

Socialist Worker

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For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 40p



Aer Lingus:

**STOP THE
JOBS
MASSACRE!**

ICTU must call strike action!

For a Socialist alternative to Labour!

★ MEET Fred Olsen, one of the world's richest men.

His business empire extends across the world, covering more than 100 companies.

Shipping is at the heart of the empire reporting sales of more than £400m a year.

His homes include a 40,000 acre estate in Scotland, apartments in London and Manhattan and a banana plantation in the Canary Islands.

Olsen, of course, is the owner of Timex in Dundee. He has threatened to close Timex in the face of the workers' five month strike against wage cuts.

Workers in Harland and Wolff should be warned. Since 1989, Olsen has been a 47 per cent



share holder. He is refusing to endorse the McBride fair employment principles.

The Northern Ireland Audit Office revealed that £6.5m of Harland and Wolff pensions was used to subsidise the construction of two Olsen ships.

Olsen's philosophy is simple and brutal as he told a press conference in Dundee: "The bottom line is profit".

Electricity robbery

FUEL bills in Northern Ireland are set to rise well above inflation as a result of privatisation.

Bills will increase each year by the Retail Price Index plus 3.5 per cent, according to the formula agreed by the government

At the same time, directors' salaries are set to rise 35 per

cent as a result of the power sell-off.

A London analyst has estimated that the salary of NIE chief executive Patrick Haren could jump from £90,000 to £110,000.

Spent

The government spent £70m on advertising and consulting fees—equivalent to £120 for every house in Northern Ire-

land.

It is pensioners who will feel the rises the most.

As a result of legislation introduced by Lamont last spring, they will have to pay VAT on fuel bills: 8.1 per cent next year and the full 17.5 per cent in 1994.

Already electricity prices are higher in the North than in Britain, while household incomes are lower.

RUC make a mint

THE RUC are making a mint. And that's official.

Average earnings including overtime now amounts to £32,954.

The police in Northern Ireland get a special allowance of £5,159 for housing. They clock up an average of £6,700 on overtime.

On that money, it's no problem for them to break up strikes or harass working class people.

Anger mounts against 1% PAYE levy

Stoppages can axe the tax

ANGER is mounting against the government's one per cent levy and the tax amnesty for the rich.

A number of trade union bodies have passed motions calling for stoppages to defeat the levy.

Disgusted

Workers are disgusted that the condition for dropping the levy is that rich tax dodgers will get off scot free.

The amnesty is an-

Money for jobs?

The coalition claim we need the tax amnesty to provide money for jobs.

But the country is now awash with money. Since the government changed its exchange rate policy the cash inflow has pushed down interest rates.

And any "hot money" that is brought back will be used for property speculation and not to create jobs.

other betrayal by the Labour Party ministers. Mervyn Taylor, the "Equality" minister, along with Ruairi Quinn and ex left winger Jim Kemmy enthusiastically backed the amnesty.

Labour used to stand for a wealth tax that would make the bosses pay their fair share of tax.

Now they plan to write off the tax bills of the wealthy.

Anger from below has forced union leaders to support the idea of taking action on the issue.

Focus

Every trade union branch and trades council should pass a resolution calling on the ICTU to lead a day of action to defeat the government.

A one day stoppage would provide a focus for the anger and could lead to further action that can force the government to drop the levy unconditionally.

WHO'S CALLING THE ACTION?

DUBLIN Council of Trade Unions has called on unions to support a campaign to remove the one per cent levy, culminating in a half day stoppage.

The following bodies passed motions calling for an ICTU-led one-day stoppage:

- Waterford Trades Council;
- Waterford ATGWU Branches;
- CPSU Annual Conference;
- SIPTU Education Branch

Pass this resolution

"This Branch/Section condemns the imposition of the 1% levy.

"It believes that the PAYE worker already carries the major burden of tax in this country.

"We call on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions to organise a one-day stoppage to demand its removal."



US AND THEM

RICH tax dodgers will only have to pay 15 per cent tax on the "hot money" that they declare.

But PAYE workers never benefit from amnesties because their tax is deducted at source.

The Paye sector face five different taxes this year. After income tax and PRSI they have to

pay health contributions, a 1 per cent Training levy and the new 1 per cent levy.

Single taxpayers will lose 31 per cent of their gross income in taxes this year and married couples will lose almost a quarter of their gross pay.

Workers cannot defer paying these amounts but bosses can employ accounting firms to find the loopholes.

Bertie's 'balance'

BERTIE Ahern proposed a Social Welfare amnesty to "counterbalance" the tax amnesty.

People claiming the dole while getting a few days work would be let off if they declared themselves.

But unemployed people trying to make ends meet are far more likely to be jailed than rich tax dodgers with friends in high places.

If the rich pay their 15 per cent under the amnesty they can go back to making more big bucks on the stock exchange.

But if people on Social Welfare come clean they will simply be handed off the dole into even worse poverty.

TAX AMNESTY: What they said

"Following the last tax amnesty, many of those individuals who participated were subsequently hounded by the Revenue Commissioners. This must not happen again." —Fianna Fail TD Ned O'Keefe, feeling sorry for his rich pals.

"...The general public has been left with a certain jaundiced view that the amnesty is inherently inequitable. It's not necessarily so. Certain other taxation measures have been inequitable and there has been no furore in the media."—An unnamed Fianna Fail source

"I think the mood within the Labour Party after the ideological baggage has been dispensed with is that anything that brings in more capital and increases the tax net will help our task in government."—A Labour Party TD

"...Over the coming years we can expect to see a rapid increase in tax evasion as hitherto complying taxpayers realise the obvious advantages of hiding hot money until the government of the day decides to introduce another amnesty."—Gearoid Griffin, president of the Institute of Taxation.

"There is no morality in tax law. Taxation is driven on policy and expediency, not morality. Where's the morality that says it's right that manufacturing industry only pays 10 per cent tax?"—Suzanne Kelly of Pannell Kerr Foster, chartered accountants.

"CRIME DOES PAY"—A Sunday Tribune headline on the tax amnesty

GIT GETS GATT JOB

We are all supposed to be proud of our very own Peter Sutherland now that he's got the big job at GATT.

But Sutherland is a rotten rich reactionary.

During the Gulf War Sutherland was a staunch defender of the Allied bombing raids which murdered 150,000 Iraqis. He said that the war was not about oil profits.

So Sutherland's membership of the board of British Petroleum was obviously not a factor in his support for the war!



Waterford cuts action

FIFTY dock workers from Waterford and New Ross picketed the clinics of the local Labour and FF T.D.s in Waterford last month.

They were protesting against one of the "dirty dozen" cuts whereby casual workers lose a lot of their social welfare benefits.

Soon afterwards they got a letter from Joan

Burton saying that the cut back was under review.

Action

One of the dockers, John Cluno, told *Socialist Worker*:

"We are not holding our breath on promises from politicians.

But it does show that the way to fight their cut backs is direct action."

Local charges fight

WATERFORD City Manager, Michael Doody has sent out 4,000 letters looking for money.

And he has hired a Dublin debt collection agency, Crosskerrys, to go after people.

Between 1983 and 1990, £1 million was left outstanding in water charges.

A hugely successful non-payment campaign had united community groups and factory workers to defeat the charges.

Activists in Water-

ford have now planned mass pickets on the council chambers to stop Doody's latest move.

SWM members are going to keep the links between the workplaces and community organisations to beat Doody back again.

Beefed-Up fees

THE eight legal counsel at the Beef Tribunal have been paid £3.7 million between them in the past two years.

The four senior counsel get £1,890 each per day and the four junior counsel get £1,260.

The Attorney Gener-

al's office says the fees are justified because barristers have to "abandon the Bar" while the Tribunal is on. This is known as "hazard of presence"! But the real hazard is trusting these fat cat legal experts to uncover Larry Goodman's corrupt dealings.



AER LINGUS JOBS AXE

Sack the bosses— not the workers



Aer Lingus bosses Bernie Cahill and Dan Loughrey—time they got the boot!

"We're appalled at the figures that are being mentioned."

This was the reaction of one Aer Lingus shop steward when the "rescue plan" was announced.

Aer Lingus wants to cut £34 million from the payroll by axing 1280 jobs in Aer Lingus itself, and cutting 250 more jobs in TEAM Aer Lingus.

But this is only the start. For the remaining workers there will be major pay cuts of up to 10%. The company is already saying it cannot pay any new wage agreements.

Cahill and Owen—the two key hit men of Aer Lingus—also want to contract out much of the airline's business. They want to get rid of the cargo-handling and catering immediately.

They hope that these can be farmed out to contractors paying low wages. Aer Lingus already has large

NO MONEY IN THE KITTY?

THE Coalition say there is no money for Aer Lingus—unless workers are prepared to suffer pain.

But Labour and FF have shown a great willingness to bail out the rich when they were previously in government

■ In 1985, AIB subsidiary Insurance Corporation of Ireland nearly went bust. £120 million was poured in to stave off a financial collapse that would have threatened the whole banking industry.

■ Beef baron Larry Goodman was handed £80 million in export credit insurance for meat sold to Iraq. If Iraq didn't pay up, Irish taxpayers would.

■ The Beef Tribunal set up to investigate this scam became a whitewash that merely served to line lawyers' pockets.

■ Last year, £9 million of EC funds was handed out to build super-luxury golf resorts for rich layabouts

■ This year, tax criminals are to be rewarded with an amnesty.

The cost in government revenue thrown away will be £130 million. The money could have been used to help save Aer Lingus—without the pain!

When it comes to handouts for the rich, the FF/Labour government is ready, willing and able.

When it comes to saving our jobs, they don't give a damn.



£80m for Goodman

numbers of "Yellow Pack" workers doing this work, whose starting pay is as low as £6000 a year.

The new plan emerged after a year-long war of nerves during which workers were kept in the dark. One staff worker said:

"People are sick of it. All we were told was what was in the papers."

One marketing graduate was let go by the company and told she would have to pay for—on pain of forfeiting wages due to her—the fortnight left on her monthly bus pass, given to her to subsidise her low wages.

SIPTU called a mass meeting the day the plan was revealed. They vowed to resist any attempt to impose compulsory redundancies.

The staff worker said: "It's ridiculous. There's not one in the whole airline who's not working their ass off, and now they want to let a third of the workforce go."

Sacrifices made in the past now seem to have been a waste of time.

Cabin crew made concessions last year in terms of flexible working.

But now they are being asked to take job and wage cuts.

Mortgage

One of the cabin crew said: "I can just about meet the mortgage on my present wage. There is no way I can take a pay cut. We are going to have to fight!"

Eight couple who work for Aer Lingus were told by building societies and banks that they could not get mortgages because of uncertainty at the airline.

Aer Lingus management and FF politicians like Ray

Burke are trying to divide the workers by raising the issue once again of the Shannon stop-over.

Cahill's plan demands that 200 cabin crew be transferred to Shannon and that the stop-over be ended.

But many do not want to move. At the SIPTU meeting, one said "I'm like Dessie O'Malley—he can't get to Brussels and I don't want to go to Shannon."

However, Aer Lingus workers based in Shannon said they don't want to ben-

efit at the expense of jobs in Dublin. Maintaining this unity will be important if the plan is to be defeated.

Many workers are cynical after the broken election promises.

Their anger is directed at the Labour Party. At the last election many Labour T.D.s were elected on the votes of Aer Lingus workers.

One worker explained why. "Dick Spring came up here and personally pledged support to the workers. The Labour candidates came around to my door and promised that there would be no redundancies and no privatisation. It makes me sick to think of it now!"

But the mood of anger is now turning to resistance. A TEAM worker explained what is happening.

"As soon as we heard the plan we started to work on making banners. We are expecting a massive demonstration to the Dail. The supervisors did not do anything because they were supporting us."

That is the type of determination that has to be turned on the real culprits for this attempted jobs massacre: Dick Spring and Albert Reynolds.

Paying the price for market madness

The world aviation business is in deep trouble—and it shows the madness of the market.

The long recession that began in 1989 has devastated airline companies.

In 1990 alone, world aviation lost more than it made in profits for the first time since 1945. Out of 200 airlines, only six made a profit in the first half of 1992.

Deregulation was introduced in the 1980s in many countries. It was supposed to bring greater "consumer choice" and cheaper fares.

In reality it led to a greater rat race where workers' jobs and conditions were sacrificed.

The giant US airline Pan Am collapsed. TWA is also in trouble. Dan Air was only "saved" when British Airways bought it—and axed 1600 jobs. Aircraft engine builder Rolls Royce cut 5000 jobs this year—one tenth of its workforce.

There is no need for this devastation. Millions of workers across the world want to be able to use air travel. The days when this was a luxury privilege for the rich are over.

In a rational system built on catering for human need airlines would be expanding and not contracting.

But under capitalism the rule of profits come first.

FF's favourite airline

One of the reasons why Aer Lingus is in trouble is because FF love Ryanair.

Ryanair is a nasty little non-union firm who pay far less than Aer Lingus.

The former FF Minister Ray McSharry sits on its board.

In 1989, FF Minister Seamus Brennan banned Aer Lingus from flying to Stanstead. Ryanair was given the route instead.

Stanstead has far cheaper landing fees than Heathrow or Gatwick.

FF have always wanted to use the threat of Ryanair to weaken the unions at Aer Lingus.

WE THINK

The FF/Labour government are talking tough on Aer Lingus. But they can be beaten.

Political correspondents have already indicated that the Labour and FF backbenchers are in a state of panic. The feeling is that government could break up on this issue.

Outrage is growing—particularly against the Labour Party who promised during the election to defend jobs and wages in Aer Lingus.

After the 1 per cent PAYE levy and tax scams for the rich, this latest betrayal is for many people the last straw.

Now is the time to turn the anger into real action. The plight of Aer Lingus is a powerful symbol for thousands who are fed up with this rotten government.

The unions should be calling for a massive demonstration of anger outside the Dail. They should invite other trade unionists and the unemployed to join them.

But this can only be the start. Here, the lesson of what has been happening in Britain over the miners is vitally important.

In November last year, Britain saw huge demonstrations in their support and Major's government looked like it might fall.

But tragically the miners did not press home the fight by pushing for a general stoppage of workers in their support.

The mood dissipated and the Tories pushed through the closure of most of the threatened pits.

This must not happen here. Aer Lingus workers should demand that the ICTU get off the fence and start acting as fighters and not 'mediators'.

And if they are not willing to do this then Aer Lingus workers themselves should nominate a Day of Action and campaign for stoppages by other workers.

Action not talk is now the only way to put manners on Spring's traitors and Reynolds' frauds.

HATCHETMAN

PETER Owen was appointed as the Coalition's hatchet man in Aer Lingus. Socialist Worker can reveal some of Owen's past antics.

■ In 1989, Owen was Director of Operations at British Airways. The company sacked a stewardess, Lynn Hupper, accusing her of selling off champagne to economy class passengers.

Her union the TGWU backed her and the cabin crew voted for strike action. B.A. had to back down and re-instate her with maximum compensation.

But Peter Owen was not happy. He couldn't keep his mouth shut and claimed that Lynn Hupper was still guilty. As a result, Lynn refused to take her job back and Owen suddenly found himself leaving B.A.

■ One of Owen's specialities is promoting divisions among workers. In 1989, B.A. encouraged the formation of a breakaway from the TGWU—Cabin Crew '89. But it was never able to make real inroads into the TGWU.

■ One of Owen's big ideas was breaking up a national airline into "profit centres". Each division had to compete against each other.

The way to make more money was to attack workers' conditions.

Owen pushed through the contracting out of catering and cleaning at B.A. Now he wants to do the same for Aer Lingus.

■ B.A. also tried to gag their workers. Any worker who spoke to the press could be sacked.

In January 1992, a survey of B.A. staff showed that only 28% believed that management took any notice of what they said. It was a fitting tribute to the work of Peter Owen—the man who has been sent over to sort out Aer Lingus.

Slaughter in Somalia

ANY claim that UN troops are in Somalia to feed the starving has been drowned in the blood of ordinary Somalis.

For night after night in June, the UN rained down bombs on Somalia's capital, Mogadishu.

The UN claims that their attacks were "closely targeted" against General Aideed's forces. But it is a complete lie.

■ The French relief agency Action Humanitaire Contre la Faim was blasted with two missiles and then strafed by an American helicopter.

■ The main hospital in Mogadishu, the Benaadir, was sealed off with barbed wire. UN soldiers rampaged through the other hospital, the Digfer.

■ Despite their claim to defend free speech, UN forces attacked and destroyed a radio station which they claimed was putting out "anti-UN propaganda".

When thousands of people took to the streets to protest against the actions of the UN they were gunned down by Pakistani soldiers.

One four year old boy had his head blown off by a bullet from a high calibre rifle.

The UN tried to claim that gunmen had hidden behind women and children on the marches. These sick excuses were just like those of the British paratroopers used in Derry on Bloody Sunday.

Eyewitnesses claim that only the UN were doing the shooting. No guns or bullets were found near the bodies.

Dr Muhammed Farrah Aden, a hospital surgeon, said "When the US forces arrived here we were waving branches of welcome. Now we are waving blood."

"We want the outside world to send us food, not death. How will death help us reach democracy?"

The UN atrocities in June were only the culmination of a policy of brutality that has been inflicted on Somalis recently.

■ Within days of their arrival last December, French troops shot two Somalis who "failed to stop at a checkpoint".

■ Days later American helicopter gunships killed nine Somalis they regarded as "suspicious".

■ In March at least twenty unarmed demonstrators were murdered while protesting against the invasion.

Meanwhile US officials are claiming that Somalia has re-

"Dead bodies were stacked in a stairwell, like rubbish. That of a boy, no more than five... next to him was a teenager, the top of his head blown off. From his body a trail of fresh blood led to a young woman... her dress was soaked with blood."— Jonathan Ewing of Reuter reporting from Mogadishu.

ceived its first taste of the "Clinton doctrine". Under this doctrine the US army is taking on the right to enforce UN resolutions.

Clinton gave the game away when he said that the US would continue "its unique role of lead-

ership in the world" through "multinational means such as the UN".

The US is leading the invasion of Somalia in order to demonstrate its military might to the rest of the world.

It sees it as a soft option com-

pared to the killing fields of Bosnia.

The large US oil companies such as Conoco, Amoco, Chevron, and Phillips believe that Somalia may have large deposits of oil and gas.

Conoco, the company with

the biggest stake in the country allowed its offices to be used as "a de facto US embassy" during invasion preparations.

What is happening in Somalia is old style colonialism carried out by a twentieth century war machine.



WHY IRISH TROOPS SHOULD NOT GO

THE Coalition plan to send Irish troops to take part in the occupation of Somalia.

As well as deploying a transport regiment, there is speculation that they are aiming to send crack troops from the Irish Rangers.

They are being egged on by agencies such as GOAL who — like the missionaries of the past — treat Af-

ricans as 'black babies'.

Labour leader Dick Spring has called for a change in the Defence Act to allow Irish troops to join UN 'peace enforcement' missions.

Concern

He has tried to cynically use the concern felt by millions of people for the starving in Somalia to win

public support for a strategy to align the Irish army alongside those of the Western powers.

But Mogadishu shows what the real face of UN "peace enforcement" is about.

Tragically some on the left justify sending the troops by claiming that 'neutral little Ireland' can help bring about a more humanitarian UN policy in

Somalia.

It is complete nonsense. The Irish army will be used as a figleaf for US imperialism.

Thousands of Somalis are bitter and angry against the UN.

The Irish army will have to face a population who do not want to see the colonial armies return.

They will be under the ultimate control of the US generals.

Their UN headquarters will be the US embassy in Mogadishu.

There is no way they can do anything else but become part of the US/UN policy of repression.

That is why we say they should not go.

Who is Aideed?



The UN war effort has helped win many of the Somalia population to the side of General Aideed.

Aideed was one of the two main warlords who tried to take over the country after the dictator Siad Barre was overthrown.

Originally the US tried to do a deal with him. But just like Saddam Hussein they found that he was not willing to be a complete lap dog.

Now they have decided that he is a "thug who needs to be spanked."

But the biggest thugs are the US generals who are now treating Somalia like they treated Vietnam in the past.

BOSNIA:

West fuels fighting

SERB, Croat and Muslim forces are engaged in a barbarous three-sided war to partition Bosnia.

Our leaders claim that the only solution is for the United Nations to impose a peace plan.

But western intervention, far from bringing peace, has only served to fuel the fighting.

The western powers set up "safe areas"—pockets of territory where Muslim refu-

gees are concentrated. Already dozens of Muslims have died in the designated areas.

Worse still, the US has threatened to start bombing Serb positions.

Even American generals admit this would cause large scale "collateral damage"—civilian casualties.

Once the Muslim leadership realised they could not count on western intervention, they launched their own war.

Muslim forces recaptured Travnik, eth-

nically cleansing the surrounding Croat villages.

One Muslim soldier told reporters "we are doing to them what was done to us".

This is the brutal logic of partitioning an area so ethnically mixed as Bosnia.

Redrew

However western powers redrew the borders, partition of Bosnia can only be achieved by driving large numbers of people from their homes at

gunpoint.

Arming the Muslims would have the same effect. The balance of power between the three factions might change, but the nature of the war would remain the same.

The only solution to the civil war is for the people of former Yugoslavia to unite and overthrow their rulers.

The war has brought tremendous hardship to ordinary people of all ethnic groups.

Living standards have plummeted and unemployment has in-

creased.

In March Croatian workers responded with a half hour general strike.

Each of the areas also has small peace groups.

The Belgrade based Centre for Anti-War Action recently organised a demonstration of 1,500 against the war.

These are small beginnings.

But when workers fight their governments on economic issues, they can be won to the

idea of opposing the war.

WRECKED BY COLONIALISM

SOMALIA and the countries of East Africa have been attacked by the colonial powers since the 19th century.

The French captured the area around Djibouti to get access to the Red Sea.

The British took over a larger area and named it "British Somaliland".

In a secret deal in 1885 they allowed the Italians to capture some of the area to the south of the Horn of Africa.

But a decade later the Emperor of Abyssinia, Menelik, drove the Italians out.

The Italians only returned in 1935, when Mussolini's fascists captured Ethiopia, Eritria and part of Somalia again.

Somalia only won full independence in the 1960s. But now the old Italian and French colonial armies are back murdering people—this time with the blue helmets of the UN.

The North: Breaking the sectarian barrier

THERE are a number of myths about people from Northern Ireland which suggest that they are mostly right-wing bible-thumpers who are divided along religious lines and are deeply hostile to each other.

The recently published *Social Attitudes in Northern Ireland*, however, proves that things are not that simple. Here SEAN MCVEIGH looks at the report's findings while KIERAN ALLEN examines the weakness of the Opsahl Report which claims to show some way out of the Northern conflict.

IF you look at the segregation that exists in education and housing along Catholic and Protestant lines, you might be forgiven for thinking that people choose to live separately.

Social Attitudes in Northern Ireland, however, shows that this is not the case.

The vast majority of people — three-quarters of Catholics and two-thirds of Protestants — say they want more cross community contact.

In terms of housing, 70 per cent of Catholics and 80 per cent

of Protestants, said the government should do more to integrate housing. 70 per cent of people said they would prefer to live in a mixed area while 86 per cent said they preferred a mixed workplace.

Prefer

In terms of education, 70 per cent of Catholics and Protestants said they supported the idea of integrated education for children.

And 50 per cent of Protestants and 49 per cent of Catholics said they themselves would prefer to send their children to mixed schools.

All in all, people are showing considerable resistance to the current ethnic cleansing propa-

ganda of the UDA with its slogan of "Irish Out".

What about the idea that people in Northern Ireland hold socially conservative ideas?

The survey shows that in areas like capital punishment, homosexuality and censorship, people do tend to hold conservative ideas, but in a whole host of other areas people hold views which would normally be described as "left-wing" or anti-Tory.

Ninety-two per cent of people said they would oppose any reduction in spending on the health service or education and when asked to name an area where the government should spend extra money, 68 per cent opted for health or education while a mis-

erable 3 per cent opted for the police, prisons or defence.

During the 1980s we were often told that people accepted the "new right morality" and "the greed is good" attitude of Reagan and Thatcher. Again the survey disproves this.

Reduce

According to the report, 80 per cent of people believe the government should reduce the gap between rich and poor, while 55 per cent of respondents said the government should redistribute wealth from the better off to the less well off.

57 per cent of people agreed that "big business benefits owners at the expense of workers"

while 70 per cent of people agreed that "ordinary working people do not get their share of the nation's wealth".

When it comes to trade unions, people in Northern Ireland are more likely to support them and be union members than in Britain.

Trade union membership in Northern Ireland is 38 per cent compared to 37 per cent in Britain. In the public sector 70 per cent of workers are unionised (Britain 65 per cent) while in manufacturing 53 per cent of workers are unionised (Britain 42 per cent).

Participation in unions is also higher with 64 per cent of trade union members saying they had attended a union meeting.

22 per cent said they had put forward a motion at a union meeting while 40 per cent of respondents said they had been involved in a strike — in Britain the figure was 38 per cent.

Overall, trade unionism seems popular in Northern Ireland: 52 per cent of respondents agree that:

"Workers need strong trade unions to protect their interests", while 45 per cent agree that "there will always be conflict between management and unions because they are really on opposite sides."

When it comes to ideas about inequality, rich and poor and trade unions, people in Northern Ireland seem far from conservative. Indeed the report notes that workers in Northern Ireland seem to have a more "ideological view of management".

When it comes to how Catholics view the state there are few surprises given the record of the Northern state in discriminating against Catholics and the record of the RUC and British Army in harassing Catholic youth.

It is no surprise that 70 per cent of the Catholic respondents believed "the police and the army get away with the offences they commit".

You just have to remember the recent case where paratroopers walked free from a court despite the considerable body of evidence which said they were guilty of assault, wrecking property and firing their rifles at unarmed civilians in Coalisland, County Tyrone.

Again, three-quarters of Catholics felt it was a good idea to abolish the notoriously sectarian Ulster Defence Regiment.

Although the survey shows a clear majority of Catholics now feel they are treated equally by the NHS, when it comes to areas like local councils Catholics still say they are discriminated against in terms of employment.

Again this is no surprise given the recent court cases where local councils have been found guilty of discriminating against Catholic job applicants.

The report is useful in that it gives us a "snapshot" of how people are thinking generally about different questions — sectarianism, repression and the economic system they have to live under.

But you have to remember that ideas can change rapidly in times of crisis — to the left or the right.



The Opsahl Commission—middle-class leadership

In the wrong class

THE Opsahl Commission has been working for the last year to come up with proposals for solving the Northern Ireland conflict.

3,000 people sent in suggestions and public meetings and hearings were held to get advice.

Tragically, their report comes nowhere near offering any solution.

The starting point for the report's author is that in every normal society the middle class exercise leadership over their communities.

The barristers, the managers, the auctioneers — all of what is sometimes rudely called the "chattering classes" — are engaged in the business of politics.

Their involvement lends an air of stability and helps to smooth over conflicts.

But according to Opsahl "there has been a withdrawal of the middle class from politics" in the North.

It is almost as if their life support machines were cut off.

There is no forum where they can practice their skills. This

means that "they never learn how to compromise and make trade deals which are the hallmarks of a functioning democracy".

Opsahl wants to re-activate this layer of society. But the middle class often lead highly individualised lives.

They are cut off from the great masses of people in their large suburban detached houses and work in small self employed offices or as part of large hierarchies.

Their main claim to political activity is that they represent "their community" by virtue of a shared religion or culture.

Division

This is not a problem for Opsahl because they see the solution to Northern Ireland being a political structure that recognises the division between both communities.

They want a situation whereby "each community has an equal voice in making and executing laws or a veto over their execution".

Opsahl naturally hopes that these vetos will be handled sensibly by practical middle class

leaders who are trained in the art of compromise.

In reality it is a proposal for the Lebanisation of the North. After the French army withdrew from Lebanon they left behind a structure where Muslims and Christians had to be both represented in government.

For a long period Christians held the key post — until the demographic balance swung too dramatically against them. This suited the traditional leaders and bigots on both sides.

They could represent themselves as defenders of "their community" putting one over or gaining more resources than the rival communities.

Being middle class politicians they could, for a period, play this game and still practice the art of compromise" with their mirror image opponents.

That is until 1976, when it fell apart in the orgy of violence that has made Beirut famous.

Opsahl would naturally discount such a comparison. But it remains the case that they cannot see a way out other than institutionalising communal politics within the North.

In reality, Opsahl tells us more about the frustrations and ambitions of the North's liberal middle class than anything else.

What is striking about the report is the glimpse it gives of how puny the aspirations of this class are compared to their forefathers who established the United Irishmen two hundred years previously.

Then there was an ambition of uniting Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter in a broader movement that swept away the muck of ages. There was little talk of preserving and institutionalising communal identities.

Fungus

But then the middle class was a revolutionary class determined to remove an old aristocracy that Thomas Russell called "the fungus productions which grow out of the diseased state of society".

The one area that was not mentioned in Opsahl was the possibility for working class unity. It is true that the violence is mainly concentrated in working class areas. North and

West Belfast, for example, account for 40 per cent of all killings in Northern Ireland.

But working class people also share a common interest. They may be facing Tory attacks on their social welfare benefits.

Or they may be one of the 44 per cent of workers who are employed in the public sector and are facing Tory threats of privatisation.

Conditions now for workers unity are more favourable than at any time since the troubles began. Protestant workers are finding they face the same dole queue, low wages and rotten conditions as their Catholic counterparts.

The type of future that capitalism offers is summed up in one statistic: in the Shankill Road only 4 per cent of children passed their 11 plus in 1987 under the North's rotten Tory system of education.

People are not necessarily aware of their common interests.

But they are sometimes forced to fight together. It is the task of socialists to build on those struggles and to promote the interests of class over community.

Italy's rulers self-destruct

ITALIAN rulers are reeling from the biggest scandal this century.

by MARNIE HOLBOROW

No fewer than 2,600 politicians, officials and bosses have been implicated in bribery and corruption. The Christian Democrats (DC) and the Socialist Party (PS) pocketed kickbacks for giving out state contracts. Some have been at the beck and call of the Mafia.

And all this at a time when the government has been calling for "sacrifices" from workers' pay packets. No less than \$100 billion has been taken from ordinary Italians in the form of welfare cuts and tax increases.

Workers have showed their anger through general strikes and big demonstrations across Italy.

The first round of the mayoral elections in June registered disgust for the establishment parties. The DC, traditionally the biggest ruling party, was down to just 17 percent of the vote and the Socialists fell to a demensory three percent.

The sheer scale of corruption has provoked a bitter reaction.

126 Italian MPs have received notification for investigation. Three former prime ministers have been named. The former Justice Minister, Claudio Martelli, creamed off money intended for Somalia into Socialist Party coffers.

Former Prime Minister, De Mita, has been arrested for taking massive kickbacks from the \$40 billion aid for the Naples earthquake in 1981. People are still homeless today in Naples as a result of this twisted corruption.

Nowhere is the sickness of the system shown more than at the very top—Andreotti. Seven times Prime Minister, DC leader Andreotti was the most powerful figure in post-war politics and tipped to become president. In March he was finally accused of Mafia association.

Andreotti has been named in connection with scandals 28 times over the past 30 years. Each time he emerged lily-white. Now his name has stuck.

It is not just the right wing DC that has been caught. Socialist Party corruption has come to the fore and angered people all the more for the hopes that they had in them.

De Michelis—the trendy long-haired disco dancer who was EC president—was chased by a crowd along a canal bank in Venice when he dared to venture out after being charged with corruption. "Thief, idiot, betrayer, delinquent, bandit, shame on you" roared the crowd.

In Milan, PS leader Craxi had amassed a Tunisian villa, a country home, an entire floor of the Hotel Raphael in Rome complete with swimming pools and helicopters—enough to make even Haughey jealous.

How did this corruption come to be all-pervasive for



Disgraced: Andreotti

Italian rulers? And how has it come to the surface now?

The truth is that the post-war settlement in Italy was built on corruption and the main string-pullers were the Americans.

Italy produced one of the biggest resistance movements against fascism. 300,000 people took part in the resistance.

At the end of the second world war, as the tide turned against Hitler, a wave of strikes and occupations swept Northern Italy as workers forced the collapse of fascism.

Nervous

The Allies were nervous of this revolutionary mood. They were also nervous that their new world order would be upset by the presence of a two million member Communist Party in government.

They therefore put all their efforts behind those who opposed the communists and the anti-fascists. They backed an unholy DC-led alliance of ex-fascists, mafiosi and Catholic populists.

"Those who had gone to bed the night before as fascists now woke up as Christian Democrats", is how the old Italian joke has it.

In 1943, the US had used Mafia boss Lucky Luciano to help prepare the invasion of Italy. After the war the Mafia was drafted in to provide the local government of southern Italy.

This laid the basis for the Mafia's power. Today the Mafia operations are said to generate 15 percent of Italian GNP.

In the North, the DC consolidated their political power by their "special relationships" with certain firms. They guaranteed them huge contracts and a share of government grants in return for party kickbacks and political loyalty.

Thus through the Mafia in the South and the kickback system in the North, the DC

consolidated its power.

When the Christian Democrats were threatened they often resorted to this 'alternative state' to sort out their enemies. After the revolutionary upheavals of the hot autumn of '69 translated into growing support for the Communist Party, a spate of bombings happened.

In 1980 one such bomb at Bologna railway station killed 85 people. It has been alleged that the CIA backed and financed this campaign.

The bombing of the Uffizzi Gallery in Florence where a family was killed bears all the hallmarks of a similar operation. The thousands who demonstrated in protest had no doubt that the Christian Democrats and their friends in the Mafia were again involved.

The Italian ruling class, historically weak and unstable, resorted to any means at their disposal to cling on to power. For forty years, they got away with it. When things threatened to erupt or their corruption stood exposed they could pull the strings and cover up.

But things have changed. The Italian "economic miracle" is over and the budget deficit is running at 10% of GNP. The old Communist Party has splintered and cannot be presented as a bogey man. This is all causing massive problems for Italy's old ruling order. With less room to manoeuvre, it is not able to contain and hide its corruption.

Anger against the scandals can fuel militancy in the workplaces. Last autumn one million people took to the streets against the bosses' attack on the indexing of their wages. As unemployment claimed more victims, the unions were forced into calling a series of regional strikes in February and a four-hour general stoppage in early April.

Workplace councils (*consigli*) have re-emerged after years of silence and called a demonstration in February which was supported by 100,000 workers.

In the local elections a left split from the old Communist Party—the Communist Refoundation Party—increased its vote to 8 percent.

But it is not just the left that gain from the situation. The right wing Northern Leagues also gained in the elections, increasing its national vote to 16 percent, and are set to win the mayorship in Milan. The Northern League is anti-immigrant and anti-southern Italians.

It has garnered some support from some Northern bosses and self-employed organisations.

The League's leader, Umberto Bossi, has stated that the Leagues are "an expression of the middle classes and we will not betray them as fascism did".

This rightward organisation can only be countered by strengthening the workers' action, started this spring.

Refugees murdered

Europe's racist race card

Racists murdered six Turkish immigrants in the German town of Solingen last month just three days after the German parliament passed new restrictions on refugees entering the country.

And before the victims had been buried EC ministers were planning new curbs on immigrants across Europe. This is what they meant by creating "Fortress Europe" when they signed the Maastricht Treaty.

Germany's Chancellor Kohl has been campaigning for the past two years against allowing more refugees into the country, blaming them for Germany's economic crisis.

Anti racist protesters in Solingen made it

What the new racist laws mean:

EC ministers have passed a resolution restricting entry for people fleeing the war in former Yugoslavia.

Relatives will not now be allowed to join refugees already in the EC save in "exceptional circumstances".

This will leave victims of the war facing the dilemma of fleeing to safety or staying with their families.

The EC ministers also want to expel foreigners who help to find homes or work for illegal immigrants.

FRANCE:

Balladur's right wing UDF government has changed France's Nationality code so that children born in France of immigrant parents no longer have an automatic right to French citizenship.

And the government has given police the green light to harass immigrants in public places with more checks on passports and visas. Anyone found without papers will be taken to detention centres and then expelled.

And if foreigners "threaten public order" they will be kicked out. This means that if people protest against racist murders they can be expelled.

Local mayors have been given the right to refuse to marry couples until they are "investigated" to prove that the marriage is genuine.

And immigrants will now have to be in France for two years before their families can be allowed to join them.

GERMANY:

The German government is refusing to give immigrants the right to dual nationality.

The Turkish people who were fire bombed in Solingen had lived in Germany for 30 years. But they were never given a chance to become German citizens.

They could not even vote in local elections.

Last November the German government began to forcibly deport Romanian gypsies.

This was after racists rioted and attacked refugee hostels in Rostock.

Now they have changed the constitution to prevent refugees from entering Germany.

clear that "respectable" politicians like Kohl were really to blame for the attacks. The protesters carried a banner saying, "The murderers are in parliament".

Across the EC politicians are once more playing the "race card" to divert the blame for economic chaos away from governments and onto refugees and immigrants.

A source within France's new right wing UDF government admitted as much when he defended the country's new asylum laws saying:

"In two years we cannot win much support with our economic programme, but we may do with these symbolic measures."

And British Tory MP Winston Churchill made a speech in Bolton last month, bemoaning the "relentless flow" of immigrants who are swamping the "British way of life".

He was echoing the 1968 speech by Tory minister Enoch Powell who predicted "rivers of blood" on the streets of Britain if more immigrants were allowed into the country.

The Tories claim to have distanced themselves from Churchill just as they sacked Powell from the cabinet in 1968. But John Major said nothing and the Tories refused to expel Churchill.

And it's not just Tories like Major, Kohl and the UDF who target immigrants. Labour Parties are just as bad.

Britain's Labour Party and the German SPD have gone along with every racist measure and have passed racist laws when they have been in office.

The French Socialist government of recent years also played the anti-immigrant card. Former Prime Minister Edith Cresson called for Africans to be repatriated to their countries of origin on special chartered flights.

And the words of another Socialist Prime Minister Michel Rocard have now been quoted by Charles Pasqua, the UDF's hard-line Interior Minister, when he said:

"France cannot welcome all the misery of the world."

Neither Tory nor Labour politicians have any solution to the misery caused by the capitalist crisis. So they both try to turn people's bitterness against refugees and immigrants.

ROOTED IN TH

There is nothing natural about racism. It is a filthy set of ideas that has been bred by capitalism.

The Roman Empire was, for example, colour blind. Several of its emperors were black. Its rulers made no distinction between the people it conquered in North Africa or England.

This began to change in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Early capitalism depended on a huge slave trade that connected Africa to the cotton fields of America and the factories of Lancashire.

America's rulers had just broken away from Britain and claimed to stand for human rights and equality.

The demonstrations across

Protests to st

IRELAND O

Ireland's treatment of a worst in Europe. Many treated like criminals or for asylum.

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■ In November 1990 six Sr protection here.

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Refugees arriving here are a

Meanwhile Irish passports a

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Now the FF/Labour Coalition

status of immigrants in Ireland.

to strengthen fortress Europe.

Ireland's racist immigration

To explain away the slave trade the

had to argue that black Africans were

fully human so they did not deserve hu

rights.

One of the best known hypocrites a

time was Thomas Jefferson who wrote

Declaration of Independence which

claimed the right to "life, liberty and

pursuit of happiness".

Needless to say these rights did not ap

to the black slaves on Jefferson's own p

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In the nineteenth century racism was u

to justify the European powers' conquest

Africa and Asia.

The white rulers of the time twist

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es Germany in the last few weeks have the potential to become a powerful anti-Nazi movement

ests show how op the racists

OF THE WELCOMES?

of asylum seekers has long been among the any refugees have been held in Irish jails and s or else deported without any chance to look

a Chinese student who escaped after the Tiananmen was kept in Mountjoy jail for seven months. Sri Lankans were deported within days of seeking

Zairian refugees arrived by ferry from France and were France before being deported to Ireland again. The pages between Ireland and France before being refused

es were sent back and forth between Ireland and Britain

nds from Turkey were assaulted by Gardai at Shannon at on a flight to Canada.

are not even told about their rights of representation. ports are readily available to white South Africans who

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Several days of demonstrations followed the murders in Solingen last month. Thousands marched and chanted "Nazis out! Foreigners stay!" Twenty thousand Opel car workers stopped in protest.

The racism that is emerging across Europe can be beaten. Many people live and work alongside immigrants and often fight alongside them as they did in the recent strikes in Germany.

Racist ideas strike a chord when the economy is in crisis and workers are encouraged to blame Turks, Algerians and other immigrants for unemployment and poverty.

But the protests in Germany prove that the racists do not have it all their own way. And Winston Churchill's recent racist speech in Britain received very little support from workers who know that the Tories are really to blame for the crisis.

On the Run

In 1968 the reaction to Enoch Powell's "rivers of blood" speech was different. Thousands of dockers marched in London saying "Enoch is right!" and demanding his reinstatement to the front bench.

But today Britain's workers have the Tories on the run with teachers, firefighters and the Timex strikers all fighting back.

The confidence of workers to fight the bosses is the key to isolating the extreme right. When workers fight as part of a class they have to unite across racial divides so it makes less sense to support racist ideas.

But to maintain that unity when the fight ebbs the fascists have to be targeted and confronted. In countries like Germany and France an anti-Nazi movement has to be built to smash them off the streets.

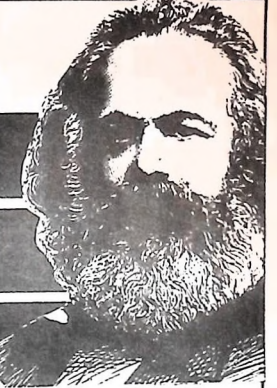
And socialist politics are needed to provide an alternative to racism and fascism. Only a socialist society where workers run the economy can end the misery of the capitalist system that breeds racial prejudice.

CONOR KOSTICK



Teach yourself

Marxism



Why socialists oppose immigration controls

The main reason given by European governments for imposing immigration controls is that immigrants cause unemployment, housing shortages and a put a strain on the social welfare system.

But this argument gives a false view of Europe's population. It suggests that there is overcrowding, with stretched resources being used up by large numbers of immigrants. The reality is very different.

The population of Europe, with the exception of Sweden, is set to decline. The number of European babies has fallen by 25 percent since the 1960s. Immigrants make up just three percent of Europe's population.

And despite Winston Churchill's talk of a "relentless flow of immigrants" into Britain, only 50,900 were allowed in to the country last year. This amounts to less than eight hundredths of one per cent of Britain's population.

And when politicians complain about overcrowding they are not blaming the many people who come to live in Europe from America or Australia or indeed the many white South Africans who come here. Harsh immigration controls are mainly aimed at non whites.

This racial discrimination would be sufficient grounds alone for socialists to be against immigration controls. However even if they were applied to everyone, white or black, they should still be opposed, as the argument for them is wrong at its very heart.

Far from immigrants being a drain on a society, every person is potentially a boon to a country. Irish immigrants were vital to the building up of British and American industry.

And Germany's post war economy was founded on asylum seekers. There were more than 10 million refugees in West Germany in 1945 and another 3.5 million crossed from the East in the 1950's.

Yet unemployment from the West dropped from 8 per cent in 1950 to 0.5 per cent in 1961. And when the Berlin Wall was built the West German government looked for "guest

workers" from the Mediterranean countries.

Living standards do not fall because of immigrants. For example, the population density in Japan and Holland is 40 per cent higher than in Britain. Yet both countries have higher living standards than Britain.

Unemployment and housing shortages are not caused by immigrants, but by the capitalist system in recession. Ireland is an important example for the rest of Europe, for here, North and South, there is negligible immigration, yet one of the highest levels of unemployment.

Another attempt to justify immigration controls is to argue that it reduces racial conflicts. If fewer immigrants are allowed into the country then there will be less provocations and attacks.

Encourage

Again this is completely wrong. Non-white immigrants are not the cause of racism. And keeping out immigrants does not undermine the fascists but encourages them.

When government Ministers draw up immigration controls they deliberately give credence to the view that immigrants are to blame for society's ills.

The Nazis, far from being discouraged by such legislation, then believe that their genocidal activities are warranted and can indeed claim to be more serious than the politicians.

Racial tension is increased, not reduced, by clamping down on immigrants. In reality racism is whipped up by "respectable" politicians who advo-

cate such a clampdown. This racism serves the interests of the ruling class in two ways.

Firstly by making scapegoats of immigrants, the governments of Europe avoid being themselves the target for people bitter and angry at the experience of unemployment and welfare cuts.

Secondly, the press, television and speeches in favour of immigration controls all serve to strengthen nationalism, binding workers to their employers. As Marx commented on the effect of a campaign against Irish immigrants in the last century:

"He (the English worker) feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself"

Immigration controls should be opposed because they are racist, and because they are a means of governments deflecting anger away from themselves for their attacks on jobs and welfare. They also divide workers along racial lines.

Workers the whole world over have far more in common with each other than they do with their rulers. The working class movement is strengthened through international solidarity.

That's why socialists are for the right of people to travel wherever they like, without any restriction. Any person driven by poverty, recession or civil war to leave their homes and look for a new life in Europe should be welcome here.

OUT NOW

Killing the Nazi Menace: How to Fight the Fascists

Chris Bambery

£1.50 + 50p from:
SW Books, PO Box 1648,
Dublin 8

World War Two:

A war for democracy?

by BRIAN HANLEY

THE Second World War was the bloodiest, most destructive conflict in human history.

Eighty million people died. Hundreds of thousands were soldiers killed in combat that raged across three continents.

Millions more were civilians slaughtered under the bombs which rained down in the cities of Europe and Japan, in Nazi death camps, and from famine and disease.

Despite the horror of the conflict, most people accept the idea that World War 2 was a "good war", a war necessary to defend democracy from the threat of fascism, and a war in which all, from communists to conservatives, could unite.

Some see it as a model for how the left and the right could again pull together to help the people of Bosnia or Somalia who are terrorised by warlords.

The reality was very different. When Britain declared war on Germany in 1939 it did so in the name of the British empire. Yet most of the millions of the empire's subjects enjoyed no democratic rights.

When Britain and the US signed the Atlantic Charter in 1941 with its promise to "respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they live", Winston Churchill made it clear that this did not apply to "India, Burma and other parts of the British empire".

When Gandhi and the Indian Independence Movement launched a campaign of civil disobedience in 1942, British troops crushed it with shootings, beatings and mass detentions.

Churchill himself was no anti-fascist. In the 1930s he had said of Mussolini:

"If I had been an Italian I am sure I should have been wholeheartedly with you in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism."

During the Spanish Civil War he said: **"Franco has right on his side, because he loves his country and is defending Europe against the Communist danger"**.

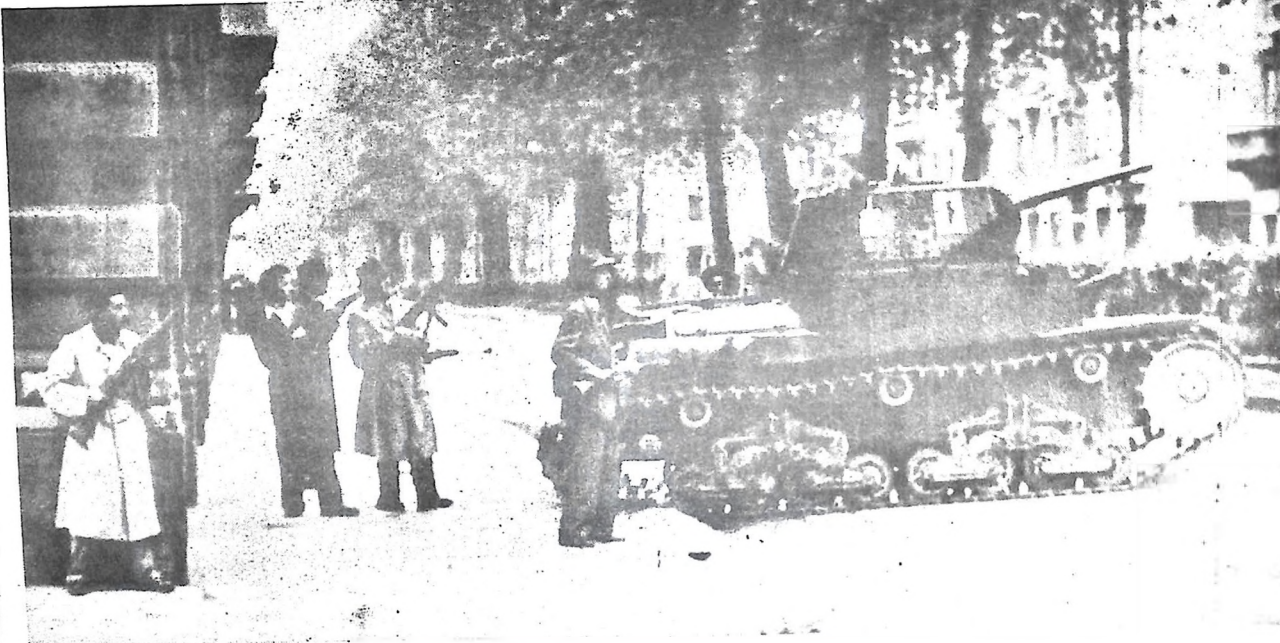
Far from all of Britain pulling together it was the working class which bore the brunt of the war effort.

While the rich moved their children to country homes and ate in ration free restaurants, workers faced food shortages and were crammed into unsafe, often flooded and rat infested air raid shelters. It was the working class East End of London which was devastated during the Blitz.

So if defence of freedom was not the motivating factor of the war, what was? The seeds of war were sown in the 1930s. In the wake of the great depression, governments all over the world stepped up state intervention in their economies.

One result of this was that market competition was partially displaced by military competition and it became essential for each major power to have a firm grip over its own bloc.

Britain, France and the US were relatively comfortable.



Armed workers liberating Milan from the fascists

For Germany and Japan, with no empires of their own, military expansion was the only option. Germany wished to expand into Central and Eastern Europe, Japan into China and the Far East.

At first the majority of Britain's rulers favoured a policy of appeasement with Hitler. This was not based on a naive desire for peace.

It was based on the belief that the interests of British capitalism could be best served by buying Hitler off with concessions in Central and Eastern Europe. Many members of the British ruling class were sympathetic to Hitler and saw him as a bulwark against the USSR.

Threaten

Some Tories, above all Churchill, opposed appeasement. They did so because they realised Hitler's expansionist programme would eventually threaten British interests.

Even after the beginning of the war, many of Britain's rulers hoped for an early peace with Germany. It was only after the invasion of France and the disastrous defeat at Dunkirk that they gave way to Churchill.

Similarly the USSR calculated that a pact with Hitler would protect its interests in Eastern Europe. After the invasion of Poland in 1939, Stalin gained in the carve-up.

Indeed oil exports from Russia made the German lightning strikes through Belgium and France possible in 1940. It was only after Hitler invaded Russia in 1941 that Stalin re-converted to anti-fascism.

The war was fought to defend the interests of the rulers of the allied powers, not to defeat fascism. The conduct of the war by the Allies shows this even more clearly.

Millions of ordinary people volunteered in the belief that they would

defeat fascism and never return to the poverty and depression of the 1930s. In the occupied territories of Europe and Asia there were heroic examples of resistance.

In 1941 the workers of Amsterdam brought the city to a halt to stop deportations of Jews. Workers, Jewish and non-Jewish, battled with Nazis on the streets.

The Danish resistance saved the country's Jewish population by secretly smuggling thousands of people to Sweden. In 1943 the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto rose, and fought to the end against elite Nazi divisions.

Their heroism and that of thousands of others did not mean a thing to the Allied leaders. The Allies knew about the Nazi concentration camps but refused to bomb the railway lines transporting people to them despite demands from the resistance movements and Jewish groups.

By 1943 it was becoming clear that the superior military and economic strength of the Allies, particularly the US and USSR, would defeat Germany and Japan and their allies.

The Allies began plans for the post-war carve-up. At meetings between Churchill and Stalin in Moscow in 1944, and with Roosevelt at Yalta in February 1945, the foundations of the postwar world were laid. With amazing cynicism the world was divided up between the rival powers.

Churchill recalled how he wrote to Stalin:

"So far as Britain and Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have ninety percent predominance in Rumania, for us to have ninety percent say in Greece, and go fifty-fifty about Yugoslavia?"

Stalin ticked the list in agreement. All the participants at these conferences agreed on two principles. The first was on a world division which remained until the revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989.

The USSR was given jurisdiction over the nations round its borders. In return the US, Britain and France were given control over Greece and Italy and their colonies.

Agreements were also reached on war reparations, the post-war division of Germany and the setting up of the United Nations.

Crush

The second point of agreement was the need to crush any movements that could upset the post-war set up.

These movements became the Allies' biggest worry as the war drew to a close. Across Europe and Asia resistance groups began to stage uprisings as the Allies approached.

Many of these groups were led by communists, and included thousands of workers who saw a chance to defeat the occupying armies and root out the local rich who most often collaborated with them.

On 29 January 1944 the Red Army was within fifteen miles of Warsaw. Expecting quick support from the Russians, the Polish resistance rose two days later.

But the Red Army stayed put, Stalin fearing an alternative power base if the rising was successful. After two months of bloody fighting the Nazis razed Warsaw.

Over 240,000 Poles were killed and another 600,000 deported to death camps.

The British army entered Athens in Greece in September 1944. The Germans had already withdrawn and the local communist resistance ELAS had imprisoned fascists and collaborators.

Churchill ordered the British commander to "treat Athens like a conquered city". Fascists were released and the Greek monarchy reinstated.

The British and right-wing militia began a war against the ELAS. Stalin, having handed Greece to Britain, offered

no help to the Greek communists.

In Belgium the British had to use military force to impose the unpopular government in exile from London against the wishes of the Belgian resistance.

Italy had been divided between the Allies in the South and the fascists in the North since 1943. The Allies had appointed the ex-fascist Marshall Badoglio as head of the Southern government.

In early 1945 the workers in the great northern cities of Milan and Turin revolted. Factories were seized and workers' councils set up.

Twenty thousand fascists (including Mussolini) were shot. There was a state of armed revolution. The Allies were alarmed. But the Italian Communist Party under Stalin's direction mobilised the movement.

In the Far East resistance movements fought the Japanese and expected independence after the end of the war. In the Philippines the HUK armies had liberated large areas of the country from the Japanese.

They found themselves at war with General McArthur's US forces. The Allies ordered the defeated Japanese armies to remain in place in Indo-China and Indonesia until the French and Dutch colonists could restore order.

The final act of barbarity in a barbaric war came when the US dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

There was no military need to use the atomic bomb—the US knew Japan was on the verge of surrender. A quarter of a million people died so the US could show its rivals, especially the USSR, its latest weapon.

It was the first step of the Cold War. Before long both sets of former Allies were using ex-nazis to spy on each other and to help with military technology.

France and Britain moved to reclaim their colonies and the US and USSR set about establishing their spheres of influence.

So much for a war for democracy.

Help us build a socialist alternative!

On the weekend after the Aer Lingus "rescue plan" was announced, we sold 74 copies of *Socialist Worker* on the streets of Dublin and collected hundreds of signatures on a petition against the plan.

This shows that the anger is mounting at the FF/Labour government's attacks. Opinion polls have shown huge opposition to the tax amnesty and the new Telecom charges.

Workers are sick of footing the bill for the massive rip offs being carried out by the Irish rich. And they are disgusted at the Labour Party's betrayals.

In the North there is similar anger at the Tory attacks. Plans to tax invalidity benefit have added insult to injury. Nothing is sacred as the Tories squeeze workers' living standards while bailing out rich gangsters like Asil Nadir.

And as Page 5 of this issue of *SW* shows, Protestant and Catholic workers share a belief that society caters for the wealthy at the expense of the less well off.

This radicalisation has gone a stage further in Britain where teachers, firefigh-

ers and other groups have got the Tories on the run.

To achieve the same here, we need to build a socialist organisation. That is not to say that workers will not fight in the absence of socialist politics.

But to give that fight some direction we need a clear set of ideas that do not compromise with the present set up.

Workers' anger in the South is still expressed in a good showing by the Labour Party in recent opinion polls. If workers are still looking to Labour while hating the party's policies, it means that they have seen through bosses' parties like Fianna Fail.

But things do not stand still. If a genuine socialist party is not established ideas can shift back to the right as they have done in France.

Similarly, in the North, we cannot ignore the bigots' attempts to divide workers by saying that Catholics are getting all the benefits at the expense of Protestants.

Join Us!

Only socialist politics that puts class before community can prevent the Tories from dividing workers and letting their system off the hook.

For these reasons the SWM is trying to build a revolutionary organisation in Ireland. The people we aim

to recruit are people who want to fight back and who think that our ideas -- as outlined in the What We Stand For column opposite - make sense.

If you are one of those people we need you to help us build the SWM. It is not enough to sign the petitions,

attend the demos or to be a good activist in your trade union. You need to get organised with other socialists.

Join us today! Fill out the slip at the bottom of this page and hand it to your *Socialist Worker* seller.

What's our stand?

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

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM
The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system. It has to be overthrown. The machinery of the capitalist state—parliament, courts, army, police etc.—is there to defend the interests of the capitalist class, not to run society in a 'neutral' fashion. To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:
The SWM welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class. Workers' revolutions are needed to win real freedom in the East. We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

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

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

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

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

Support this appeal

THE Socialist Workers Movement believes that workers' unity can be forged in the North which challenges all discrimination and the sectarian nature of the state.

We are attempting to build a socialist organisation, capable of promoting

workers struggles, and providing an alternative to the politics of sectarianism.

Our appeal is for money in order to establish premises in Belfast. We also

need to buy new office equipment for the party.

We need the support of readers of *Socialist Worker* to reach our target of £2000 by the end of July.

"The support that the Socialist Workers Party in Britain have given to the Timex strike has been unbelievable. I would certainly strongly support the appeal from the SWM in Ireland."—Margaret, from the Timex strike committee who was over in Belfast recently building solidarity.

Rush donations, Trade Union and workplace collections to: Socialist Worker Appeal, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8. Or PO Box 103, Belfast BT15

What's On

Branches of the SWM meet around the country at the following times and venues

Athlone

Meets every other Tuesday at 8.00pm, upstairs in Hooker Bar.

See paper sellers for details of meetings

Belfast

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in Central Hall, Rosemary St.

6th July: Is Cuba the last bastion of Socialism?

13th July Break

20th July: The Politics of James Connolly

27th July: The Lessons of the Paris Commune

Cork

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Anchor Inn, Georges Quay.

See paper sellers for details of meetings

Derry

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in Badgers Pub, Orchard St.

29th June: Gay Liberation and Socialism

6th July: Is Cuba the Last bastion of Socialism?

13th July: Break

20th July: Religion: What do Socialists say?

Dublin North

Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in Conways Pub, Parnell St.

7th July: Is Cuba the last Socialist Country?

14th July: The Russian Revolution: Is it relevant today?

21st July: Socialists and War

28th July: Can Men and Women be equal?

Dublin South

Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in the Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

8th July: What happens in a Revolution?

15th July: Is Socialism Utopian?

22nd July: Why do people turn to religion?

29th July: The Holocaust: Could it happen again?

Galway

Meets every second Wednesday at Currans Hotel, Eyre Square.

7th July: Why Socialist Oppose Immigration

Controls

21st July: Why is the Economy in Crisis?

Waterford

Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in ATGWU Hall, Keyzer st.

1st July: Religion: What do Socialists say?

8th July: How do we change society?

15th July: The Warsaw Uprising

22nd July: Do First World workers benefit from Third World Oppression?

To contact the SWM in Bray, Coleraine, Cookstown, Drogheda, Dundalk, Kilkenny, Limerick, Navan, write to SWM PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Phone (01) 872 2682 or PO Box 103 Belfast 15 2AB

DUBLIN PUBLIC MEETING

The Fight for Gay Liberation

Speaker: Michael Kerrigan

Wednesday 30th June, 8.00pm, North Star Hotel, Amiens St

SWM News

MARXISM '93

Central London 9 - 16 July
Thousands of socialist and trade unionists from all around the world come together for an exciting week of discussion and debate with over 250 forums and meetings.

According to Tony Benn "Marxism '93 offers a remarkable series of lectures and seminars around the theme of socialism from the past to the present and into the future.

"It is a veritable university for all those who realise that the decay of capitalism lies at the root of most of our present problems and look to building a society based on peace, democracy and social justice".

Free accommodation and creche are available.

For full details of programme and travel arrangements write to SWM PO Box 1648, Dublin 8 or Tel: Londard: 004471 538 2707

PAT THE BAKER SOLIDARITY

SWM members have been active in building support for the Pat the Baker strikers in Ballyfermot.

As soon as a solidarity march was announced SWM members in Dublin distributed posters around the city.

The bosses at the plant were so annoyed that they tried to produce an exact replica poster to attack SIPTU and 'its socialist cohorts'.

In the Ballyfermot

area, SWM took to the door steps to argue for support for the march

SWM provided the largest socialist contingent on the march with lively slogans about 'Pat the strike breaker'. Afterwards three people joined the SWM.

In Waterford, SWM leafletted the local Quinnsworth and Crazy Prices stores.

One member explained, "The response was

unbelievable. The management tried to claim that they had already taken Pat the Baker pro-

SOMALIA PROTEST

The UN massacres in Somalia was met by SWM protests who have been arguing that Irish troops should not be sent there.

In Belfast, a city centre protest drew tremendous support. 20 papers were sold and some people drew direct comparisons between Bloody Sunday in Derry and Mogadishu.

In Dublin, the SWM initiated the formation of an Anti-War league to protest at UN atrocities and to oppose sending the troops. A lively picket of Dail Eireann was held within days of the massacre.

Join Us!

If you would like to join the SWM or receive more details, send this slip to: SWM, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682 or PO Box 103 Belfast 15 2AB

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Spring and the Labour Story

A sheep in sheep's clothing

by DAMIENTIERNAN

SPRING and the Labour Story is a good gripping story of betrayal.

The author, Stephen Collins, is political correspondent with the *Sunday Press* and he has boundless admiration for Spring.

But unintentionally he paints a picture of a cynical reformist who sees the world revolving around Dail debates.

Spring often spoke in favour of Coalition but his real talent lay in organising bus loads of Kerry delegates to vote for it.

When Michael O'Leary deserted Labour to join Fine Gael, the party searched around for a new leader. Spring's main advantage was that "he was largely an unknown quantity but he was young". He got the job.

Soon he surrounded himself with a clique of advisers who reflected his own outlook. Some came from the Trinity rugby club set like John Rogers or Joe Revington. Others like Fergus Finley was a personnel manager.

In 1982, Spring led the Labour Party into his first Coalition with Fine Gael. Spring loved rubbing shoulders with the likes of Garret Fitzgerald. The two of them breakfasted regularly in the exclusive University Club on St Stephan's Green.

During this time one Fine Gael leader described Spring as 'a sheep in sheep's clothing'. It was an accurate description. Spring was completely at Fine Gael's beck and call.

He allowed local authorities to bring in the water rates. He forced ESB workers out on strike and saw the Offences Against the State Act used to arrest some of them. He supported the removal of food subsidies on basic items such as bread.

The one issue Spring stuck it out on with Fine Gael was to get his mate, John Rogers, appointed as Attorney General.

All this time Spring was deeply unpopular inside his own party. According to Barry Desmond "The loyal majority for Dick in the party in the mid-1980s was very fragile".

But Spring resorted to his traditional solution. He moved the party conferences out of Dublin so that they were stacked with more right wing rural delegates. Between 1984 and 1993, Spring only held one Labour Conference in Dublin.

But even this ploy could not stop the pressure building up on him.

After the Coalition with Fine Gael ended in 1987, the leadership were discredited. According to Spring himself, "The office holders were all tired and shattered".

A new left around Emmet Stagg was in the ascendant. At the Labour Party conference in Cork the left took the positions of Chair and Vice Chair. According to one T.D. "By the time they woke up, Emmet had virtually taken over the direction of the Party."

This raises a central puzzle which Collins is unable to deal with. How could this growing left completely collapse before Spring?

Two central factors are not ex-

amined in the book. First, the Labour Left were shattered by the revolutions of 1989.

They saw the USSR and its satellites as genuinely progressive. When these collapsed they were left rudderless.

Second, the Labour Left never have any real connections with working class struggles.

They manoeuvred in the same world that Spring dominated—the Dail Chamber, the rostrum of the Labour Party conference, the committee rooms.

This often meant that they acted entirely as individuals—subjected to the most extraordinary vacillations of mood and ambition.

The story of Stagg is interesting here. In 1992, he resigned the Labour Party whip and told *Socialist Worker* that he was sick to death of the moves towards Coalition.

But then a few weeks later he approached a few Labour Party hacks in the bar of Leinster House and told them he wanted back in and as a token of his good faith sacked his left wing assistant.

Crisis

Spring's peculiar and limited talents meant that he sensed the despair and crisis of the Left.

According to Collins, "his previous experience of a bitterly divided party persuaded him that the left would have to be included in key positions of power to protect the stability of government".

The last part of Collins book deals with the 1992 election.

As Collins puts it: "In class terms the biggest jump was among middle class voters, from eight per cent just before polling. Working class backing also rose to 22 per cent but from a much higher base."

What this shows is not, as Collins thinks, that it was Spring's election, but that thousands of voters broke from the shackles of Fianna Fail in a desire for change.

He admits that most of Labour's new TDs are far removed from workers: college lecturers, a solicitor, a barrister or two, a psychiatrist among others. The middle class people who may have joined Labour do not have the same experience of day to day living as most workers. This is what Collins fails to see.

Labour is bound to prove itself even more hostile to its working class supporters, but this doesn't translate into the death of reformism in the working class.

Labour's roots on the ground though are weak, with the lack of activists making it increasingly difficult for Labour to defend itself. It is the job of socialists in this situation to destroy any illusion that you can reform the system, and offer a revolutionary alternative.

This book is a narrow account of "the great betrayal"—you'd be far better off reading and re-reading Conor Kostick's pamphlet on "Why the Labour Party Fails". Cheaper too!

■ *Spring and the Labour Story*, by Stephen Collins, O'Brien Press, IRE7.95

Film:

Falling asleep at 'Falling Down'

by CATHY BERGIN

THERE is much debate about this film.

When I saw the excerpts I thought it looked like a racist, reactionary piece of tripe.

But I heard—"No, it's a film about the little man, pushed to the limit, caught between uncaring corporate America on the one hand and the violence of the street on the other.

"It's a subtle film, that far from being racist is in fact an ingenious, realistic drama about '90s America."

This film is a racist, reactionary piece of tripe!

Michael Douglas plays D. Fens, an ex-employee of the Department of Defence, who one hot morning, sitting in a traffic jam, cracks, leaves his car and walks through Los Angeles, taking on all the elements in society that

need taking on.

You know, the real baddies, Korean shopkeepers, fast food employees, construction workers, Latino gangs and people who want to use public phones.

We're supposed to sympathise:

"Haven't you had a sweaty burger that looks nothing like the picture, served by someone with a name tag and a false smile?"

Wouldn't you like to take out a machine gun and scare and humiliate them?"

Well, actually, no.

Terrorises

It would be good to see them unionised so they could get proper compensation when a nut comes in and terrorises them with a gun and they could lose the uniforms that are humiliating enough in themselves.

"Why don't you learn our language?" he shouts at the Korean shopkeeper.

"I wouldn't want your people living in my back yard," he tells the Latino



'Falling Down'—'heroic' or just plain racist?

gang. "Why don't you get a job" to the beggar in the street.

The universal "identification" we're supposed

to feel is based on ignorance and racism.

Amazingly when he meets a Nazi he kills him, with a look of shocked disgust on his face.

Why?

Nothing he's said or done would indicate he'd disagree with him.

D. Fens is one of the "new oppressed", the real oppressed in this society, white, male and middle class, he's the one who won't take any more in the murky world of the streets.

But Michael Douglas' character is not a sympathetic one, the makers of the film say. Oh, really?

Since when is the guy with all the weapons and the smart one-liners not the hero in Hollywood?

Robert Duvall, who

plays the good cop, only receives hero status when he tells his neurotic wife to shut up and get his dinner on the table.

There are no subtle messages in *Falling Down*.

The message is that what's wrong with society is not the conditions people have to live under, but the people themselves.

There's reams of slick photography panning the city, focusing on grabbing beggars and sinister black faces—"this is no longer America, be afraid of everyone, the little man has had enough".

This is a nasty little film.

Paint your door and watch it dry for two hours.

It's far more productive than sitting through *Falling Down*, believe me.

Mick Doyle looks at Pat Tierney's autobiography

THE MOON ON MY BACK

PAT Tierney's autobiography, *The Moon On My Back*, is a story of struggle; a struggle for respect and recognition in a system that not only frowned on but discriminated against people like him.

Pat Tierney was "pulled from a pocket a surgeon cut in my mother's tummy on the 4th of January 1957".

Of course, he couldn't have known it then but he had just been pulled into a world waiting to punish him for being a "bastard".

Eight months later, in the face of economic hardship and local speculation as to who his father was, he was sent into an orphanage run by the Sisters of Charity.

It was the first of

many institutions in which he was to experience the cruelty and brutality so many working class people suffer under the indifferent eye of the Church and State.

At the age of ten he was fostered out to an elderly couple. But even the dubious security of that artificial family fell to pieces around him.

He drifted into petty crime and served prison terms here and in England.

Emigration

The book tells of the mixed reactions he received when he finally made contact with his family, his involvement with Sinn Fein, and his emigration to the United States.

There he worked in occupations as diverse as cowboy, construction worker, fisherman and balladeer.

It was in the States too that he first became involved in hard drugs.

Newfoundland was to awaken a love of poetry

that changed his life.

Travelling from town to town, he made his living composing poems and ballads.

It was a desire to re-establish this bardic tradition in Ireland which brought him home in 1988.

Since then he has published several books of poetry, has been a regular busker on Grafton Street and around the country, and has appeared on television and radio.

However, the drug abuse of his past life was to have tragic consequences, when in 1990 he discovered he was HIV positive.

Pat Tierney does not surrender to despair.

In fact the most remarkable thing about his autobiography is its sense of humour and defiance.

He does what he has always done. He stands up against the system and takes it on.

■ *The Moon on My Back*, by Pat Tierney, Seven Towers Publishing, IRE6.95

TAPE: reviewed by BRID SMITH

"Step by Step" by Work and Play Band

THE tradition among the Irish left of learning and singing workers' songs is one that has fast been dying out in recent years.

The best aspect of "Step by Step" by the Work and Play Band is that it re-establishes the importance and the pleasure in the songs that tell us about the conditions of workers' lives, songs that express the pain, the pride and the struggle of workers.

Although this album has a distinct Irish flavour, with some excellent traditional instrumental numbers, its songs tell the story of workers in places as far apart as Australia, America and England—a clear illustration of the common cause of workers of the world.

My favourites are "Canning Salmon" and Dominic Behan's "Building Up". However, the sleeve contains the words of all the songs. Socialist should learn and sing them.

Congratulations are due to Eric Fleming and the lads from the Work and Play Band. It's just a pity that they didn't have Pat the Baker strikers launch the album, instead of that class traitor, Ruairi Quinn.

If you have a story from your workplace phone (01) 872 2682

Industrial News

Pat the Baker strikers battle on

AFTER nearly four months, bakery workers at Pat the Baker in Ballyfermot, Dublin, are still on strike.

Twenty five workers demanded the right for SIPTU to be recognised, The Labour Court recommended that the company accept.

But Pat Higgins, the owner of the company, is determined to keep out unions.

The workers have rejected management's offer of a "works committee" to represent their interests.

On June 12th, 400 people turned out for a support march to the bakery organised by the strike committee. The rally represented the first "mass picket" of Pat the Baker since the strike began.

Before the march, Higgins used his PR agency to design a special poster denouncing SIPTU and "its socialist cohorts". He tried to cover the Ballyfermot area with the posters—but they did not last long.

Raised

SIPTU have put some good effort into winning the strike. £2000 was raised for the strikers at the SIPTU conference.

But the union is fighting with one hand behind its back. It keeps insisting that it has to stick inside the law.

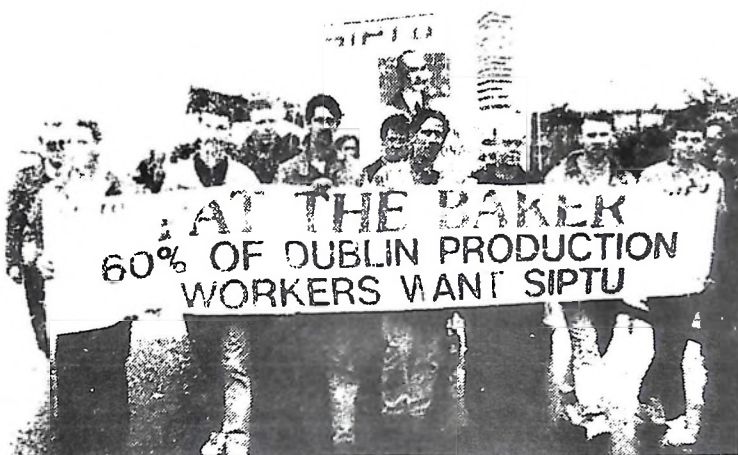
The law has already stopped supermarket workers from blacking the company's products. Instead the

strikers have only been allowed to leaflet shoppers, asking for a boycott.

Although members of IDATU and the INUVGATA (unions which organise shop workers) were on the march, their officials have so far failed to instruct members to refuse to handle Pat the Baker bread.

But Pat the Baker workers have started to visit supermarkets themselves. They are confident that workers at a number of country supermarkets would begin blacking, regardless of the law.

This would represent a huge breakthrough, especially if the action was extended to Dublin.



Hell in Granard

Shocking revelations have emerged about the conditions in Pat the Bakers main plant in Granard.

In 1990 a number of workers tried to unionise the plant. But they were sacked and other workers were intimidated into rejecting the union.

Now a regime of management terror is being imposed at the plant. The company has an obsession with video cameras. Inside the factory, one of the boss's family sits at a bank of security cameras that observe the staff.

Workers are roared at down a public address system when the boss

does not approve of their work.

One of the video cameras even overlooks the toilet. To further intimidate workers, phones in the Granard bakery are tapped.

Written warnings are issued regularly for the pettiest of reasons. Most employees get several written warnings.

The works committee at the plant is a complete sham that is run by a friend of the boss. Few people use it to make complaints.

Now the local gombeens in Granard have formed themselves into a Chamber of Commerce. They have started off an anti-SIPTU petition claiming that they are "saving jobs".

RESISTANCE AT TEAM

Workers at TEAM, the Aer Lingus subsidiary, showed how to treat management's attacks by rejecting a plan to introduce short-time working.

The company wanted them to accept working for only three weeks out of four. This demand would have meant huge pay cuts for workers.

After the rejection of short-time working, the bosses issued protective notice to 2000 workers. Defiant workers returned the notices in black rubbish sacks!

This is the latest in a series of attacks on TEAM workers.

In February, management demanded 375 redundancies and compulsory "retention" of 15% of workers' pay. Shop stewards rejected this plan on the spot, imposing an overtime ban.

Then on June 16th, the company announced that it wanted to axe 250 jobs as part of the overall "rescue plan" for Aer Lingus. Most of the jobs to go are in supervisory grades.

The main issue in TEAM at the moment is the attempt to impose short-time working. There is talk that

bosses will try to pick and choose who will lose out.

A TEAM worker said: "If they try that, there'll be trouble."

The workforce in TEAM has shown since the beginning of the year that the only way to deal with at-

tacks is to refuse to give an inch.

Maintaining this militancy, and linking their fight with that of Aer Lingus workers, will be important if the bosses' hatchet plan is to be defeated.

FIREFIIGHTERS PREPARE TO FIGHT

Firefighters in Northern Ireland are planning a public demonstration and will be distributing leaflets to the public seeking support in their struggle to defend their pay formula.

The government and the fire authorities are out to break the agreement which

links firefighters' pay to other workers. The Tories are determined to impose a 1.5% pay freeze.

FBU leader Ken Cameron says, "We can't stand by and see our pay agreement destroyed to pay for the mess this government has made of the economy."

The load on the fire service in Northern Ireland has

increased by 64% since 1980.

But management have tried to run down the service—putting 45 fire engines out of action between 1988 and 1991.

Now the firefighters are gearing themselves up for a major battle. Preparations are already under way for a ballot on strike action.

B+I

THREATENED solidarity action in support of B+I maintenance workers broke management's no-negotiations stance.

Members of three unions have been on strike since March in opposition to plans to bring in private contractors.

They have also had to contend with scab labour brought in from England.

Dockers, checkers and ships' officers had voted to strike from June 4th in support of the maintenance workers.

Two days before that action was due to start, B+I agreed to talks, after refusing to negotiate since the strike began.

The solidarity action was then postponed. It should have been kept up until the bosses backed down fully.

Although the strike hasn't been won yet, it shows the importance of extending disputes as much as possible, even if it means defying the law.

DUBLIN BUS CRAFT WORKERS STRIKE

Since the end of May, 250 craft workers in Dublin Bus have been on strike in a bid to resist a savage attack on conditions by management.

The strike has already forced the Labour Court to give some small concessions. But there is still a lot wrong with their recommendation:

■ shift and overtime rates are still being cut

■ there is still the possibility of supervisors and other workers taking on the craft workers jobs. Foremen have already been very active in scabbing during this strike.

■ there is still a clause which allows management to introduce contractors to work alongside CIE workers

■ The 40+ redundancies are still being sought

Management have increased their wage offer from £41 to £46 to buy out these conditions. But this is little compensation for big losses of earnings and a weakening of trade union strength.

The rank and file in this strike have shown great courage and determination to fight.

Two weeks into the strike, their union leaders announced that they should go back to work pending a Labour Court hearing. The rank

and file ignored the advice—and so forced through the small concessions that the Labour Court had to give.

The behaviour of SIPTU officials was especially appalling. Even though SIPTU craft workers voted to join the strike, officials refused to let them carry union placards. The bureaucrats feared that SIPTU drivers would refuse to pass pickets.

Workers should be carrying out "safety checks" on the buses. One craft worker at Conyngham Road said "There are about 16 buses here that would not pass a DOE test. But management are using them at peak times".

Although there has been a recent history in Dublin Bus of unions not respecting each others' pickets, workers there need to overcome this sectionalism if they are to win.

Solidarity between workers can stop Bob Montgomery and his macho management.

BUS EIREANN

MORE than 600 drivers struck in Bus Eireann for a day last month in a dispute that crippled coach services throughout the country.

Bus Eireann management had imposed new rosters in Sligo in April 1992 without union agreement. A worker who would lose his Sunday off refused to work the new schedule and was sacked. SIPTU has been demanding his reinstatement and proper negotiation of rosters since.

SIPTU bus drivers voted six to one for strike action but the company failed to have the dispute banned under the Industrial Relations Act.

The strike was solid across Bus Eireann with NBRU members supporting SIPTU. Porters at Dublin's Busarús refused to cross picket lines.

The Sligo dispute has cost the company £163,000 and their attempt to use outside scab buses only managed to cover a fraction of services.

SIPTU steward at Broadstone depot, John Conry, told *Socialist Worker*: "If the company put as much effort into negotiating a settlement to this dispute as they have put into hiring outside buses, we would have solved this dispute".

ISSUES FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT by Kieran Glennon

Break the law... Not the unions

Pat the Baker, B+I, Nolan Transport, Irish Rail, Bus Eireann—over the last few months, there have been strikes in all these companies. In each case, workers' ability to fight has been hampered by the 1990 Industrial Relations Act.

The Act forces workers to hold secret ballots and give a week's notice of strike action. It prohibits picketing in disputes that involve one worker. It limits numbers on the picket line.

The Act therefore stacks the odds in favour of the bosses. They can suspend, give notice to, or sack workers at the drop of a hat. But

when workers want to defend themselves, they must wait.

If workers fail to comply with the terms of the 1990 Act, their unions can be hauled to court.

Bus Eireann are claiming £100,000 in damages from SIPTU over a long-running strike in Sligo that involves one worker. The shop workers' union, IDATU, ran up legal bills of £22,000 after being dragged to court four times in the long Japan strike.

The costs of defending court cases brought under the 1990 Act is a crippling drain on unions.

However the courts do not just hand out massive damages. They are also willing to throw out injunctions like confetti.

In the recent Irish Rail strike, the High Court banned picketing only two days after the strike began. The judges used the Industrial Relations Act to claim that the strike ballot had not been conducted satisfactorily.

Licence

The same thing happened in a strike at Sisco in Cork. B+I management threatened to sue the ATGWU during the strike there. They even said they would try to get the courts to take away the union's negotiating licence.

The Act is also being used to remove one of workers' most valuable weapons—the use of solidarity action by other workers.

Unions claim that they

can no longer instruct their members to black a company involved in a strike. All they are allowed to do is appeal to their members' consciences!

The effects of this part of the Act have been particularly visible in the strike at Pat the Baker and Nolan Transport in New Ross. If SIPTU members blacked all Nolan's lorries entering unionised workplaces, the Nolan's strike would be over in days.

As a B+I shop steward said: "Under this Act, it is almost impossible to get official support from other workers." He was talking about legal hoops that B+I strikers have had to go through since their strike began.

The Industrial Relations

Act is very similar to the anti-strike laws that the Tories have brought in. But as Billy Atley might put it, its introduction reflected 'Irish industrial relations conditions.'

In other words it was introduced quietly with the full consent of the ICTU. It was a price that the union leaders paid willingly to Fianna Fail to get the Programme for Economic and Social Progress.

The union leaders got away with it then because Ireland was experiencing one of its lowest levels of strike action. It is only now that thousands of workers are waking up to its real effects.

The leaders of SIPTU have started to protest about the Act—but at the same time

they are using it to dampen militancy.

When workers call for an escalation of action, the union leaders claim that their hands are tied—and that they must respect the law.

Unworkable

But this is nonsense. Workers can defy the Industrial Relations Act and make it unworkable.

When Irish Rail got their injunction against the NBRU recently, the union decided to appeal to the Supreme Court.

But rank and file NBRU members in Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann staged unofficial walkouts in protest. Their action forced management to back down.

The history of Irish trade unions is littered with laws that were broken by workers—and then repealed.

Trade unions were only founded because workers defied the law against "combinations".

When FF tried to introduce a special law to ban strikes in the ESB in 1965, rank and file workers defied it the following year against the advice of their union officials. Soon afterwards the act was scrapped.

In 1990, Gateaux workers were served with several injunctions. Each time they ignored them. The bosses or the gardai never dared enforce them and they became a joke.

Instead of listening to the union leaders shed crocodile tears over a measure which they sponsored, we should tell them loud and clear: **DEFY THE LAW!**

Socialist Worker

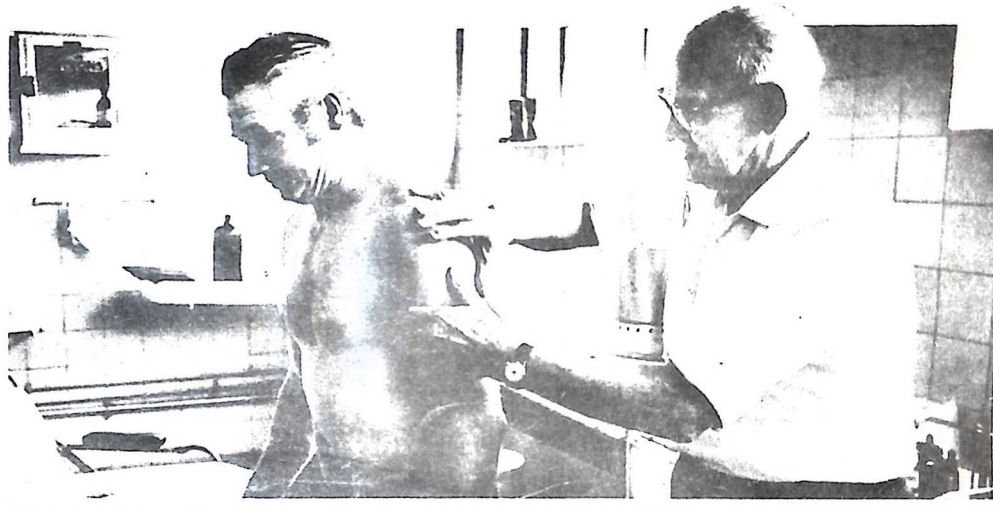
Inside

Breaking the sectarian barrier: page 5

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism 40p

Now they want to cut Invalidity Benefits

KICK OUT THE TORIES!



Tories run down the NHS—now they want to attack benefits

THE TV adverts promoting electricity privatisation show happy Northerners dancing in the streets at the prospect of buying NIE shares.

But workers know that behind the advertising gimmicks the Tories are out to make a misery of the lives of all workers in Northern Ireland.

The mess they have made of the British economy means that government borrowing has reached a record £56 billion. Now they want to raise the money at our expense.

The new Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, believes that there "are areas of public spending where there's plenty of room for downward pressure".

In Northern Ireland that will mean a wholesale policy of privatisation.

Already they have spent £120 for every household in Northern Ireland to sell off the electricity industry.

They only result will be increased bills for us and more superprofits for the Tories friends.

Top level plans have also been drawn up to privatise the community services.

The Tories want groupings like district nurses and community care

workers to form themselves into Trusts to tender for "caring services".

The Tories plan to use Northern Ireland as a pilot project for the rest of Britain. They know that the levels of poverty in Northern Ireland make it a good testing ground.

But if this was not enough, the Tories have set out to attack Invalidity Benefit.

Withhold

Social security minister Peter Lilley plans to tax invalidity benefit, make it "less generous", and withhold payment from as many as 600,000 people.

In one case a patient who suffered head injuries in a car crash had his benefit cut for attending college one day a week.

And claimants who do voluntary work for charities are being told that they risk losing benefit because they are "fit to work".

The Tories hope that they can push through their plans for privatisation and cut-backs in Northern Ireland easily because workers are divided.

They hope that workers will keep asking whether it is the Catholic or Protestant workplace that is bearing the brunt of the attacks.

But a mood of bitterness is building up. The loyalty that was so readily given in the past for Queen and Country now looks like a sick joke.

Areas like the Shankill are being devastated by unemployment and low wages as much as the Falls. And workers know it.

The danger is that bigots are trying to get a hearing for their arguments that "the Catholics are getting all the favours".

We will all lose out if we allow the Tories and the bigots to divide us in this way.

The way to stop them dividing workers is to oppose every redundancy and every Tory attack and not just the ones that affect "our" particular community.

To ensure that this happens we need to build a socialist organisation that takes on the bigotry and tries to unite workers in a fight to get rid of the Tory vandals.