

# That's Capitalism (WS48)

## Workers Solidarity Movement

1996

In the five years up to 1995 the 26 county government was allocated £2,611 from EU funds to improve transport. Most of this money, 63%, was spent on roads. All public transport, including the LUAS tramways in Dublin, got just 13%. Yet money spent on building roads is “investment in infrastructure” while the same money spent on public transport becomes a “subsidy”.

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Some of America's most well known corporations, including American Express, are now investing in the ‘prison industry’. At last count, there was some 50,000 ‘privately operated prison beds’ in the USA. This number is expected to rise further in the next few years. One ‘successful’ prison company is Corrections Corporation of America. This company now operates twenty-one prisons in a number of countries – America, Australia and Britain to name but a few. It is valued at over \$100 million on the US Stock Exchange.

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U2's Bono has a brother. He owns Scotts restaurant in Castleknock. A few months ago he took on a young “barman” and paid him just £1.22 per hour. Total pay for a two hour shift was £2.44. After deducting a £1.10 bus fare, the “barman” was left with £1.44 or just 72p for each hour worked.

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According to the US Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2.4 million (64.4%) crack-cocaine users in the USA are white. This compares with just 1 million (26.6%) black users. Yet, in 1992, a study by the US Sentencing Commission found that 91.3% of those sentenced for Federal crack offences were black (African-American), as compared with only 3% for whites.

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Pharmacia and Upjohn, two chemical companies, recently merged. As a result their profits are expected to boom in the coming year. Why? In order to ‘cut out duplication’ 4,000 of the 34,000 jobs in the new, joint company will be got rid of. This will amount to \$550 million in ‘savings’.

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Been playing golf recently? Well, just in case, don't use 'Spaulding' golf balls. Spauldings, are one of a growing number of companies in the US that use prison labour to boost their profits. Spaulding, a sports company, use Hawaiian prison inmates to make their golf balls. Prison workers get paid just \$1 an hour after deductions. Often they get less. At present over 30 States in the USA allow the use of inmates as workers

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Uganda now has an average life expectancy of just 42 year. Ten years ago the life expectancy in the country was 52 years of age. This can partly be explained by the problem of HIV/AIDs – but only partly. The health service in Uganda has been ravaged from a lack of money in the last decade. One doctor, recently stated that as many as 50% of all cases coming to hospital could be saved by basic medical care – but this isn't available. There isn't any money ..for health.

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