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Thats' Capitalism (WS42)

Workers Solidarity Movement

1994

In spite of the Employment Equality Act and the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act many employers still get away with treating women workers worse than male employees. More than fifteen years after the introduction of equal pay laws in the 26 counties, women workers earn only 62% of men's average earnings. On an hourly basis they are paid, on average, #2 less.

60% of the tax relief in the 26 counties on mortgage interest and VHI premiums goes to the top 20% of earners. Only 5% goes to the bottom half.

While workers' pay rises were kept down to the the PESP level, there were no restraints on the rich. Last year executive directors averaged 12% and shareholders 13.4%. The seven AIB executive directors averaged #526,666 each, earning more per hour than most workers get for a week.

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Of the #530 million the Child Support Agency hopes to get from 'absent' fathers in Britain and the North, just #50 million will go to mothers and their children. The rest will go the government Treasury. So much for the Tories' claim last year that the Agency would be a major help to mothers and children

According to the Irish Times industrial correspondent, Jackie Gallagher, #250,000 was spent during the negotiations on the Programme for Competitiveness & Work. Twenty union officials turned up each day. Most of them "spent their time playing cards, having quizzes and on one occasion having a sing song". Snacks included steak sandwiches. Wine was served with the meals. Indeed the drinks facility had to be cut off at one stage because so much was being consumed.

Having being conned into accepting wage rises that may not even keep up with inflation (the PCW), workers now see top professionals get much bigger increases. The current chief executive of Telecom, Fergus McGovern, gets #70,000 a year. The maximum laid down in the Gleeson guidelines for top public servants pay is #81,000 (six times the average industrial wage). The new chief executive will be hired as a 'consultant', which will allow him to be paid 'fees' of over #100,000. Peter Owen, the new Aer Lingus chief executive is also a 'consultant', and the same will probably happen at the National Treasury Management Agency which was set up outside the control of the Central Bank so that its senior employees would not be bound by the Gleeson guidelines.

According to the MSF union 14% of the workforce in the 26 counties earn less than #115 per week. Of full-time employees

who earn less than #3 per hour 16% of them work in the very profitable banking, finance and insurance sector