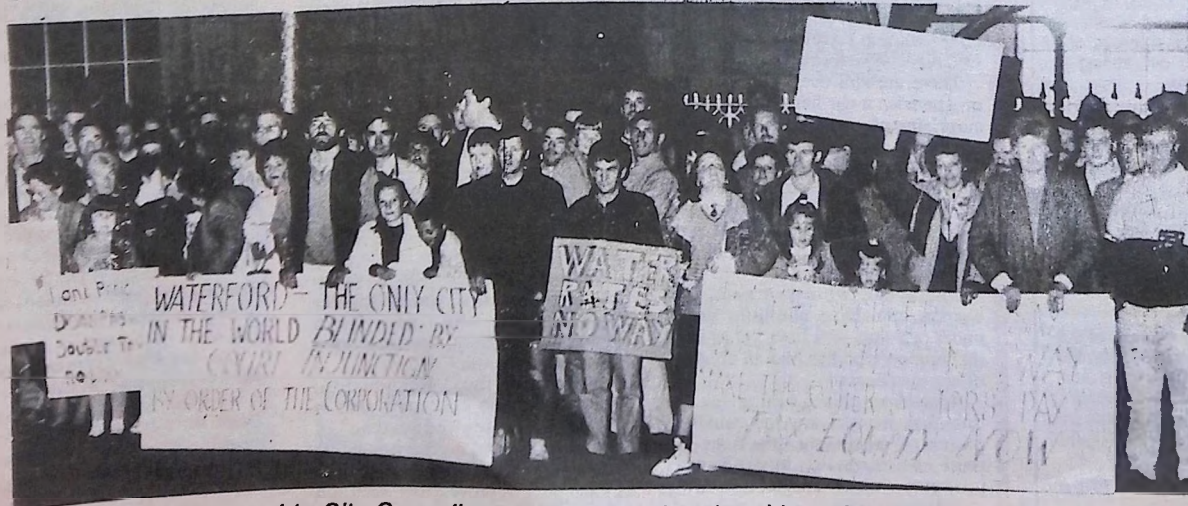
Yet Ireland has one of the lowest rates of tax on profits and wealth anywhere in the West.

Haughey's aim is to squeeze the poor with cuts and charges to continue pampering the rich in the hope that they might be tempted to invest in Irish capitalism.

But even with the laxest tax regime in Europe the Irish capitalist provided 1000 fewer jobs this year than last.

Local councillors are happy to go along with these anti-working class measures in order to further their political careers.

The only way this vicious circle can be broken is by mass action and working class resistance. That is why the example of Waterford is so important.



Demonstrators outside City Council meeting demand and end to water rates.



## Why millions are starving

OVER one hundred years ago Karl Marx wrote that the greatest indictment of the capitalist system was its inability to feed the people.

The productive forces were capable of producing enough food, but investment was diverted towards heavy industry where profits were higher.

Today the situation is no better. In the last decade major famines have hit Africa and Asia. But what is different is that we produce enough food today to offer

Bangladesh, it was only the poor that died. Only the poor were desperate enough for land to make the dangerous move onto the new islands that appear every year in the Bay of Bengal.

commodity to be bought and sold for profit, not to meet people's needs. The world grain trade is dominated by just five companies. These corporations control 85 per cent of US grain ex-



everyone in the world well over the recommended minimum of 2,500 calories per adult per day.

That only takes account of cereal production; if we take into account the calories in vegetables, nuts, root crops and grass-fed meat then we clearly have an abundance of food.

The problem is the distribution of that food, both within countries and between rich and poor countries.

The Green Party, among others, argue that the problem is overpopulation. Central to their argument is the view that we must drastically reduce the world's population and in particular the population of the industrialised West.

The argument goes that the Americans represent only six per cent of the world's population yet they consume 35 per cent of its resources—the same as the entire developing world. So, they say, the real problem is that there are too many Americans.

But America and the Western countries have enough money to support their populations. There is little relationship between hunger and the availability of land.

Holland has 1,117 people per square mile and Bolivia just 12, yet the Dutch are among the best-fed people in the world and the Bolivian poor among the world's most undernourished. Africa may have the world's greatest food problem—but it isn't for the lack of land. At the moment only a quarter of African potential land is being cultivated.

Neither does the weather cause famines: those who control the resources of the world do. Earthquakes and floods, droughts and storms, may be natural disasters.

But it is the system that decides who will suffer from them. When the recent cyclone hit

When the floods came they were washed away. Red Cross statistics show that in high-income countries the number of people killed per disaster is under 10 per cent of those killed in low-income countries. The reason why more die is poverty. The weather merely tips them over the brink.

The Green Revolution—the scientific development of high yield crops—was to have solved the world's food problems. It has proved to be a false dawn. In some cases it has made matters worse.

High-yield seeds only work with high levels of artificial fertiliser and an irrigation system that is beyond the means of most small farmers. Only the medium and large farmers have benefited from the Green Revolution.

They have increased their output, while the small farmers grow the same or less than usual but have to sell at a lower price due to the glut on the market. When new agricultural techniques are injected into an unequal society then the gap between rich and poor widens, even if more food is produced.



Quite clearly the problem is not overpopulation, the weather or lack of production. There are two main reasons why famine exists today, and both are products of the system by which society is organised. Firstly, food, like every-

thing else, is seen as a

commodity to be bought and sold for profit, not to meet people's needs. The world grain trade is dominated by just eight families. Unilever control 80 per cent of world trade in oil seeds. A one per cent price increase on the Chicago grain exchange will result in many thousands starving or dying in Africa and Asia.

The second reason for famine is debt. The crisis of the 1970s forced most underdeveloped countries

to borrow huge amounts to survive. The servicing of these debts is bad enough on its own. Jamaica's repayments will consume half its earnings from exports.

Africa's debts are now beyond its ability to pay. What makes matters worse is that any new loans taken out necessitate satisfying the demands of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Their conditions for loans involve drastic cuts in public expenditure, ending of food subsidies and welfare programmes. The poor are the first to be hit. No economy has benefited from these monetarist policies.

In order to repay the loans to western banks and governments production is switched from food to cash crops such as cotton and coffee. In many cases the land is unsuitable for these crops and soon gives out, adding to the problem.

Peasants in South America are pushed off their traditional lands to make way for production of cash crops. The peasants are forced to cut and burn the rain forests to get land to survive. The downward spiral of destruction and poverty continues.

The only way out of the spiral is to repudiate the debts and utilise the surplus food to meet people's needs. But that cannot be done within the existing framework of society.

■ PAUL O'BRIEN

## ABORTION INFORMATION:

# The fight against the SPUC bigots

**T**HE battle against SPUC has been won, but the war is far from over. As students celebrate their High Court victory, the self-styled guardians of Irish morality are appealing the decision against them in the Supreme Court.

It had been decided that there was insufficient evidence to prove that the students were in contempt of court, though they had publicly distributed the information that SPUC is trying to control.

This is undoubtedly a setback for the right-wing group which was responsible for the banning of abortion counselling and referral services provided by the Well Woman Clinics and Open Line Counselling in 1986.

But support for SPUC and similar organisations is not widespread in Irish society; membership of SPUC peaked at 4,000 around the time of the "pro-life" Amendment, and has since dwindled to a meagre 1,000.

The organisation claims to be pro-life—President Mary Lucey insists that her main concern is for the unborn and young mothers. This concern is so great that she would also like to deny women the right to contraception at a time when over 4,000 women travel to Britain from Ireland each year to have abortions.

There are still over 4,000 teenage pregnancies a year here, which is not surprising given that there is little or no sex education in schools.

A group with similar aims to SPUC, the Life group, which has been setting up college groups since the beginning of the student confrontation with SPUC, is also very "caring".

One spokeswoman argued that women who have abortions do so under pressure—"I have yet to meet the woman who has had an abortion of her own accord".

Apart from this insulting suggestion that women are the mindless pawns of others, the pressures are real economic and social pressures—which are not solved by

forcing her to have the child.

For instance, 250,000 Irish women are now officially considered to be living in poverty. One in three children are living below the poverty line.

In 1985, a baby found abandoned was not eligible for adoption because no-one knew for certain that it was "illegitimate"

or "orphaned"—the only conditions where it could legally be adopted.

Right wing morality has spawned a host of fundamentalist groups dedicated to keeping the status quo. The husband of Mary Lucey, property investment manager Michael Lucey, is a member of the Family Solidarity Group.

This group marshalled the forces against divorce in Ireland at the time of that particular referendum. At present its stated aim is "to secure tax relief for the children of married parents".

Michael Lucey's declarations are such as the following: "Family planning for people not forming a family is merely a licence to fornicate... If you have unmarried people of eighteen who are not prepared to make the commitment to marriage then we take the view that they have no right to sexual indulgence."

This comes at a time when official statistics show a 160 per cent increase in marriage breakdown through desertion in the past ten years; the 1986 Census showed 11,622 people deserted and 13,062 separated but not legally separated out of a total of 37,245 people who declared themselves "separated".

Yet Family Solidarity demonstrates no comprehension of, or sympathy for, the victims of broken relationships—the social pressures which bear down on people and alienate them are not mentioned once. According to Michael Lucey, there are no second chances, regardless of how many lives are ruined in the process.

Another prominent SPUC member, John O'Reilly, was a founder member of the so-called Responsible Society, now re-named "Family and Youth Concern".

In Britain, the "Responsible Society" was so concerned that it opposed all sex education in schools. In Ireland it concentrated its fire on the Rape Crisis Centre and campaigned to prevent the abolition

of the stigma of illegitimacy, claiming that "the family unit founded on marriage is the cornerstone of society."

This is despite the fact that in Britain one in four children is born outside of marriage.

People, complains Mary Lucey,

## How we can

**W**omen do go out to work organised to fight for better conditions alongside male workers.

The experience of common possible for old sexist ideas to be

The fact that more and more women work means that they are now in a position to fight against their oppression as part of the working class.

This is why it is vitally important that the

information should be taken up in the trade union movement. If the struggle remains isolated within the trade union branches should pass resolutions and become actively involved by publishing

is seeking to censor.

All the left-wing parties in the Dail should be made to stand alongside the students and stand publicly. If SPUC wins, it will actually lead to further policing of women, including:

- Monitoring telephone calls to abortion clinics
- Prosecution and jailing of women who have abortions
- Examination of women to ensure that they are not pregnant
- Currently the practice in countries such as Ireland is to examine women to ensure they are not pregnant
- Preventing pregnant women from travelling to Britain for abortions

All this is not as far-fetched as it may seem. In Ireland a massive anti-abortion campaign is being mounted by groups such as "Operation Rescue" and "Operation Rescue" act women going in to have abortions and phoning women from going ahead with the operation.

And this is in a country where abortion is legal. In Britain at the moment the Prime Minister is supporting an attempt to reduce the time for which abortion is permitted from 28 weeks to a possible 22 or 24 weeks.

All these reasons make it imperative that the people possible are involved in the campaign. Emmett Stagg, TD, Proinsias de Rossa, TD, making supportive noises from a safe position openly in defiance of a law that is oppressive to women. A full scale campaign of mass defiance can win the day.

The student demonstrations outside the SPUC building are a most important determination to fight against SPUC. A full scale campaign of mass defiance can win the day. The student demonstrations outside the SPUC building are a most important determination to fight against SPUC. A full scale campaign of mass defiance can win the day.



## ABORTION INFORMATION:

# The fight against the SPUC bigots

**T**HE battle against SPUC has been won, but the war is far from over. As students celebrate their High Court victory, the self-styled guardians of Irish morality are appealing the decision against them in the Supreme Court.

It had been decided that there was insufficient evidence to prove that the students were in contempt of court, though they had publicly distributed the information that SPUC is trying to control.

This is undoubtedly a setback for the right-wing group which was responsible for the banning of abortion counselling and referral services provided by the Well Woman Clinics and Open Line Counselling in 1986.

But support for SPUC and similar organisations is not widespread in Irish society; membership of SPUC peaked at 4,000 around the time of the "pro-life" Amendment, and has since dwindled to a meagre 1,000. The organisation claims to be pro-life—President Mary Lucey insists that her main concern is for the unborn and young mothers. This concern is so great that she would also like to deny women the right to contraception at a time when over 4,000 women travel to Britain from Ireland each year to have abortions.

There are still over 4,000 teenage pregnancies a year here, which is not surprising given that there is little or no sex education in schools.

A group with similar aims to SPUC, the Life group, which has been setting up college groups since the beginning of the student confrontation with SPUC, is also very "caring".

One spokeswoman argued that women who have abortions do so under pressure—"I have yet to meet the women who has had an abortion of her own accord".

Apart from this insulting suggestion that women are the mindless pawns of others, the pressures are real economic and social pressures—which are not solved by

forcing her to have the child.

For instance, 250,000 Irish women are now officially considered to be living in poverty. One in three children are living below the poverty line.

In 1985, a baby found abandoned was not eligible for adoption because no-one knew for certain that it was "illegitimate" or "orphaned"—the only conditions where it could legally be adopted.

Right wing morality has spawned a host of fundamentalist groups dedicated to keeping the status quo. The husband of Mary Lucey, property investment manager Michael Lucey, is a member of the Family Solidarity Group.

This group marshalled the forces against divorce in Ireland at the time of that particular referendum. At present its stated aim is "to secure tax relief for the children of married parents".

Michael Lucey's declarations are such as the following: "Family planning for people not forming a family is merely a licence to fornicate... If you have unmarried people of eighteen who are not prepared to make the commitment to marriage then we take the view that they have no right to sexual indulgence."

This comes at a time when official statistics show a 160 per cent increase in marriage breakdown through desertion in the past ten years; the 1986 Census showed 11,622 people deserted and 13,062 separated but not legally separated out of a total of 37,245 people who declared themselves "separated".

Yet Family Solidarity demonstrates no comprehension of, or sympathy for, the victims of broken relationships—the social pressures which bear down on people and alienate them are not mentioned once. According to Michael Lucey, there are no second chances, regardless of how many lives are ruined in the process.

Another prominent SPUC member, John O'Reilly, was a founder member of the so-called Responsible Society, now re-named "Family and Youth Concern".

In Britain, the "Responsible Society" was so concerned that it opposed all sex education in schools. In Ireland it concentrated its fire on the Rape Crisis Centre and campaigned to prevent the abolition

of the stigma of illegitimacy, claiming that "the family unit founded on marriage is the cornerstone of society."

This is despite the fact that in Britain one in four children is born outside of marriage.

People, complains Mary Lucey,

are beginning to think that their bodies and their lives are their own.

**W**hile SPUC and its Wallies would like to see women in the traditional subservient

## How we can win

**W**omen do go out to work, where they can be organised to fight for better pay and conditions alongside male workers.

The experience of common struggle makes it possible for old sexist ideas to be broken down.

The fact that more and more women are now going out to work means that they are now in a better position to fight against their oppression as part of the collective struggle of the working class.

This is why it is vitally important that the campaign for the right to information should be taken up in the trade union movement.

If the struggle remains isolated within the colleges, it cannot win. Trade union branches should pass resolutions supporting the students and become actively involved by publishing the information that SPUC is seeking to censor.

All the left-wing parties in the Dail should also publish the telephone numbers, and stand alongside the students in handing the information out publicly. If SPUC wins, it will actually be possible for it to push for further policing of women, including:

- Monitoring telephone calls to abortion clinics in Britain;
- Prosecution and jailing of women who have had abortions;
- Examination of women to ensure that they have not had abortions, as is currently the practice in countries such as Romania;
- Preventing pregnant women from travelling to other countries if it is suspected that they might intend to have an abortion.

All this is not as far-fetched as it may seem. In the United States, where a massive anti-abortion campaign is under way at the moment, groups such as "Operation Rescue" actually attack clinics, abuse women going in to have abortions, and physically attempt to stop the woman from going ahead with the operation.

And this is in a country where abortion is still, for the most part, legal. In Britain at the moment the Prime Minister is lending her support to an attempt to reduce the time period in which abortion is permitted from 28 weeks to a possible 22 or 24.

All these reasons make it imperative that the greatest number of people possible are involved in the campaign to defend women's rights. Emmett Stagg, TD, Proinsias de Rossa, and the others should stop making supportive noises from a safe position behind USI and come out openly in defiance of a law that is oppressive and discriminatory. Only a full scale campaign of mass defiance can win.

The student demonstrations outside the Four Courts showed a militant determination to fight against SPUC. Action groups in the colleges have been keeping the profile of the campaign high; what needs to be done now is to organise a struggle involving a much wider body of people—the labour movement and the working class as a whole. Only then will SPUC be smashed.



positions, both within the family and society, they are conspicuous by their silence when it comes to the actual hardships faced by Irish families.

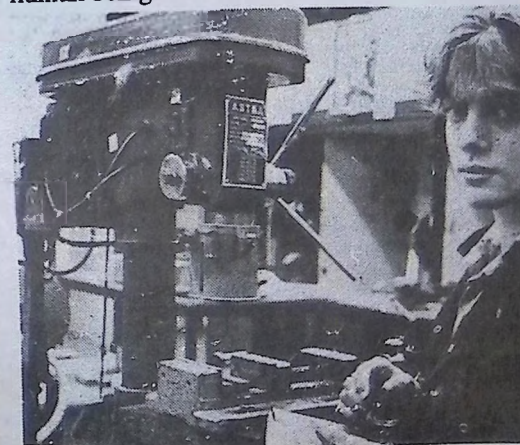
A married couple with three children, on unemployment assistance, is expected to live on £107 a week.

If they have five children this assistance is increased to the magnificent sum of £127 a week. SPUC manifests no concern at this situation. They are merely concerned with the protection of the family as an institution of bourgeois society, not with real live human beings.

truth of the man who are better off few problems: abortion—it is who suffer most this.

They cannot afford facilities—even and the Irish state no consideration with children. Ins women are isolated on housing estate economic independence to change

The marginal from the work serve to reproduce force, caring for children who are It also means that into the workp and condition bosses, with literacy, paid love



The actual plight of many women who find themselves in a crisis pregnancy is totally ignored by SPUC. Because the defence of the institution of the family necessarily involves an attack on the rights of women, it is vitally important that the right to information campaign is used as a focus of struggle to defend women's rights.

Although the campaign has so far been fought on the basis of a woman's right to information, it is vital that socialists defend the right to free abortion for all women. The

erally discrimi

This is why sexism and all SPUC and t entirely to the ism and are in f

This is wh Lucey of SPUC fundamental a clinical aborti abortion."

This is in sp Britain thousa from backtree 1967 legislati tion legal. T importance; it which must be



# Why we fight for abortion rights

THE renewed controversy about abortion caused by the Student Unions' defiance of SPUC resulted in the all too familiar reaction of "abortion is murder; it is always wrong; caring, pro-life people should be against abortion".

Since the 1967 Abortion Act was passed in Britain over 150,000 Irish women, from both sides of the Border, have had abortions in England.

These women are Catholic and Protestant, married and single, young and old. In the younger age groups, an Irish woman is every bit as likely to have an abortion as an English woman of the same age. So, are all of these women murderers?

Of course not. Down through the centuries, women have always tried to control the number of children they had. The Catholic Church didn't always condemn abortion totally.

It used to be acceptable until "quickening"—when the foetus started to move. It's only since the end of the last century that abortion has been ruled "always wrong".

Church and state in Ireland, North and South, allow no extenuating circumstances for women who choose to have an abortion. Both allow killing in certain circumstances—in self defence, in a "just war" and in capital punishment.

But while Church and state justify *beforehand* any policeman who kills in self defence, any soldier who kills in a war situation, any government that hangs the wrong person (or that shoots them down in the street), both *condemn beforehand* any woman who has an abortion.

The reason is a simple and political reason, not a moral reason. The demand for contraception and abortion raises the most political question of all: who decides, who controls?

The answer is that in class society the overwhelming majority of people—the working class—have no control at all. The extent of this lack of control is nowhere more obvious than in the fact that nowhere in the world do women have the right to control even their own bodies.

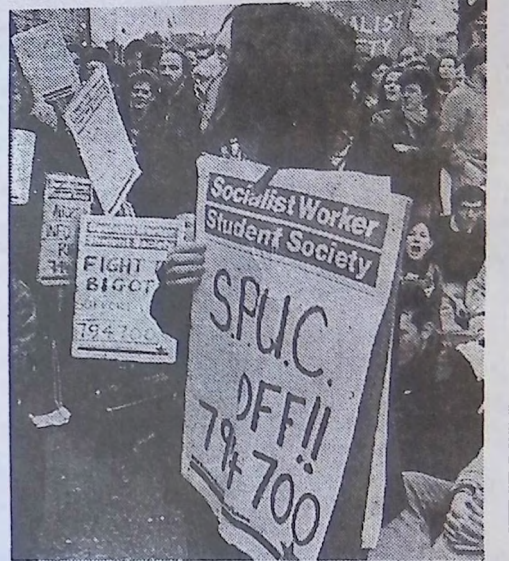
The question of abortion is also very

much a class issue. In demanding free, legal abortion in Ireland, we expose the class hypocrisy where rich women have always been able to get abortions in expensive private clinics, while working class women have been forced to resort to home remedies and often dangerous backstreet abortionists.

be compared with that of the pregnant woman without devaluing her life, needs and aspirations.

SPUC seems to think that people who are pro-choice ("the abortion lobby" they call us) want women to have abortions.

Yet it is usually the people who fight for abortion rights who are also campaigning



Today, rich women can slip off to England with very little trouble (or can even find a sympathetic consultant here) but working class women have to face the panic of getting the money together fast enough to get an abortion.

Women controlling their lives is all very well, some people say, but abortion affects another human being's life. Socialists would never deny that abortion involves ending life.

Can we say, though, that a just-fertilised egg, or even an eight or ten week foetus is another human being? Of course the foetus is a potential human being. But it is totally dependent on the

women who carries it.

It can only continue to live if she lives, will not be nourished if she does not eat, will not receive oxygen if she does not breathe, will die if she dies.

That is why we must put the woman, her life and her right to control that life, before the rights of the foetus. The humanity it has is abstract and cannot

for childcare facilities, for better housing, for proper jobs—all the facilities that might help women choose not to have abortions. The so-called "pro-life" people seem to lose their concern for life once it has been born.

Socialists have always been to the fore in the struggle to win for women more control over their fertility. Today in Ireland that means fighting the health cuts which have meant that contraception is still not available free on the Health Service. It means standing up to SPUC and fighting to have free abortion available here in Ireland.

But in the end, the idea of women—or men—having real control over their own lives is not one which is compatible with the capitalist system under which we live.

The idea of the mass of people, women and men, controlling their own lives to the extent of having real choices about having or not having children with all the necessary facilities will only be possible under socialism.

■ GORETTI HORGAN



...itimacy, daily unit the corner-  
...ct that in an is bom  
...ry Lucey,

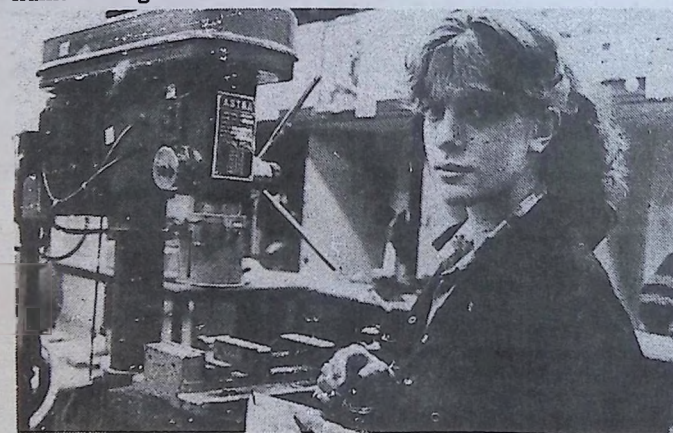
are beginning to think that their bodies and their lives are their own.

**While SPUC and its Wallies would like to see women in the traditional subservient**

positions, both within the family and society, they are conspicuous by their silence when it comes to the actual hardships faced by Irish families.

A married couple with three children, on unemployment assistance, is expected to live on £107 a week.

If they have five children this assistance is increased to the magnificent sum of £127 a week. SPUC manifests no concern at this situation. They are merely concerned with the protection of the family as an institution of bourgeois society, not with real live human beings.



The actual plight of many women who find themselves in a crisis pregnancy is totally ignored by SPUC. Because the defence of the institution of the family necessarily involves an attack on the rights of women, it is vitally important that the right to information campaign is used as a focus of struggle to defend women's rights.

Although the campaign has so far been fought on the basis of a woman's right to information, it is vital that socialists defend the right to free abortion for all women. The

truth of the matter is that women who are better off socially will have few problems obtaining an abortion—it is working class women who suffer most from attacks like this.

They cannot easily afford creche facilities—even if these existed—and the Irish state certainly shows no consideration towards women with children. Instead, working class women are isolated in their homes on housing estates, with little or no economic independence and no power to change things.

The marginalisation of women from the work force means they serve to reproduce the labour force, caring for husbands and children who are future workers. It also means they can be brought into the workplace on the terms and conditions offered by the bosses, with little or no job security, paid low wages and gen-

erally discriminated against.

This is why the ideology of sexism and all the values held by SPUC and their friends work entirely to the advantage of capitalism and are in fact generated by it.

This is what drives Dr Mary Lucey of SPUC to say: "There is no fundamental difference between a clinical abortion and a backstreet abortion."

This is in spite of the fact that in Britain thousands of women died from backstreet abortions before the 1967 legislation which made abortion legal. The woman is of no importance; it is the social structure which must be preserved.

## We can win

go out to work, where they can be to fight for better pay and alongside male workers.

of common struggle makes it exist ideas to be broken down.

and more women are now going out to they are now in a better position to fight as part of the collective struggle of the

ly important that the campaign for the right to taken up in the trade union movement.

ains isolated within the colleges, it cannot win. should pass resolutions supporting the students involved by publishing the information that SPUC

ties in the bill should also publish the telephone alongside the students in handing the information wins. It would actually be possible for it to push for

men, including: who have had abortions; that they have not had abortions, as such as Romania;

ge in countries travelling to other countries if it is it women have an abortion.

ight intended it may seem. In the United States, "abortion rescue" actually attack clinics, abuse "abortion rescue" and physically attempt to stop the

ave abortions. operation. abortion is still, for the most part, the Prime Minister is lending her the time period in which abortion is

pt to reduce the 22 or 24. rative that the greatest number of campaign to defend women's rights.

Rossa, and the others should stop position behind USI and come out ppressive and discriminatory. Only a can win.

side the Four Courts showed a mili- SPUC. Action groups in the colleges campaign high; what needs to be e involving a much wider body of the working class as a whole. Only

ashed.



## OUR HISTORY



*"It is, of course, impossible for us to ignore the views of the hierarchy. Even if, as Catholics, we are prepared to take the responsibility of disregarding their views, which I do not think we can do, it would be politically impossible to do. We must therefore accept the views of the hierarchy on this matter."*

*This exchange of letters between Sean MacBride, leader of the Clann na Poblachta party and Dr Noel Browne, Minister for Health in the 1949 coalition government put to an end Browne's ministerial career. And, as KEVIN WINGFIELD writes, it meant the end of the Mother and Child Scheme, a mildly progressive health measure which the Church had opposed.*

In 1947, De Valera's Fianna Fail government had introduced a Health Act enabling the State to provide for the health of all children, to prepare women for motherhood and to make gynaecological care available to all women.

Although the act was passed by the Dail, there was no scheme giving effect to its provisions by the time Fianna Fail lost power in the election of 1948.

The incoming Dail reflected widespread disillusionment with the austerity of the De Valera years. While Fianna Fail returned 68 deputies and Fine Gael 31, Labour had 19, Clann na Talmhan—a party championing small farmer dissatisfaction—had seven, Clann na Poblachta ten in addition to twelve Independents.

Clann na Poblachta had been formed from dissident republicans and claimed a social radicalism. Former IRA chief MacBride became Minister for External Affairs and Browne—a young doctor working in a TB sanatorium with no previous political experience—was given the Ministry of Health.

Labour had three ministries. Party leader William Norton as well as Tanaiste took Social Welfare, Murphy and Everett took Local Government and Posts and Telegraphs. Lands and Fisheries went to Clann na Talmhan and Fine Gael took the rest with Costello as Taoiseach.



Left: Sean McBride and Health Minister Dr Noel Browne

*"Your letter is a model of the two-faced hypocrisy and humbug so characteristic of you.*

*Your references to a conflict between the spiritual and temporal authorities will occasion a smile among the many people who remember the earlier version of your kaleidoscopic self."*

The new government introduced proposals for social insurance and legal adoption and immediately ran into Church opposition. Adoption was dropped and social insurance never reached the statute book.

However it was Noel Browne's Mother and Child Scheme giving effect to the 1947 Health Act which finally tore the government apart.

Browne proposed replacing the poor law dispensaries with free medical care before, during and after childbirth and for children up to sixteen.

The scheme was immensely popular among masses of working class people who lived in constant fear of expenses for hospitals and medicines. And at first all parties wanted to claim credit for initiating the scheme.

Browne understood that he would face hostility from rich consultants to the "socialisation of medicine" as Bevan had in Britain with the introduction of the more wide-ranging NHS. Such pressure in the USA had defeated a similar measure by Truman. But the cabinet had expressed itself willing to face down this opposition in defence of a "no means test" scheme.

But the wealthy consultants had a powerful ally in the

## 1951: The Mother and Child Health Scheme When the Left ran away

Church hierarchy. The bishops, through their control of the religious orders and placemen on hospital boards, had a hand in the management of most of the hospitals in Ireland, which were run on resolutely sectarian lines.

Leading the attack on behalf of the hierarchy was Archbishop of Dublin, Dr McQuaid. On October 10 1950 Browne was summoned to McQuaid's palace. He was commanded to come alone. There, flanked by two other bishops, McQuaid read a letter from the hierarchy to the government condemning Browne's scheme.

The gist of the condemnation was that a free medical scheme would take from parents their God-given "right" to provide for the physical wellbeing of family members; that medical provision for the poor should not be provided from taxation from the rich and that gynaecological services for the poor could lead to a weakening of Church domination: "Doctors trained in institutions in which we have no confidence may be appointed as medical officers under the proposed services, and may give gynaecological care not in accordance with Catholic principles".

Over the next few months, increasingly isolated in the government, Browne offered concessions to the hierarchy. In particular he was prepared to revise provision of ante-natal and gynaecological educational material—which the bishops claimed might open the door to

offering advice on contraception to women. The Church could veto these items if only Browne could keep the free, no means test nature of the scheme.

MacBride forced Browne to grovel to Dr Michael Browne, a member of the Episcopal Committee. Sipping champagne and smoking cigarettes from a silver casket—"I have them hand made in Bond Street"—the bishop seemed only concerned about the cost of the proposed scheme.

Despite offers of more concessions, it became clear that the hierarchy would settle only for the complete abandonment of the scheme. The bishops launched a hate campaign against Browne.

In pastoral letters, and sermons from the pulpit Browne was condemned. In a farming parish in Connemara the priest described Browne as one of those people who "come amongst us disguised as friends, when meanwhile their real work is to poison the wells, and so kill off our stock".

Archbishop Kinane of Cashel was quoted in the Irish Independent: "I have recently emphasised that certain graduates of TCD, while openly parading their Catholicity, have at the same time publicly set themselves up in opposition to a

fundamental part of Catholic religion, namely the teaching authority and the bishops.

"These people are now claiming the right to determine the boundaries of their jurisdiction. They should not oppose their bishop's teaching by word or act, or by any other way but carry out whatever is demanded by him. They must carry out political, social and economic theories which are in harmony with God's laws."

For the Jesuits, Fr Edward Coyne wrote to the newspapers complaining that if there were a free medical scheme "the standard of medical care for all would be reduced to that standard presently available to the dispensary patient".

It was whispered that Browne was part of a Communist plot to destroy the family, bring contraception and abortion into Ireland and even euthanasia of the elderly.

An emergency cabinet meeting was called in the evening of April 6 1951. There was just one item of business. Before it was a letter from McQuaid which read: "The Hierarchy must regard the scheme

proposed by the Minister for Health as opposed to Catholic social teaching."

Taoiseach Costello said, "This must mean the end of the Mother and Child Scheme". All except Browne nodded. Not just the Fine Gael ministers but Norton, Keyes and Everett, the Labour men, voted to abandon the scheme in the face of Church opposition.

Labour leader William Norton, a fat Havana cigar in his hand, gave a spurious ring of radicalism to his capitulation by saying, "We don't want to have to provide a free health service for the fur-coated ladies of Foxrock!"

Two days later MacBride demanded and received Browne's resignation. Within weeks a new election had returned De Valera to power.

Noel Browne later wrote: "My resignation as Minister for Health was the first time in the history of the state that a cabinet minister had chosen to sacrifice office in order to show publicly that the Irish government process was an elaborate sham."



### Labour bends the knee

Many individual Labour Party activists have taken a courageous lead in fighting the SPUCists in recent weeks. But the impression that the Labour Party has a tradition of resisting Church influence in politics is completely untrue.

The record shows a history of Labour leaders bending the knee before the reactionary bishops of Ireland.

In 1925 the Free State government—at the bishops' prompting—introduced legislation outlawing divorce. Labour supported Cosgrave's measure. Labour deputy Bill Davin described those who sought a divorce as "people without consciences".

In 1929 Cosgrave's government introduced the Censorship of Publications Act. This set up a vigilante committee consisting five censors, one a priest, three lay Catholics and a Protestant. Labour supported Cosgrave.

To bring the law into line with Catholic theology, Cosgrave's government forbade "propaganda for the use of contraceptives"—again Labour agreed.

De Valera went one better and outlawed their sale or import. He too could count on the rabid support of Labour in the Dail.

When the bishops fulminated against young people "keeping company" and dancing at crossroads, De Valera was able to oblige with legislation regulating dancing to enthusiastic Labour approval.

Labour welcomed the ban on divorce introduced in De Valera's 1937 Constitution.

In 1936 Labour adopted a programme which included nationalisation of basic industry and banking. Maynooth was not amused. As a result the phrase "workers' control" was quickly ditched and the nationalisation proposals substantially abandoned.

In the same year Labour TD for Limerick Michael Keyes proposed to a mass meeting: "That we pledge our support to the Irish Christian Front ... the Papal Encyclicals and thereby overcome the evils of Communism and Socialism which are altogether contrary to Christian principles".

In 1951 at the height of the Mother and Child controversy, Labour party leader William Norton declared: "There will be no flouting of the authority of the bishops in the matter of Catholic social or Catholic moral teaching."



# ★ News from the SWM

THE Socialist Workers Movement is the major revolutionary socialist organisation in Ireland. It has branches in most of the major towns and is actively seeking new recruits.

Anyone who agrees with the ideas of *Socialist Worker* should consider attending our weekly meetings. This is the best way of finding out how the SWM works.

Each SWM meeting begins with a political discussion with plenty of time for debate and questions. The following are the major topics for the month of November.

## Belfast Branch

Meets every Monday at 7.30 pm in the Ulster People's College, 30 Adelaide Park, Belfast (between Lisburn Road and Malone Road, opposite Queens Elms Halls of Residence)

November 13th: *Trotsky's Marxism*  
November 20th: *Poland: Solidarity in Office*  
November 27th: *The Roots of Racism*

Further details of Belfast Branch write to: PO Box 418, Tomb St, Belfast BT9 5PU

## Cork Branch

Meets every Tuesday at 8 pm in the Anchor Inn, George's Quay

November 7th: *Can there be a Revolution in Ireland?*

November 14th: *Can SPUC be beaten?*

November 21st: *James Connolly and the Party*

November 28th: *Socialists and Free Speech*

## Bray Branch

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00 pm in Hibernian Inn, Marine Terrace

November 7th: *How the Russian Revolution was lost*

November 14th: *Can Protestant and Catholic Workers Unite?*

November 21st: *The Family and Women's Oppression*

November 28th: *China after Tienamin Square*

## Galway Branch

Meets every second Thursday in UCG

November 16th: *The Crisis in Eastern Europe*

November 30th: *The SWM and the Struggle in the North*

## Derry Branch

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00 pm in Dungloe Bar, Waterloo St

November 7th: *The Role of the Revolutionary Party*  
November 14th: *Trotsky's Last years*

November 21st: *How the Russian Revolution was lost*  
November 28th: *The Republican Congress*

## Dublin Branch

Meets every Wednesday at 8 pm

## in the Bachelor Inn, O'Connell Bridge

November 8th: *Women and the Workplace*

November 15th: *Poland: Solidarity in Office*

November 22nd: *Marxism and Nationalism*

November 29th: *Can the Intifada defeat Zionism?*

Further details of BELFAST Branch write to: SWM, PO Box 418, Tomb St, Belfast BT9 5PU

For more details of meetings in DUNDALK, DUNGARVIN, GALWAY, KILKENNY, PORTLAOISE & WATERFORD contact: SWM, PO Box 1648, James's St, Dublin 8

# What we stand for ★

The Socialist Workers Movement is a marxist organisation fighting for a workers' republic in Ireland and for socialism internationally.

## FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

We begin from the proposition that what determines the nature of any society is the system by which its wealth is produced. In the system we live under, capitalism, production is geared to profit, not to human need. Among its inevitable features are poverty, war, racism and sexism. Capitalism cannot be destroyed and these evils thus eradicated by piecemeal reform. It can only be destroyed by revolutionary action by the class which creates all the wealth, the working class.

The machinery of the capitalist state—parliament, courts, army, police etc—is designed to protect the interests of the ruling capitalist class, not to regulate society in a neutral fashion. At most, parliament can be used sometimes, to make propaganda against capitalism. It cannot be used to smash capitalism. Only a workers' revolution can do that and establish a truly democratic society in which workers hold power directly through delegates elected from workplaces and areas and are re-callable and replaceable at any time by those who elect them.

## NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

This kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers do not have control in Russia, China, Cuba etc. Instead, power is held by a state-capitalist class. A workers' revolution is needed in these countries too.

We are against NATO and the Warsaw Pact and all weapons of mass destruction. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

## FOR AN END TO PARTITION

The Northern State was created by British Imperialism in its own interests. Sectarianism and bigotry were built into it and will continue to exist for as long as the state exists.

The marginal privileges given to Protestant workers are just that: marginal. It is in the immediate interest of Protestant as well as Catholic workers to fight against their exploitation. It is in the interest of all Northern workers to unite against the state and aim at socialism in Ireland.

We support all forces struggling against imperialism and the Northern state, regardless of differences we may have with them.

The interests of the Southern ruling class are no longer in fundamental conflict with those of imperialism. Southern capitalism is a junior player in the world capitalist system. The Southern state too, prays up partition, despite occasional nationalist rhetoric.

The "national question" can be solved only by mass working class struggle against both states. Republicanism, by limiting the immediate struggle to the achievement of "national unity", and by appealing for all-class alliances in pursuit of this goal, can never lead the working class towards the defeat of imperialism.

## 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 fight for free contraception, abortion on demand and the right to divorce. We oppose all discrimination against gays and lesbians. We stand for secular control of hospitals and schools. We fight for the complete separation of church and state.

## FOR A FIGHT IN THE UNIONS

Trade unions exist to protect workers' interests under capitalism. The role of trade union leaders is to negotiate with bosses over workers' position within capitalism. To destroy capitalism, we need a rank and file movement in the unions separate from the leaderships and fighting for workers' interests regardless of the needs of capitalism.

## FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To destroy capitalism and achieve socialism the most class conscious sections of the working class must be organised in a revolutionary party. The SWM aims to build such a party through spreading its ideas and through its activity in the working class movement.

## OUT NOW

Alexandra Kollantai  
**Sexual Relations  
—and the  
Class Struggle**



A Socialist Workers Party pamphlet

*Socialist Worker* reprints two pamphlets written by the Russian Marxist Alexandra Kollantai at the height of the Russian Revolution. In them she looks at the distortion sexual relations suffer at the hands of capitalism, and the beacon of hope socialism offers to their transformation.

75p plus postage from: SW Books, PO Box 1648, James's Street, Dublin 8

# ★ Around the movement

## DUBLIN: PNR debate

LAST month a debate organised by the Critical Studies Group on the Programme for National recovery. Sixty people heard Phil Flynn of the LGPSU speak for the PNR, with Brian Anderson of MSF opposing it.

Flynn was defensive about the PNP. And no wonder, with massive health cuts, emigration at 40,000 a year and wages falling behind inflation. He said we may be doing badly now but we would have been worse off without the PNR.

In early 1987, he said, the Progressive Democrats were on the rise and they were "Thatcherites" who wanted to privatise everything. Meanwhile trade unions were out in the cold and the absence of National Wage bargaining meant some groups of workers were falling behind.

The PNR involved softening up to the more "progressive" Fianna Fail, winning a "say" in running the country and returning to a national strategy on pay.

The reality was that well before the PNR was signed Fianna Fail were proving as "Thatcherite" as Thatcher

herself with an onslaught on health and education.

When reminded by a SWM member that 70,000 marched against the closure of Barrington's hospital in Limerick Flynn said he supported the closure in the name of "rationalisation".

Nine Socialist Workers were sold at the meeting

## GALWAY: UCG setback

STUDENTS at University College Galway voted by three to two not to give out abortion information. This represents a major blow against the national student campaign against the far right SPUC.

There were a number of causes for the defeat. First, some of the student leaders in the college took a very ambiguous position on the issue and even attacked the national union, the USI, for appearing on the campus to distribute their magazine which contained abortion information.

Second, the anti-abortionists in the college also adopted the clever strategy of denying all connections with the discredited SPUC.

They claimed that they were for sex education in the

schools and did not oppose contraception facilities or divorce. It just so happened, however, that not a single individual in their campaign had the slightest record of campaigning for women's rights.

However, the pro-information campaign also made a genuine tactical error. They stressed that the telephone number 794700 provided counselling rather than simply abortion information. The right wingers in the college were however able to put up posters on the sort "Brid rang up and got ABORTION information in 6 minutes". Thus by organising the campaign on a soft basis, problems were stored up.

Afterwards Fiona Neary from the pro-information campaign argued that they had made a genuine mistake in believing that counselling was available. She said that 'we feel we were victims of the type of confusion that arises from censorship'.

The Right to Information action group have now taken the courageous decision to go ahead anyway and provide access to the telephone number 749700. They will not be ground down by the SPUCists.

# Join us!

If you would like to join the SWM or want more details, complete and send to:  
SWM PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

Please send me more details of SWM

I want to join the SWM

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....





## REVIEWS

## BOOK REVIEW

Mary Daly: *Women and Poverty*, Attic Press, £3.95.

THE facts about the position of women in Ireland are startling.

■ Half of all women are low paid, i.e. earning £65 a week or less.

■ At the end of 1987, the average gross weekly pay of women in industry was 40 per cent below the average male wage £139.89 as compared with £232.45 a week. This means that a woman in an industrial job would have to work a further 25 hours a week to earn the equivalent of a man's wages.

■ 70 per cent of part-time workers are women.

■ Only one in five of single mothers are likely to be in employment and single mothers as a whole are likely to be suffering the worst levels of poverty.

■ 74 per cent of married women say that they are not in a job because of their childcare responsibilities.

■ Half a million women in Ireland now depend on social welfare. And more women are relying on social welfare—the numbers have grown by 90 per cent over the last ten years.

It is the bringing together of facts like these that makes Mary Daly's book *Women and Poverty* such a valuable read. The book is packed with this kind of information and all of it up to date.

The book covers the nature and

extent of poverty amongst women and examines women's experience of poverty. She tells of families of two unemployed adults and eight children living on £157 a week. She describes the cycles of recurring debt, of difficulty of routine payment of gas bills, of borrowing from friends on their dole days. Women go without food for the sake of the children, and have shorter life spans and poorer health.

Women in Ireland are discriminated against at every level. Women on low incomes have a very limited choice of contraception no form of contraception is available to women with medical cards, although the pill can be prescribed for other purposes.

In one survey, it was found that the so-called "natural" method (regarded as totally unreliable but, if nothing else, cost-free) was being used by 35 per cent of the sample, although the vast majority of the women said they did not want to become pregnant.

She shows the way the social welfare system harasses women. It views women as dependents. It equates cohabitation with a man with financial dependence.

She also shows how the state's perception of women as dependents leads to a curiously contradictory position where single women are actually better off—if you can call £58 per week, the rate of a widow's pension, better off—than women living with unemployed men.

She also shows who is the main beneficiary of women's dependent status and the poverty they suffer.

According to ESRI estimates for 1987, the minimum amount needed to rear one child under four years is £19.60 and one child over four years £28.20. And yet the highest social welfare payment for a child is around £14 a week, and £10 a

# Poor women



week is the most common payment.

As Daly puts it herself "Think of the enormous expense to the state if the traditional role of the family did not operate—the costs of caring for children, the ill and the elderly would soar, as would the state's bill for women's social welfare."

In an important sense the relationship between women and the state is one of interdependence more and more women are being pushed into reliance on social welfare but equally, the state needs women to provide the services that all wives and mothers provide."

In spite of this shrewd observation, Daly's general political conclusions are less sharp and, in some cases, misplaced. Firstly she seems to avoid challenging the state and its responsibility for women's low social status and presents, instead, the development of women on a personal basis as a way out.

So she overstates the potential of local women's groups. She ignores, it seems, the relative weakness of these groups (to wit the continuing absence of even a contraceptive service in any of the working class areas) and underplays the real material and monetary constraints that these groups are forced to work within.

Surely the glaring lesson from the winning of women's rights elsewhere, whether abortion rights or equal pay, was that it was the mobilisation of men and women workers as workers that has alone managed to secure any

significant gains for women. The attacks on abortion by White and Corie in Britain were only stopped in their tracks by the mobilisation of large numbers within the organised trade union movement.

Secondly she claims that men are responsible for the position of women. "A system designed by men for men" is how she describes it and she refers to the patriarchal values underlying social welfare.

Yet surprisingly enough, in spite of these claims—referred to more than explained in the book—all the evidence she presents would seem to point in to a class rather than a sex divide.

In education, for example, she refers openly to the "virtual upper class monopoly of the advantages that depend on education" and shows how in education upper class girls have more chances than working class girls and how sex differences are stronger at the lower end of the socio-economic scale.

The figures she quotes bear out the class nature of selection in Irish education. In 1986 only one per cent of college entrants had fathers who were in an unskilled manual job and 2.5 per cent were from semi-skilled manual backgrounds. She concludes herself, in her section on education, that the system "especially disadvantages women and men from poorer backgrounds".

■ MARNIE HOLBOROW

## PLAY REVIEW

*The House of Bernarda Alba* by Federico Garcia Lorca at the Gate Theatre, Dublin

THE HOUSE of Bernarda Alba was the last play Lorca wrote before being murdered in 1936 and dumped on a lonely road by local Falangists in Granada, at the age of 38.

He was not politically active, although he had been a strong supporter of the Republic.

But his plays, his poetry and his life generally—he was homosexual, and full of life and passionate outrage against lies, repression and oppression in all their forms—would have been enough to mark him out as an enemy of Franco's fascism.

He was probably Spain's most outstanding modern playwright, using a variety of theatrical traditions and new forms to comment powerfully on the lives of people in the Spain he knew.

In this play all the characters on stage are women. *The House of Bernarda Alba* is about an almost insanely dominant mother and her five adult daughters, who she keeps in near imprisonment to stop them from meeting men, especially working class ones.

## The House of Bernarda Alba

Her life is ruled by what she sees as a need to preserve an iron silence towards the world outside, with its sensuality and readiness to subvert her snobbish and paranoid code of "honour" and religious rigidity. Her daughters are all,

in different ways, starving for freedom, fresh air and men.

They are obsessed with sex—as she is herself, in a twisted way. Even the openly mad old grandmother is full of voluptuous erotic fantasies and dreams of escape, and is in

some ways more sane and life-loving than Bernarda herself.

The man who is the main focus of all the frustrated sexuality of the daughters is never actually shown, but his presence pervades the play. When one daughter becomes his lover, the whole repressive household comes unstuck, with explosive and tragic results.

Only the women servants, discussing the family with a mixture of compassion and contempt, have a straightforward and sometimes sexuality, life and death.

As well as showing the desperately limited choices then, and now, open to most Spanish women (restrictive families, restrictive marriage and/or poverty and low wages) you could stretch a point and see some of the features of fascism in Bernarda—rigid authoritarianism, distortion and dehumanisation.

But whatever about this, it's a powerful play and worth seeing (although at a price of £8 most of the audience was middle class, not the sort of audience Lorca mainly wrote and performed his plays for in his lifetime).

■ NAN DALTON



Frederico Garcia Lorca

## FILM: POETS AND ROBOTS

FOR most of us poetry was rammed down our throats at school. It was something that appeared only relevant to exams—not something to be appreciated for its beauty or meaning.

Because of this most of us can sympathise with the students in *Dead Poets Society*. At their posh New England school these boys are taught to understand poetry in terms of its rhyme and metre.

Along comes John Keating, played by Robin Williams, who takes a completely different approach to teaching English. On his first day he urges the boys to tear out the introduction to their poetry books because it is stuffy and academic. As Keating says, "we are not laying pipe".

The boys try to break away from the oppressive atmosphere of the school. They reactivate the Dead Poets Society, founded

by Keating when he was a student, and hold "meetings" at the nearby Indian cave.

The film is set in America's McCarthy era, where Keating's "free-thinking" style is frowned on.

But we can still identify with the situation. Education tries to mould us to become "good citizens" and slaves of capitalism. Even the rich kids in *Dead Poets Society* are moulded—not to serve capital but to preserve its traditions when it's their turn to take over.

This is a very moving film—even hardened marxists shed a tear or two. It celebrates the spirit of individualism which capitalism pretends to promote but actually suppresses. That spirit will not change the world but without it we would all be robots and robots don't make revolutions.

■ DAVE McDONAGH



EAMONN MCCANN

# Fight the media gag

THE first anniversary of the broadcasting ban on Sinn Fein was marked by features in newspapers, radio and television.

Most of these focussed on the morality of allowing supporters of the IRA speak on the airwaves.

But it's in terms of ideas that serious people should consider such issues.

It's the ideas which would be conveyed by Sinn Feiners appearing regularly on television which prompted Thatcher to impose the ban. Not the particular ideas of Irish republicanism—which aren't in their essence subversive of capitalism at all—but the general idea conveyed by the appearance on television and radio of people who don't accept the legitimacy of the State.

The notion that we live in a democracy, in a society which can reasonably demand loyalty from decent people, is very precious to our rulers. As long as we continue to think of their society like that—as long as we think of it stupidly as OURS—their rule is safe.

It is therefore of the utmost importance to them that the mass of the people should continue to accept what might be called the "democratic delusion".

I am not referring here to the North specifically, or to Britain, but to capitalist society as a whole.

The democratic nature of the society we live in is supposedly indicated by the existence of a parliament elected by universal suffrage. But in practice it is virtually impossible for a party proposing to do anything which the capitalist class strongly disapproves of to win a parliamentary majority.

All the propaganda machinery of the capitalist system will crank into action to render a party with such policies "unelectable".

Most parties in this situation will drop the policies which offend the ruling class, at which point the propaganda machine will announce that the party in question has been transformed and can now be considered "electable" after all.

The recent history of the British Labour Party illustrates the point exactly.

Occasionally it happens that, despite all this, a party with policies which the ruling class doesn't like manages to win an election. In such cases the ruling class will speedily bring it home to the government that it, the ruling class, and not

the government at all, makes the ultimate decision on all matters of fundamental importance.

There will be an investment strike or a "run on the pound", deliberate destabilisation or even the threat of a coup, and the uppity government comes to heel. See, again, the sad history of British Labour, or of social democracy in France, Spain, Germany, wherever.

There have even been cases where a government, citing its democratic mandate, has persisted with policies which the ruling class had ordered it to abandon.

## ABANDON

When this happens, the ruling class will abandon altogether the fiction that parliament runs the State. It will abolish the parliament and rule for a time through some other mechanism. This process commonly involves mass murder by the ruling class's forces of people who object to what's happening. Chile's Allende is the example which springs most readily to mind.

That is to say, the capitalist system which, when it can, prefers to masquerade as "democracy", is ultimately underpinned by violence.

One of the most important factors in masking this reality and sustaining the democratic delusion is the ability of the ruling class to have anybody who dissents from the delusion—anybody who denies the democratic credentials of the institutions of the State—presented as being beyond the pale, outside the bounds of what is politically or "morally" acceptable.

Here we come close to what the ban is really about.

A wide consensus has developed in recent years—whether the consensus is well-based or not doesn't matter for the moment—that appearing regularly on television is now the single most important factor in conferring "legitimacy" on people or political parties; that it's appearing on the box, particularly in the context of news and current affairs, which brings people and ideas into the category of those

who are to be taken seriously.

Sinn Fein is characterised by its refusal to accept the legitimacy of the State or of the institutions of the State. (Sinn Fein's reasoning has very little to do with an understanding of the fraudulent nature of all capitalist "democracies", and a great deal to do with old-fashioned Irish nationalism. But it's the simple fact that the party rejects the legitimacy of the State which is relevant.)

Any time Gerry Adams or Dodie McGuinness appears on the news—so the accepted theory goes—the message is conveyed that rejecting the authority of the State does NOT automatically put a person or a party beyond the pale.

This is, obviously, deeply subversive of the democratic delusion. And thus it is this aspect of reality in the North which, above all others, Thatcher is anxious to shield the British public from.

## TOXTETH

There are times when she—that is, the capitalist class she fronts for—has bother enough keeping their "own" masses in line.

Areas like Broadwater Farm in North London or Toxteth in Liverpool or Easterhouse in Glasgow or Harmsworth in the Midlands come to mind, where the forces of the State are already regarded as alien and "democracy" seen as an unfunny joke.

More generally, and in the long term far more important, is the continual fear which haunts the British and all other capitalist classes—that the great sleeping giant, their "own" working class, as a whole, will one day come to an organised understanding that it doesn't have to, and in its own interest ought not to, regard as legitimate the instruments by which Thatcher's parasite class holds power.

When you get right down to it, the basic reason for the ban is that Thatcher doesn't want Sinn Fein, even by implication, giving the British working class good advice.



Continued from page 1

■ **HOURS:** The union leaders claimed that the PNR would allow them to reduce the working week by one hour and so create jobs.

## MAJORITY

But a survey by the *Industrial Relations News* in July showed that only 5,000 workers had won a reduction in hours.

Only one company had taken on extra workers as a result.

The vast majority of the cases made up for the one hour reduction by increased productivity.

However the single greatest reason for attacking the PNR is political.

The Irish trade union movement has been involved in close links with Fianna Fail since the thirties.

Leaders of the ITGWU have in the past collaborated with Fianna Fail to expel married women from the workforce and to try to ban British based unions operating in Ireland.

In the 1960s and 1970s an elaborate institutional structure was established under Fianna Fail to bind the union leaders closer to the state. Union leaders joined

the Commission for Industrial Organisation to plan for greater productivity improvements in industry.

They established a two tier picket system which allows open scabbing in response to Fianna Fail pressure.

## INDUSTRIALISE

The root of this behaviour has been the belief that workers have a direct interest in supporting Fianna Fail industrialise the country.

For nationalist leaders such as Phil Flynn, the most prominent Sinn Fein

supporter in the unions, this has been a natural outcome of their politics.

But Labour and Workers Party supporters in the union bureaucracy have also taken the same course as a substitute for not having a mass reformist party.

Breaking the programme for National Recovery would be a major step forward for Irish workers. It would help to tackle the key weakness of the workers movement in the South.

That is why the campaign has to be fought on an openly political anti Fianna Fail basis.

## Arklow Fertiliser strike

SIX instrument technicians in Irish Fertiliser Industries' Arklow factory struck last month.

The strikers—members of the industrial and services union, MSF—are demanding pay increases and parity.

Pay has fallen 25 per cent below similar workers in other semi-state companies. The parity claim is to regard two of the six workers.

The strike follows years of fruitless negotiations and a Labour Court rejection of the claim as lying outside the narrow confines of the Programme for National Recovery.

## SYMPATHY

Thirty fitters—spread over three unions—have come out in solidarity and are helping with a mass and vocal picket each morning as management enters the factory.

Despite having sympathy for the strikers, delive y

## ITGWU course

THE Irish Transport and General Workers Union is organising a series of courses for branch committees. The five-day course, entitled "The New Firm: A Management Strategy?", covers topics such as "New Technology", "Gender Ghettoes" and "Post Fordism", amongst many others.

The course has been designed and is presented by the Education and Training

drivers are being forced by their own employers to "scab or be sacked".

The instrument technicians normally take care of maintenance and supervision of the factory. As the strike drags out—despite scabbing by non-union engineers—safety and pollution are likely to become problems.

Some years ago air pollution from the factory damaged trees and vegetation in the surrounding countryside, and the health of the workers in IFI could also be at risk.

Even though production has grown sixfold since 1984 and the factory made a profit of £5 million last year, management are refusing to talk to the union and are threatening total closure to break the strike.

Workers generally need to fight back against the Programme which limits wage increases over next year as well as this year to 2.5 per cent and does not allow for any negotiations on pay, although inflation is now nearing 5 per cent. MSF's backing for the strike reflects the union's recent decision to actively oppose compliance with the National

Programme.

A victory for IFI's striking workers now would encourage other workers to challenge the National Plan's pay restraint.

Strikers should picket the dock and send a delegation to seek support and solidarity

strike action from the company's Cork factory.

Regular weekly meetings of all strikers would help fight passivity by keeping all informed and involved in the organisation of the strike.

■ BRAY SWM

## CPSU:

### Anger at low pay

RECENTLY the issue of low pay has loomed large within the civil service. Recently the Civil and Public Services Union organised a seminar on low pay.

It was clear that low wages are not confined to burger joints but exist among "white collar" workers as well.

Many lower grade civil servants qualify for Family Income Supplement. Several speakers at the

seminar pointed out the irony of this fact—that government employees are beginning to look to the government itself to help pay the bills.

There is tremendous anger over the issue and the possibility of industrial action was talked about at the seminar.

If anger is not to turn into frustration, every effort should be made to build for such action.

useful.

Unfortunately the dominant ideas being presented were those of the *Marxism Today* current and feminism. These ideas have not yet made big inroads into the working class movement in Ireland, but have led some sections of the trade union movement in Britain, principally the electricians and the engineers, to adopt the position of "new realism"—no-strike deals, acceptance of market forces, class cooperation rather than confrontation.

An example of this was

the section on equality. In a case study of the electronics industry most of the time was spent discussing the fact that only 35 of the 800 managers in the electronics industry are women. How we could improve the wages and conditions of the 5,500 women general operatives did not seem to matter. More women managers was the solution, which reflects how right wing feminist ideas have gained a toehold in trade union thinking.

If your committee is not booked in, bring it up at your next meeting.



# Socialist Worker Fight Thatcher's dole rules

DOLE offices were picketed across the North last month as the fightback began against the Tories' "actively seeking work" provisions.

Leaflets outlining the new measure and giving advice to individuals on how to defend themselves were handed out at the DHSS offices in Belfast, Derry, Enniskillen, Craigavon and Strabane.

Protest rallies are scheduled for Derry, Strabane and Belfast on November 17, 18 and 19.

This activity reflects the deep anger of the unemployed at one of the most vicious anti-working class measures of the Thatcher era.

Under the new Act, claimants will have to prove not only that they are capable of and available for work—that's always been the requirement—but also that they are "actively seeking work".

The new Act also abolishes the concepts of "suitable employment" and the "rate for the job".

Claimants will have to accept any job or be deemed not to be "actively seeking work".

Under the Act, "job" includes any working of 24 or more hours a week or any of



Take the struggle to the workplaces

the various fraudulent "training" schemes. The unemployed will be forced onto ACE, YTP, Restart, etc, etc.

Between people "wiped" and people forced onto the schemes, the official unemployment figure will probably fall by a few thousand—without a single job being created.

The unemployed will be made to suffer even more in order to bolster up the latest statistical lie from the Tories.

In the North the notion of "actively seeking work" is nonsensical anyway.

In April this year in East Anglia, the "best" region in Britain, there were five unemployed chasing every notified job vacancy. In Brit-

ain's worst region, Yorks and Humberside, the ratio was fifteen to one.

In the North, it was forty-nine to one.

It's an insult in this situation to ask people to prove that they aren't skiving.

The response to the new Act has already shown that the unemployed are very much in the mood to fight back. However, the campaign so far has a number of weaknesses.

It has been tightly controlled by the full-time officials of the Unemployed Workers' Centres. Like literally hundreds of other co-op, voluntary, community etc. groups in the North, these are dependent for funds on official agencies and on local councils and trade union off-

icials. This puts strict limits on the type of campaign they can sponsor.

The campaign is so far reluctant to approach the rank and file members of NIPSA, the union which organises DHSS workers, to ask them not to cooperate in implementing the Act. That would mean asking NIPSA workers to defy their bosses—and the Unemployed Centre officials don't want to upset the right-wing NIPSA leadership by urging rank and file NIPSA members to take that sort of action.

The new Act has to be seen in relation to the scandal of low pay. Since the unemployed won't be able to refuse any job on the grounds of low pay—even pay lower than the level of benefit—there'll be an endless flow of people from the dole having to take jobs at any price at all.

And that will make it impossible for existing low-paid workers to a real fight against their exploitation.

There should be direct approaches to workers in the low-pay areas—catering, for example. And the same goes for YTP, ACE schemes, etc.

All this would require a campaign against the new Act with a democratic structure that would allow the unemployed, low-paid workers, rank and file trade unionists, community activists and others to become involved. This won't happen if the unemployed and rank and file workers are seen as a stage army to be wheeled out for demonstrations and then thanked and sent home again.

The SWM in the North is fully supporting the campaign and fighting within it for a programme of action which would make it effective and able to mount a real challenge to the Tories' plans.

## Students fight Tory loans

THE Tory government plans to implement a vicious attack on students next year. This is not simply an attack on the student population, but also on the very concept that education should be available to all, not just the rich.

Firstly, the level of the student grant is to be frozen with a "loan" of £420 per year, to be borrowed by students.

This is despite the fact that the student grant has fallen by 20 per cent since Thatcher came to power in 1979.

This will increase financial difficulties for those who are already poor, especially those people who face greater difficulties finding well-paid work such as women, the working class and mature students. The loans scheme, if brought in, will put these people off even beginning university.

Not only will loans hurt the poor, they will also cost more to implement. One estimate puts the total cost of the scheme at £1.62 billion. Savings, if any, would not be made for 36 years. This is an indication that loans are part of an ideology of attacking the vulnerable, regardless of consequences.

The scheme is opposed by a large number of groups including trade unions and Education Boards.

The Union of Students in Ireland, in combination with the National Union of Students, propose a week of action from November 7 which would be nationwide. Action had originally been intended to be held back until this date, but in Belfast student militants have pushed successfully for more immediate activity.

### PICKETS

This activity will take the form of mobilising students around "white line pickets", distributing leaflets and so on. At the Students' Union general meeting it was hoped that this would be important in building momentum

for the week of action.

At this meeting SWM members were able to push for this greater activity against the argument that passive, "respectable" activity would be more successful.

The SWM members were able to point to examples of how the Thatcher government had been beaten recently in pay disputes, notably through the action of striking train drivers, and the SWM proposal of inviting ambulance workers involved in their dispute along to speak to students was agreed to.

In this way we hope that by uniting with workers fighting Tory attacks students will increase their fighting ability and eventually defeat this proposed scheme.

■ BELFAST SWM

## Ambulance drivers step up action

THE ambulance dispute in the North is now entering its second month. Rising mortgage rates, inflation and the success of the summer pay revolt in Britain have fueled opposition to the Tories' offer of a 6.5 per cent wage increase.

Every Tory cutback has added to the ambulance crews' workload in a sector already overstretched by underfunding and neglect. Workers are sick and tired of shouldering the cutbacks.

A decisive victory for this dispute would be a slap in the face to Tory plans for privatisation of the NHS. It would boost the confidence of other public sector workers in fighting back against cuts in living standards and public spending. But defeat would mean poorer services to patients, increasing the breakdown of health care in the NHS.

The action escalated this week with support more widespread among staff and only emergency calls being responded to. Despite the silence of the media and Baker's obstinacy, Belfast ambulance drivers are sure that NHS users will support them.

The success of this action is critical. Solid support is essential and every worker should be in touch with the dispute. Although the mood in Belfast is confident, workers in the Royal Victoria Hospital feel at a disadvantage in two areas.

They feel that their numerical weakness makes their victory dependent on more organised colleagues in Britain. One driver *Socialist Worker* spoke to said: "A lot will depend on the London drivers. There are 2,000 of them and only 200 or so of us here in the North."

The effect of the overtime ban has not had the same impact in the North as in regions where overtime is an integral part of the ambulance service. *Socialist Worker* was told that drivers are simply working twice as hard during normal hours.

This is why they are pinning their hopes on the escalation.

Ambulance drivers were planning to step up the action by introducing a 39-hour week.

While the idea of relying on fellow workers is understandable, Northern crews' disadvantages can be overcome by strengthening their position here. This can be achieved by a strategy of building practical solidarity by making links with other disputes:

- Greater unity between the different unions involved, and mass meetings to ensure the fullest participation;
- Fostering broader support both within and outside the NHS, for example taking up the nurses' demand for a 12 per cent pay rise;
- Sending delegations to or leafletting other workplaces.

These steps can make the action in the North as significant a threat to the Tory attacks as elsewhere and add to the impact of the overall dispute.

Fight the  
media gag  
by  
Eamonn  
McCann  
Page 11