

WORKERS SOLIDARITY

20p

PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

NO. 1. November 1984



IS THIS MAN WORTH £146,698 A YEAR?

Garret Fitzgerald is forever going on about how we are living beyond our means, telling us to tighten our belts even more. For doing this he picks up £44,350 in wages plus £50,000 for travel expences. He has put a gang of his Fine Gael friends on the payroll as 'advisors'. For wages, transport, advisors, subsidised food, free postage and all the rest he costs us a cool £146,000 a year. PAYE workers are footing nearly all of this bill. It's a waste of money. We cannot afford him!

PLANNING FOR PROGRESS

Are there not enough organisations trying to change society? What makes the Workers Solidarity Movement so different?

We are different, very different. Unlike so many others we do not believe the end justifies the means, we say the means you use will shape the society you create. We want a free and socialist society and we have to organise in a like manner.

We are anarchists. We are socialists. You can't have one without the other because they are one and the same thing. Socialism is not a collection of reform and minor changes. It is a lot more than that. It means building something completely new. And you build everything from the bottom up - socialism is no exception.

ELECTIONS

That is why you won't see us standing in elections. We don't want to be the new rulers. This is not because we are against democracy. We are totally in favour of it. But by democracy we do not mean

letting 166 professional politicians run our lives. We mean people coming together to make their own decisions. Councils of delegates from jobs and communities. Economic planning that has to be put to the people for their agreement. We don't want to change the faces in the ruling class, we want to abolish classes.

Likewise you won't find us in the ranks of the full-time union officials. Instead we will be found working for the power to be returned to the membership. At the moment that means arguing for respect for pickets, solidarity with workers on strike, regular branch meetings and taking the initiative away from the unelected full-timers.

SELF-ACTIVITY

We support self-activity. On the picket line you learn to do things for yourself, in an election you do something for someone else. In a strike you begin to assert yourself and come together with others for a common goal. In an election

you can only decide who should be in charge, who should run your life.

Anarchist socialism means workers control. Not somebody, no matter who they are, controlling workers.

CONFIDENCE

We base ourselves on the struggles of working class people. Struggles not only at work but also for women's rights, against imperialism, against sectarianism.



We do it because struggle can not only win gains but also because of the confidence it gives people in their own ability to change things done. And that is the sort of confidence needed to change society.

JOIN US

We won't be trying to take over the state structures. Government, the existing civil service, police, army and so on are there to meet the needs of a capitalist society. They cannot be turned around to serve socialism, they were not designed for that. The state is only necessary when a minority wants to rule.

Workers will create their own structures to bring a new society into being. Structures that are efficient, and geared towards mass involvement and democratic decision making.

All this is not just around the corner. But unless we know what we want and how to get it we will be stuck with the chaos and inequality of the present system with its' continual series of crises.

Freedom, socialism, workers control, anti-authoritarianism...if these are the sort of aims you have, then you belong in the Workers Solidarity Movement.

Editorial Collective

THEM AND US



One of Ireland's rich men is Tony O'Reilly. He is worth (depending on how the Stock Market is doing, you know) about £15m. (excluding his U.S. business interests). O'Reilly is president and chief-executive of H.J. Heinz International but also has his fingers in the Irish Independent Group, Fitzwilson and Atlantic Resources. His chief interests appear to be golf, rugby and triple-jobbing.

the recession has avoided them like the plague. JEFFERSON SMURFIT GROUP recently announced interim pre-tax profits of £20m. for the six months up to the end of July. Similarly CEMENT-ROADSTONE HOLDINGS had big profits in the same period earning £7.2m.

In the U.K. the gap between the rich and poor has become a yawning chasm (take a bow Thatcher, you delivered on the goods). Since 1978 workers in the bottom 10% of the wages league have suffered a real drop in living standards,

but the real take home pay for Managers and Directors has leapt by as much as 60%. Last year alone Britain's Executives received pay rises twice the rate of inflation, whereas workers barely managed to break even.

A recent survey of America's 400 wealthiest people showed that there was twelve people who owned at least 1,000m dollars. Top of the list was Mr. Gordon Getty (the oil heir) who was estimated to be worth at least 4.1 billion dollars. Mr. David Packard of the Hewlett-Packard computer firm was the third richest being worth 1.8 billion dollars. Eighth on the list was Mr. An Wang (who has Irish workers contributing to his personal luxury) of Wang Computers who is worth 1.2 billion

dollars. Yoko Ono among others made the list but Michael Jackson didn't. He is after all only worth 70 million dollars.

The other side of the coin is just as dramatic: the U.S. Census Bureau announced last month that 35.2 million Americans were officially living below the poverty line last year. This represents 15.2% of the population and is the highest figure since the mid-sixties.



The economic crisis, the foreign debt and of course the high wages of Irish workers have been having no effect on Irish Businesses. In fact one suspects

PLANNING FOR POVERTY

The much talked about National Plan is now available for all to see. The State has made it clear who is going to pay for the present crises — the PAYE workers, the unemployed and the poor. A particular vengeance has been preserved for public sector workers, who at the moment seem to be the governments favourite scapegoat.

On the Dole

Unemployment Benefit and Children's Allowances are to be taxed, food subsidies are to be wiped out altogether, local authority rents are to rise. All this will obviously affect the less well off.

Tax

As regards tax the much alluded to (by the government) burden on the PAYE sector has hardly been lightened. The government has shed crocodile tears for us. The 1% levy which was supposed to be temporary in the first place will be removed "as soon as resources permit". We are still left carrying the can while the farmers and bosses got off scot free.

There is no mention in the plan of the £500 million in profits which multinationals took out of this country last year. No attempt to tax it or any other profits is being made. The farm tax, on the admission of the farmers themselves, will leave them better off. The farmers expect to be paying less in 1986 than they do at the moment. Another case of the government giving into the rich and powerful.

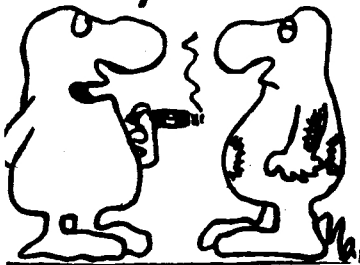
Jobs

If you are unemployed you are likely to stay that way. On the plans own admission the government only expects enough jobs to absorb any increases in the labour force to be created. Those of us already on the dole can stay there.

The state refuses to accept responsibility for creating real jobs. It will offer you more training schemes or part-time work at scab wages. We are all to be encouraged to set up our own businesses. Thus the responsibility for creating jobs (and causing unemployment) is thrown back onto the unemployed and away from those who actually create it in the first place.

There is to be no new recruitment to local authorities and health boards. This adds to the general ban already operating in government departments. As well as less jobs services are inevitably going to get worse. We can expect less nurses, less teachers etc., etc... as cuts become the order of the day.

I'M RICH AND GETTING RICHER... YOU'RE POOR AND GETTING POORER ... SEE, I TOLD YOU THE SYSTEM STILL WORKS!



Public Sector

Underlying the whole plan is the belief that Irelands lack of competitiveness is due to high wages. Again the responsibility is thrown onto workers for creating the countries problems. Public sector wages are going to stand still. The government have declared war on public sector workers. The workers must respond in an appropriate manner.

Interest Rates

On the plans own admission whether it works or not

depends on American interest rates. If they rise the amounts we have to pay back to U.S. banks will increase. Thus the governments book balancing may not be worth the paper its written on.

This underlines the extent to which this country's fortunes are tied up with international capital and banking. The idea of national solutions to the recession is ridiculous in light of this. Capitalism is an international system which does not recognise national boundaries.

Fight Back

This plan is clear in its intention to cut the living standards of working class people. We must fight it wherever the government attempts to implement it. The lead must come from the public sector which is most heavily under attack. The workers there must resist rationalisation and cut backs. The miners have shown how this can be done.

Eddie Conlon

CONJUGAL RIGHTS

Noel and Marie Murray are Anarchists who have been imprisoned since 1975. They narrowly escaped hanging and are now serving their sentences in high-security conditions. They married and were living together before they were sent to prison. They now receive a one hour visit a week which is closely supervised. This visit is considered a privilege and can be withdrawn at any time.

The Murrays have decided to take a case against the Irish State for Conjugal Rights. If they win their case all other married prisoners will benefit. As usual the case will take money. £5,000 is urgently needed. Please send all you can spare to the Committee for Prisoners Conjugal Rights, 15 St. Aidens Park Road, Fairview, Dublin 3. Ireland.

PICKET

DEFEND OUR UNIONS — EAST AND WEST

The Polish government is sending scab coal to Britain to weaken the miners strike. Hands off Solidarnosc! Hands off the NUM!

Picket the Russian Embassy, Orwell Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6. Saturday Nov. 10th 3.00 — 4.00pm.



Organised by the Workers Solidarity Movement.

ANARCHIST BOOK SERVICE

Books and pamphlets on anarchism, socialism, labour history, Ireland, women...hundreds of radical titles. For a free list send a 22p stamp along with your name and address to ABS/WSM, P.O. Box 1528, Dublin 8.

"Anarchy for Ireland", a new pamphlet for the WSM. 60p plus 22p postage. "The best thing since the price of whiskey came down" Garret Fitzgerald (no relation).

A dispute in your job, opposition to the water rates in your area, a victory on pay, fighting to retain jobs?

These are the sort of things our readers will want to know about.

Send your reports to the address on page 4.



ANARCO

'They're all anarchists, y'know, or Trotskyites or Jehovah's witnessess, or something. All, I know is they're not bleedin' Fianna Failers, I'll tell ye that. Bloody cheek of them, that's what I say! Be God, it wouldn't have happened in Dev's day!



Anarchism is a much maligned and misunderstood set of ideas. It has come to symbolise to many people, a society of destruction and disorder. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Anarchism has been deliberately slandered and misrepresented, not only by those running this society but also by most on the Left. Deliberately, for the reason that its uncompromising and radical critique of society and how to change it, poses a challenge that can not be met except by slander. Its roots and association with the working class of all countries tells the real truth.

Anarchism views society, what it is and how it should be, on the basis of two fundamental pillars. These are the economic nature of society and the manner in which political power is organised. We believe that the economic system under which we presently live must be abolished. We also say that the political institutions of capitalism, which are hierarchical and authoritarian must go too. These institutions serve the employer class and will have to be replaced with ones based on mass participatory democracy and freedom.

WORKERS COUNCILS

In the new economic order the workers of the world will own and share all the wealth they produce. Decisions will be made through

OUR HISTORY

History is not neutral. Ask who pays the historians, ask who finances their books, ask who decides what is important and what is not. Ask this and you find out whose version of history you are hearing. That is why we learn very little working class history but a lot of what the ruling class wants us to be told.

When anarchism is not being distorted out of all recognition, it is being ignored. No wonder few Irish people realise that it was and still is a force to be reckoned with in the international labour movement.

You may hear about some terrorist who called himself an anarchist but you don't hear about the trade unions built by anarchists from Sweden to Argentina, about the revolutionary struggles of Mexico and Spain. You don't hear about how the anarchists

were the first to fight against the bureaucracy who betrayed the Russian revolution.

In our own country, to take just one example, there was Captain Jack White from Ballymena who trained the Irish Citizen Army. That's about all most of us are ever told about him. Who was taught that he went to South Wales in 1916 where he was jailed for trying to organise a strike against the planned execution of James Connolly? Where are you to learn that he went to Spain to fight with the International Brigade?

While there he became disenchanted with the manipulation of the Communist Party. White offered his services to the anarchist CNT, relinquishing his international brigade command. A few months in Spain saw him become a convinced anarchist and he

was sent to London to organise support for the anti-Franco forces. While there he wrote a pamphlet simply entitled "Anarchism".

Unfortunately, when White died in 1940 his family destroyed his papers. These included drafts of a history of the Irish labour movement which he wrote with another Irish anarchist, Matt Kavanagh, and a study of the Cork "soviet" of 1922. It is even more unfortunate that a leading Irish socialist of his day is almost written out of history because the historians don't like his radical politics.

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HISM: SOCIALISM AND FREEDOM

workplace and community councils which will be federated at all levels and centrally co-ordinated. Thus political power will not be organised in a hierarchial manner, where a central government tells everyone else what to do.

Those socialists who follow the ideas of Lenin hold that such a society can only be built by using the State structures, albeit a "workers state", under the leadership of their Party. Anarchists reject this since both the State and Party are hierarchial and authoritarian. They are diametrically opposed to the aims and organisation of the new society.

STATE CAPITALISM

Rather than building a real socialist society where both economic and political power would be everyone's possession and nobody's prerogative, these people end up building societies that are no more than State Capitalist like Russia and China. In these countries ordinary people do not have any say in how things are run or in the decisions that affect them. They are ordered about and exploited just as happens in the "free world".

Anarchists predicted this long before it was confirmed by the betrayal of the Russian revolution, when the workers' soviets and factory committees were suppressed by the Bolshevik state. After all the means you use and what you end up with are connected. Thus if the structure used to build socialism are hierarchial and undemocratic you should not be surprised if the society you end up with is hierarchial and undemocratic. This scientific law seemingly escaped some self-proclaimed followers of "scientific socialism".

The question of freedom is not just a subject for some mere philosophical debate. It is at the very heart of revolutionary change and socialism. A successful revolution is not just a shift in economic power from the employers to the workers, it is a time of real freedom. It is a time when the shackles of the old oppressive order are thrown off and the workers movement explodes into a re-creativity as it copes with organising every facet of society so that the needs of all are met. Everyone can get involved, through their assemblies and delegate councils, in decision making and planning that used to be the sole concern of central government. Freedom of ideas, criticism and input will not only

be a practical reality but a necessity.

Capitalist society is organised in a top-down way. Orders come from the top and those at the bottom obey them. The institutions by which the bosses rule, the Government and the State, are built so that the rule of a minority over the majority is possible. Control of political freedom, ideas and information is fundamental to their working. Participation is strictly limited so that most people never have any say.

"WORKERS STATES"

That is why we wish to abolish these structures. They can never be used to create socialism but instead will actively sabotage the workers' cause. The "workers states" advocated by the Leninists for the

transition to socialism have proven to be its greatest enemy. Only workers councils can form the basis for the new society.

We stand uncompromisingly for a new world. One which will be owned and managed by all those who work. It will be organised from the bottom up and production will be to meet peoples' needs, not for the private profit of a few. Anarchist society will make real the old call "from each according to ability, to each according to need". Every individual will enjoy complete control of her/his life with no limit on their freedom as long as they do not encroach on the freedom of anyone else. Now, isn't that something worth struggling for?

Kevin Doyle

Russian Free Trade Union

The rise of Solidarnosc in Poland clearly focused attention on the so-called "socialist" countries. People asked why it was necessary for 10 million workers to organise themselves in opposition to a state that was supposed to be a workers state. The obvious answer is that their interests were not being looked after. The official trade unions were effectively organs of the state whose main role is to control the workers rather than provide them with a means of fighting for their demands.

In the USSR itself, workers have been organising independently of the state since 1977. At that time a group of workers who had been victimised and fired from their jobs for protesting at poor working conditions set up the Association of Workers in the USSR. Within ten days of

the 200 strong group being formed it was suppressed. All members ended up in jail.

However in October of the following year, a new group was formed — the Free Inter-professional Association of Workers (SMOT). Set up with 100 members it declared that it would not be appealing to governments around the world for support but to the organised working class. From their foundation SMOT have constantly been under attack from the KGB. Members have been jailed, exiled and sent to psychiatric hospitals.

HUNGER STRIKE

Alexander Skobov, a Leningrad anarchist and SMOT activist, has been interned in a psychiatric hospital. On the eve of his arrest he declared "SMOT is a free association of mutual aid, an association of people who

because of their moral convictions cannot remain silent". Another member, Valery Senderov, was sentenced to seven years hard labour and five years internal exile. He was given a further five years for going on a hunger strike.

Despite this SMOT continues to grow. Today there are 21 branches throughout the USSR with 1,500 supporters and 300 activists.

In Cuba, presently the darling of large sections of the left, five workers were sentenced to death for trying to form a free union. The sentences have been commuted to 30 years in prison. The lawyers who defended them and the magistrate who overturned the death sentence have all been arrested. Sugar workers have also been arrested for demanding the right to strike.

Eddie Conlon

DUNNE IN SOLIDARITY



Since the summer thirteen young workers have been picketing Dunnes Stores in Dublin's Henry Street. They are not looking for more pay or improved conditions even though they could well do with them. They are on strike in solidarity with fellow workers three thousand miles away in South Africa.

It all started when their union, the Irish Distributive and Administrative Trade Union, passed a motion at it's conference calling for a boycott of South African goods to help the struggle against apartheid. Too often such motions are all hot air and no action. Not this time around. The members in Dunnes take their trade unionism seriously and are totally against the racist system in South Africa

SCAB LABOUR

Mary Manning was suspended when she refused to sell South African food. Twelve of her fellow workers walked out with her and the pickets went on. Dunnes responded by putting non-union part timers on the check-outs and arranging deliveries from the scab firm

MFM in Tallaght. Strikers have been assaulted by these scabs and by managers. They have had clothes torn and been cut and bruised but their determination remains strong.

The picket is having an effect, custom is way down. On a Saturday the shop is almost empty. Managers have been pretending to be customers to make it seem that someone is shopping there. But you soon twig that one when you see the same guy pushing a half-empty trolley around for four hours!

ESCALATE

If Dunnes had only this one shop they would have had to give in after a week or two. Unfortunately they have shops all over the country. The profits from these will allow Ben Dunne to prolong the strike. The union officials have not brought the strikers to the other shops to explain their case, they certainly have not called for a strike throughout the Dunnes chain.

This would be the way to win. If the strike is spread Ben Dunne will have

to settle quickly. It simply proves yet again that union bureaucrats cannot be relied on to escalate action. In every strike the officials should help out and provide resources but the strikers must be in charge. Workers' control is a demand that applies to unions as well as workplaces.

A defeat here will spread demoralisation among shop workers. The union will be seen to be unable to defend it's own members. On the other hand a victory over a boss like Ben Dunne will give workers all over the country the confidence to spread the boycott. It will also give them the confidence needed to push for also give them the confidence needed to push for higher pay and an end to the petty harassment suffered by thousands of shop workers. A victory here is a victory for both black workers in South Africa and for supermarket workers in Ireland.

Help welcomed on the picket line every day. Mass pickets every Saturday 2.30 - 5.30 p.m.

Alan MacSimoin

VEROLME

At the end of November, Verolme Dockyard in Cork will close after 23 years of shipbuilding. During the past year, the workforce has been reduced from over a thousand to its present size of a few hundred. The government, which owns most of the company, have deliberately run it into the ground. Contracts have been passed up, such as a recent opportunity to build a Norwegian oil rig. Each time, so-called 'restrictive work practices' have been held to be responsible for lost contracts. But even the £65,000-a-year chairman has admitted that the unions weren't responsible for the closure. On one occasion, the construction of five fishery patrol vessels was turned down because the orders were from non-NATO countries. So much for Ireland's neutrality.

The truth is that the increased competition amongst shipbuilders, which has resulted from a world wide drop in demand for ships, has meant that Verolme couldn't survive without subsidies, which the government no longer wish to give. As always, the workers will pay, unless active opposition is mounted to keep the yard open.

TAXED TO THE LIMIT

The top 44,000 farmers in the country, including those with another trade or profession, paid an average £724 income tax last year compared with an average tax of £1,875 on a PAYE worker. The South has the highest level of indirect tax and the second highest level of personal tax in the EEC. Bosses get off light with company profits taxed at the second lowest level. If they don't pay they find that fines imposed by the courts have been halved from an average of £494 in 1979 down to £263 last year.

MINERS

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He has attempted to negotiate deals with other officials, rather than appealing to rank and file workers. Part of the problem is that there is very little rank and file organisation amongst workers in Britain today. When Scargill was a miner himself, he was involved in rank and file organisation, and seemed to recognise then that workers would not be forced into action by union officials. Instead, it is necessary that the issues are fully understood and accepted first, and that the confidence to fight is there.

UNION OFFICIALS

Few workers have confidence in their union officials, particularly when they have seen so many sell-outs in the past. In the case of Arthur Scargill, he is proof that no matter how left-wing union officials may be, there is no substitute for rank and file organisation. Yet Scargill has largely rejected this by rising through the union bureaucracy. Now he makes deals and negotiates secretly. The strike is being run by the union executive and local branches, rather than through strike committees which would ensure that the best tactics for winning the strike are adopted.

Even so, after so much hardship and violence, the striking miners are not likely to cave in without making some kind of gains. A real victory would mean no more pit closures except on grounds of exhaustion; a wage rise to make up for lost pay; the abolition of bonus schemes and a pay rise to compensate; the reinstatement of all miners sacked during the dispute; the dropping of all criminal charges against strikers and guaranteed investment in the mining industry.

EFFECTS IN IRELAND

These demands will only be met if the support from

other workers is forthcoming. The miners fight should concern all workers throughout Europe, because a victory or a defeat will have consequences for us. If they lose, the entire labour movement in Britain will suffer and its quite likely that Irish bosses will feel inspired to attack our living standards. We can do our small part in helping the miners by sending cash and messages of support which will be vital to see them through the winter, and on the way to victory.

Dominick Carroll

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The following is an open letter to Arthur Scargill the President of the striking National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in Britain. It is in response to the current NUM strike and the sharp increase in Polish coal exports throughout this struggle. The letter is also prompted by the fact that when the Jaruzelski regime in Poland imposed martial law in an attempt to crush Solidarnosc Mr. Scargill refused to come to its defense.

Dear Mr. Scargill,

For months we and thousands of our union colleagues have attentively observed your struggle for the right to work.

We know well that at the present time your fight takes on more universal significance. It is a matter of fact affecting the subsistence of the British trade union movement. We have already condemned and we maintain this condemnation with all firmness the coal exports to Great Britain by the Jaruzelski regime.

If Thatcher is getting along with Jaruzelski it is a great time to make logical conclusions. That is why we hope that in the name of workers' solidarity you will reverse your unfriendly positions towards our movement.

We want to express through you our solidarity and support for the striking miners and all British workers.

*Executive Board of Robotnik
(Paper of the Inter-Factory
Workers' Committee of
Solidarnosc)
Robotnik Political Group
Group Emmanuel Goldstein*

months less than everyone else. From January next these women will get the full benefit for the full length of time. Married women will also be able to claim unemployment assistance for the first time ever. That sounds good but in reality very few will qualify because of the family means test. That's the good news.

The bad news is that thousands of families are going to lose up to £40 or even £50 a week. At present an unemployed man gets a dependents allowance for his wife. This is paid even if she has a job. It is worth £25-£30 a week. He also gets dependents allowances for the children. From January the wives allowance will not be paid if she is working, regardless of how badly paid she may be. Half of the children's part of the allowance will go as well.

LOW PAY JOBS

Thousands of women in this position work part-time in low pay jobs like contract cleaning. Many take home less than £40 a week. This is nearly always non-union work with no job security, terrible conditions and often not covered by protective legislation because the hours worked are less than eighteen.

Losing the dependents allowance will mean a big cash drop to any family in this situation. This will force women to give up their jobs or cause them to move into the 'black economy' where they will be even more exploited.

In the meantime people should not lose out as the government intends. Extra cash should be paid to families caught in the 'catch 22' trap. A proper child benefit scheme of £20 a week per child would be the best way to do this. Otherwise the 1984 EEC Directive on Equality will be a backwards step for both men and women who are dependant on welfare.

*Patricia McCarthy
(Womens Social Welfare
Campaign)*

EQUALITY?

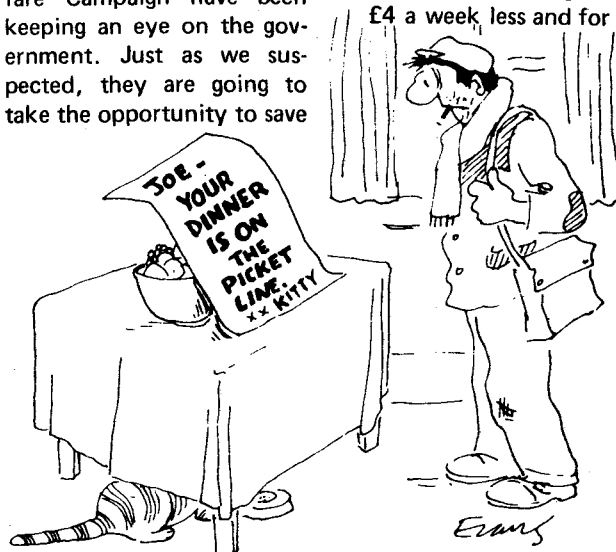
What should have been a significant victory for womens equality in 1984 is turning very sour. According to an EEC ruling, discrimination against women in the social welfare code must be eliminated by the end of this year.

The Women's Social Welfare Campaign have been keeping an eye on the government. Just as we suspected, they are going to take the opportunity to save

themselves a lot of money and to increase the financial hardship of thousands of families. All in the name of equality!

£4 A WEEK LESS

They are going to change the system whereby a married woman claiming unemployment benefit gets about £4 a week less and for three



VICTORY TO THE MINERS

As we go to press, the miners strike in Britain is going into its ninth month. It began in March as a response to government plans to axe 20,000 jobs in the coal mines this year, and to the threat of a further 50,000 redundancies in the next few years.

The impression gained from the media is that most miners are still working. In fact, 80% of the miners are on strike, and there is no sign of them weakening at this stage. The fact that some miners have stayed at work can be largely attributed to the productivity scheme which was forced on the miners by the Labour government in 1977. In some areas, coal is more easily mined than in others, such as in Nottinghamshire, which means that some miners receive much higher bonus' than others, and this has created a division. Also, since the coal in these pits is cheaper to extract, they are less likely to be closed, and so the miners there feel fairly secure and have refused to join the strike.

SEVEN DEAD

For the rest, it's been a hard struggle. The massive police operation has resulted in thousands of injuries and arrests. Entire villages have been sealed off and curfews have been imposed. Riot police have rampaged through the street and strikers have been dragged from their homes. To date, seven people have been killed as a result of the strike.

WOMENS ACTION

The miners and their



South Wales Miners with Nicky Kelly at his "Coming Out" Party.

families have coped with the hardships caused by the strike by organising themselves into support groups. For many women, this activity has helped them break from some of the restraints they have been under as working class women and as miners wives. Unfortunately, much of work of the women support groups is the same as that which is traditionally forced on them, such as cooking. It's no surprise that women have been so adept at organising communal restaurants. But the important thing is that these tasks are being operated on a communal basis rather than people being forced to look out for themselves, and that the

women are as much involved in the miners fight as the miners themselves.

SCAB COAL

There have been many difficulties in making the strike more effective. Power stations have been maintained by scab coal, and from an increase in supplies of coal from Poland and South Africa. Arthur Scargill considers the Polish government to be socialist, so he appealed to them to stop sending coal. They didn't. On the other hand, the outlawed Polish union "Solidarity" which Scargill condemned even when it had ten million members, sent messages of support.

Coal has also been trans-

ported to Steel Works by lorry and train drivers who are themselves members of unions. As the strike was getting underway, Scargill had talks with the rail and steel union leaders to remind them of an agreement reached many years ago that they would always support each other's disputes. Bill Sirs of the steel union refused, and the rail union leaders have been unable to ensure effective blacking of coal. With winter approaching, it is essential that the increased demand for coal is met by total blacking by all the unions involved. Scargill's failure to get that support arises from his approach.

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