

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers Republic and International Socialism

## WHY THE GARDA GANGED UP ON JOANNE HAYES



WHAT the Kerry babies case shows is that the Garda Heavy Gang is alive and still kicking.

It shows too that it isn't only guards who delight to

put the boot in on vulnerable people. The treatment of Joanne Hayes and her family demonstrates that fat-cat lawyers are just as ready to batter and humiliate those at

their mercy.

And that they are at their most vicious when they are dealing with women.

Everybody who has read the reports from Tralee knows that no man would have been treated the way Joanne Hayes was.

Men, sure, are mistreated in garda stations and by lawyers and judges in courts, if they are working class and, more particularly, if they have socialist or republican beliefs.

### STANDARDS

But their sex lives would not be used against them in the same way. Indeed *could* not, because it's OK in this twisted society for men to have active sex lives, whether they are married or not and whether the women they are doing it with are married or not.

It's different for women. Different standards are applied, as they are in all sorts of other areas. And the very core of women's sexuality, the fact that women can conceive and give birth, is used—as it has been used against Joanne Hayes—as something to humiliate and victimise her for.

It is not going too far to say that the interrogations of

Ms. Hayes by people who represent the State reveals a *hatred* of women's sexuality.

But something else, too, emerges from the Kerry case.

The gardai who mis-treated Ms. Hayes were doing what comes "naturally"—in all sorts of ways. Tralee wasn't an aberration.

### NICKY KELLY

Supt. John Courtney, who headed the Tralee investigation, has been at it for years. He was involved in extracting confessions in the Nicky Kelly case. He was the man who squeezed a false confession to the murder of an old woman out of Christy Lynch in Dublin in 1977. Mr. Lynch was freed by the Supreme Court in 1980 when it was shown that he *couldn't* have committed the crime.

### DETECTIVE

Sgt. Gerry O'Carroll who terrified Joanne Hayes in Tralee garda station also made his name in the Nicky Kelly case. He was a rank and file member of the central detective unit until he proved then how good he was at gouging confessions out of suspects. That's what got him



promoted to the murder squad and landed him in Tralee to hammer Joanne Hayes.

Gardai Tim O'Callaghan and Con O'Sullivan—two other heroes of this case—figured in the beating of a Republican for which they were themselves convicted in courts.

### POLITICIANS

And we could go on. The point is that the gardai got the go-ahead to maltreat the Hayes family from the politicians of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour who have known full well what their style was but who in the course of a decade and four changes of government rejected all protests with contempt and instead signalled their *approval* of the brutality.

Courtney, for example, was promoted head of the murder squad although the government *knew* he was into torturing confessions out of innocent people.

The Kerry case didn't come out of the blue. It happened both because of the sexism which runs deep in Irish Catholic society and because of the acceptance of the repression which was directed initially against political activists who were deemed a "threat to the state", but which eventually, inevitably, became normal practice.

### TRALEE

To rage against what has happened in Tralee is not enough. It is necessary to understand why it happened. And then to get rid of it forever by joining the fight *against* the values represented by the gardai and the establishment lawyers and for a socialist society in which all women and men are free and equal and in which the grief and rotteness brought to the surface in this sordid story are ended forever.



Det. Sgt. Gerry O'Carroll — the man who "roared" at Joanne Hayes that he would have the family farm sold, etc. . . . was involved in the Nicky Kelly case. He told the Kelly trial he always carried a sawn-off baton in his pocket — because he never knew when he might need it! And was promoted afterwards as a reward!

Should Socialists support Sinn Fein? — page 5



## What we stand for

The Socialist Workers Movement is a revolutionary workers' organisation which aims to organise the working class in the struggle for power and for the overthrow of the existing social order.

The system under which we live, capitalism, is based on production for profit and not for human need. It is a system that leads to poverty and war, racial and sexual oppression.

Only the working class can destroy capitalism and build a socialist society based on workers' control of production.

Our political action to prepare the working class for that is based on the following principles:

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

There is no parliamentary road to socialism as the left in the Dail believe. The system cannot be changed by piecemeal reform. The state machinery—the courts, parliament, the police and army—are used to maintain the dominance of the ruling class. The real power lies in the boardrooms of big business.

We stand for a workers' revolution which produces a different and more democratic society—one based on councils of delegates from workplaces and localities who are democratically elected and subject to recall at any time.

### NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW

That kind of socialism does not exist anywhere today. Workers have no control over countries like Russia, China or Poland. They are exploited by a state capitalist class. A workers' revolution is required in those countries too.

### A SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The six county Orange State is propped up by British Imperialism. By bribing loyalist workers in the past with privileges in, for example, housing and jobs, Protestant workers have come to see their interests as being served by the British-backed Unionist boss class. This divides the working class and delivers a section of the workers as allies of Imperialism. The Northern state is sectarian in essence and must be smashed.

The slow task of building working class unity against Imperialism must be begun. However Imperialism must be fought in here and now and we support all forces engaged in that struggle regardless of our difference of programme.

We stand for:

- Immediate withdrawal of the British Army.
- Political Status now.
- The disbandment of the RUC and the UDR.

In the South, the bosses are junior partners with other European and American bosses in world capitalism. The main enemy is the boss at home. Nationalism or a united capitalist Ireland offers nothing to workers. The only republic worth fighting for is a workers' republic.

### WOMEN'S LIBERATION

We believe that only through socialism can women achieve full emancipation and that their struggle is part of the whole class struggle for socialism.

### FOR A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

The main area of political action for socialists is the mass organisation of the working class, particularly the trade unions. We fight for the independence of the unions from state interference, democratic control of all union affairs and the election of all union officials.

We oppose all anti-union legislation and all forms of national wage understandings and wage restraint. We oppose all redundancies. We say: Occupy to demand nationalisation under workers' control. Fight for a 35 hour week. We support the building of a rank and file movement which draws together militant trade unionists to oppose the class collaboration of the union leaders.

### FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS PARTY

The SWM is a democratic centralist organisation open to all those who accept its principles and objectives. The struggle for a workers' republic in Ireland is inseparable from the international struggle. The SWM fights to build a mass party of the working class as part of a revolutionary international of working class parties.

SOCIALIST WORKER is produced by the SOCIALIST WORKERS MOVEMENT. If you would like more information on our activities and policies, would like to become a member of the SWM or would like to take out a subscription to SOCIALIST WORKER - £3.50 for a year - clip this form and post to SWM, 41 Herberton Park, Rialto, Dublin 8.

I want to join.  I want a subscription and enclose £3.50:

I would like more information about the SWM

Name.....

Address.....

# SHOE WORKERS KICK BACK AFTER FIRM PUTS BOOT IN



Workers sitting in at Winstanley's shoe factory in the Liberties in Dublin in a fight for jobs and against attempts to force even worse conditions on them.

THE next time you are thinking of buying Winstanley shoes, think of the Victorian conditions in which the employees who produce these shoes work.

They haven't had a pay rise in three years; some with three or four kids earn as little as £90 a week — and that is just half of it.

Management weren't happy enough with that. They decided to squeeze them even more, by cutting the workforce and forcing the rest of the workers to do the same work for very little extra.

Not making the huge profits they wanted over the last few years, the bosses decided to let two-thirds of the workforce go. They introduced an "incentive scheme" to get the other third to do the same work.

It started on a trial basis of three months. But the workers had to stick it out for 8 months earning as little as two or three pounds extra on top of their already miserable wages. Some were operating up to six machines, where they had only operated one in the past.

Finally they decided they had had enough and went back to their original way of work-

ing. For a few months then they were harassed by management, ending up with each worker being given a letter more or less telling them that if they didn't return to the management scheme, they needn't bother reporting for work.

This time they were pushed too far and they occupied the factory. They are convinced that if they leave the premises, the bosses will lock up and pull out.

With more than a million pounds worth of assets there they now have good bargaining power.

The workers informed their union — the FWUI — of this.

The official told them he would do nothing until they returned to work. He even went so far as to blame them for management's refusal to go to a Labour Court hearing because of the occupation.

In fact, the bosses had pulled out before that.

The workers are disgusted with the way the Union is treating them — they are receiving NO strike pay.

With no money coming in, it's going to be tough, but they are determined to stick it out until they win.

They need the support of all trade unionists and socialists. — PADDY CARROLL

## Bosses press lies

IF YOU have taken a look at any of the national papers lately you have probably noticed the dire warnings of the need for belt-tightening, the demands for cuts in everything from education to social welfare and the attacks on workers who dare ask for a living wage. Given this, it is interesting to note just who owns these papers.

Take Independent Newspapers for example. This group owns the *Irish Independent*, *Sunday Independent*, *Evening Herald* and *Sunday World*. Its boss is Tony O'Reilly. Maybe you think O'Reilly is tightening his belt in these recessionary times? No chance.

Only last year he made a bomb when Atlantic Resources, of which he happens to be a major shareholder, struck oil in the Celtic Sea.

O'Reilly explained how he and his mates got hold of the most promising patch of seabed: "We chose six blocks we believed in. Since I own 35% of the newspapers in Ireland, I have close contacts with the politicians, I got the blocks we wanted".

And he doesn't find it hard to spend money either. His estate, *Castlemartin*, which is just south of Dublin, is thought to be worth over £5 million and that's just one of his "homes". This is the same scumbag who uses his newspapers to attack public sector workers who demand a few quid more in their pay packets.

O'Reilly's main rival for the newspaper market is the Irish Press group, which publishes the *Irish*, *Sunday* and *Evening Press*. While it rarely sinks to the sickening level of

the *Independent* it always makes it clear that it's on the side of the boss. The group is no more democratic in terms of its ownership either. The same family, the de Valeras, have controlled it since Eamon de Valera established it in 1933 as a pro-Fianna Fail paper.

The other national paper is the *Irish Times* which is controlled by a Trust, which probably explains its more truthful nature, but at the end of the day it, too, is always clear whose side it is on.

What becomes obvious from all this is that there is a tiny privileged minority which controls the national press and uses it to attack anyone who seems to pose a threat to their position. That includes not just the Provos but also any section of the working class which looks like getting up off its knees. And if you doubt that you only have to look at the treatment the Concerned Parents Movement got, or the way in which lies were spread about the real wages of ESB workers when they were in dispute not so long ago.

But although the press has a fantastic amount of power to influence people's opinions, it quickly loses all credibility once workers begin to fight back. The miners' strike in Britain is a clear example.

Before the strike many miners regularly read such trash as the *Sun*. But now they have learned to be careful about what they read and what they believe. In the same way, despite the fact that the ruling class has always had control of the media, they have never been able to stop the working class struggling for a better way of life and ultimately for socialism.

— TONY RIGNEY



"When an unmarried mother woman, with one or two babies asks my help to obtain a place to live, I find it very difficult to explain to her why she cannot get a house." So said Paddy Harte TD, at a meeting of the Western Health Board recently.

You or I might find such explanations difficult, but then it's easy for us to say "Smash the rotten system!" without stopping to think of those who are labouring under its ever increasing absurdities, those who find themselves thwarted at every turn by its

ridiculous contradictions, those unfortunate individuals who, like Paddy Hatte, have to explain it.

In the same boat was Cllr. Willie Farrell, who decided to try the direct approach, "I appeal to girls to realise that there is more to life than sex... if we are sincere we will go back to the old ways." Presumably the "old ways" existed before sex was invented.

As everyone was in such a suggestive mood, Fr. J Young threw in his tuppence worth. He suggested that ten per cent of houses built for the elderly be allocated to other people in need.

Having solved, well at least

discussed, the problem of housing for unmarried mothers the worthy group pondered the moral implications of the "problem", the general body of opinion was that we are living in an "un-Christian" community.

### 'LUGS'

WELL KNOWN members of the boxing fraternity recently got together to pay tribute to a man who did much to bring the subtleties of the sport to the deprived kids of the inner city. His name is Jim Brannigan, but his benevolent personality lent itself to the loving nickname of "Lugs".

Ex-Commissioner, Ned Garvey and other members of that exclusive boxing club, "the force" were also present. Punchbags may have been a hot topic of conversation, but none were invited to attend.

### BLAST OFF

For a mere \$3,600 you can have your own private space capsule and have it blasted off into orbit. The only problems are that the capsule is 1/4 inch thick and two inches long, you have to be a pile of ashes to fit inside it, and you don't come back.

A US company, Celestis, is eager to hear from all those who are dying to travel in space, in fact they will be only too happy to arrange it. By 1986 they hope to send off the first batch of satisfied cus-



tomers (6000 of them). All you have to do is die, be cremated, be handed over to Celestis who then do a "reducing" job on you, pour you into a capsule, stick you on a shelf in their satellite and off you go into eternity. For a little extra you can even get a cross or a star of David or some other religious symbol stuck on your shell. (I wonder if that includes a red fist?)

Offhand I could think of one or two Americans who I'd like to see avail of this great offer. Which reminds me I had to agree with the White House spokesman, Larry Speakes, when Larry spoke on the incident known as "the wanderings of an unarmed man one floor below the President's living quarters":

"I think all parties will agree there was a mistake made," said Larry. Whether you regret what did happen or what didn't happen, there was definitely a mistake made.

— JEAN CROSS

SWM, 41 Herberton Park Rialto Dublin 8

The Socialist Workers Movement is a growing revolutionary socialist organisation. It has members in Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Waterford, Galway, Dundalk, Dungarvan and Portlaoise.

### DUBLIN

Thursday February 14/Marxism and Religion/speaker: Liz Butler.

Thursday February 21/Why the union officials sell out/speaker: Mick Berry.

Thursday February 28/What is the state?/speaker: Stewart Dowie.

Thursday March 7/The Industrial Workers of the World/speaker: Tony Rigney.

All meetings start at 8pm. For details phone 716932.

### WATERFORD

Waterford meets every second Monday.

Monday February 11/Socialists and the unions.

Monday February 25/What the SWM stands for.

For details contact local paper sellers or write to national address.

### CORK

Cork SWM meets every Thursday—details phone 932828

Public Meeting/The Revolutionary Road to Socialism/speaker: Eamonn McCann/Connolly Hall Monday February 11.

### DUNDALK

Dundalk SWM meets every second Wednesday—details phone 36868.

### GALWAY

Public Meeting/James Connolly—Socialist or Republican/speaker: Kieran Allen/Friday February 22, UCG, 1pm in the Concourse AND 8pm Curran's Hotel, Eyre Square.

For details of other meetings phone Kathleen at 24682.

For details of meetings in Belfast, Portlaoise, Dungarvan contact local paper sellers or write to National Office.



The Irish Permanent Building Society may like to cultivate the image of being "the people's choice" but they draw the line when it comes to being ripped off. So much so that they have installed the last word in technology to protect the investments of their customers. Soon, every branch of the society will have its own sophisticated close-circuit TV system to keep an

eye on things. But the cameras won't tell the Revenue Commissioners what they see, the tapes will be scrubbed every two weeks to ensure the confidentiality so beloved of the big-spenders who can now give their best profile without any fear of being "discovered".

When it comes to rip-offs the Irish Permanent obviously doesn't believe in "do unto others".

# CP 'answer' dodges the real issues

THE DECEMBER issue of the Communist Party paper, the Irish Socialist, carried a review of Mike Milotte's book, "Communism in Modern Ireland". The review was written by former CP General Secretary, Michael O'Riordan. It wasn't a bad review. It was a very bad review.

Milotte's book was a sharply critical analysis of the Communist Party of Ireland and its forerunners. It argued that there are two reasons the Communist Party has failed to put down real roots in this country. First, that objective conditions were very bad—the influence of the Church, nationalist ideology, the partitionist split etc. And second, the Communist Party's slavish loyalty to the Soviet Union and acceptance of Stalinist ideas.

O'Riordan would broadly agree with Milotte on the first area and doesn't, therefore, go into it—reasonably enough. It's when we come to Milotte's second point that the emptiness of O'Riordan's arguments becomes glaringly obvious.

The Irish Socialist devoted a full page to the review, yet O'Riordan does not take up seriously a single one of the points advanced by Milotte.

Almost half of the review consists of ignorant abuse of Milotte personally... on the ground that, for example, he did much of the research for the book while studying at the Politics Department of Queen's University in Belfast under Queen's politics professor, Cornelius O'Leary. O'Riordan points out that the Professor is a right-wing reactionary—which indeed he is.

He then goes on to tell us that O'Leary himself studied at UCC under an even more right-wing thug in the 30s, Prof. James Hogan and that Hogan had a brother high up in the Free State security service...

Now professors are often held responsible for the politics of their students. But this is a case of the student being held responsible for the politics of the professor. And of the professor's professor. And of the professor's professor's brother...

It should be obvious to any serious reader of the Irish Socialist that anybody who has to resort to that class of balderdash has no serious argument to present. And that's not the worst of it. Take this:

O'Riordan mentions that Milotte quotes a CP manifesto

of October 1941 saying that an Allied victory over Hitler "would be a cause for the triumph of national liberty" and then complains: "Milotte refuses to concede that Irish Communists were right in supporting the Soviet Union and its then allies against Hitler Fascism".

But that wasn't Milotte's point at all. What the book sets out in considerable detail is the way the CP followed the zig-zags of Soviet foreign policy without any reference to the immediate (or even ultimate) interests of the Irish working class. It points out that in February 1939, the CPI argued for support for Britain in the event of a war with fascist Germany. The CP paper declared: "We cannot be neutral against fascism". That was the party position until news broke in August 1939 that Hitler and Stalin had signed a "non-aggression" pact. Now the war which was actually launched against Hitlerite Germany was dubbed an "Imperialist" war and the Communist line was to call for peace. And peace on Hitler's terms.

But everything changed when Hitler ignored the "non-aggression" pact and invaded



Above: CPI founder members at 40th anniversary — Jimmy Walshe, Tom Watters, Sean Nolan.

the Soviet Union anyway in June 1941. Immediately the "peace" line was dropped and all effort went into drumming up support for the war effort.

In the North, no criticism of Britain was allowed. The CP opposed all strikes—even a virtual general strike in Belfast in February 1944—on the ground that this disrupted the war effort. In the South, the CP opposed neutrality and, in fact, dissolved the Southern section of its organisation altogether.

Milotte did not, as O'Riordan implies, simply attack "sneeringly" the CP's October 1941 position on the war. It is the way the position chopped and changed, twisted and turned, according to the needs of the Stalinist leadership in Moscow that Milotte attacked. O'Riordan doesn't deny that these twists and

turns happened. Nor does he seek to justify them (although other CP leaders have tried to justify them in the past). He just misrepresents what the book says, alleges that it says it "sneeringly", implies that it's all a foul lie anyway... and moves on to the next point. But no argument.

There's much more along the same lines. For example, Milotte's strictures on Betty Sinclair's inconsistent record on imperialism is "answered" by reference to the number of republicans who turned up for her funeral. As Mick O'Riordan ought to know, all sorts of people go to all sorts of funerals in Ireland. So what? A roll-call of mourners is no substitute for serious argument.

We could go on, but the point is probably well enough made. O'Riordan evades the

political arguments and presents the book as a Trotskyist distortion of reality. All the old slanders are wheeled out: that Trotskyism hinders the development of socialism or "objectively it has been consistent in helping imperialism", that Trotskyism opposes building socialism in any one country until it can be built simultaneously everywhere. No evidence is produced for any of this, for the very good reason that no evidence exists...

\*IF the Communist Party wants seriously to debate the issues raised in the book we will be happy to accommodate them at any time, in public.

\*\*"Communism in Modern Ireland" is available from the Socialist Workers Movement at the special rate of IR£11 (shop price, £25).



# THE ONLY WAY TO END THE DOLE QUEUES

THERE ARE nearly 20 million unemployed people in Europe.

As jobs are destroyed in one industry, the workers there no longer have the pay packets to buy the products of other industries. Sacked miners can't buy cars, which are made from steel — so steel plants close, which run on coal, reducing further the number of jobs in the mines.

It's the result of the crisis of "overproduction" inherent in the system — what Marx called "the seeds of its own destruction" built into capitalism, and which capitalism cannot control.

But what about America and the born-again boom in the "land of the free"? Well, it's true that unemployment has dropped over the past two years. (Mind you — it still stands at 7.5 million.) And it's true that in terms of real output, 1984 saw their best growth rate since 1955. So doesn't that mean that American capitalism at least has found a way out of the crisis.

The answer is "No", for a variety of reasons. First, the cycle of boom and slump is built into capitalism. The system itself is haywire, no-

one is in overall control of what is produced. The only "control" is that engendered by an open market — an excess of supply means slump, an excess of demand means boom. The alternation between the two is the only means the system has to control its own anarchic tendencies. It follows that an economic recovery does not mean that capitalism is OK, merely that it's alive. A brief boom may be a prelude to an even worse slump.

## CAPITALISM

Second, capitalism develops unevenly. Some parts of the system always do better or worse than others. For example, Germany and Japan grew rapidly in the 1930s, while the rest of the world was in the grip of the Great Depression. So today, the American boom is counterbalanced by stagnation in Europe, and economic catastrophe throughout most of the rest of the world.

Third, those portions of the system that do grow in times of general slump, usually do so at the expense of the rest, and by storing up

worse problems for the future. The US has achieved its recent economic recovery by massive spending on armaments. In the past, Uncle Sam has paid for guns "out of his own pocket," so to speak.

## REAGAN

This time, Reagan has borrowed massively from capitalists all over the world. The money is attracted by high interest rates. This in turn has played havoc with the economies of countries all over the world, already heavily in debt, who had to up their own interest rates/stakes to stay in the game. Now that Reagan has been re-elected, the spending party is over, and the bills will have to be met. This could well precipitate a deep and long term slump for the US and a catastrophic knock-on effect for the rest.

In Ireland, it can be measured in terms of human misery, by the lengthening dole queues.

WORLD'S HIGHEST STANDARD OF LIVING



# ... IS TO HIT BACK!

*BUT CAN things ever be different?*

Don't workers need capitalists to invest and organise and run the show? And if there's a crisis aren't we all in it together, and shouldn't we all be willing to make sacrifices till things improve?

Many decent intelligent working people believe all that — and it's no wonder.

It's the general "line" fed to us all our lives — directly or indirectly: at school, endorsed by the church, presented daily in the papers, nightly on the telly, and of course at work itself.

Marxists hold the belief that workers change in struggle — their direct experience can dispel these myths. And in the process of making a change in their conditions, they change themselves. How many miners do you think still believe the police are there to catch burglars, or that Ian McGregor — NCB boss — deserves an enormous salary for his know-how in running the coal industry? Their ideas have

changed in the process of their attempting to change their condition.

Since the "crisis" hit here in Ireland, rising unemployment and a fall-off in orders in the factories' books, have meant not only fewer strikes, but that the ones that did take place were defensive. The absence of struggle and of a few "good wins" have bred passivity and demoralisation.

The behaviour of the "labour leadership" has only made matters worse. Just two examples: the ICTU-approved two-tier picket, probably the most effective means of tearing the guts out of the fundamentals of trade unionism — solidarity. And the British TUC's behaviour during the miners strike — all mouth and no action.

But if failure and passivity breed a feeling of impotence among workers, so too does success breed confidence and sense of power. As explained elsewhere on this page, the order is not unchanging — an crisis comes on the books, a few more workers are taken on, things are looking up. A pay increase or improvement

in conditions is due — it's fought for and won, and everyone feels a foot taller — if they won it for themselves. And this is the key. Small time organisation, rebuilding confidence on the shop floor, the best militants not climbing the union ladder, but organising among the rank and file, agitating on small issues, building on minor victories.

And the best of them arguing for socialist politics. Because crisis isn't cured within capitalism, it's the symptom, not the disease. Capitalism itself must be smashed. The only power that can do that is the organised power of the working people. And this isn't pie-in-the-sky. We've been down so long a lot of us forget what "up" looks like. Loads of us never had a job. Rebuilding organisation and confidence is the start, but those years of pent-up anger and frustration can be a very volatile force, and a revolutionary situation can develop in lightning time. Look at May 1968 in Paris — the biggest general strike in history started with police repression of student demos —

came, it seemed, out of the blue. Or Poland 1980. Solidarnosc grew to an organisation of twelve million in two years, and almost toppled the state.

That's why we say the building of an organisation of socialists in the workplace is so important now. So that when such times come, as come they must, we can be in a position to grasp the final victory that slipped through the fingers of those that went before us.

*A party provides organisation, our own leadership, remembers the lessons of history and thereby avoids the pitfalls and side-tracks that bedeviled our class before. Building such a party is what the Socialist Workers Movement is about — it's the way to decisively end the roller-coaster ride of capitalist crisis, and put a planned and plentiful system — socialism — in its place. Join us!*



Report compiled by MARY SMITH



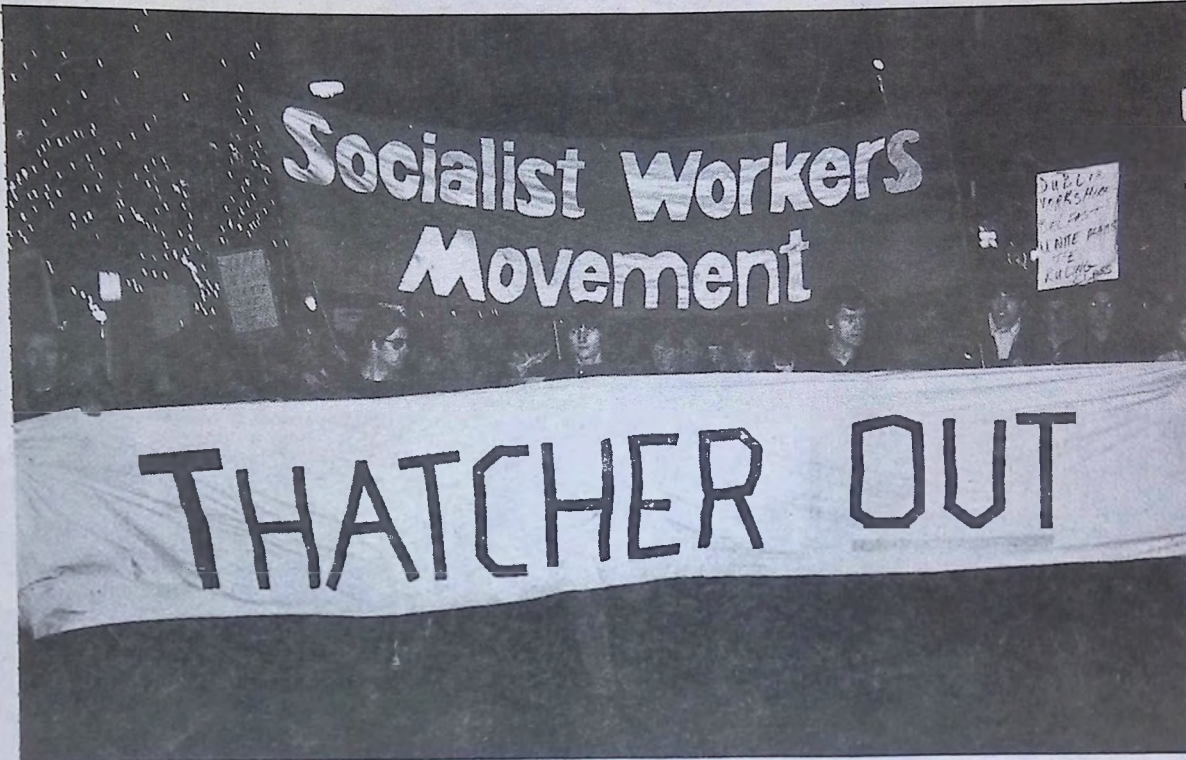
# Why we need a marxist party if we are to ever beat the Brits

THE LETTERS column of the Sinn Fein paper "Republican News" has been dominated for a number of weeks by comments on the politics of the SWM. Lengthy letters from Republicans have attacked the SWM. Some of these have used Marxist terminology, and quotations from Marx, Lenin, Connolly etc., to "justify" their attacks and to argue that *proper* socialists should be in the Republican Movement, not trying to build a separate organisation.

For example, on January 17th Brendan Kelly—formerly a leading member of the People's Democracy, now in Sinn Fein—argued that "Marxists have always distinguished between the nationalism of the oppressed and the oppressor, supporting the former and opposing the latter. And that Irish nationalism—which Sinn Fein represents is therefore deserving of the support of Irish Marxists, if only as a step in the right direction."

On January 24th, left-wing Republican Philip Ferguson asserted that Lenin believed Republicanism to be both revolutionary and working class". And he accused the SWM of believing that "you can't have a revolution in Ireland until international capitalism is destroyed".

The general point of these letters was that Sinn Fein is the proper place for Irish



Marxists and that people like the SWM who reject this and try instead to build a separate revolutionary socialist organisation are only Marxists-inverted-commas and condemned to permanent isolation.

(One implication of this is that from a Marxist point of view it is never right in any country where there is a struggle going on against

imperialism to try to build an open Marxist organisation. This is nonsensical. The people making these points are very fond of digging up quotations from big-name Marxists to back up their arguments. If any of them can find a single sentence in Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky or anybody else to support this position we will happily refund the cost of the stamp they use to convey this quotation to us.)

But let us look for a moment at what the Republican Movement says for itself—as opposed to what its left-wing supporters say on its behalf.

The critics of the SWM maintain not only that Sinn Fein should be supported because it is leading a national struggle but that it has, anyway, become some sort of socialist organisation.

But when Gerry Adams offered on a BBC radio programme on January 31st to hold talks with the SDLP he didn't say he wanted to discuss the class nature of the new Ireland. He wanted to talk about "pan-nationalist interests". The phrase "pan-nationalist" means specifically *nationalists of all classes*. He was clearly and explicitly repudiating the notion that Sinn Fein represents the specific interests of workers, or indeed of any particular class at all.

On February 1st when the IRA Army Council took up John Hume's counter-suggestion of talks with the military leadership, they defined exactly what they saw as the SDLP's basic betrayals. These

didn't have to do with the SDLP's class politics in any way whatsoever, but exclusively with questions concerning the national struggle: Brits Out, strip-searching etc. (Good issues to tackle the SDLP about, but *on their own* relevant only to the SDLP's lack of nationalist militancy, not at all to its openly pro-capitalist nature. That is: the attack on the SDLP was not that it pursues different class aims to Sinn Fein but that it is insufficiently militant in pursuing the same aims.)

So what is this argument really all about? What *is* the Marxist position on national struggles, and how does the SWM position vis-a-vis Sinn Fein fit into it?

First, the Marxist position is not nationalist. It is internationalist. That's because capitalism itself is organised on a world scale and the struggles of workers in one country have a direct effect on struggles in other countries. This is especially important when we come to consider the question of revolution.

We do *not* believe that Irish workers have to wait around until an international revolution occurs. That would be nonsense and condemn us to passivity. It is possible for Irish workers to seize power even if the revolutionary wave has not touched other countries. But to proceed from the seizure of power and a declaration of the Workers' Republic to the building and consolidation of socialism *would* require the spreading of the revolution.

The reason for this is clear and simple. An isolated workers' state would have to compete with an international capitalist economy which surrounded it and was far more powerful and productive.

The pressures of that competition—possibly coupled with military pressure—would force the workers' republic to batten down the hatches.

Questions of workers' control, and workers' wages and conditions, would take second place to "defending the revolution".

Eventually, a bureaucracy would emerge whose main function would be to hold down the workers. This is precisely what happened in Russia. The only way out of it would be to break out of the isolation of a *national* revolution. *This* is why we say there can be no "socialism in one country." It doesn't mean holding Irish workers back while we wait for some worldwide upsurge.

## LENIN

Lenin therefore argued: "Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of 'the most just' purest, most inspired and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity, a unity that is growing before our eyes with every mile of railway line that is built, with every international trust and every workers' association that is formed".

However, the general opposition of Marxists to nation-

alist ideas isn't a cop-out from supporting struggles against national oppression. Wherever there is oppression Marxists are on the side of those struggling against it—whatever their ideas. This is because it is the internationally-organised capitalist system that is the basis of national oppression. Any struggle against national oppression, therefore, is, objectively, pitched against capitalism.

And one class alone has both an interest in destroying capitalism *and* the capacity to do it—the working class.

That is why we insist on the necessity for working-class leadership of the national struggle and cut ourselves off sharply from movements—like the Republican Movement—which specifically repudiate this.

## CAUSE

It's not that we are against their cause, or that we fail to recognise that they frequently gather significant working-class support, or that victories for such movements—as happened in Nicaragua—are blows against imperialism which are to be welcomed. It is that they cannot ultimately defeat capitalism/imperialism and usher in socialism.

There is a second reason Marxists support national struggles: to bring about working-class unity. There can never be unity between groups of workers if one group (in an oppressor nation) is siding with its "own" ruling class in the oppression of another group of workers (in the oppressed nation).

This is what the Marxist leaders who the critics of the SWM quote meant when they demanded that Marxists support national struggles fully. They meant, for example, that British workers must side with those fighting for Irish freedom against the British ruling class—whatever the ideas of those leading the Irish freedom fight. They did *not* mean that Irish Marxists should abandon separate, class organisation and dissolve themselves into any "pan-nationalist" movement.

People who do that—like some of those who attack the SWM from the letters page of Republican News—have simply despaired of the working-class and abandoned the admittedly difficult task of building a revolutionary working-class leadership for the more "exciting" environs of Republicanism.

For Marxists, the fundamental task remains of building a revolutionary party, and that's what the SWM is at.



Gerry Adams knows the limits of Republicanism: that's why he wants "pan-nationalist" talks with the SDLP.



## Reviews

# Fighting talk of northern women

Only the Rivers Run Free. Northern Ireland: the Women's War. Eileen Fairweather, Roisin McDonough and Melanie McFadyen

Brandon Press. £5.95

'WITH things so bad we had to be active, and with that we've found a whole new identity for ourselves. No longer was the woman just a piece of property; your man's mistress, your children's mother. As we've come more and more to the forefront we've discovered our own strength and power.'

No, it's not a quote from a British miner's wife. Those words were spoken by a member of the Republican Relatives Action Committee and appear in *Only the Rivers Run Free. Northern Ireland: the Women's War*.

The book consists of interviews with women from the North—mainly Catholic. Women whose lives cannot but have been affected by the war. One gets the impression that the authors (three feminists) were, at times, disappointed with the women they spoke to. Because few, if any, of the women recognised 'the sex war also going on'. In fact most of them identify as much with their menfolk as with other women.

## IMPERIALISM

The experience of the women involved in the struggle against British imperialism in the North like the experience of the women involved in the miners' strike, bears out everything we marxists say about the road to women's liberation.

Both these groups of women have become conscious of, and begun to fight against, their oppression as women. But this didn't happen through feminist consciousness raising sessions of women-only meetings.

They began to fight for the interests of their whole community, women and men. In the course of that fight it became obvious that they didn't have to be barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen. And the men saw that it was in their interests to have the women standing shoulder-to-shoulder with them in the fight even if it did mean they'd have to wash their own dirty socks!

*Only the Rivers Run Free* is a very readable book—it's a bit like listening to people talking. Most of us know the statistics—that 50% of Six Counties houses are officially classified as 'unfit for human habitation', that rates of infant and maternal mortality, physical and mental handicap and poverty-related illness are among the highest in Europe. But those of us living in the South often don't realise what that can mean day-to-day for those living in the working class Catholic ghettos of the North. There are other cities in Ireland, in Britain, in Europe where working class people suffer intolerable levels of poverty. But the Catholic areas of Belfast and Derry are the only places where army patrols regularly, and at will, kick down people's doors and wreck their homes and drag them from their beds to insult and try to humiliate them.

The authors of *Only the Rivers Run Free* tell us in the introduction that they 'intrude to provide fact and analysis'. Facts are provided. But the analysis seems to be based on that particularly Catholic,



Republican view that if people suffer enough, show enough endurance, they will win the day.

In this book the suffering, and the courage and determination, of the republican women and men of the North fighting to smash British imperialism shines through. For fifteen years now they've been exhibiting fierce bravery against massive odds.

Unfortunately, courage, determination and bravery are not enough to defeat the British military machine and its Loyalist backing. The only force that has the power to beat the Brits, and to win

Protestant workers from their defence of imperialism, is the working class.

Only a strong working class movement in the South, poised to smash the state and replace it with workers' power, can hope to convince Protestant workers that it is in their interests to break with Loyalism.

After all, the extra crumbs they get from the Orange state are nothing to the bakery that a united working class movement could win.

There is no hint of class politics in this book. Class is just one more division in society rather than the division Sex, nationality and

religion, the authors consider to be of equal importance.

This is more than a quibble. The lack of a class perspective leaves the reader hopeless. It gives the impression that the misery of life for the Nationalist community in the North is a cross that must be borne.

It is not. Freedom is possible. But it will not come about through women of all classes, or Irish people of all classes getting together. It will only come about when, as Connolly said, the working class of Ireland will emancipate itself and in emancipating itself it will, perforce, free Ireland.

—GORETTI HORGAN

# MICRO WAVES

COMPUTERS are a real switch-off for many people. But the onslaught of consumerism is such that every parent was under pressure to provide little Sean or Siobhan with a personal computer last Christmas.

Many of those bought will lie switched off on shelves because the instruction book is incomprehensible or lost or torn or shredded up in frustration. But that's consumerism!

Nevertheless, cliché as it may be computers are here to stay.

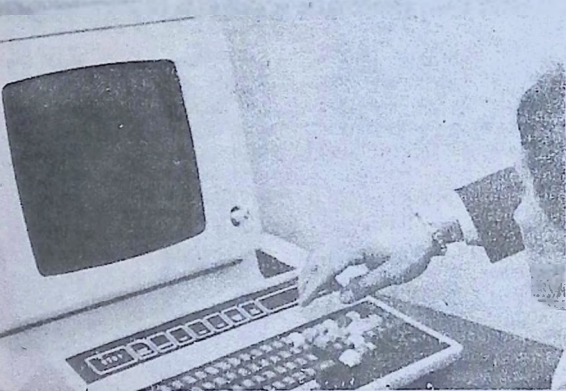
Computers, for all the mystification surrounding them are little more than sophisticated tools. This is the basic argument in Christopher Evans' book 'The Mighty Micro'.

As early as 1883, Charles Babbage devised and built a machine with cog wheels and sprockets which would have solved mathematical equations if he had got enough support to finish it. He had plans for a more sophisticated 'Analytical Engine' which was in essence a programmable computer.

There was little understanding and a lot of scepticism. Disraeli said that the only practical use for Babbage's huge engine would be to calculate the huge sums expended on it.

He got a sympathetic ear from Ada, Countess of Lovelace and a daughter of Byron, who shrewdly observed that:

'The Analytical Engine has no pretensions whatever to originate anything. It can do whatever we know how to order it to perform. It can follow analysis; but it has no power of anticipating any analytical relations or truths. Its province is to assist us in making available what we are already acquainted with.'



Computers need workers to operate them.

Computers have today shrunk to tiny things, are made from the cheapest of cheap materials and their essential so-called 'brain', the microcircuitry, once built, can be photocopied and printed out in thousands in the same way as this paper is.

Advertisers no longer boast that their cars are 'built by craftsmen'. They can boast of superior automated equipment. This has been exaggerated wildly to say that work is finished for us.

As Evans points out, a lot of difficult and dangerous work could be carried out by computers. The so-called 'professional' jobs can be extremely well done; given the proper information computers can for example give a more reliable diagnosis than any doctor, can find a loophole in the law better than any solicitor or barrister or accountant. They can take individual pupils through a controllable teaching programme at the pace of the pupil.

And there is no doubt that they could be used to control machines that could mine coal for 24 hours a day under any conditions. Speaking as some-

one who once worked as a pony man in the tunnels, I'm amazed at the machines they have already built for tunnelling, and which can be computer-controlled.

There will of course always be workers to build the computers, to mend them when they break down and to do the everyday jobs like clearing the canteen tables where they do the manufacturing.

But Evans misses out what is always missed out in any discussion around computers—the Marxist view. That is, that it is simply not possible to 'exploit' a computer any more than other machines. Only human labour is exploitable. So, in the long run and indeed in the short run, the rate of profit for capitalists will continue to fall still further, as they hit up against this massive contradiction.

The availability of computer power to solve problems and lift the drudgery should bring nearer the day when we have production for human need and not for profit, — Socialism. It's up to us.

—JIM BLAKE

'The Mighty Micro' by Christopher Evans (Coronet Books).

# PUBLIC

## Why the Civil Service settled

THE CIVIL Service unions in the Republic have accepted the 6% pay award recommended by the arbitrator. It looks likely that many other public sector unions will do likewise and this despite the fact that the award represents yet another cut in the living standards of public sector workers.

Why is it that so many workers have accepted this pay cut without a fight? At the most basic level many workers, impressed by the Government's arguments about the financial situation, on seeing an arbitrator's award higher than the pay guidelines set out in the 'National Plan', felt they were lucky to get even that. But the lack of fight goes deeper than that.

The white collar public sector unions, although strong in numbers, have very little record of militancy. Much of this is due to the system of 'Conciliation and Arbitration'. Under this system, claims must first go through a lengthy procedure of negotiations. Finally, if no agreement is forthcoming, they go to arbitration where they can lie for several years.

The theory is that the Arbitrator is an independent person above the quarrels between workers and management and so can find a 'fair' solution to the claim. This, of course is a load of nonsense especially considering that the arbitrator is usually a senior barrister — a breed not known for its sympathy to trade unionism. In the meantime the average member has probably forgotten about the existence of the claim.

What this system does is encourage the passivity of the members and so strengthen the importance of the union

officials. The rank and file members become part of a stage army waiting to march on and off the stage at the call of the leadership, although generally they never get to march at all.

A classic example of this was the series of stoppages planned to oppose the Government's reneging on the pay deal in 1982. At the last minute the stoppages were called off to allow 'meaningful negotiations' — the result of these negotiations was then put to a ballot with the recommendation that it was the best deal 'under the circumstances'. The circumstances being of course that no action was taken, and surprise, surprise, the members voted for it.

'But,' some militants would argue, 'the rank and file membership are very conservative.' There's no doubt that this is true. But what is equally true is that they will remain conservative if every time there is a possibility of action they are stopped at the last minute.

If further defeats are to be avoided in the future militants will need to build the basic trade union structures and awareness in their workplaces. Initially this can be done through organising solidarity activity, collections and meetings, with other groups of workers in struggle. Small initiatives around local grievances can help build the self confidence of the membership. The issues around which we organise do not really matter. But the experience of this type of work will help to build rank and file involvement and leadership which is the only way to ensure that similar pay rounds are not foisted upon us in the future.

—WILLIE CUMMING

## WORK PLACE NOTES

### WATERFORD

WORKERS at Waterford Glass have scored a significant victory over management.

A recent meeting of the board of directors at the factory premises informed a carpenter at the factory that he was not going to be taken back to work after a period of illness.

The man's own doctor and a specialist in fact certified him fit for work.

Immediately the group of craft unions at the factory announced their intention of placing pickets.

When pickets were placed the following day, they were fully respected. Not only that but solidarity action was taken at the Dungarvan plant.

There the shop steward's Committee convened a

meeting in the factory and explained the issue to the workers. The vote to respect the craftworkers' pickets was carried by 310 to 6.

Management caved in immediately. The worker was taken back to work pending an investigation by a committee that acts as a face saver for management's capitulation.

The lessons of this dispute are clear. The hard-line new macho management were testing the union organisation at the glass factory—they got a bloody nose.

First, the workers responded immediately.

Second, craft and general workers stuck together.

Third, the action was spread to the three factories in the group.

AND the stewards committee took the trouble



# SECTOR UNDER ATTACK

**PUBLIC sector workers are again under attack. A whole barrage of right wing propaganda has "discovered" that the cause of Ireland's high levels of tax is the fact that we have too many public sector workers.**

Cutting public sector jobs by five thousand is not enough for the New Right. They want the wages of public servants slashed to the bare minimum. Above all they want a scapegoat for the failure of private enterprise in this country.

## What are the facts?

It is true that the number of public sector workers grew by 50 per cent. throughout the seventies. But there are good reasons for this. Firstly the main growth areas were in health and education. Free education was introduced in this country only in 1966. A

totally inadequate system of free hospitalisation was gradually introduced in the seventies.

The growth of the public sector co-incided with the expansion of Southern Irish capitalism. Both multi-national and native bosses were demanding a more skilled and educated workforce.

But they were never willing to pay for it. The Irish boss class and their multi-national lodgers remain amongst the least taxed rich in the world. Capital taxation — tax on windfall profits, inheritance, etc. — accounts for a mere half-a-per cent. of all state taxes. Tax on company profits amounts to only four per cent. of all state taxation. In the sixties, the average company could expect to pay out a quarter of its profits on tax. Today it has dropped to less than ten

per cent. The rich are truly living the life of O'Reilly and now they want public sector workers to be the scapegoats for their greed.

The failure of the massive trade union led campaign on tax, has given right wing economists the opportunity to blame the public sector workers for the burden of taxation that hangs on the PAYE worker.

But these right wing arguments can be answered with a strong socialist case. When they say that every wage increase for the public sector will raise the taxes on PAYE workers we should demand a steep hike on taxes on profits and wealth. When they talk about the massive debt 'the country' is in, we must tell them this country is run by the rich for the rich.

Already, the mass of workers — public and private

sector workers alike — pay back the interest on the debt of Ireland Ltd with every penny of their income tax. The type of shark who benefits from the massive interest payments are the Irish government bond holders who refused to let Dukes tax them during the 'bond washing' scandal last April. If they claim that there is no money left in the kitty, they should be told cancel the debt.

The truth is that there is plenty of wealth in this country to pay the full pay claims of public sector workers. But we are going to have to fight to get our hands on it.

## But who is going to lead the fight?

Since the defeat of the Post Office workers strike in 1979, public sector pay has fallen well behind that of the private sector. The failure of the union leaders to support the post office then was the main cause of the defeat. But the fact that the POWU had to crawl back after a long strike served as a warning to every other public sector worker not to have a go.

## FIANNA FAIL

In 1981, the then Fianna Fail government, simply announced its intention to tear up the pay deal with the public sector unions and refusing to pay the last phase of the agreement. The Public sector committee of the ICTU threatened a militant response with a series of one day strikes in selected areas. But the late Michael Mullen of the ITGWU arranged secret talks with Haughey and a miserable compromise was patched up. Public sector workers again saw their wages cut.

This time around the



Tom Darby of NBU

union leaders have behaved even more pathetically. When the civil service arbitrator granted a 6% deal over 17 months, the union leaders rushed to accept in case 'the government might back out'. The offer wasn't even put to a ballot of the members. When Boland offered to extend the deal to the whole of the public sector, the ICTU fell over themselves to get into the talks.

But in fact the deal represents:

\*A cut in public sector pay for the fifth year running.

\*It will be partially paid for by the job losses in the public sector.

\*After wage increases are taxed, one economist reckoned that it would cost the government a mere 2½% a year.

But it is more serious than that. The bosses organisation, the FUE have argued for some time that the lowering of public sector wages will set the example for the private sector as well. The defeat of the public sector will be a signal for the stepping up of the bosses offensive in every workplace around the country.

The union leaders know that the wage deal means more wage cuts. But they are more interested in preserving the structure of negotiating

than fighting for their members' interests. Most civil and public servants are covered by conciliation and arbitration schemes. The union leaders' task has simply been to process the claims and wait for the result from the arbitrator.

Many of the white collar unions have rarely had to lead a fight. The result is that certain unions in the public sector have not seen strike action in DECADES. The union leaders main worry is that this cosy set up will be destroyed by the strains put on it by the Coalition National Plan. That is why they are doing everything now to patch up a deal.

The only way public sector workers can break through the cycle of wage cuts is by building links that cut across the dominance of the union bureaucracy. A major opportunity to build such links begins on February 11th. Then 4,500 workers have threatened to strike in Dublin corporation.

There are two groups of workers involved. The general workers have been offered an insulting deal of 3% over 19 months; they have turned down the Labour Court recommendation and served strike notice. The skilled workers have traditionally maintained an 'analogue' deal which compensated them for any discrepancy that arose between their wages and those of private sector workers. Boland is determined to see the 'analogue' agreement destroyed.

The corporation workers could quickly become a focus for public sector discontent. Already, workers employed by Dublin VEC have threatened to strike with the corpo workers as they are on the same wage claim. The rank and file group that links corporation workers, the Local Authority Workers Group made this point when they issued a leaflet to corporation workers:

## VICTORY

"No group of workers should be left to fight alone. A victory for Dublin Corporation workers would be a major morale booster for all workers".

Every socialist and militant in the public sector should rally behind the corporation workers. The sort of tradition of solidarity that were built up to support the miners can be brought in behind the corporation workers. We should argue for:

- \*visits by corporation workers to every public sector workplace.
- \*regular weekly collections for the strike.
- \*industrial action in their defence if the army makes any attempt to scab on the strike.
- \*rejection of Boland's pay deal and the bringing forward of claims to back up the corporation workers.

KIERAN ALLEN



The fight-back against the attack on public sector workers will need more vigorous action than one-off token demonstrations.

to convene a general meeting and argue the case with their own members.

This little victory shows how the new board of Waterford Glass can be put in their place.

## GALWAY

THE real reason for the Galway CIE strike by 102 bus workers is that management are trying to force rationalisation — axeing of jobs and the overtime that low wages make necessary. This in turn will cut services to the public.

TOM COSTELLO, ITGWU Steward, told Socialist Worker that management propose:

- \*Cutting 7 - 12 drivers' and conductors' jobs;
- \*Drastically reducing earnings for a six-day-week (£114 basic);
- \*Cutting frequency and number of buses at peak

hours, for example:

SALTHILL route to be cut from 20 minute to half hour frequency; and from two to one double-deckers;

BALLYBANE route from 3 to 2 buses and from 15 minutes to half hour frequency;

PROVINCIAL ROUTES: cutting CLIFDEN service from daily to twice weekly; cutting LOUGHREA completely; cutting CARRAROE workers train service completely and school service to collect kids at 7am instead of 8am and to leave them waiting outside the school from 8am to 9am.

\*250 - 300 workers (rail, road, road-freight and clerical) already issued with protective notice and will be laid off from February 24.

NBU members in Galway have accepted a compromise deal from management. However, ITGWU members have decisively rejected this deal and continue to picket.

This attempt at rationalisation is part of the general attack on Public Sector jobs. The plan is for about 5,000 jobs to go. Paul Conlon, the new CIE boss, wants to do for CIE what Ian McGregor is trying to do to the miners in Britain. Conlon has already done a McGregor job with NET.

The Socialist Workers Movement fully supports the strikers in their stand to save jobs and stop wage cuts. But Galway bus workers cannot do it alone. They need the support of all CIE workers and the rest of the Public Sector.

—KATHLEEN O'DRISCOLL

## DUNDALK

DUNDALK, for decades the traditional home for shoe-making with two thousand workers employed at one

stage, has received another body blow with the news that Clarks have gone into liquidation.

The firm has been in Dundalk since 1937 and just 15 years ago employed 1,100 people.

With unemployment in the town now at 3,495, and one in four out of a job, Dundalk is devastated. The jobless rate, almost ten per cent above the national average.

There is considerable anger by the workers at the company's decision to walk away leaving them without redundancy entitlement.

Fifty workers who took redundancy before Christmas were paid three and a half week's wages for every year of service above the statutory entitlement which has heightened the anger in the workplace,

At a special branch meeting of the ITGWU of which most workers are members on January 31, the Shop Stewards announced that six and a half weeks for every year's service will be fought for above the statutory payment.

The action to secure this demand will result in picketing docks where £1 million of goods are imported by Clarks into the country.

Also a picket will be placed on shops owned by the Company.

The company's claim that the factory is losing £800,000 a year was greeted by derision by the workforce who point to the £4½ million profit shown by the company for its Irish operation.

The workers are at the moment sitting-in and will wait for the liquidator's offer on Tuesday February 5 before decisive action will be taken.

— PHIL TOALE



# Socialist Worker

# SOUTHERN BUDGET Reform con as job losses soar

## COLLEGES -THE FIGHT HOTS UP

THINGS are beginning to hot up in the universities and regional techs.

In the face of severe cut-backs in education a number of occupations and boycotts have been undertaken around the country.

Over the last three years fees in the South have risen by 140-240% while the real value of the grant has fallen by 50% - for the few who get it.

### OVERCROWDING

Massive overcrowding in classrooms, inadequate library and study facilities and increasingly poor canteen facilities have resulted from the general cuts in the education budget.

Although the plan to introduce fees in colleges in the North has been dropped, it is still proposed to reduce the minimum grant from next September.

Recent actions against the cuts include a one-day strike in Maynooth and occupations of the NCAD in Dublin. Tax offices in Belfast and Dublin have also been occupied in solidarity with PAYE workers.

A three day strike is planned for February 12 - 14 by the

Union of Students in Ireland. The actions so far have been militant but have involved only a small proportion of students.

There is a clear need for the vast majority of students to stop leaving the fightback to the dedicated few and to seriously take up the issues that affect us all.

Students are affected not just by cuts in education but by Government economic policy generally. Cutbacks in the Health and Social Welfare hit them hard. They face near certain unemployment when they leave college.

These concerns are the concerns of all working people at this time of economic crisis. Students, like workers, should refuse to be made to pay for what is a bosses crisis. To be successful the student fightback must be linked with the fight of the minority of militant workers.

### WORKPLACES

There are real gains to be made by the mass action of students, but it is important to remember that links with the militant workers both in the colleges and in other workplaces - who are the people with the power to change things - will make all the difference. - JOHN HAROLD



A three-day strike is planned for February 12 - 14.



10% VAT on shoes and 370 Clarks workers on the dole in Dundalk.

THE verdict on the Southern Budget was generally good.

The economists and commentators were falling over themselves saying how fair it was.

How good it was to see some tax reform. How wise the Government is to reduce VAT on electrical goods. How wonderfully kind they are to increase the dole by a couple of bob. Yes, a popular budget. The kind of thing that would make you feel an election coming on.

As usual, for the vast majority of workers, the reality behind the figures is as grim as ever. Take the "reform of the PAYE system". For this one Dukes obviously had the help of a three-card-trick expert. Because the "reform" is nothing more than a con.

There are approximately 835,000 workers being screwed by PAYE. For the higher earning 205,000 of these there will be a slight

drop in the tax they pay. For another 150,000 there will actually be a rise in tax paid. But for 480,000 - the overwhelming majority - there will be no change whatsoever as a result of Dukes' much-praised "reforms".

To console us though, they have reduced the VAT on necessities of life like videos, TVs and Hi-Fis, paying for this by putting up the VAT on luxury items - like clothes and shoes.

### UNEMPLOYMENT

Talk of shoes brings us to the subject of unemployment and the amount of good shoe leather that will be wasted in queuing for the marvelous increases in dole - as you might expect, these are nothing but window dressing and won't even make up for the rise in the cost of living.

And shoes bring unemployment to mind in another way too - because over the last few weeks quite a few workers from shoe factories have been thrown on the dole. About

370 workers in Clarks of Dundalk were told the factory was losing £800,000 a year and would have to close. This they found difficult to accept since the figures showed a £4½ million profit for Clarks Irish operation.

The effect of this closure will bring the jobless total in Dundalk - once a thriving industrial town - to one in four.

Unfortunately Dundalk is not unusual. The picture is repeated all over the country - in Cork, Limerick, Galway, Derry, Belfast and Dublin. The numbers on the dole continue to grow.

The Dublin government is even planning for more rather than less unemployment. Their famous "National Plan", far from planning for more jobs actually expects more job losses.

The recent budget confirms that they expect this spiral of job losses to continue.

And so it will unless workers fight for their jobs. This can be done. The Clarks workers are occupying for

better redundancy payments. The workers at another shoe factory - Winstanleys of Dublin - are occupying for their jobs.

As the report on another page explains, they have refused to accept that the choice for them is between the dole and going along with draconian management demands.

The Winstanley workers have occupied their factory and will stay there until they are guaranteed their jobs on realistic terms.

When workers do stand up to the bosses like this they need solidarity from workers in related industries - from the Dock workers who unload their raw materials, from workers in companies which buy the finished product, etc.

The fight they are fighting is not just for their own jobs, it is for a future for everyone. They are showing the way in which militant action can give some hope for saving jobs.

This action builds far more "on reality" than Dukes' plans for thousands more on the dole.