

# Northern Workers paid less

Workers Solidarity Movement

1996

CHEAP LABOUR for sale. That's the offer made by the North's Industrial Development Board. Their fact sheet for potential investors is to the point:

*Labour costs in Northern Ireland are lower than the rest of Britain and Ireland, and are among the lowest in Europe. The total average hourly cost (including overtime and social costs) for manual workers is 14% lower than the UK, 52% lower than Germany and 22% lower than the US.*

They go on to assure foreign bosses that

*here are no government restrictions on work hours for adults over 18 years of age in factories. Workers in Northern Ireland are happy to accommodate a variety of shift patterns. There are no government restrictions on overtime.*

The North's Department of Economic Development has put figures on the benefits of being a worker in one of the last colonies. In manufacturing, average male manual earnings are STR 263 a week and average women's earnings STR 171 a week. The female figure is 14% lower than in Britain, and the male figure 16% lower.

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