

Socialist Worker

Special issue on:
**NATO'S WAR
IN EUROPE**

see pages: 3,5,6,7&8

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p Solidarity price £1

NATO BOMBS BRING

SHEER BLOODY MURDER

NATO bombers are murdering innocent civilians in Serbia and Kosovo and calling it 'collateral damage'.

After a month of bloodshed, they have escalated the war to include civilian targets. In Aleksinac, 24 civilians were attacked in this poor mining town after an ice cream factory was destroyed. Another ten people died after NATO attacked a train passing over a bridge.

But the most horrific incident occurred outside the village of Prizren when seventy five refugees were incinerated after NATO aircraft swooped on their convoy on three occasions. Every

colonial war shows contempt and arrogance towards 'the natives' they are fighting. NATO's war is no different.

After the Prizren bombing, Clinton could only say that "This is not the business of perfection".

When this sort of vile attack occurred in Omagh, almost everyone denounced the terrorism. But when Blair and Clinton order their bombers to attack civilian targets, the press say they are fighting a 'humanitarian war'.

We need to oppose this filthy hypocrisy and take on the system that puts profit and military hardware before human life.



A refugee murdered by NATO

JEWISH LEADER SLAMS NATO

ACA SINGER, one of the leaders of Yugoslavia's Jewish community, has spoken out about comparisons between the actions of Serbia's President Milosevic and the Holocaust.

Singer opposes the way Serbia is treating Albanians in Kosovo, but he also criticises NATO's manipulation of the way Jews were murdered by the Nazis.

He says, "I don't agree that what is happening in Kosovo is genocide."

"There was no effort to exterminate an entire race - men, women and children - merely because of their religious or ethnic identity."

"Both Serbs and the Albanians pressure us for sympathy and compassion. Both sides, it seems, want to be Jews. I put myself on neither side."

"Sixty five members of my family were killed at Auschwitz and I know all their names, first name and surname. The youngest was a baby and the oldest was 92."

"Sixty five people killed from one family because they were Jewish. That is genocide."

HOUSING CRISIS

"How is this allowed? The people at the top probably have ten houses."

THE HOUSING Action Campaign has been set up to fight for rent controls and more local authority houses. Socialist Worker spoke to members of the campaign about why they got involved.

Helena, who works as a Community Development worker was recently forced to leave the apartment where she had been living with her partner for 3 years after the landlord raised the rent from £360 to £520 a month. She is angry that landlords are allowed to get away

with this.

She and her partner have been forced to move into her parents home.

"We're not going to be ripped off anymore" she explained. "We can't afford rent but we can't afford to buy a house either."

"What are the options for young couples?"

"We need close to a hundred grand to buy a house and I can't see that happening."

Parent

Frances, another campaign activist, spoke about the difficulties she faced as a lone parent trying to find accommodation.

She lives in appalling conditions in a one-bedroom basement flat with her twelve year old son.

She told *Socialist Worker* "I couldn't find anyone who would take a child. I took this because I was desperate."

The damp conditions of the flat mean that Frances has to bleach the walls every two weeks.

Her clothes are hung around the walls of the tiny flat because she can't use the cupboards.

Incredibly she is charged £110 a week in rent.

"What I'm trying to figure out is the unfairness - how is this allowed? The people at the top probably have ten houses. As long as people don't say anything it'll go on."

explained Frances.

She has joined the campaign because she knows how difficult it is to fight the landlords on her own.

Left with £33 to live on for the week after paying her rent, Frances says:

"I could cut a penny in half but this is too much - it's ridiculous."

"When you're dishing out most of your money just to keep a roof over your head you're not really living a life".

NATIONAL PROTEST
Saturday, May 22nd
GPO, Dublin 3pm.

Meeting
Tuesday 27th April
Portobello Hotel
South Richmond Street, Dublin

LOBBY
Dublin Corporation
May 10th, Wood Quay

Corruption tribunal held up by CAB

"The tribunals into political corruption have run into further obstacles as sections of the Irish establishment try to stop the truth coming out."

The latest development has been the refusal of the Criminal Assets Bureau to cooperate with the Flood Tribunal into town planning.

The Criminal Assets Bureau arrested George Redmond on February 18th as he was boarding a flight to

the Isle of Man with £300,000 in cash and cheques.

They took copies of several documents from him at the time.

But now CAB are refusing to hand over the evidence to the tribunal about what they learned about George Redmond.

Refusal

Justice Flood described this refusal as "absolutely ridiculous".

But a more sinister interpretation might also be made.

Despite their extensive powers, the CAB

has made no attempt to seize documents from a variety of figures who have been implicated in corruption and tax evasion.

Yet they only moved against Redmond on the very day the Flood Tribunal ordered him to supply it with details of all his bank and investment transactions since 1970.

These transactions might reveal close links with politicians who had intervened in the planning process.

The CAB are even refusing to say when they started investigating Redmond.

Health scandal shows

PROFIT COMES BEFORE CARE

SIXTY EIGHT women in the North Western Health Board area have been misled about the results

of a cervical smear test.

The tests were carried out by a private company, Clayform, who informed the women that they were in the clear.

Nearly two years after these results were given, the women are now being re-called for further tests.

The scandal is another example of how profit comes before people's

health.

Over the past few years, the tax rates on company profits have been cut to derisory figures.

One result has been a systematic run down of the health service.

This has meant chronic shortages of staff in key hospitals.

Despite the fact that the numbers looking for cervical smear tests rose in the North Western Health Board from 6,000 in 1992 to 9,000 in 1998, no extra staff were appointed to carry out the tests.

Instead when a backlog arose, the tests were handed over to a private company which is run by consultants who are supposed to work for Health Service.

Yet Clayform's laboratories were never inspected by the Health Board.

There needs to be an urgent inquiry now into how Clayform got a contract from the health board and how much profit it made.

Doctors denounce Immigration Bill

THE IRISH Medical Organisation has come out strongly against the Immigration Bill.

The Bill, which is designed to replace the 1935 Aliens Act, gives the government extensive powers to deport 'non-nationals'. Any non-Irish person, including EU citizens, who is charged with relatively minor offences could be automatically expelled from Ireland.

The Immigration Bill also seeks to force doctors, social workers and teachers to report on illegal immigrants.

According to Dr Mary Favier, a GP from Cork, this would turn doctors into "quasi-immigration

officials who had to check papers before giving medical care."

James Molloy a GP from Limerick said it could cause doctor-patient conflict and argued that "this legislation is racist and in my opinion contrary to human rights".

In the 1980s when the US government brought in a similar measure to compel doctors to report on illegal immigrants, the Irish government sent over a high level delegation to lobby for change.

They argued that it might affect thousands of Irish people who had slipped quietly into the US.

RECENTLY released MI5 papers show the role played by pigeons in the Second World War.

Heinrich Himmler, as well as being a mass murderer, was president of the German National Pigeon Society.

He had the idea of using pigeons to carry intelligence from Britain to Germany.

But British spies discovered this.

The Army pigeon Service Special Section recruited two peregrine falcons to assist them. They captured enemy pigeons and the secret files. But birds were prisoners of war.

LUAS: FF plans privatisation

MARY O'ROURKE has announced that business may be able to 'cherry-pick' some of the lucrative lines on the new LUAS service.

Although Dublin is grinding to a halt, O'Rourke deliberately has held up the LUAS project to get another consultants report.

Then, surprise, surprise, the report from Arthur Andersen recommended that private operators to allowed run parts of the service. These were to include the city centre section from Stephen's Green to Broadstone and the airport route.

The less profitable routes such as the line to Tallaght are to stay in the hands of CIE.

The greed of Ireland's fat cats can only mean more expensive fares for users.

what we think

A war fought just for NATO's credibility

The war in the Balkans is set to escalate into all-out bloodshed. Publicly, the NATO generals claim that they are concerned with the plight of the Kosovans.

In reality, the issue has become the "credibility of NATO".

After the first Gulf War in 1991, the US believed they could assert their domination by 'aerial bombardment'. They were frightened of the 'Vietnam syndrome' and did not want to use ground troops.

Initially, the NATO generals believed that Serbia would cave in after a few days of aerial bombardment.

But now as they recognise their own miscalculation, they have begun preparations for an all-out war.

Invasion

According to the *Observer*, 80,000 troops have already been earmarked for an invasion.

The paper's American correspondent, Ed Vulliamy, claims that "military men are privately saying they are in favour of an all-out war to ensure that the world is not troubled by Serbia for another generation".

The chorus for war was initially led by the liberal wing of the establishment. Newspapers like the *Irish Times* and the *Guardian* in Britain championed the conflict as a noble war.

But as pressure to carry on with the madness grows, the right are taking over.

They see any set back for NATO as dangerous because it will weaken the dominance of the US and the Western powers.

This is exactly what happened in Vietnam. There the US claimed that they fought a war for democracy.

They even denied any colonial

ambitions by pointing out there was no oil or wealthy resources in Vietnam.

But as the Falklands and Vietnam wars showed, imperialist powers are often driven not by the prospect of immediate material gains but rather by a fear their 'credibility' will be damaged in eyes of their rivals.

Horror

They go to the utmost lengths to inflict the most terrible horror – so that their military and economic power remains.

In Vietnam that meant dropping more bombs on a tiny country than all the bombs of WW2.

In the Balkans it will mean inflicting even worse bloodshed and risking a wider conflict.

But Vietnam also showed that the generals can be stopped by a mass anti-war movement.

At the start of WW1, the German socialist Karl Liebknecht, proclaimed that 'The main enemy is at home'.

That spirit must again encourage a mass anti-war movement throughout the Western powers.

NATO's hypocrisy over the refugees

The CIA chief George Tennant warned Clinton before the war that it would produce a refugee crisis that was worse than which occurred during the Bosnian war.

But NATO made no preparation for humanitarian relief until after the war began. Even when they rushed in some relief, they



Over 400 people marched against the war in Dublin.

spent £1,000 on bombs and military hardware for every £1 on food and shelter for refugees.

Cover

NATO then tried to cover up their hypocrisy by saying they would take refugees into Europe and the US.

But almost immediately this

caused problems because it ran up against their own racist policy of building a 'fortress Europe'.

The only time Blair disagreed with Clinton was when he told him that Britain would not take in any refugees.

Clinton in turn announced that the 20,000 destined for the US were going to be confined Guantanamo Bay, the US occupied zone in Cuba.

The NATO generals want to keep the vast bulk of the refugees in Kosovo.

That way they will be able to pressgang young men into the KLA, which they want to use as a proxy army of the US.

Camps

In Afghanistan, refugees who fled to Pakistan were virtually imprisoned in camps until they agreed to join the mujadeen which was assisted by the CIA.

It's only socialists and the wider anti-war movement who say that the borders of all countries should be open to refugees and they should be given the choice of where to go during the conflict.

Mass protests across Europe

The Irish and British media are blocking out reports of the anti-war movements across the world.

Although Ireland is officially neutral, Ahern has come out openly for NATO.

He is being backed by the two main newspaper groups, the *Independent* and the *Irish Times*. Both fill their pages with pro-war propaganda and give little space to the anti-war movement.

You would not know from the media there are mass protests across Europe over NATO's bombing.

Italy: Tens of thousands have marched and one demonstration stoned a NATO airbase. Two weeks ago, 70,000 marched through Rome.

Germany: 20,000 marched in Berlin over Easter. A special conference of the Green Party has been called in May to protest at the role of the Green Foreign Minister Joachim Fisher. Huge opposition also exists in the SPD.

Greece: Protests have erupted in every Greek city. Two weeks ago thousands clashed with police outside the Suda naval base.

Britain: 5,000 have marched in London and opinion polls show that one in three oppose the war.

United States: Thousands have taken part in protests in New York, San Francisco, Chicago and Houston.

**STOP THE WAR
NATO OUT OF THE BALKANS
March to US Embassy, Dublin
Saturday May 8th**

Assemble: 3pm, Stephens Green,

(Traitors Gate, opposite Stephen's Green shopping centre)

Speakers include:

**John de Courcy Ireland (CND), Eamonn McCann (SWP),
Roger Cole (Peace, Solidarity & Neutrality Alliance),
Ivania Bacik (Trinity Professor of Law)**

Ignored by media:

30,000 ON DEMO AGAINST LOW PAY

"THE minimum wage of £3.60 an hour is too low". This was the message that came from a 30,000 strong demonstration in Newcastle Upon Tyne.

The demonstration was organised by UNISON but there were many delegations from other unions as well as students and unemployed groups.

One demonstrator summed up the mood, "Student fees, pressure on social welfare recipients, and a low minimum wage - it's all part of New Labour's policies and we should fight together on all the

issues'.

A coachload of trade unionists from Belfast and Derry joined the march carrying placards, "Catholic and Protestant at Workers United from a £5 per hour minimum wage".

The delegation carried banners from the Derry Trades Council and the Fire Brigade Union.

Raymond, a civil servant from Belfast said, "At a time when the politicians of Northern Ireland seem they can never reach agreement on anything, it's important that ordinary people have an opportunity to concentrate on the issues that affect us."

Tony Armstrong an Fire Brigade Union

delegate who also travelled from Northern Ireland said, "It's really good to see so many people coming over here to fight for a decent minimum wage".

The march took two hours to pass Newcastle with onlookers cheering and motorists blasting their horns.

HOW LABOUR SOLD US SHORT



"I HOPE that Blair is watching this march because this is only the beginning". This is how Nicola, an assistant branch secretary from UNISON in Sunderland summed up the mood of bitterness against New Labour.

Blair's minimum wage legislation discriminates against the young by establishing a £3

per hour figure for those aged between 18-21.

For many students this is a double blow.

After the introduction of fees they will live in poverty for three years and be in debt for decades.

Labour says the country cannot afford a higher minimum wage - but there is no problems finding extra money to finance a bombing campaign in the Balkans.

As one teacher put it,

"They find money for bombs but not for looking after people".

The low minimum wage also contradicts Blair millennium promise to eliminate poverty in Britain.

One in four children are in a family whose main earner is living below the poverty line.

Yet Blair bows to the pressure of big business and brings in a minimum wage that is lower than Southern Ireland.

The Hillsborough agreement flops

THE Hillsborough Declaration of Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern has added to the crisis in the peace process.

The declaration caved into Unionist demands for IRA decommissioning before the setting up of an executive.

It demanded a specific date for the handing over or destruction of some IRA weapons and a 'day of reconciliation' before the new Stormont government could be set up.

Sinn Fein, the PUP, the Women's Coalition and the Alliance Party all rejected the declaration when talks resumed at Stormont after the Easter break.

Gerry Adams rightly asked Secretary of State Mo Mowlam if

the declaration was to replace the Good Friday Agreement, since it represents a change in what was agreed 12 months ago.

The Agreement does not require Sinn Fein to achieve IRA decommissioning before taking seats in the government, only to use whatever influence they have to achieve decommissioning.

Process

Similar peace processes in South Africa and Palestine did not require decommissioning by the ANC and PLO.

There are still thousands of guns legally held by Unionists in the North, many of them in gun clubs set up by the notorious B Specials reserve police

force after they were disbanded in the early 1970's.

It is the utmost hypocrisy for the British state which in the last year has fired dozens of cruise missiles in the Balkans, Sudan and Iraq to demand the hand-over over comparatively tiny amount of IRA weapons.

David Trimble says that "it is now time for Sinn Fein to stand up to the hardliners in their ranks".

But the crisis in the peace process is caused by Trimble using the issue of IRA disarmament to shore up his crumbling support.

Holding Unionism together

THERE ARE deep divisions within Unionism, caught between accepting the need for some power-sharing with Catholic parties, to have stability, and the traditional stand of anti-Catholic hatred on which the Unionist state was built.

For the hardline DUP and much of the Unionist Party grassroots, Sinn Fein being part of the executive without first announcing their surrender is unacceptable.

Hatred of the militant section of the Catholic population which supported the IRA, is the cause around which all unionists can unite.

This is why the issue is so important for David Trimble as he struggles to hold his own Unionist Party together.

The British and Irish governments, far from standing up to these sectarian bigots, have repeatedly caved into their demands. The setting up of the executive has been repeatedly postponed.

Mo Mowlam was quick to deny that the Agreement was being rewritten but she admits that the governments have no strategy

other than to try to find a way of fudging the issue and muddling through.

The danger now is that the process continues to drift as tension builds around the marching season and the European elections in June.

The British and Irish governments' refusal to stand up to the Unionists has strengthened the hand of the hard Right.

Sectarians

Even if an eventual agreement is patched together, the events over the last few weeks show that it will not eradicate sectarians in Northern Ireland.

For that to happen we need to see an upsurge of working class struggle from below.

If that struggle is linked to a set of politics which challenge loyalist myths that Catholics are inferior, while also fighting against the republican argument that all Catholics, whether left wing or right wing, must stick together - then we can lay the basis for real class unity.

STOP THE BOMBING...STOP THE BOMBING...STOP

WAR
IN
EUROPE

Media spreads lies to cover NATO brutality

THE MEDIA is being used to build up support for NATO's all out invasion of the Balkans.

The British Defence secretary George Robertson even had the gall to say, "The Serbs tell lies about us. We will go on telling the truth about them".

The reality is that NATO and the press are lying to justify their bloodshed.

Britain's air commodore, told a news conference on 29 March that five prominent Kosovan opposition leaders had been put to death.

Two days later US diplomatic sources had to admit, "We believe they are still alive." One of them has been shown on

television, after his alleged death, meeting with Milosovic.

★ After Nato attacked three convoys and killed over 70 Kosovan refugees, they initially they claimed that the Serbs had bombed the convoys.

They now say they hit one vehicle have apologised for the 'mistake'. But they still refuse to release video footage of their claim that they were attacking Serb forces who were burning Albanian

ians.

Even then a NATO spokesman said, "One bomb appeared to be seduced off the target at the final stages."

★ British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook reported that Serbs had executed 20 teachers in the village of Goden.

But the village of Goden only has a population of 200. It doesn't have a school large enough to have 20 teachers.

In the First World War the media told tales of German troops marching with Belgium babies on their bayonets.

...In the Gulf War a claimed to be a nurse, broadcast a story that Iraqis had ripped pre-mature babies out of incubators and taken the machines with them.

All these stories were complete fantasy.

As NATO's war increases, the media will lie and lie to cover the brutality.



Passenger train bombed by NATO

Damage

★ After NATO's bombed the centre of the Kosovan capital, Pristina, they tried to claim the damage had been done by the Serbs. Later they had to admit that their bombs had murdered at least ten civil-

Stop Partnership for Peace

FIANNA Fail have used the Balkan War to Bring Ireland closer to NATO.

Fianna Fail's 1997 Election Manifesto stated that "We oppose Irish participation in NATO itself, in NATO-led organisations such as the Partnership for Peace, or in the Western European Union beyond observer status".

Yet just a week after the NATO bombing began, Aherne did a U-turn and announced that Ireland was joining Partnership for Peace.

Army officers have openly intervened by saying the army is tired and demoralised and the PFP would be a much need pick-up.

Authority

PFP involves an agreement negotiated directly with NATO. It operates under the authority of the North Atlantic Council, NATO's supreme body chaired by NATO's Secretary General.

At its launch in 1994 the PFP was hailed by NATO as playing an important role [in the] enlargement of NATO". Clinton proclaimed in November 1996 that the PFP was "a path to full NATO membership for some and a strong lasting link to the alliance for all".

In 1997 PFP was "enhanced" to include peace enforcement, crisis management, "much more robust, complex military-to-military co-operation".

"Peace enforcement" has become the new catch cry for colonial missions. One of the first "peace enforcement missions" was to Somalia in 1995.

US troops claimed they were trying to stop a conflict between local warlords but they soon turned their guns on innocent civilians.

By the time they left 10,000 ordinary Somalis had been murdered.

PFP is a misnomer. Its agenda is not to secure peace but to boost

the arms industry as NATO tries to expand eastwards.

The Clinton Administration foreign aid submission to the US Congress last year last year argued that the PFP budget was specifically designed to prepare countries for NATO membership by supporting "acquisition of NATO compatible equipment."

PFP membership will require Ireland to acquire Standardisation Agreements with NATO to ensure that Irish military equipment has "interoperability" with NATO's.

Ireland is about to provide a few million more to defence contractors:

It has issued a £40m tender

for 40 armoured personnel carriers last April.

This money could have been used instead to fully equip the Tallaght hospital.

Fianna Fail say that joining Partnership for Peace will not affect Irish neutrality.

But several PFP neutrals like Austria and Sweden are reconsidering their neutrality.

NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe already referred to the "neutrals" in the PFP as "former neutrals".

The Irish Government has always been a US ally. Now as war breaks out in Europe, it is getting ready to link up with NATO plans for dominance.

Ireland's war profiteers

WHILE BRITAIN and America are the main sellers of arms around the world, Ireland has its own businessmen who are happy to make money out of bloodshed.

Over a 150 Irish companies have ongoing contracts with NATO. These are just a few firms that are making money out of the war in the Balkans.

■ **Moog Ltd Ireland.** The company makes the defence control system for the B2 bombers flying over Kosovo. The Cork plant also makes the defence systems for Nato's battle tanks and anti aircraft guns.

■ **In Northern Ireland Shorts** makes military equipment including some of the missiles being dropped on Yugoslavia. But Shorts does not just sell to NATO it has satisfied customers in the repres-

sive regimes of South Korea, Malaysia, and Kuwait amongst others.

■ **Analog Devices in Limerick** produces components for F16 US fighter Aircraft

■ **DATA Device Corporation in Cork** makes computer products for US Fighters.

■ **Timony Holdings in Navan** developed armed personnel carriers for Kuwaiti army and light tanks to the US military.

A bonanza for arms dealers

EASTERN EUROPE shows how Partnership for Peace will be used to drag Ireland into NATO.

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia were invited to join PFP. Politicians argued that new arrangements were needed after the ending of the Cold War.

Yet these countries have now joined NATO, giving the military alliance a border with Russia for the first time. Within weeks of their joining, NATO began its bombing campaign of Serbia.

NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe has provided a bonanza for arms dealers. These are estimates of up to £80million being spent to modernise the armies of Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland alone.

The arms industry's lobbying effort in the region has been even more blatant and aggressive than their campaigns in the US.

The New York Times reported, in April 1997 that Norman Augustine the former boss of defence contractors Lockheed Martin, toured Eastern Europe "drumming up business and supporting the largest possible expansion of NATO."

In Romania Augustine even promised to support that nation's bid for NATO membership only if Romania purchased an £82 million radar system from his company.

STOP THE BOMBING...STOP THE BOMBING...STOP THE BOMBING

Kosovo, Nato and the KLA

Faced with NATO's war against Serbia and the suffering of the Kosovan Albanians, some have reacted by championing the cause of Kosovan independence.

In a recent letter in the Observer, signed by ex British Labour leader Michael Foot called on NATO "to recognise Kosovo's right to independence". It declared, "The first priority is to arm the KLA without delay."

The Kosovo Liberation Army undoubtedly enjoys considerable support among Kosovan Albanians. Unfortunately its leadership is pursuing a strategy that will make a mockery of Kosovan self determination.

The Serb security forces were not responsible for all the atrocities during the small scale counter-insurgency war going on in Kosovo before NATO's bombing campaign. Journalists sympathetic such as the Guardian's Jonathan Steele, reported that the KLA was targeting members of the Serb minority.



Tony 'bomber' Blair

the mid-1970s the Iraqi Ba'ath regime was closely allied to Moscow and in conflict with the pro-Western regime of the Shah of Iran. Washington and Tehran were therefore happy to back the Iraqi Kurds, at least until the Shah made a deal with the Iraqi regime.

Then in 1978-9 the Shah was overthrown, and the West looked to Saddam Hussein in Iraq as a bulwark against the Iranian Revolution. The US supplied arms to Saddam, which he used not merely to wage war on Iran, but also to butcher the Kurds.

But during the 1991 Gulf War between the West and Saddam, Washington and London suddenly rediscovered the Iraqi Kurds and encouraged them to rebel against Saddam. After the war the Kurds were forced to flee from Saddam's revenge to the far north of the country, where a Western protectorate was established.

Here the Iraqi Kurdish nationalist organisations, the KDP and the PUK, have degenerated into a mafia, living off the black market trade between Turkey and Iraq, and balancing politically between Saddam and the West. Shamefully, they collaborated with the recent Turkish military offensive against the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), which is fighting for the liberation of the Kurdish minority in Turkey.

This is the fate which awaits the Kosovan Albanians should their leaders continue their present strategy of allying with NATO and the other Western powers.

The Kosovan Albanians have the right to national self determination, just like all the other peoples of the Balkans. But that does not mean that socialists should support the KLA.

Nationalist movements which allow themselves to become subordinated to the designs of the Great Powers cease to be independent political forces. All the signs are that the KLA is becoming an instrument of NATO.

Backing the KLA does not offer a soft option. This is NATO's war. Those who want the killing to end must campaign for NATO to stop the bombing and get out of the Balkans.

—ALEX CALLINICOS

Nationalists

Instead of allying with the powerful democratic opposition to Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, the KLA sought the backing of right wing Albanian nationalists.

They trained on land belonging to Sali Berisha, who was dictator of Albania until he was brought down by a popular rising two years ago.

Now the KLA is looking towards NATO. "Only NATO Can Save Us", read the slogan on a recent Kosovan demonstration in Britain.

KLA leaders are in regular contact by satellite telephone with Robin Cook and other Western leaders. A KLA spokesman told the *Financial Times* that "the KLA is also helping NATO by supplying information, including bomb damage reports."

In all likelihood the United States and its allies have already begun to arm and train the KLA, just as they did the Croat and Bosnian Muslim forces in the mid-1990s, even though they continue to regard Kosovo as legally part of Serbia.

These developments are likely to bring yet more disaster on the Kosovan Albanians.

A weak national liberation movement such as the KLA, confronted with a stronger opponent, is often tempted to rely on the support of the Great Powers. The effect is to turn the movement into a play thing of these powers, to be backed or abandoned as it suits them.

The Iraqi Kurds are a particularly tragic example of this. In

PROTESTS CAN TOPPLE MILOSEVIC

S L O B O D A N M I L O S E V I C —but by his own people, not by NATO bombers.

People in Serbia like those in Croatia, Bosnia and across Yugoslavia are divided along class lines between rich and poor. Milosevic has not only been the enemy of other ethnic groups, but the enemy of Serbian workers.

Threatened

Twice in the 1990s people in Serbia rose up in mass movements which threatened to oust Milosevic.

These movements, in 1991 and 1996, showed the potential for an alternative to the vile nationalism of Milosevic and the other Balkan leaders.

In March 1991 on the eve of Yugoslavia's descent into bloody civil war there was a wave of mass protests on the streets of Serbia's capital, Belgrade.

Tens of thousands of students and workers protested against government repression and cen-

WAR ON KURDS

TURKEY PART of the NATO alliance, launched an other assault on the Kurdish minority in northern Iraq, killing over 40 people.

Tulay Kocak, the editor of the socialist paper *Workers Democracy*, is going on trial for writing articles in defence of the Kurds against Turkish state's repression.

★ Fax Calls for Tulay Kocak's release to the Turkish minister of Justice on 0090 312 417 3954

★ Send messages of support for Tulay Kocak and donations towards the cost of her defence to Committee of defend Turkish Socialists, c/o PO BOX 1648, Dublin 8.

...the high point of the struggle up to a quarter of a million people, according to some estimates, occupied the city centre and brought Belgrade to a halt for five days. Protesters chanted, "Slobo must go".

Milosevic feared he would suffer the same fate as Romania's Ceausescu who was toppled by revolution in 1989. Milosevic ordered army tanks to crush the movement. Troops killed several

He was also forced to make some concessions.

The head of Serbian state TV, who had peddled Milosevic's propaganda, resigned. Some 600 demonstrators were released from prison.

Disastrously the biggest opposition, the Serbian Renewal Movement was led by Vuk Draskovic—even more of a national chauvinist than Milosevic himself. But Milosevic

Opposition during the Bosnian war

During the long years of the Bosnian war there was also opposition to Milosevic. In 1993, at the height of nationalist frenzy during the Bosnian war, there were strikes in Serbia and Croatia, anti-war demonstrations in Belgrade, and Bosnian Serb soldiers at Banja Luka mutinied.

Milosevic was nearly toppled again in 1996. Mass protests in Serbia took place every day for 100 days from November 1996.

Hundreds of thousands took to the streets. The protests began against election rigging. But they also reflected the wider discontent with the regime.

A third of the population lived in poverty, inflation hit a rate of 100 percent a year, and half the work force was unemployed.

Protestors

One demonstration drew an estimated 250,000. A newspaper reported "Young and old throw eggs and firecrackers and occasionally stones at the government buildings and boo and hiss their president. "Slobo is Saddam" they chant.

Sections of the armed forces said they would not attack protesters.

But the opposition coalition Zajedno ("Together") was headed by the right wing nationalists Vuk Draskovic and Zoran Djindjic.

Djindjic had close ties with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, who was responsible for bloody atrocities in the Bosnian war. These nationalists did



Protest against Milosevic

not want workers' opposition to Britain and the US only backed sition in February 1997 when Milosevic's regime could survive.

The opposition leaders were ab ing elite.

Vuk Draskovic, for example, prime minister of Serbia. Milosev all opposition to his regime, howe

In May last year the *Financial T* "worker union began to weaken M

"In recent months across Serb and transport workers and the Z factories have had partial stop reported.

Now the NATO bombing h Milosevic could not. It has drawn out opposition.

TO INNOCENT CIVILIANS...



'S NOT BOMBS

PLE

VIC



The stark reality of NATO's humanitarianism

also faced workers' opposition. Laura Silber in the *Financial Times* said in 1991, "Labour unrest is the greatest threat to the Serbian government." Even as late as April 1991, as Yugoslavia's bloody war got underway, some 700,000 workers went on strike in Serbia to demand higher wages. But tragically there was no socialist leadership which could unite workers' anger over living conditions and wages with opposition to nationalism.

For a socialist federation

during an war



test against Milosevic in 1996
 vant workers' opposition to the regime. Britain and the US only backed the Serbian opposition in February 1997 when they were certain Milosevic's regime would survive. The opposition leaders were absorbed into the ruling elite. For example, Vuk Draskovic, who was a deputy minister of Serbia, Milosevic could not silence his opposition to his regime, however. The *Financial Times* described how in May last year the Serbian government began to weaken Milosevic's support. "In recent months across Serbia teachers, health transport workers and the Zastava arms manufacturers have held partial stoppages," the paper reported. Now the NATO bombing has achieved what Milosevic could not: it has drowned out opposition.

The effect of Western intervention in the region has always been to encourage nationalist tension never to break it down.



Leon Trotsky

For a century revolutionary socialists have put forward the alternative of workers' unity across national boundaries. The Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky reported as a journalist from the Balkans in 1912-13.

He wrote of the terrible legacy left by the imperialist powers of Russia, France, Germany and Britain all competing to expand and control access to rich trade routes in the region. Trotsky talked of the "national diversity of the Balkans" being converted into "a melee of petty states" by European diplomacy.

He goes on, "Each separately was entangled in diplomatic bonds and counterposed to the rest and the whole lot were condemned to helplessness in relation to the great powers".

The many treaties negotiated during the wars could not last, Trotsky said because "the new boundary lines have been drawn across the living bodies of nations that have been lacerated, bled white and exhausted".

He argued that to concentrate solely on the nationalist question without regard to the wider issues of imperialism would lead to disaster.

That is why, he said the solution of the national question had to be linked to the unity of all Balkan peoples.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917 revolutionaries from across the world met to discuss tactics and strategy. The 1920 Congress included in its manifesto a section dealing with the Balkans.

It said that the great powers had fought the war under the slogan of the "defence of small nations" but that their interests had led to "the total destruction and enslavement of the Balkan peoples, victors and vanquished alike."

"Imperialism has created a series of smaller national states. It rules them through banks and monopolies and condemns them to unbearable economic and national hardships, endless conflicts and, bloody collisions."

In the same spirit the Bulgarian revolutionary Kaba-kchiev argued that, although there were over one million Bulgarians divided off from Bulgaria by imperialism, it was necessary to go beyond nationalism. "It was nationalism that led the Bulgarian people

through two terrible disasters in the wars of 1912 and 1918.

"The same applies to Serbia and the only way out is a Balkan socialist revolution." The great powers have ripped the region apart and prepared the ground for mass murder and terror.

Revolutionaries have been the voice of sanity and class unity across borders.

Trotsky argued that Balkan unity could be achieved by two different ways:

"Either from above, by expanding one Balkan state and at the expense of the weaker ones - this is the road of wars of extermination and oppression of weak nations." The alternative Trotsky said was "from below through the people themselves coming together - this is the road of revolution."

Such an analysis is even more relevant today. Serbians cannot be free as long as their country oppresses Kosovo.

Kosovo cannot be free if it becomes a pawn in NATO's game and its liberation is taken up cynically by the US, Britain and the rest.

Serbians have to support the right of Kosovan Albanians to self-determination, to decide their own future, and Kosovan Albanians have to be for harmony with Serbians and for an end to ethnic cleansing.

Century of slaughter

A system that breeds bloody wars

**WAR
IN
EUROPE**



"I have seen refugees in Africa, but when you see crying refugees with shattered lives in central Europe at the end of the 20th century, it almost beggars belief."

They are the words of a BBC reporter about Kosovo.

The NATO bombing and its horrific consequences show that the 20th century is ending as it began-punctuated by war.

The century opened with promises from the leaders of the world's empires about a new dawn of peace and prosperity.

But every decade for the next 100 years we have seen ordinary men and women slaughtered, maimed, and psychologically shattered by the effects of war.

Millions have also died from the side effects of war-from disease, famine and the mass migration of refugees.

Each time the world's powers and their warmongers in the press present their goals in the most noble of lights.

They say their wars are against tyranny and evil, and for democracy and liberation.

The reasons change over the years. But each time lies are pumped out to mask the truth of what all wars are about-power, control, and the ability of the world's rulers to carve up the globe and make profit.

And in every war the rich and powerful of each nation send ordinary working class soldiers to die for them.

CAPITALISM IS the most bloody society in history. From its beginning capitalism has spawned wars for colonies, gold, slaves, oil, opium, cheap labour and "strategic advantage".

Competition between rival capitalists drives them ever onwards in the pursuit of profit. This is not a peaceful process. As rivals go bust and capitalist concerns get bigger, they increasingly rely on using the state and the military machine for their own advantage.

The 20th century has been the most bloody because, alongside the competition for markets and resources, capitalism also creates the technology and the weaponry of death on an enormous scale.

The First World War of 1914-18 was a war for colonies.

Britain ruled a third of the world, while France controlled half of Africa and Indo-China.

The German ruling class came later to the race, and so had only a few colonies and wanted more.

The British government knew it could only get ordinary people to back war if it convinced them terrible horrors were being committed against innocent people. It did everything to demonise the German ruling class and its army.

There were lies in the press about German soldiers in Belgium raping nuns and mutilating children.

A committee of lawyers and "historians", headed by former US ambassador Lord Bryce, stated:

"Murder, lust and pillage prevailed over many parts of Belgium on a scale unparalleled in any war between civilised nations during the last three centuries."



VIETNAM a war for Imperialism dequised as a war for democracy

Later investigations could not corroborate a single story.

The committee's findings were based on statements from unnamed Belgian refugees who had not witnessed these events and all the statements mysteriously "disappeared" from the Home Office.

At the same time the government censored pictures of dead troops, news of defeats and the reality of the trenches.

Ten million were left dead by the First World War.

A new international order was declared by the victorious powers-Britain, France and the US.

They said it was the war to end all wars.

But within 20 years the world was torn up again on an even bigger scale by the Second World War of 1939-45.

A massive slump in the 1930s intensified economic competition between the world's big powers.

Today the war is celebrated as a war against fascism and Hitler's dictatorship in Germany.

Ordinary soldiers were rightly motivated by the fight against Hitler and the Nazis. They saw it as a war for democracy.

But the world's rulers fought for their own interests.

The British ruling class fought to maintain the British Empire, particularly in the Middle and Far East.

The US wanted to replace Britain as the world's dominant power, and wanted to fight off competition from the Japanese ruling class in the Pacific.

The rulers of Japan wanted colonies in Indonesia, Malaya and South East Asia for their oil supplies.

The result was 50 million dead.

If the great powers were interested in defeating Nazism, why did they not bomb the railroads to the gas chambers?

Why did they not allow Jews fleeing Hitler free entry into Britain?

One of the final acts of the Second World War was the US dropping an atomic bomb on an already beaten Japan which the US knew was about to surrender.

THE END of the Second World War ushered in the era of the Cold War. Competition between the old Soviet Union and the West led to more war.

Within five years of the end of the Second World War there was war in Korea.

The US said it was a war against communism and for freedom as the country entered the McCarthy era of witch hunts against anyone on the left.

In reality the US and the Soviet Union fought out a bloody episode of the Cold War at the expense of the people of both North and South Korea.

The US used saturation bombing and the chemical weapon, napalm, in Korea.

Around two million civilians were killed in Korea, and 100,000 children were left orphaned.

Initially the military authorities were slow to introduce censorship.

One shaking US soldier was reported saying, "Are you correspondents telling the people back home the truth?"

"Are you telling them that we have nothing to fight with and that it is an utterly useless war?"

The army quickly moved to rule out any criticism of decisions made by United Nations commanders or the conduct of allied soldiers on the battlefield.

The Korean War was quickly followed by the Vietnam War.

Again the US said it was a war against dictatorship for democracy and civilisation.

In the name of "civilisation" the US dropped more bombs on Vietnam than it did during the whole of the Second World War.

The US rained down bombs on Vietnamese civilians and sprayed chemical weapons napalm and Agent Orange over fields and villages.

One million died in Vietnam. Another million died when the US spread its bombing to Cambodia. Some 55,000 US troops lost their lives.

AT THE end of the Cold War in 1989 we were again promised a new world of progress and peace.

Yet within a year Saddam Hussein was proclaimed the "new Hitler".

The press fed out stories about how Saddam's army raped air hostesses in Kuwait and ripped babies from hospital incubators.

Only a handful of people challenged these stories.

Later it was revealed that they were all lies. Children did die from the allied bombing raids and are still dying as a result of sanctions.

The multi-billion pound arms business guzzles resources whilst babies die for lack of nourishment, the old and the sick go without care, and the homeless

and the poor suffer.

The century has seen the repeat of a terrible cycle.

Lies are poured out to excuse the killing. Then a few years later it is often hard to find anyone to defend the slaughter.

Today many politicians, historians and military figures say the First World War was senseless.

It is difficult to find defenders of Thatcher's war in the Falklands. Many people now say the Gulf War of 1991 was a war for oil.

But at the time the government and the press whipped up war fever, denouncing anyone who opposed those wars.

It is not good enough to oppose wars years after they have finished. Opposition must be immediate.

There is also another side to the terrible cycle of war.

Each time those who fight are hailed as heroes, only to be abandoned once they are no longer necessary.

Many soldiers of the First World War went from the trenches to the dole queues or begging in the streets.

Vietnam veterans were left rotting in dilapidated hospitals and today those who suffer from Gulf War syndrome are ignored.

Capitalism breeds war. But it also breeds revulsion at war.

Opposition to the Vietnam War in the 1960s helped radicalise a generation.

Today we must do everything in our power to oppose NATO's war in the Balkans but also to tie that opposition to the system that breeds war, and to the fight for a better world that can end war altogether.

in my view

The legacy of Trotsky

TONY CLIFF'S book *Trotsky after Trotskyism* provides a brilliant explanation of developments in world capitalism since World War II. It attacks the way key strands of the Marxist tradition were obliterated after Stalin's rise to power in Russia.

At the end of WW2, Stalin's dominance of Communist parties was so complete that only handfuls of socialists rejected his outlook. Most of these socialists had split into a number of competing tendencies after Trotsky's murder in 1940.

One of the reasons for the disarray was that, although Trotsky had fought hard against the horrors of Stalinism, he made a number of mistaken forecasts about the impact of the war.

Trotsky had believed that Russia was a 'deformed workers state' and that Stalin would not outlast the war. He also thought that capitalism in the West would hurtle into renewed crisis creating conditions for outbreaks of revolutions. This, he hoped would coincide with the working classes of the Third World taking the place of the bourgeoisie in leading the fight against colonialism.

Yet not only did Stalin outlast the conflict but he extended his grip over Eastern Europe.

Capitalism in the West did not enter a new crisis — instead its Golden Age of sustained economic growth began.

And the working classes in the Third World did not take the lead in anti-imperialist uprisings. Instead, these revolts tended to be led by relatively small groups of revolutionary intellectuals.

The question which confronted socialists then was how to regard Eastern Europe and other countries such as Ghana or Egypt which proclaimed themselves socialist.

Some such as the forerunners of the Socialist Party, insisted on sticking with the letter of Trotsky's earlier arguments and regarded these countries as 'deformed workers' states'.

Active

Tony Cliff emerged as the major Marxist theoretician who challenged this view. He argued that, since the working class had clearly played no active role in its own 'emancipation', these regimes had nothing to do with socialism.

Moreover, as these countries were similar in their social structure to Russia, this meant that Trotsky's notion of a 'degenerated workers' state' was mistaken.

Instead Cliff argued that a form of state capitalism prevailed where a ruling class collectively owned the means of production and exploited workers.

In effect, the Stalinist regimes were different in form, but no different in content, from those in the West.

Marx had defined capitalism's two defining features as anarchy in the marketplace combined with tyranny in the workplace. Competition meant that the system was driven to 'accumulate for accumulation sake'.

Russia competed militarily with the West and Stalin's goal was to reach military parity. But this could only take place at the expense of a nightmare existence for the Russian people who were forced to channel resources to the military-industrial complex.

Ultimately, the Russian economy simply could not compete on the same terms and this led to the collapse of Stalin's system.

Model

In the Third World, the revolutions which broke the grip of the old colonial powers were led by the local middle classes. Many copied Stalin's model of state capitalism because it seemed to offer a successful path to development in the fifties and sixties.

When the USSR collapsed, the former 'communist rulers' of these countries shifted easily to adopting a model of development promoted by the IMF.

In the West the permanent arms economy that developed during the Cold War was a major contributory factor in the long post-war boom. But Cliff predicted that the contradictions in the system would re-assert themselves in the type of economic crises we are again witnessing.

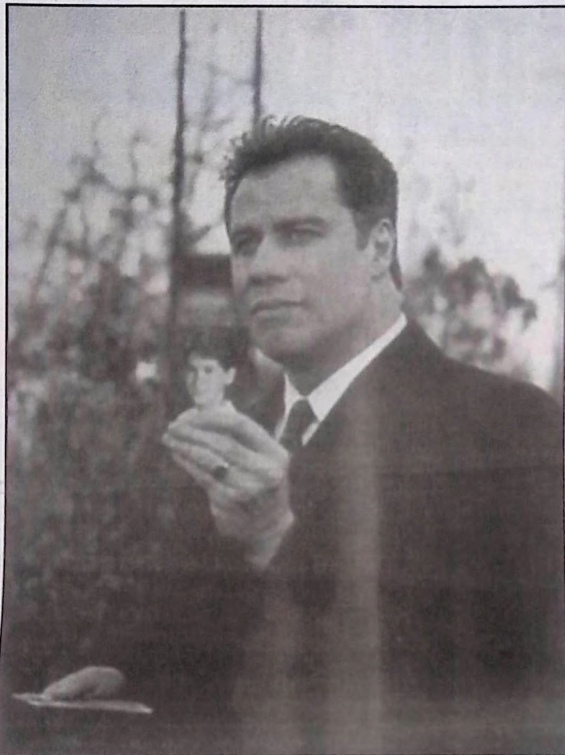
Cliff's whole outlook was to reject blind faith in favour of a scientific approach to Marxist theory. By doing this he helped to repair links in the intellectual chain broken during the Stalin era. As we enter a new period of wars and revolutions, an understanding of the real Marxist tradition is more vital than ever. Cliff's book is essential for anyone who wants to understand the wider traditions of the Socialist Workers Party.

Trotsky after Trotskyism. Available from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8. Price: £4:50 +75p postage.

SIMON BASKETTER

film

An ambulance chaser beats the multi-nationals



TEN YEARS ago, a group of families in the American town of Woburn, Massachusetts won major damages from two multinationals.

The companies—Beatrice Foods and WR Grace—were found responsible for an outbreak of leukaemia which was killing local children.

Two local subsidiaries of the multinationals had dumped chemicals which seeped into the town's drinking water, causing widespread illness.

A Civil Action, starring John Travolta, brings the Woburn case to the big screen.

Travolta plays the part of Jan Schlichtman, the lawyer who represented the families.

In focusing on Schlichtman, the film deals with one of the media's favourite bogeymen in

by DAVE
McDONAGH

recent years—the "ambulance chasers".

In a black humoured send-up of the stereotype, Schlichtman walks by the scene of a traffic accident handing out business cards to the bruised victims.

Enemy

But the film turns the myth on its head. According to the stereotype, the ambulance chasers are often seen as the main enemy.

They manipulate ordinary people into making spurious personal injury claims against innocent companies and government bodies.

The film certainly itself portrays Schlichtman as a parasite, with a champagne lifestyle funded by his clients' misery.

But the multinationals are clearly shown as the main cause of that misery.

It shows how the legal system is weighted against working class people and how people's lives are valued according to their earning power rather than their worth as human beings.

Schlichtman lives by the motto that the best client to have is a 40-year old professional white male, cut down in his prime.

The most worthless, he reasons, is a dead child.

Refuses

He initially refuses to take the Woburn case but changes his mind when he realises how much he can win from the big companies.

It is a pity that the film concentrates so much on the heroic lawyer while the families themselves become characters.

Some of the best scenes involve one of the townspeople who knows the truth but is afraid to talk because he still works for one of the companies.

He is torn between anger—because the contamination has brought illness to his own family—and fear because he depends on the company for his livelihood.

But ultimately the townspeople are never seen to rise above an air of quiet dignity, while John Travolta struts his stuff on their behalf.

book

Beckett's games are worth waiting for

SAMUEL BECKETT'S exhilarating *Endgame* has returned to the Gate for a limited run.

Beckett began *Endgame* in early 1955. It was the first major play he produced after the international acclaim he received for the *Waiting for Godot*, a play that changed the course of Western theatre forever.

Haunted

Engame is preoccupied with slowness of an approaching end of life and haunted by the tiny practical details of waiting for someone to die.

All Beckett's plays were banned for performance in Ireland but with *Endgame* he also had to endure the wrath of the English censure.

The main problem the English censure had with *Endgame* lay in the 'prayer scene' in which Hamm orders Clov and Nagg to pray to God.

Hamm concludes from the lack of response from the Godhead: "The bastard! He doesn't exist".

Beckett refused to consent to the suppression or the mutilation of the scene and the controversy continued for months while Beckett dug his heels in.

Eventually the authorities conceded that if the word "bastard" was changed the production might be allowed to go ahead.

Beckett then made what he termed a 'noble concession' and offered them

"SWINE" in a moment of gush and that's my last word on the matter... I refuse to play along any further with these licensing grocers."

Beckett was a thorn in the side of the establishment for most of his career.

He often regretted that his non-didactic approach to writing did not allow him to write overtly political plays.

But he always considered himself as a left-winger.

He was a member of the French resistance during the Second World War and defended numerous Eastern bloc writers who were imprisoned by Stalinist regimes for their politics.

Critics

His one resolutely political play *Catastrophe*, written for Vaclav Havel, was accused by critics of being politically 'ambiguous'.

Beckett angrily retorted; "There's no ambiguity there at all. He's saying: you bastards, you haven't finished me yet."

He was horrified when in 1969 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature and immediately went into hiding.

He refused to attend the ceremony or give the Nobel lecture. Instead he sent his close friend Jerome Lindon.

He wrote that Lindon "is very kindly facing the turnips in my stead on that Nobloodybeldamday".

by SINEAD KENNEDY



where we stand
Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system.

The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion.

To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:

The SWP welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class.

We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry.

We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army.

Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class.

Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states.

We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:

Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it.

We support the leaders when they fight but oppose them when they betray workers. We stand for independent rank and file action.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:

To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWP aims to build such a party in Ireland.

Scaffolder's Strike

Scaffolders stand up to intimidation from building bosses

We think

THE SCAFFOLDERS claim goes well beyond the miserly wage increases allowed in Partnership 2000.

Because of their commitment to this agreement, SIPTU leaders have not backed the strike officially.

But it's about time P2000 was blown out of the water. Workers should not be tied to tiny percentage increases when it's boom-time for the bosses.

SIPTU officials should come off the fence and give official backing to this important strike.

Eight hundred scaffolders, members of SIPTU, are picketing sites across the country.

The action has been organised by the rank and file Scaffolders Committee and is 100 per cent solid.

The men are demanding a wage rise to £18 an hour.

Two months ago the scaffolders put in their claim but the building bosses refused to come up with an offer. Instead they stocked up with materials preparing for a strike.

Scaffolders picketed the sites from Monday 12th April and stopped all scaffolding work. Support for the action is magnificent.

Readymix drivers refused to cross picket lines with supplies

of concrete and other drivers followed suit. Crane drivers refused to unload supplies. On a number of sites work stopped completely.

Carpenters and bricklayers, members of BATU, downed tools in Cork and Dublin.

Closure

Building labourers supported the action and forced the closure of a number of sites, including the massive Financial Services Centre in Dublin's docks and the Liffey Valley Centre.

After two days of picketing, the employers offered talks. The scaffolders remained on strike but lifted pickets.

The employers then cynically used the lifting of pickets to

re-supply many sites.

The bosses offered only 30p, money which was already owed under a previous agreement.

Immediately after news of this disgraceful manoeuvre came out, the strikers organised an early morning mass meeting in Dublin.

Soon the pickets were back up on the sites.

The building bosses have also sought to divide the strikers by offering to do a deal separately with scaffolders in Cork and Limerick.

This was immediately rejected by the workers.

"You can see by the number of cranes that it's boom time for the bosses," one striker told *Socialist Worker*.

"They're making a killing but we're seeing none of the

benefit."

Another striker pointed out: "Now is the time to get a decent basic. The union rate is as low as £6.25 an hour."

During this current boom many employers have been forced to pay double that to get workers.

But when the building boom slows down work will only be offered at the union rate—that's why it's important to get it right now.

Safety

Scaffolders are the first to scale the heights when work begins and the scaffolds they erect affect the safety of all of the workers on a site.

"We have to sign to certify the work we do.

"We are individually legally responsible for the safety of the scaffolding we erect. But we are not even classed as a trade."

Another striker added: "Scaffolding is a skilled job but every day builders tell unqualified people to interfere with scaffolding by removing planks or toe-bars or handrails.

"Only skilled scaffolders should alter scaffolding.

"It's about time there was a full implementation and expansion of an industry-wide training scheme."

Sites

The scaffolders strike is the latest in a wave of militancy on the building sites.

Already bricklayers and crane drivers have won important concessions.

But if the scaffolders win, it will have more direct implications for thousands of labourers who are stuck on the same unskilled rate of £6.25 an hour.

In the past, building labourers have been the least organised on the sites.

As a result, it is often their health and safety that suffers as the building bosses and sub-contractors cut corners to get more profits.

But if solidarity develops around this strike it will help revive trade unionism among the building labourers.

The employers know the stakes are high.

This is why they have been putting propaganda ads in the papers and also giving protective notice to other workers to try to intimidate them.

Yet the bosses can be beaten.

Solidarity action has already driven them back. If it keeps up, victory can be secured.

Go for direct employment

ALTHOUGH A number of house-building firms still directly employ scaffolders, on most sites scaffolders are not directly employed by the building contractors.

Instead they are employed by sub-contracting scaffolding firms like ASL, OK, Donoghues, Erect, Scafform and BML.

This has developed over the past five years of the building expansion.

Employers want to be able to hire and fire workers more easily and the system of sub-contractors suits them.

In a series of strikes organised by Building Workers Against the Black Economy, bricklayers have scored a number of important victories against sub-contracting in the industry.

BATU members won direct employment in Cramptons two years ago and have cleaned up a number of sites since. Scaffolders who have begun to organise should also look for direct labour.

SWP Branch meetings - all welcome

ATHLONE:
Contact 01- 872 2682 for details
BRAY
Meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Mayfare Hotel at 8pm
BELFAST CENTRAL:
Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Garrick Bar, Chichester St.
BELFAST EAST:

Contact 01- 8722682 for details
BELFAST SOUTH:
Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in upstairs Renshaws, University St.
CORK
CENTRAL:
Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in Dennehy's pub, Cornmarket
CORK SOUTH:
Meets every Monday at 8.00pm in Scellig, UCC

CENTRAL:
Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways, Parnell St.
DUBLIN NORTH WEST:
Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in the Snug, Dorset St.
DUBLIN RANELAGH:
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Tom Kelly Flats, Charlemont St
DUBLIN RIALTO:
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR, Rialto

COMMUNITY CENTRE ENNISKILLEN
Meets fortnightly on Saturdays at 4pm. Phone 01 - 8722682 for details of venue
GALWAY:
Meets every Thursday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square 7.30pm
LIMERICK:
Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details

DERRY:
Meets every Monday at 8.30pm in Badgers Bar, Orchard St.
DUNDALK:
Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details
DUN LAOGHAIRE:
Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Christian Institute
DUBLIN ARTANE / COOLOCK:
Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane/Beaumont Recreational Centre opp. Artane Castle
DUBLIN NORTH

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL:
Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St.
DUBLIN TALLAGHT:
Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in Jobstown

MAYNOOTH:
Meets every Wednesday in Classhall D, Arts Block, Maynooth College
UCD
Meets every Tuesday at 1pm (See posters for room no.)
TRINITY COLLEGE
Meets every Thursday at 7.00pm (See posters for room no.)
WATERFORD:
Meets every Thursday in at 8.00pm ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

Join the socialists

If you want to join the Socialist Workers Party, fill in this form and send it to: PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682

Name

Address

Phone

Union

CELEBRATE MAYDAY

Fight for peace and socialism

RALLY AND SOCIAL WATERFORD

Norris Bar, Barrack St. Sunday 2nd May, 8:30pm £5/£3

Feat: Dermot Byrne

DUBLIN

Saturday 1st May, Teachers Club, Parnell Square
Feat: Mark Dignam

news/reports/politics/industry/unions (01)8722682; fax (01) 8723838;
email: swp@clubi.ie web: www.clubi.ie/swp

An action programme for workers' rights

UNION conferences this year have seen a major growth in opposition to the partnership deals. Now an important attempt to galvanise this opposition has been made with an alternative Action Programme which has been developed by a number of trade unionists.

The Action Programme has been produced by a group of trade unionists who are associated with the Rank and File Solidarity network.

It has already received an endorsement from the Waterford Crystal Shop Steward's Committee and the education Branch of SIPTU.

Strategy

One of the sponsors of the Action Programme, Carolann Duggan explained the thinking behind it.

"We are often told that our union leaders have a complex strategy to

advance workers interests.

They use their research departments and glossy literature to win support for partnership programmes that way.

"But most workers now realise that they were conned.

"The 'experts' who lead the labour movement sold us short when they pushed through a deal that gave tiny wages rises.

Derisory

"While rents, house prices and profits are allowed to rocket, wages are being pegged down to derisory increases.

"In this free market economy, it seems that the only economic item that is controlled is our income'.

"This Action Programme offers workers an alternative approach to appeasing the employers and the government. It provides a set of policies that put workers interests first.

"I hope the Action programme will be distributed widely at union branch and picket lines.

"I want to see thousands of workers adopt a programme that offers an alternative to the do-nothing approach for the past decade."

Dunnes Stores

WORKERS AT Dunnes Stores in Galway are set to take official action unless a row involving the suspension of Marian Callaghan, a worker at the deli counter, is resolved.

An unofficial stoppage which began on Easter weekend was ended after six days when a mass meeting of workers decided to ballot for official industrial action.

The ballot of 200 mandate staff showed an overwhelming majority in favour of industrial action.

Workers are angry at the refusal of Dunnes management to allow Marian to choose her own representation at a disciplinary hearing. Marian was suspended on full pay pending the hearing when she was accused of stealing by a member of management when, in fact, she had tasted a salad dish when dealing with a customer enquiry.

Staff colleagues sup-

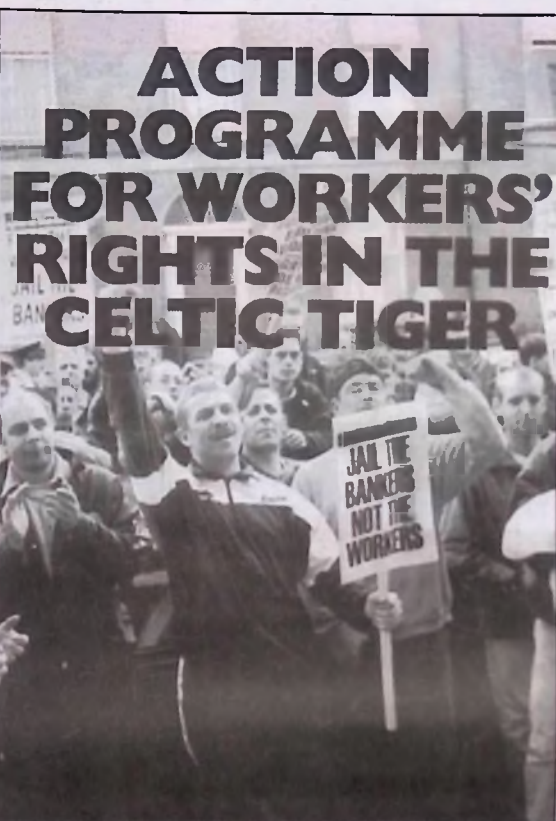
ported Marian by calling the all-out action on April 1st.

We are furious that management can decide who represents a worker at a disciplinary hearing.

We are demanding that Marian be represented by a shop steward as well as the union official at the hearing', a Dunnes worker told Socialist Worker.

Dunnes response to this demand was that staff members were needed to work and thus a shop steward would not be allowed to represent Marian at the planned hearing.

"We are determined to go the whole way on this issue, as our unofficial action has shown, and we will not be bullied by management for doing our job," the worker concluded. Dunnes, whose turnover in this country exceeds 1 billion pounds a year, and who previously have had no problem in drawing up elaborate schemes to avoid tax and bribe politicians, show a completely different face when dealing with their workers.



GET YOUR COPY OF THE ACTION PROGRAMME

THE Action Programme commits workers to fight for some policies that will advance the interests of the wider labour movement.

Among the policies included on the programme are:

★ End Social Partnership — Decent Wage Rises Now

Banks like the AIB have seen profits rise to £ 816 million yet wages have been held down. Partnership is a fraud that should be brought to an end.

★ Tax the Rich: Fund Social Services

The Celtic Tiger holds the record for hospital bed closures in EU. We say tax the rich to fund health, education and transport.

★ Stop the closures: nationalise firms that declare large scale redundancies.

★ A 35 hour week to create more jobs.

★ For an Automatic Right to Union recognition

★ Repeal the Industrial Relations Act.

★ Rent Controls and an emergency local authority house building programme to tackle the housing crisis.

ORDER COPIES OF ACTION PROGRAMME FROM PO BOX 1648, Dublin 8.

Teachers

Unions demand pay rises and reject productivity

THE THREE main teachers' unions, the INTO, TUI and ASTI, are combining to demand decent pay rises for their members.

The teachers' conferences at Easter all called for a pay deal to match what has been won by the gardai and the nurses.

And delegates rejected calls for more productivity in return for pay

increases.

Colm, an INTO delegate, told Socialist Worker, "there is huge anger on the ground over pay.

"The INTO cut a deal early on in the last Partnership deal, the PCW, but we were not allowed a vote on Partnership 2000 so we have fallen behind. Now there is a revolt from below."

Several INTO delegates argued that a new pay increase should not be linked to more productivity.

Already primary teachers are expected to implement a new curriculum next year as well as a school computerisation programme.

They say they have already agreed enough productivity.

TUI members forced their union leaders to aban-

don moves towards performance related pay.

This is a major blow to Bertie Ahern's attempts to break pay links between different groups of public sector workers.

The TUI conference passed an emergency motion barring their Executive from entering talks on performance related pay.

Delegates argued that linking pay with performance would undermine attempts to follow the pay rises won by gardai and nurses and would set teacher against teacher.

There was a political mood at all the conferences with delegates pointing out that teachers had helped create the boom in the economy but were not seeing the benefits.

Alan Kelly, Branch Chair of Dundalk TUI, told Socialist Worker, "The government wants education on the cheap.

But without us teaching building trades, or educating scientists and technicians, there would be no boom."

Pat Cahill, a newly elected member of the ASTI Standing Committee, added, "Second level teachers have turned out a 'quality product' which multinationals are using to make huge profits. But teachers are not ben-

efitting from this Celtic Tiger."

NO LEAGUE TABLES

Both the TUI and ASTI vowed to resist any move towards "league tables" for schools. This would result in some schools being branded as poor performers and denied resources.

This happens in Britain under the OFSTED inspections which scapegoat schools in poorer areas.

The threat of league tables here comes from the Whole School Inspections being piloted in 12 schools under the new Education Act.

OPPOSING RACISM

The TUI conference took a stand against John O'Donoghue's racist policies by demanding equal access for asylum seekers to Post Leaving Certificate courses.

The Department of Education - under instruction from the Department of Justice - had informed college authorities to demand a fee of £2,030 from asylum seekers enrolling in PLC courses.

Meanwhile the INTO passed a motion demanding that English language courses for non-nationals be extended.

Probation Officers

PROBATION officers have voted by more than nine to one for industrial action in a dispute with the government over staffing and resources.

The probation officers, members of IMPACT, voted 145 to 15 in favour of action demanding that the recruits 75 more officers.

The Department of Justice are arguing that they can not afford the additional 75 officers, who

would cost an extra £2.5 million.

This is compared to the £200million the government is spending on increased prison places, which will cost £92 million to a year to run.

Initially Impact members will restrict their caseloads to 30 each.

Absent

Normally they handle up to 100 caseloads each. They will also ban cover for absent workers.

One probation officer told Socialist Worker, "John O'Donoghue won't even offer the small amount needed for 75 new probation officers, despite the fact that this was recommended by the governments own review group."

He also pointed out that, "the cost of dealing with offenders through the probation service was £2,000 a year, compared to more than £43,000 to keep them in prison."

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p Solidarity price £1

Special issue on: NATO'S WAR IN EUROPE

see pages: 3,5,6,7&8

Sheedy scandal shows...

CLASS RIDDEN JUSTICE



Justice O'Flaherty



Sabrina Walsh

JUDGE HUGH O'Flaherty who resigned over the Sheedy affair has been praised by the media and the Bar Council for "preserving the integrity of the justice system".

But the media seem to have forgotten the last time O'Flaherty hit the headlines. His "integrity" was not in evidence last year when he told 20-year old Sabrina Walsh that she would have to serve a six year sentence for stealing a handbag.

Sabrina, from Ballymun in Dublin, was a heroin addict who did not realise that the bag she stole contained £10,000. She appealed her original sentence of

nine years but Judge O'Flaherty only reduced it to six years, to be reviewed after two years.

O'Flaherty said bag snatching was a "cancer" in society and the court had to send out a message "loud and clear" that such offences would carry stiff sentences in future.

Sabrina Walsh's sentence—even after O'Flaherty reduced it—was widely condemned as inhumane.

Class

Yet the same Judge O'Flaherty now claims he lobbied for the release of Philip Sheedy on "humanitarian grounds". But the real reason Sheedy went free was because of his class background.

The scandal arose because

Sheedy, a well heeled architect with important connections, was jailed for killing Ann Ryan after a spree of drunken driving.

Justice Cyril Kelly, who ordered his release from prison after a two minute hearing, told another judge that Sheedy was from "good family".

The contrast between O'Flaherty's contempt for Sabrina Walsh and his sympathy for Sheedy exposes the class bias of the judicial system. The political establishment told O'Flaherty to go in order to stop people seeing through this class bias.

According to the *Sunday Tribune* political correspondent, Stephen Collins, confidence in the judicial system had fallen and the politicians felt that if they did not do something *or else* "they would all be implicated in the Sheedy

affair".

O'Flaherty was a Fianna Fail supporter who received a sudden promotion to high office. He was a speech writer for Charles Haughey and worked closely with the former Fianna Fail Taoiseach, Jack Lynch.

Jailed

In the 1970s, O'Flaherty helped to draw up guidelines for the non-jury Special Criminal Court which jailed hundreds of republicans on the word of a *Garda* Superintendent.

O'Flaherty has no doubt resigned on a huge pension. But Sabrina Walsh is still in jail despite her heroin addiction. If there was any justice she would be immediately released.

FREE SABRINA WALSH