

# Socialist Worker

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

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# NO MORE WAGE RESTRAINT

# 5% is not enough

# VOTE NO TO THE PARTNERSHIP DEAL



## Coroner calls for inspection of every building site

Dr Ciaran McLoughlin, a coroner, was so shocked by the circumstances surrounding the death of a Galway schoolboy that he has called for every building site to be inspected immediately.

Liam Tyrell was only 18 years when he died after being suffocated by carbon monoxide fumes that came from a generator.

The machine was used to heat an unfinished house on a building site.

The Leaving Cert student had only taken up work as a night-watchman the day before.

### Owner

His employer, Billy Cleary, the owner of K Security, did not even know the boy's surname or his address. He had picked him up at midnight and brought him to the site.

Generators are not supposed to be used inside buildings but under cross-examination, Cleary admitted it had

been used like this for several months.

The coroner pointed out that every building site needed proper lighting, heating, first-aid equipment and safety training for workers.

But all of that might cut into the profits of companies like K Security and the building bosses.

## Toll road scam

IRISH TAX payers face another multi-million pound bill from the EU because of a scam run on the two main toll roads.

The toll companies were supposed to pay VAT on their charges but since 1987 they never did.

National Toll Roads is owned by the Roche family who are close to Fianna Fail.

They are also increasing their charges by 21 percent even though profits for the first six months of 1999 jumped by 38 percent.

## Left short of breath by Celtic tiger

A NEW study by the respiratory unit at Dublin's Tallaght hospital shows how asthma accounts for almost a quarter of GP referrals

One of doctors responsible for the report Dr. Stephen Lane said "Asthma has risen fourfold in the last 25 years and Ireland now has the fourth highest prevalence in the world, preceded by Australia, New Zealand and the UK".

### Cities

Asthma is also more common in working class areas especially in the inner cities.

A number of doctors in the inner city have indicated that the huge increase on traffic has contributed to a growing number of sufferers.

Asthma is highly

**GM GIANT Monsanto's own staff canteen has banned genetically modified (GM) food. Canteen managers at Monsanto's British headquarters said they took the decision "in response to concerns raised by our customers".**

# Privateers plan to steal the ESB

IT SEEMS the government's next target for privatisation is the ESB. Deregulation of the electricity markets is set to begin on February 19.

Once again the winners will be big business. The 320 major industrial users of power will see their electricity cost slashed but ordinary household users will reap little benefit.

In fact they can expect to see prices rise as the cost of price cutting industrial power will fall on their shoulders.

The Huntstown Power consortium headed by Michael McKernan is one of the main players behind the push for privatisation and has demanded that the ESB surrender its control of the national grid.

### Firm

Huntstown Power is comprised of the Northern Ireland electricity firm Viridian and the building material firm CRH.

CRH was the company that effectively ran the Ansbacher tax scam for the rich in

this country.

Privatisation is all about giving the rich a license to print money. Businessmen like Haughey's friend Dermot Desmond and others have made a fortune by winning lucrative contracts to privatise state assets.

Denis O'Brien made almost a quarter of a billion after he sold ESAT because the Fine Gael - Labour coalition governments sold him the rights to telecommunications for a measly £16 million.

O'Brien was a major financial contributor to Fine Gael.

## Another Ansbacher Crook:

# Throw Foley out of the Dail

DENIS FOLEY the Kerry North Fianna Fail TD has been exposed as one of the Ansbacher gang.

Foley still has £130,000 in the dodgy account.

Yet he was one of the TDs who was in charge of investigating the massive tax scam by the banks. The report into the DIRT scam which he co-wrote said that the politicians did not turn a blind eye.

annual fund-raising bash.

Finnegan arranged the purchase of Ahern's Drumcondra home, which the local party branch bought as a present.

But Ahern may not have to worry. The judge who is supposed to be investigating the scam used to own shares in the CRH company which provided an office for the Ansbacher accounts.

### Justice for Belmondo Wantete

Victim of Garda Harassment demonstrate at the Four Courts No.24, February 28th, Assemble 10am

### Scams

Peter Sutherland was chairman of AIB when the tax scams took place.

He was also a political advisor to the Fine Gael leader John Bruton and is a former Attorney General — the top legal officer in the country. He has also been revealed as one of the Ansbacher gang.

Foley used to run dances for hotels owned by property shark John Byrne. Byrne, another Ansbacher depositor was one of Haughey's closest colleagues. He still makes millions of pounds out of the rents he receives from the state, including the Revenue Commissioners.

### Nothing

Ahern claims that he knew nothing about Foley's Ansbacher links.

But Ahern also turned a blind eye when he received money from another businessman who hid money in the Ansbacher accounts.

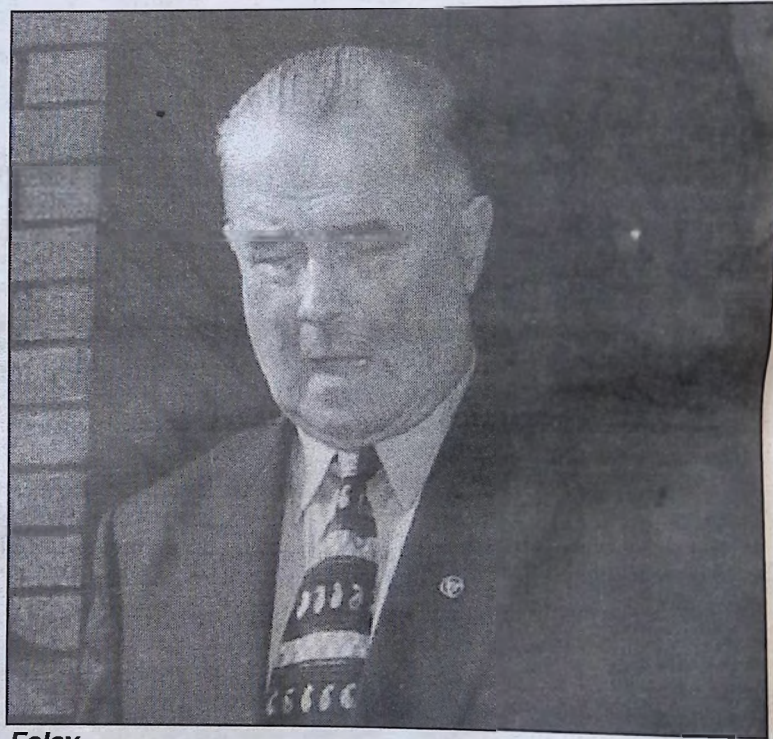
John Finnegan the Dublin Estate Agent, had £2 million in Des Traynor's dodgy bank.

Finnegan has a long relationship with Ahern and regularly attends Bertie's £2,000 a head

### Liberal

Keane has been heralded as a 'liberal' with one of the country's finest legal mind by the media.

Yet he presided over the Stardust Inquiry into the horrific fire which saw scores of people burned to death because of inadequate safety precautions and failed to



Foley

## Impartial Justices?

RONAN KEANE, husband of the infamous Terry Keane has just been appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Like most of the judiciary in Ireland he comes from the ranks of the state's most illustrious private schools; he was a pupil of Blackrock college.

recommend the prosecution of the owners.

In a recent tell-all book Terry Keane even admitted that Haughey orchestrated his appointment to the High Court.

Adrian Hardiman is the newly appointed President of the High Court. According to the Sunday Business Post, Hardiman has a reputation as a notorious conservative.

In his student days he paraded around UCD heckling left-wing speak-



Keane

ers. He is a founder member of the Progressive Democrats (PD's) and

has spent his holidays with Mary Harney.

The new judges will earn enormously salaries. The new Chief Justice, Ronan Keane, and the Chief of the High Court will get £109,560 and £98,657 respectively.

Their working conditions aren't bad either.

The room which is lined with books comes readily equipped with a leather-topped desk and a drinks trolley.

## The real social partners

THE FORMER SIPTU official Paul O Sullivan has left his job to join a Public Relations firm.

O Sullivan was once seen as a close ally of Des Geraghty. His new firm is run by Jackie Gallagher, who

was a close aid of Bertie Ahern.

Meanwhile, only a tiny number of SIPTU members are left at Ryanair after O Sullivan and Geraghty managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.



# NO TO THE NEW PARTNERSHIP DEAL

**Socialist Worker**  
(01)8722682

# Pay: 5% a year is not enough

A NEW partnership deal is set to offer workers only a 5 percent pay rise for each of the next three years. The press are pretending that this is a very generous offer.

But media moguls like Tony O'Reilly, who owns most of the newspapers, want to tie workers down to low pay rises.

The reality is that 5 percent a year is a miserable pay rise.

## Soared

House prices have soared across the Celtic Tiger and many young workers are already lumbered with mortgages of £600 a month and upwards.

Rents have also risen sharply as the government has dismissed all calls to introduce rent controls.

This pay rise will barely make a dent in these huge housing costs.

But more bad news lies around the corner.

The decline of the euro and the volatility of the US economy means that interest rates are set to rise worldwide. This will mean huge hikes in mortgages and rent.

## The price rise scam

PRICES RISES are supposed to be measured by the Consumer Price Index. But the CPI is a con.

★ It does not include the rise in house prices. An explanatory leaflet from the Central Statistics Office even claimed that 'there is no contradiction between rising house prices and low inflation'.

★ It underestimates the rise in rents. Newspapers count for as much in the inflation index as rents.

★ It does not take full account of changing spending patterns. With more women working outside the home, workers spend more on pre-cooked meals, restaurants and canteens. But little account is taken of this.

This all means that the real rate of inflation is well above 5 percent a year.

A one percent rise in interest rates, for example, would mean an extra £50 a month repayment on the average mortgage.

Ireland already has the highest inflation rate in Europe. Officially it is running at 3.9 percent a year but this is an underestimate.

Inflation rates across Europe are set rise, due to escalating oil prices.

This will push up Irish prices even further so workers will start falling behind again.

A concerted attempt is being made by the media, the government and the union officials to con workers into accepting this pay deal.

They want to keep trade unionists quiet for another three years.

But pay is the only item that is controlled in the Celtic Tiger. Profits, dividends and prices can soar - but the income of workers has been restrained for over thirteen years.

Workers should have the right to bargain for the highest wage rise they can get. There should be no restraint on when they make claims.

The union leaders should also be told that their job is to represent their members - and not to act as policemen over them.

## ROBBED BY PARTNERSHIP: How the national income is "shared"

	1987	1992	1997
PROFITS	31%	36%	41%
WAGES	69%	64%	59%

# IT'S PAY BACK TIME FOR WORKERS

**IRISH WORKERS have been chained to miserable pay rises for the past decade while the economy has been booming. Instead of wage restraint - it should be pay back time for workers.**

If the farmers could take on the meat barons and win, then the union leaders can take on big business.

They are making such huge profits that they can pay far more than 5 percent.

US multi-nationals claim they are making a 25 percent rate of profit in Ireland. That is three

times that for Spain. Irish firms have also seen their profits nearly double as a percentage of sales.

The AIB, which was one of the main banks involved in the DIRT scandal, saw its profits rise by 61 percent a year in the last decade.

## Create

The productivity of Irish workers has also helped to create the boom.

But they have not been rewarded for working harder and more efficiently.

One business journalist estimated that the net output of each employee

increased by over £97,000 in the ten years between 1987 and 1997.

With growing labour shortages, trade unionists are in a strong position to win double figure pay rises for this year.

That is why we should throw off the chains of social partnership.

The bosses have never been our partners. Our only partners are our fellow workers.

**Workers should:**  
■ Vote NO to the Pay deal

■ Put in catch-up claims for 20 percent pay rises.

**No restraint for tax cuts**

THE GOVERNMENT are already claiming that a package of tax cuts will compensate workers for the low increases.

But this is nonsense.

★ Share owners got a 50 percent cut in tax on dividends. But they were never asked to tighten their belts.

★ Big farmers won a 90 percent reduction on their inheritance taxes. But they never had to show restraint.

★ The banks and big business will get a tax rate of only 12.5 percent. But their profits were never pegged to a rise of 5 percent a year.

If no other class in Irish society had to make sacrifices to get tax cuts, then why should PAYE workers sacrifice their wages?

Get active with the campaign in your union.

★ SIPTU against Partnership meets on

Saturdays afternoons in Chaplin's Pub, Hawkins St  
Phone: 8558087

★ Teachers Against Partnership  
Phone 4732425

★ IMPACT Against Partnership meets Thursday February 10th  
Trinity Inn Pearse Street  
Phone: 2861902

★ Busworkers Against Partnership:  
Phone 4561802

## Join the Campaign

**RANK AND file trade unionists can beat this rotten deal - but we will need to get organised.**

The SIPTU conference agreed that workers would not be rushed into a deal this time and that a month be given over for debate.

Union activists should use this time to mobilise a No vote

★ Demand a special meeting for all members in your job to discuss the terms of the partnership deal

★ Insist that union meetings get a speaker from the Campaign Against Partnership so that an alternative viewpoint is heard.

★ Order leaflets and poster from the Campaign Against Partnership, 105 O'Hogan Road Dublin 10.

Pin this on your noticeboard





**Ecuador**

# Uprising of the masses

**THE SOUTH American country of Ecuador is in turmoil after the president was toppled in a confused coup that occurred amid mass protests by the poor.**

The protests were backed by students and teachers. Oil workers struck and demonstrations in several cities called for the overthrow of the government.

**Protests**

*The President Mahuad dismissed his entire cabinet in an attempt to stop the protests. Army chiefs unleashed 30,000 troops onto the streets to counter demonstrators.*

But they were unable to hold back the tide of anger.

The demonstrations and strikes culminated in a popular rising against the government. But unfortunately the leaders of the rising made the fatal mistake of looking to a section of the military for support.

So although Mahuad was forced to quit, the new government is in the hands of the same wealthy elite who stood behind him. Mahuad wanted to make the poor pay for Ecuador's profound economic crisis.

Ecuador had one of the most unequal income distributions in the world, and 60 percent of people were already on or below the official poverty line before Mahuad's measures.

Half the country's population are descendants of the people who lived in the country before the 16th century Spanish conquest. They

are mostly peasants living in the Andean highland area in dire poverty.

Their Quechua language is discriminated against by those at the top of Ecuadorian society.

The cities, such as the capital, Quito, and the main industrial centre of Guayaquil, are surrounded by vast shanty towns where the Spanish speaking, but multiracial, urban poor live in miserable conditions. Ecuador's debt burden is equivalent to its entire annual economic output.

Economic output has shrunk by over 7 percent in the last year and the poor have suffered as inflation has rocketed to 60 percent. The

madness of the world market has fuelled the crisis. It has hit the prices of key export commodities such as shrimps, timber and bananas. The government's response was to push through austerity measures which will further impoverish the mass of people while protecting the rich.

A key plank of the government plan was to abandon the country's currency, the sucre, and switch instead to the US dollar.

The wealthy, with money held in dollars outside the country, would not suffer under this. But it threatened to wipe out savings held inside the country, and also to push up prices of many basic commodities.

## Learn lesson from show of strength

A THREE man junta, consisting of a military figure, a former supreme court judge and a key indigenous leader, took power on the back of the mass protests.

But within hours military chiefs, with backing from the bulk of the armed forces, the rich and the US government, sidelined that junta.

They installed a new government under Mahuad's vice-president, Gustavo Noboa. He announced he would continue with the state of emergency declared by Mahuad. He pledged to continue with the currency plan and with privatisation. The move left the mass of people furiously disappointed.

One protester when leav-

ing the occupation of the Senate building had taken a lamp. He said, "I don't have any electricity in my village. I came for a revolution and have ended up with a lamp."

Riots exploded in the country's biggest city and similar mass protests hit other key cities such as Rio Bamba and Ambato. One protester summed up the mood: "The generals and the admirals have betrayed us. It's not them who feel hunger. We've shown we are strong and we'll learn. We put too much confidence in the military and they've conned the people."

People will have to look to mass action if the hunger for change is to have any chance of being realised.

**Germany**

# Jail Haughey, Jail Kohl



**A member of the SWP's sister organisation on a demonstration in Hamburg against the corruption scandals that have rocked Germany's right wing Christian Democratic Party. It has been revealed that Helmut Kohl took millions of pounds in bribes from big business. Just like Fianna Fail, Germany's main right wing party, the CDU, uses bribes to prop up a corrupt system.**

**Austria**

# Haider can be stopped

**AUSTRIA'S extreme right wing Freedom Party, looked set to enter into a coalition government as Socialist Worker went to press.**

The party won 27 percent of the vote in Austria's general election last year. The scapegoating of immigrants was at the centre of their campaign.

Their leader, Jorg Haider, deliberately echoed the language of Hitler's Nazi party in the 1930s. Haider has praised the "orderly employment policies of the Third Reich" and refers to former members of the SS as "decent fellows".

His electoral success is a warning of how racist politicians can get a hearing as mainstream governments, of various stripes, fail to make

life better for ordinary people across Europe.

A coalition government of the (Tory) People's Party and the Social Democratic Party, which is equivalent to the Labour Party governed Austria for 13 years.

*Haider has been able to build on resentment at the attacks the government has launched on working people, and the corruption which sees plum state jobs going to supporters of the two main parties.*

There is a sharp divide between rich and poor inside Austria's population of eight million. All the political parties support further privatisation and moves towards a more free-market economy.

These policies of the "grand coalition" provided the fertile ground for Haider to build.

But there are weaknesses in the growth of the far right. Exit polls show that two

thirds of those who voted for Haider put disillusionment with the two main parties as their main reason for doing so — not agreement with his racist immigration and welfare policies.

His success, however, gives confidence to racist thugs and can push mainstream parties to echo his attacks on immigrants.

**Nazi**

Haider has not built the kind of street-fighting force which was at the core of Hitler's Nazi Party and a central feature of Le Pen's National Front in France.

His aim is to form a far right parliamentary government. But elements within the Freedom Party and Nazi groups want to build a movement to smash working class organisation and all forms of democracy in the

way Hitler did. They want to forcibly repatriate and even exterminate immigrants.

Haider's guarded praise for some of Hitler's policies shows he is quite capable of adopting Hitler's methods. He feels his path to power through the ballot box is blocked.

*Haider can be stopped. Last year over 50,000 people marched in Vienna to protest at Haider.*

There have also been numerous protests against education and welfare cuts in recent years. The new that Haider may enter government was met with protests around the country.

These responses point to a collective socialist alternative to the grand coalition and the potential to build mass movement to confront Haider.

**India**

**"STRIKE FEVER"** is gripping India, according to the country's prime minister.

Some 125,000 dockers were on strike, demanding higher pay. A strike by 100,000 power workers against privatisation is leading to power cuts across swathes of northern India. Civil servants in Jammu and Kashmir have been on strike for the last month.

Rajasthan civil servants are also on strike, as are doctors in Hyderabad. Telecom, postal and local government workers are threatening action.

The ruling coalition, led by the Hindu-chevunist BJP, is in turmoil.

The strikes are a direct challenge to its policies of opening the econo-

my to the global market.

The government called in the army and the navy to run the ports and power installations. Union leaders have been arrested, as have thousands of striking power workers.

Negotiations with union leaders halted the dock workers' strike but the docks were decked out with red flags and manned by pickets, while jeeps and cars with red flags cruised up and down the dock area. The dockers wanted a 100 percent pay rise.

They are also worried about the government's plans to "modernise" the ports by using private capital, which may eventually lead to privatisation.



## Eamonn McCann

### Think tanks and trainers

A THOUSAND days of Tony Blair and we still have no more idea what's going on in his head than we have of the meaning of the Millennium Dome.

What we do have is a clear record of betrayal even of the limited expectations of the voters who rejoiced on May 1st 1997 that "things can only get better".

But for millions who did vote Labour things haven't got better. Nobody any longer denies the widespread feeling of let-down. It's expressed in the huge support for Ken Livingstone in London, in angry reaction to Jack Straw's U-turn on Pinochet, in the popularity of protests over everything from underfunding in the NHS to the machinations of the World Trade Organisation.

But to what extent does Blair himself believe his government has fallen short of its objectives? Even his closest media supporters have difficulty making the measurement, because after 1,000 days in office the principles Blair stands for are more elusive than ever.

#### Defenders

One of his strongest defenders, former independent editor Andrew Marr, now an Observer columnist, mused a couple of weeks back on the distinguished Friends of Tony who have recently proven less than loyal, then ended with a wondering sigh: "Just what, exactly, would they be expected to show loyalty to?"

Marr, exasperated, urged Blair "to be more ideological, clearer about the principles upon which his Government rests." But that merely shifts the problem onto a higher plateau: it begs the question, what are (ital.) the principles, exactly, upon which the Blair Government rests?

Searching around for a model for his "New Britain", Blair has, at various times, pointed to Swedish social democracy, regenerated Germany, innovative Japan and the rapid-growth "Tiger" economies of Asia. But, as some of these go belly-up, and others sink ever deeper into sleaze, not much is heard of any of them any more as paradigms for progress.

Shortly before his May 1997 election, Blair delivered a speech in Singapore which had been widely trailed as an authoritative exposition of his political philosophy. The headline phrase to emerge was "the stakeholder society".

But scarce had the chatterati of north London crouched around their stripped-pine tables to ponder the meaning of this slogan than Blair had ditched it, and was off scampering along "The Third Way".

The Third Way, a galaxy of New Labour gurus made clear, was not the same thing as The Middle Way, a moth-eaten concept with no place in the bright hi-tech future envisioned by Blair. Which at least let us know what it wasn't.

#### Actually

But as to what it actually was, nobody knows, even now. (We do know where it led us—along corridors lined with NHS patients twitching with pain.)

One man who ought to know what it's all about is Charles Leadbeater, a big wheel in the new Labour "think-tank". Demos, and, according to reliable reports, Blair's "favourite thinker". Old-fashioned despots had their own food-tasters. New-fangled autocrats have personal trainers. Tony Blair has his own personal thinker.

Those wishing to delve deep into the contents of Blair's favourite mind should read Leadbeater's latest book, "Living on Thin Air". (People who live on thin air are called "breatharians". The most famous breatharian ever was a German nun, Terese Neumann, who neither ate nor drank from 1927 until 1952 when she died, rather spoiling the effect.) The late Pope Pius XII firmly believed in her.

As with Pius, so with Blair. He firmly believes in the man who believes in living on thin air, and proclaims his belief in tones of infallibility.

Emptiness, irrationality and arrogance are the hallmarks of their thinking. Blair, after a thousand days, is revealed as a man who believes in nothing surrounded by people who'll affect to believe in anything.

A perfect combination, some might think, for idea-impooverished Labourism at the lag-end of the century just past. But not much use for the century ahead.

# THE ASSEMBLY GRAVY TRAIN

AFTER voting themselves a huge pay rise before Xmas, the new members of the Assembly are planning to award themselves a pension of £30,000.

These massive increases come at the same time as Tony Blair froze the minimum wage at £3.60 an hour earlier this month.

The very first decision of the new Assembly last November was to vote themselves a pay rise of more than 30 percent.

Gerry Adams made a very popular speech during the debate about the pay rise last year. But Sinn Fein's Alex Maskey and Francie Molloy still voted in the committee to back the pay rise.

The basic salary for a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) went up from £29,036 to £38,036. But for many of them the salaries are even higher.

#### Extra

David Trimble and Seamus Mallon get a massive £102,344 each. Both of them are also MPs at Westminster and get an extra £40,000 on top.

And all of this is just their basic salary. On top of this they get thousands in expenses to run their own offices and employ advisors. Last week it was



Trimble: Loaded?

reported that over £500,000 has already been spent on advisors at Stormont.

And now, to add insult to injury, the Finance and Personnel Committee, headed by Minister Mark Durkan, is discussing plans to give a £30,000 handout to any MLA who loses their seat or decides to stand down.

The salaries of the Assembly members are an outrage at a time when the gap between rich and poor is even wider than in Britain.

## Poverty Kills

A NEW report by the Chief Medical Officer last week revealed that people in the most deprived areas of the North:

- ★ Die on average seven and a half years earlier.
- ★ The infant mortality rate is 50 percent higher
- ★ Poor children are seven times more likely to die in a traffic accident.

The report shows that the single biggest cause of ill health is poverty.

It estimates that 2,000 lives a year could be saved if the gap in health status between rich and poor was addressed.

The surest way to address that gap is to increase wages and

improve pensions and benefits. But this month Blair froze the minimum wage at £3.60 an hour.

Yet a third of workers in Northern Ireland are earning less than £4 an hour.

The Assembly could do something to start changing that.

It could fight for a higher minimum wage. It could argue for higher taxes on the rich to pay for a better health service and social security system.

But most of its members believe that their job is to help out big business.

In the meantime they are happy to stick their own snouts in the trough.

## Teachers campaign against the 11-plus

THE CAMPAIGN against the 11-plus in Northern Ireland is gathering momentum. The main teaching union in Belfast, the NASUWT, has voted to call a mass demonstration to Stormont in May, when the results of the 11-plus arrive.

Each year, over 70 percent of 11 year old children are told that they have failed the exam. Education Minister, Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness, himself a victim of the 11-plus, has said that he is against the exam but is waiting for a report by Queens University academics, due out in mid-February.

#### Rotten

Secretary of the Campaign Against Selection, Belfast teacher John Price, told Socialist Worker, "The 11-plus system is rotten to the core. Children don't fail it - it fails them."

Activists aren't pinning all their hopes on the Assembly because McGuinness appears to be worried about upsetting the Catholic and Protestant middle classes who

support the retention of grammar schools.

John continued, "In my school alone over 100 teachers have joined the campaign. We want everybody, parents, trade unionists, students involved in this."

"The 11 plus comes into the public domain at this time every year and then it slips away again. People's hopes have been raised because of the Assembly. We need to build a big grassroots campaign that can guarantee that we finally get rid of it this year."

#### Campaign Against Selection

Public meeting:  
8pm Tuesday 15 February  
Senior Library, St Louise's  
Comprehensive College,  
Falls Road  
'Come and help build  
opposition to educational  
apartheid'  
All welcome

To get copies of the petition or to add your name to the list of sponsors contact John Price, Secretary CSA, 1 Woodland Park North, Lisburn or phone (01846 660011)

## TIME TO FIGHT POVERTY - TIME FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS DEMONSTRATION

Let's tell New Labour and the Assembly

- 5 an hour minimum wage
- Fund the NHS - tax the rich

● Scrap the 11-plus

● Abolish student fees

Increase benefits and pensions

DERRY Saturday 11 March

1pm from the Triangle, Waterside, march to Guildhall Square

Called by Derry Trades Council and backed by trade unions and community groups



## Eye witness report

# UN lets down people of E. Timor

**DINO GANDARA** is a student of Science student studying in Dublin who has just returned to Ireland following a visit to his native East Timor. It had been his first visit in 7 years. Niall Smyth spoke to him about the situation in East Timor and the UN involvement.

"IT WAS not until the massive revolt in Indonesia and the toppling of the Suharto regime in Indonesia, that things really began to change in East Timor.

This action by the Indonesian students gave the vast underground clandestine resistance movements courage to come out onto the street and fight for independence.

Shortly after Habibie came to power in November 1998, it was announced that a referendum would take place to decide the future of East Timor later in 1999.

### Vicious

Following the announcement, the Indonesian military in East Timor began setting up these ruthless, vicious militias to intimidate and scare the people of East Timor to vote against independence.

In the spring, the UN entered the country to manage and educate people on the referendum. This is what they called "popular consultation". But, security in East Timor remained in the hands of the Indonesian military.

99 percent of people registered to vote and 97.8 percent actually voted. The militias continued to attack and scare people before and during the voting. The result was that 78.5 percent voted for independence and 21 percent against.

Afterwards, there were massacres. I would say about 1,000 people died directly afterwards and it got worse and worse as time went on.

The UN then fled despite promising the people they would remain regardless of the referendum's outcome. This was the beginning of the hypocrisy of UN involvement in East Timor.

In September 1999, UN troops entered East Timor. People were glad to see them at first, as many had been killed.

They promised to provide of the necessi-

ties for rebuilding the country. Four months later, when I returned to Timor I saw how little has been done. Children are dying because of inappropriate medicines prescribed by the UN.

The crazy UN approach can be seen with spending money on floating hotels for UN officials to stay. They exclude East Timorese people from work in UN programmes.

During the Indonesian occupation around 30,000 East Timorese worked in the civil service, but now that the UN run the country only 2,000 are employed. Unemployment is at about 90 percent.

The standard East Timorese wage is \$5 a day and \$8 if you are really lucky. In December there was a strike in the country by workers at the small wages they receive.

The UN workers are winning and dining with

want to return to school and learn, but there are no facilities there for them.

Since the transition period began, the UN wanted to establish the US dollar as the official currency.

At the moment the Indonesian rupiah, the Australian dollar and the Portuguese escudo are the main currencies being used in the country.

It has also made English a requirement for employment, even though only a minority speaks the language.

It seems that the UN and the NGOs in East Timor are more concerned with facilitating and promoting Western business interests, rather than the needs of the people.

If the UN believes that East Timorese people have the right to self-determination as human beings, they have to include the people themselves.

### Harassment

They don't cooperate with local people and some Australian UN troops have been involved in the sexual harassment of East Timorese girls.

People's lives are worse than ever now. People are extremely dissatisfied and frustrat-



Protests against Indonesian troops in East Timor

the Australian and Western bankers and businesses, while the people suffer from lack of food.

The people have been stripped bare and there is real lack of food and housing which the UN is not helping.

When I returned, my home had been destroyed. Students

ed with all of this.

Already, there has been action with 3,000 students demonstrating outside a UN building and stoning it.

The struggle for independence from Indonesia is over, but the fight for a decent standard of living continues."

# MUMIA MUST LIVE! REA

# The voice rings out f

**IN JUST over four weeks time a US judge will begin considering whether radical black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal will be put to death or will be granted a retrial. Mumia, a former Black Panther, was framed for murder has been on death row for 17 years.**

During the 1970s Mumia, a founding member of the Black Panther Party in Philadelphia at the age of 15, became a journalist for Philadelphia's local radio station and was dubbed the "voice of the voiceless" because of the way he spoke about those marginalised by US society.

When he condemned a police assault on the radical black organisation MOVE's headquarters in 1978, an attack that left 18 people wounded, the radio station fired him.

That is why Mumia was driving a taxi on the night of 9 December 1981. Mumia stopped his car when he saw police assaulting a black man, who turned out to be his own brother.

Eyewitnesses say one officer was shot by another unidentified man who then fled the scene. Before he died the police officer shot Mumia. Mumia was then beaten and framed for the murder by other police officers.

The police's chief witness was prostitute Cynthia White. She was the only wit-

ness who claimed to see Mumia with a gun in his hand. A friend of White's later testified that they were both offered deals by the police in exchange for their story. Another witness, a prostitute Veronica Jones, testified that the police threatened to take away her children unless she identified Mumia as the killer. The bullets that shot the police officer do not even match those of Mumia's gun. All but two members of the jury who convicted Mumia were white.

The judge who presided over the trial was Albert Sabo, a lifetime member of the Fraternal Order of Police. He is known as a racist hanging judge. Sabo has sentenced 32 people to death - twice as many as any other judge in the US. All but two have been black.

To understand why the police and the US state hate Mumia, all you need to do is read his words.

## WARLUST AGAIN (IRAQ II)

"ONCE AGAIN we are in the maw of war. The deaths of Iraqi men, women and children to protect the corporate interests of Western industry. Is there something obscene here?"

American politicians and their PR specialists are revving up for death. American women talk of "collateral damage" on TV, as if they are talking about washing dishes, not the tortured, horrific deaths of babies.

Once more into the breach-for

February 1998

## THE POOR STILL SUFFER

"FOR MILLIONS of poor people in America, poverty is their daily reality. Homelessness isn't a thing of the past, it is an enduring burden upon the spirit.

In the ongoing War Against the Poor that is politically popular in America today, the poor are getting truly poorer and the rich are getting it all.

There are jobs out there, but at levels that barely approach subsistence. Capital is strengthened, labour is weakened and the poor are simply crushed, expendable. This then is Clinton's gift to the poor.

Clinton has always been the darling of the wizards of Wall Street, those who own wealth, and it's in their interest to keep labour in constant terror of starvation.

For millions of people in America the rising of the Dow Jones Average, the stocks and bond volumes increasing, the raging markets mean next to nothing at all.

They live a bare and frugal existence, hoping tomorrow will be better than the hellish yesterday."

November 1998

## WHY A WAR ON THE POOR?

"SEVERAL WEEKS ago French unemployed took to the streets nationally, rocking the neo-liberal establishment with a wave of militant demonstrations.

This remarkable mobilisation showed the power of a movement of unemployed, that beat back the state's attempts to cut back on French income maintenance programmes.

That movement leaped across the border to Germany, where marches sprung up in over 200 cities.

We can learn from the French who did not hesitate to organise and mobilise the poor and unemployed. The slogan of the French bears repeating:

"Who sows misery, reaps rage." The politicians ain't the solution-the people are. Let us organise."

February 1998



## THE ILLUS INTERNATIONAL

Internati creation of e behalf of e "stateless pe War Two o One) were sr ests of the who saw the In the en written on pa

So often have we heard the words, that it now echoes unconsciousness, as a thing unquestioned.

The late revered Malcolm X taught that history is best equipped to reward our research, so let us look to history.

Over a million ethnic Armenians were annihilated under Turkey's Itihad Party, and millions of Jews were massacred under Germany's Nazi Party.

These historic horrors arose in a world where the Geneva Conventions (of 1864 and 1906) and the Hague Conventions (of 1899 and 1907) forbade war crimes, protected the prisoners of war, and ordered protection and respect for civilians and private property.

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**READ HIS WRITINGS**

# ...ce of the struggle ...it from death row



## US OUT OF YUGOSLAVIA!

"NATO IS but a figleaf for American interests and the bombing of Yugoslavia is but a global demonstration of the ruthlessness of the American empire.

Consider the case of the Palestinians, the Kurds, the East Timorese, the Colombian rebels-who has the US supported, the oppressed or the US armed governments?

This isn't about "human rights". It isn't about "ethnic minorities". And it also isn't about "genocide". It's about establishing who's boss in the next century.

It's about keeping Russia in its place. It's about keeping the European Union under the thumb of Wall Street.

The bombing of Serbia is an echo of the bombing of three other countries in the past six months-of Iraq, Sudan and Afghanistan. And for precisely the same reason-to show that it can be done, to instil terror, to establish a New World Order."



Mumia was a member of the the Black Panthers

## PRIVILEGE OF EMPIRE

"WITH THE dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991, there is only one real super-power left in the world, and superpowers make their own rules. Who's to stop them?

In an age of the American empire, the entire world is open to US exploitation.

As in 1986 Libya or 1983 Grenada (when US forces bombed and invaded, respectively).

Nothing quite cures the political ailments of an embattled presidential administration like the rocket's red glare, preferably against a brown or a black nation.

In the nauseous throes of L'affaire Lewinsky, the prospect of bombing African and Afghan sites must've seemed attractive indeed."

books, nor in scripted treaties. International law bowed to national (economic) interests, and the weak fell before the strong.

Here was the grim historical blueprint for Bosnia, for Rwanda, and for genocides to come."

■ May 1988

■ August 1998

## ILLUSION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

term "international law, it turns out, is the creation of the ruling class elites, on behalf of elites. Millions of so-called 'stateless peoples' (like Jews of World War Two or Armenians of World War One) were sacrificed to the national interests of the 'International Community' who saw them as expendable.

In the end, it didn't matter what was written on paper, in the glazed tests of law

■ May 1988

### HOW YOU CAN HELP

■ Rush letters demanding a retrial to Judge William H Yohn Jr. c/o Leonard Weinglass, 6 West 20th Street, Suite 10a, New York, NY 10011, US.

■ Book transport and build for the national demonstration to save Mumia's life.

■ Organise local petitioning and campaigning meetings.

■ For more information contact the Mumia Must Live! Campaign on 01-8788170

**MUMIA MUST LIVE!**  
National demonstration  
**Sat 4 March**

American Embassy, Ballsbridge, assemble 1pm

## ZAPATISTA DREAMS

"OVER 500 years after European conquest of the Americas, the native indigenous peoples still live on the margins of society and are the poorest of the poor, the people most dispossessed of so-called "New World" populations.

Many of us forget that so-called "Indians", not Africans, were the first slaves of the Americas, pressed into service by Admiral Cristobal Colon (known to the Americans as Christopher Columbus) to dig for gold, and if felt they were unproductive, their hands were chopped off.

This Columbian injustice was the opening which brought genocide to untold millions of natives and transformed an ancient Indian world into

a "New" white one.

Every country in this hemisphere rests upon the shattered bones of native genocide.

In the southernmost "kneecap" of Mexico, in Chiapas state, an indigenous revolutionary movement is growing.

Named after the Indian revolutionary Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919), whose forces fought the Spanish dictator Porfirio Diaz under the slogan Liberty and Land, the Zapatistas draw their strength and their vision from the most oppressed segments of Mexican life.

That they exist is something of a miracle, and they bring something to life's table that is wonderful."

■ May 1997

**OUT NOW**

Ideas to change

the world

★ Socialist Review



From your Socialist Worker seller or from P.O. Box 1648, Dublin 8



# New biography reveals...

**R**TE chose Tony O'Reilly to talk to Pat Kenny about the life of Peadar O'Donnell on the publication of a new biography by Peter Hegarty.

While O'Reilly went to school with O'Donnell's son and spent time in his house there could be nobly less qualified to pay tribute to O'Donnell's life.

Peadar O'Donnell was a revolutionary, socialist, republican, novelist and journalist. He spent his life fighting against capitalism.

He was born and educated in Meenmore, Dungloe, County Donegal before going to study to become a teacher in Dublin. He taught on Arranmore Island before leaving for Scotland to assist migrant labourers in their strike for improved pay and conditions.

He became an organiser for the Transport & General Workers' Union in 1918 and spent time recruiting workers in Northern Ireland to the union. During the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921), O'Donnell fought with the IRA leading a brigade in his native county.

**U**nlike other republicans, he took an active interest in workers struggles. On one occasion, he led the occupation of an asylum in Monaghan.

The asylum was taken over by both Catholic and Protestant workers and they raised the red flag over the asylum.

The *Dundalk Democrat* reminded its readers "We know what the flag has stood for - in Paris of the Commune, in Russia, and Berlin two weeks ago." Over 125 armed police surrounded the asylum to lay siege to it. But the threat of a general strike in the town forced them to back down and the occupation was won with massively improved conditions for workers and patients.

O'Donnell was frustrated with the way the labour leaders were standing aside from the Black and Tan war.

He condemned the conservatism of the labour movement: "Nobody noticed that Connolly's chair was left vacant; that the place Connolly purchased for the organised Labour movement in the leadership of the independence struggle was being denied or reneged."

It was made easy for De Valera to call Griffith in and shut Labour out, for the Irish Labour Party did not want a share in the leadership. James Connolly's work, teaching, and martyrdom, left no imprint on the policy of Irish working class movements. Dublin workers uncovered at every mention of his name at a meeting but nobody preached Connolly to them."

**O**'Donnell opposed the Treaty of December 1921, and in January of the following year he joined a group, led by the Irish novelist Liam O'Flaherty, which occupied the Rotunda in Dublin.

Fighting the red flag and calling for the establishment of a Workers' Socialist Republic, the occupation ended after four days when they were evicted by Free State Forces.

In April 1922, O'Donnell was a



## Peadar O'Donnell: THE RED REBEL

member of the IRA garrison that took over the Four Courts in Dublin.

Arrested the following June when the building was attacked by Free State troops, he spent most of the civil war in jail where he wrote his first novel 'Storm'.

O'Donnell attempted during the late 1920's and early '30s to direct the energies of the IRA towards socialist republicanism. During this period, O'Donnell organised the campaign against payment of Land Annuities to the English exchequer.

The strength of the campaign forced de Valera to take up the issue and allowed him to gain a veneer of radicalism.

In September 1931, O'Donnell was a founder member of the socialist-republican group, Saor Eire. This was composed of IRA members who had the aim of over-

throwing "British Imperialism and its ally, capitalism" in Ireland.

The organisation was banned and O'Donnell was subject to unprecedented attacks from the Catholic hierarchy. A special book "Could Ireland Become Communist?" was written by James Hogan to stir up an anti-left witch hunt. Most of the information in it came from Special Branch files and the tone was hysterical. It argued that O'Donnell was leading a plot to destroy Catholicism in Ireland and had learnt "church burning in Rome".

**F**aced with these attacks from the Bishops, the IRA leadership disowned Saor Eire. O'Donnell then set up the Republican Congress.

It gained impressive support from workers and soon had between 6,000 and ten thousand

members. Fourteen trade unions and trade councils were represented at its first conference.

O'Donnell set about organising workers in Northern Ireland and the group recruited a number of Protestant workers, setting up branches in the Shankill and Ballymacarrett.

O'Donnell convinced a group of workers to join a banned Easter commemoration march in Belfast. "We went along until the stage where the B Specials would allow us to go no further. Then the whole republican procession flopped to its knees and began the rosary. My Orangemen could have afforded to risk getting the heads cracked with a baton, but they couldn't kneel on the streets to say the rosary."

Famously, two lorry loads of Protestant workers went to march at Bodenstown where the IRA

attacked them. O'Donnell described the events as "The Belfast fellows were taken aback when an attempt was to seize their banner. For a moment they were confused but they rallied to the defence of their banner with a slogan that never was heard at Bodenstown and probably never will be again - 'Up the Shankill Road'."

The Congress organised strikes and housing campaigns effectively and offered the best potential to build a revolutionary party in Ireland. But there was a major political weakness.

One section of the organisation, led by James Connolly's son Roddy, and the Belfast Protestants argued that the Congress had to declare openly that they did not stand for de Valera's republic but were fighting for Workers' republic.

The majority of the Congress led by O'Donnell and the Communist Party wanted a looser alliance. They claimed that calling for a workers republic would alienate the grass roots of Fianna Fail.

As O'Donnell argued "We dare not jump through a stage in the fight, now raising the slogan of a workers republic and leaving Fianna Fail to say that they stand for one sort of a republic and we stand for a different one."

O'Donnell won the vote, but the Congress declined rapidly as it failed to offer an alternative to the populist rhetoric of FF. Crucially most of the Belfast Protestant workers left.

O'Donnell threw himself into the defence of the Republican Government in Spain. Following the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, 1936-'39, O'Donnell helped to organise a 'Connolly Column' which fought in Spain.

While in prison during the civil war O'Donnell had written his first novel *Storm* to critical acclaim and this was followed by his most famous novel *Islanders* in 1927 which depicts the severe poverty of the islanders on Gola Island, off the coast of Donegal, where his mother came from.

All his novels paved a road for a fiction that was rooted in the reality of Ireland rather than the fantasies of the Gaelic revivalists.

**B**etween 1946 and 1954 O'Donnell edited *The Bell* which was the most influential literary magazine in Ireland.

It was a constant thorn in the side of official Ireland, and the one beacon against censorship in the 1950's.

Throughout his long life Peadar O'Donnell espoused socialism and was an active anti-Vietnam protester in the 1960's and '70's. As late as 1984 he was at the forefront of the protests against Ronald Regan's visit to Ireland.

In 1918, while still a teacher, he spoke at an INTO conference: "Let us convert our schools into hotbeds, where working men's interests are fostered."

"Let us fling ourselves among the most fervent social and economic revolutionists... If that means that the teachers of Ireland must become rebels, because their employers happen to be the state, then, in God's name, let us become rebels."

It is a message Tony O'Reilly would like to be forgotten, for O'Donnell was one of the best rebels Ireland has produced.

by SIMON BASKETTER



## in my view

# Jack B's hidden history

IN RECENT years the artist Jack B. Yeats has come to be seen as the most important Irish artist of the twentieth century. At the London auctions his work is very much in fashion with a recent painting, *Singing 'Oh, Had I the Wings of a Swallow*, selling for over a million pounds.

Last March saw the opening of a new Yeats museum in the National Gallery.

Few self-respecting Irish institutions or millionaires seem to be without a "Yeats" adorning their walls.

Yet they might be quite surprised to learn that Jack B. Yeats was something of a left-winger. Born into Anglo-Irish society, he spent much of his teenage years like his brother, the poet W. B. Yeats, in Co. Sligo. He settled in Devon and worked as an illustrator, returning to Ireland in 1910.

Drawn to nationalism and repulsed by the slaughter of the first World War, he supported the 1916 Easter Rising and War of Independence.

*The Treaty signed by Michael Collins and others with the British in 1921 was for Yeats a betrayal of all that was noble and pure in nationalism and he supported the anti-treaty side in the following civil war.*

He detested Cosgrave, the first prime minister of the Free State. Like most left-wing republicans he was again disillusioned, when de Valera became Taoiseach in the 1930s and ruthlessly turned on his own supporters and the IRA.

He was particularly horrified by the rise of fascism across Europe in the 1930s Relations with his brother, the famous poet William Butler Yeats quickly deteriorated as William flirted with fascist ideas and went on to write the anthem for the Blueshirts.

## Reader

During the Spanish civil war Jack became a regular reader of *The Worker* (the Communist Party paper).

Although Yeats was never actively involved in working class politics, a look at his paintings shows where his sympathies lie. He never painted the normal stock-in-trade of artists at the time - still lifes, life drawings (nudes) and portraits. Although his father John was an acclaimed portrait painter, Yeats's only known formal portrait is of his wife

Instead his pictures and canvasses are of ordinary people - the rural and urban poor, people at markets and fairs, circuses, funerals, boxing matches, dockers at work or people on crowded trams.

Even his father observed this about his son's work. "his drawings were never one of object, one person or one animal, but of groups engaged in some kind of drama."

*He loved public gatherings like races and fairs and loved to depict the vitality and energy that is the jostling mass of humanity in his work. The people in his paintings are always sympathetically drawn, often full of hope and defiance.*

There is also a warm humour in his work. The wonderful *Cavalier's Farewell* is a deeply ironic painting - he says good-bye to fairground merry-go-round horse, not a proud Arab stallion.

A number of his works are more overtly political. His painting *Bachelor's Walk*, in Memory shows a flower seller laying a flower in memory of those killed by British soldiers in 1912 on Bachelor's Walk.

*Communicating with Prisoners* depicts woman prisoners and their supporters at Kilmainham Gaol during the War of Independence. He once joked that his painting of anti-treaty leader Harry Boland's funeral was the only record of the event, as all the cameras were confiscated at the entrance to Glasnevin Cemetery.

Probably his most striking piece of work is his anti-war piece *Grief* that manages to capture in one striking visual image the horror and inhumanity of war.

Unlike W.B. Yeats he was not interested in cultivating artistic masks. As one critic remarked "he has the crooks and the baddies as well as the heroes". Above all his work displays a committed belief in the dignity and honesty of ordinary people.

VASCO PURSER

## film

# NORTHERN EXPOSURE

"WELCOME to America's last frontier" brays the tourist-brochure voice-over at the start of *Limbo*, the latest film from acclaimed left-wing director John's Sayles.

For over 20 years Sayles has been one of the most interesting and truly independent directors working in American cinema.

While he has worked on alligator films, cockroach films and sci-fi films, at the heart of the man is a noble social narrator.

## Political

Much of his work has been political, films with large composite casts looking at communities in conflict and transition - the past, in the case of the brilliant *Matewan*, with his account of a coal miners' strike in the 1920s; the present, with *City of Hope* and his tale of a declining industrial town in New Jersey.

His new film *Limbo* echoes much of his past work and is a haunting and passionate film.

The first scene cross-cuts between the local salmon cannery and a society wedding.

We are introduced to a host of characters that comprise the scrubby Alaskan town of Juneau.

## Before

Sayles then focuses on two of them. Native Alaskan and former high school basketball star Joe Gastineau and country singer Donna De Angelo, a single mother, who has travelled 36 states before ending up in the limbo of Alaska.

Both are enduring broken and bruised lives that sparks a deep connection when they meet. Sayles subtly locates their relationship in the



*Welcome to the frontier*

changing Alaskan community.

"History is our future here" says one local who sees Alaska as on its way to becoming one giant Disneyland theme park.

Donna, an enter-

tainer, is part of this new economy while Joe a former fisherman is a part of the past.

As the film continues it twice switches style as Joe, Donna and her lonely teenage daughter

Noelle first become fugitives and then desperate survivors. However the film never loses its sense of wholeness and completion.

Sayles leaves the best until last and ends the film cruelly

with a dangling conclusion that leaves you both confused and haunted. *Limbo* is a film that will stay with you long after the credits have rolled.

—SINEAD KENNEDY

## music

# Rebellion songs

"SO LONG as there is a rope tied round Mumia's neck / Let there be no rich white life we're bound to respect"

These are some of the lyrics from Rage against the Machine latest album.

It contains good songs such as 'New Millennium Homes' which warns that "A fire in the master's house is set" and 'Maria' which deals with sweatshop labour.

RATM emerged from Los Angeles in 1991 with their self-titled debut album of angry, defiant but also political songs.

## Strength

The strength of RATM has not just been good music but that they push their politics both on and off stage.

RATM reject the madness of the capitalist system which they try to fight and they urge us to do the same. Their support of the Anti-Nazi League is



the clothing company Guess!

Just before Christmas last year over 300 off duty police showed up to picket RATM's concert in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The cops denounced the band's outspoken support for Death Row inmate and ex-Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal. "The police were afraid of our audience, that people might be listening" Morello said after the event.

The right wing boycott of the band that was stirred up by the National President of the Fraternal Order of Police was a failure

Predictably, the album is raw and defiant. The 12 fantastic songs are a mix of funk, punk, metal and rap.

The music may not be to everybody's liking, but anyone who is into this kind of music should get this album now.

— PAUL SMYTH

well known, as is their support for anti-censorship campaigns in the US, the Zapatista struggle in Chiapas and their opposition to US imperialism. Their overt politics has drawn the ire of the US establishment. Lead singer Zach De La Rocha has been targeted by the FBI and guitarist Tom Morello was arrested in 1997 as part of a demonstration protesting about working conditions for garment workers at





**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.

**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.

**SWP Branch meetings**

**ATHLONE:**

Contact 01-872 2682 for detail

**BRAY:**

Meets every Wednesday at the Mayfare Hotel at 8.30pm

**BELFAST CENTRAL:**

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Garrick Bar, Chichester St.

**BELFAST SOUTH:**

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Queens Students Union

**CORK:**

Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Abbey Tavern, College Rd.

February 8th, The revolutionary party February 15th Origins of the family private property and the state.

**DERRY:**

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Badgers Bar upstairs, Orchard St.

**DUNDALK:**

Contact 01-872 2682 for details

**DUN LAOGHAIRE:**

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Christian Institute

**DUBLIN ARTANE / COOLOCK:**

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane / Beaumont Recreational Centre opp. Artane Castle

**DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL:**

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways, Parnell St February 9th What do we mean by revolution

February 16th Genetic engineering: Has science gone too far

**DUBLIN NORTH WEST:**

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in O'Mahoney's Pub, Phibsboro (near Crossguns bridge)

February 9th The crisis of European Social democracy

February 16th Are Ethnic conflicts inevitable?

**DUBLIN RIALTO:**

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR, Rialto

February 8th The future socialist society

February 15th The origins of the family property and the state

**DUBLIN RATHMINES:**

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in O'Connell's Pub, St. Richmond St.

February 9th Class polarisation in Europe

February 16th The revolutionary ideas of James Connolly

**DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL:**

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St

**DUBLIN TALLAGHT:**

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Jobstown Community Centre

**ENNISKILLEN:**

Phone 01-872 2682 for details

**GALWAY:**

Meets every Thursday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square (beside Cuba) 8.30pm

**LIMERICK:**

Phone 01-872 2682 for details

**SLIGO**

Meets fortnightly on Saturdays, phone 01-8722682 for details

**TRALEE**

Meets fortnightly on Mondays at 5.50pm in Harty's Bar, Tralee:

**WATERFORD:**

Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

**WEXFORD**

Meets every fortnight, phone 01-8722682

**MAYNOOTH**

Meets every Wednesday at 6.30pm in classhall B

9th Feb: Marx's theory of history

16th Feb: The politics of James Connolly

**UCD**

Meets every Wednesday at 1pm room G109a (arts block)

9th Feb: Marx's theory of Alienation

16th Feb: James Connolly and the Irish Socialist tradition

**TRINITY COLLEGE:**

Meets every Thursday at 7pm room 4050a (arts block)

10th Feb: Sartre and the politics of existentialism

17th Feb: Mumia Abu Jamal and the death penalty

**Leaked document shows...**

**Performance related pay backed by ICTU**

**LEAKED documents from the partnership negotiations, which have come into the possession of Socialist Worker, show that the government is determined to introduce the Thatcherite performance pay system into the public sector.**

And instead of defending the idea of common pay for common work, the ICTU is backing the change.

On December 22, the government presented a document where they demanded a new pay system for the public sector that was "grounded on a performance driven approach to reward, rather than traditional relativities / analogues approach."

Traditionally public sector workers have

pushed up their pay levels by maintaining 'relativities' with each other. Specific groups like health board and local authority workers also receive 'analogue payments' which are based on links to private sector workers.

After the nurses scored high pay settlements, the government were determined to break relativities.

They had also seen how the fire-fighters had been able to defend their link with the Gardaí to gain increases of 9 percent. Their strategy is to push workers to compete against each other for performance related awards.

The government document accepted they would not get a full individual performance system immediately but they wanted to open the door to this. They wanted a 'roll-out' of the system to be followed by performance driven systems at 'individual level'.

But instead of opposing these moves, the ICTU have gone along with them. This is despite the fact that they had no mandate from their union conferences to do this.

In their response to the government, the ICTU accepted that workers should only get pay reviews where there was an agreement to "provide for the design and implementation of performance management systems".

They argued that workplace 'partnership bodies' should negotiate on these issues, so undermining the traditional structure of collective bargaining.

They even specified that "a change management consultant" should be brought in to deal with disputes.

This is a scandalous position for union leaders to take and is already provoking a massive rebellion, particularly among teachers.

**Teachers say no to PRP**

**"PERFORMANCE pay would be a disaster for education" said Pat Cahill, from the Executive of the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland.**

"Everyone knows that exam results vary according to whether the school is in a deprived area or a wealthy area. How could you set performance standards that are supposed to apply to teachers in different situations."

**Disaster**

"Performance related pay has brought an educational disaster in England. Why should we copy it over here?"

The revelation that the ICTU was backing performance related pay was the last straw for the secondary teachers. Anger had already grown among teachers over the 'early starter issue'.

Teachers had settled for a 5.5 percent pay rise but then found that nurses, fire-fighters, Gardaí and others had won far higher awards. The government is now blackmailing 'early settlers' by making a small extra increase conditional on accepting a new partnership agree-

ment. ASTI has pulled out of the ICTU and is now lodging a 30 percent catch up claim for teachers. They may embark on industrial action in the near future if it is not achieved.

Opposition to performance pay has also grown in the INTO, the home base of ICTU President Joe O'Toole. Three major Dublin branches have opposed O'Toole's support for performance related pay.

One union activist, Crea Ryder said, "the media are claiming there is a division between the three teachers unions."

"But in reality the division is between rank and file teachers and those who owe their allegiance to the ICTU bureaucracy. There was almost unanimous support in my branch for a resolution which attacked the whole idea and expressed concern with the role played by O Toole."

Eddie Conlon, a TUI executive member agreed. "The ICTU has accepted the government's argument about the need to import market criteria into the public service, as if educating children was the same as making washing machines. These leaders have forgotten how to defend public services and the people who work in them."

**Oppose performance related pay**

**PERFORMANCE related pay is a system that was pioneered by the Tories in Britain to weaken the unions.**

It undermines the ability of unions to negotiate a rate for the job. Workers are encouraged instead to compete against each other and end up with different pay rates.

It gives management more power to award 'Yes' men and women.

Management get the final say on who has put in a good performance. There can be no absolutely accurate measure of performance in the vast majority of jobs. The criteria are never fully

clear. So management get a major opportunity to reward those who toe their line and discriminate against union militants.

Performance Related pay demoralises the majority of workers.

At first everyone believes their pay will rise because workers naturally think they are not being rewarded for their full effort.

But all performance systems reward only a small minority. This leads to jealousies and a feeling that the work of the majority is undervalued.

Workers should reject any moves to introduce these system and instead demand across the board wage rises.

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## Drogheda Council workers strike

# 'For as long as it takes'

**OVER 50 Drogheda council workers are on strike and determined to stay out until Drogheda Corporation rescind their decision to privatise the refuse collection in the town.**

Members of SIPTU and the ATGWU have jointly picketed council installations and sent flying pickets to confront contractors.

Moreover, the largest public meeting in Drogheda in recent times, held in the Westcourt Hotel, attracted over 1000 people angered by the decision of the local authority to charge £155 per year for the privatised service.

### Anger

Marches and demonstrations in the town centre over the weekend prior to the strike also drew hundreds of people onto the streets and are further testament to the seething anger that has gripped Drogheda over the issue.

The local dump in Drogheda is to be closed by order of the Environment Protection Agency. The County Manager, John Quinlivan, insisted that the councillors had no alternative but to vote for privatisation, and make the people of Drogheda pay for the cost of transporting the refuse to another location.

One union source told

Socialist Worker, "This strike is about a number of issues: the jobs and working conditions of the council workers; the dictatorial stance of the County Manager, the supine decision of the councillors, and total opposition to double taxation and privatisation".

A few days before the pickets were placed, the authorities used a crane to lift two refuse trucks out of the corporation yard after the workers blockaded the Wheelie bin trucks. When the workers tried to prevent their removal by lying down

on the road, the Borough Engineer, John Dineen, demanded that the Gardai arrest the workers involved.

One of the bosses of Wheelie Bins Service threatened the strikers with "a visit from the boys in balaclavas if they interfered with his operation." This kind of language is taken very seriously in this area.

However, the workers were defiant on the picket line later that morning and promised that, "we'll stay here for as long as it takes to win our demands".

## Chilton Electric

### Workers fight multinational

**SOME 200 workers have taken strike action for increased pay at the Chilton Electric plant in Dunleer.**

Management have refused to negotiate on the issue of basic pay in the plant. Chilton Electric is owned by Glen Dimplex, one of the most profitable companies in Ireland.

Lochann Quinn, the chairman of the tax dodging AIB bank, owns 26 percent of the company.

Many workers in the

plant take home no more than £165 per week.

A management proposal to put a new bonus payment scheme was rejected since the current bonus scheme has been miserable for staff.

Workers say the bonus system was linked to units sold rather than units made.

A bonus of just £8 was paid in the week before the current strike began, although 20,000 units were manufactured.

Workers at Chilton's fellow Glen Dimplex company Bitech are on a work to rule and overtime ban in support of the strike.

## Privatisation

# Privatisation plans provoke resistance

**THE GOVERNMENT'S plans to push through privatisation of local services is rapidly unravelling as a wave of opposition mounts in towns across Ireland.**

A strike by council workers in Bray which was supported by huge marches in the town has fuelled the confidence of campaigners across Wicklow who are fighting

the privatisation of refuse collection.

The three weeks of strike action by the council workers in Bray forced Bray Urban District Council to take the rubbish collection service back in to public ownership.

The workers returned to work on Saturday after a deal which returned one of the two bin lorries removed over Christmas.

Initially the workers were asked to return to work on the bin lorry with a team of only two men but continued strike action forced the council to employ a

team of five.

The remaining five men who worked on the other lorry are being offered a redundancy package of five weeks pay per years service or the option to return to work in a different council department with increased benefits.

However far more could have been won if the SIPTU leadership had fully backed the strike.

Despite a letter from Regional Secretary Jack O'Connor appealing for collections to support the workers, little money came in.

As workers faced growing financial

hardship, O'Connor himself intervened. He argued against militant action and made no attempt link the struggles against privatisation together.

The key to winning more in Bray lay in copying the farmers and placing mass pickets on dumps which took commercial rubbish. But the SIPTU leadership kept talking about respecting the law.

However the struggle in Bray set off a chain reaction. In Wicklow, council workers faced with the same threat of privatisation have also voted for strike

action and were due to go out as Socialist Worker went to press.

In the past week, every council meeting in Bray, Wicklow and Arklow has been met by militant demonstrations of local residents who are angered by the relentless attacks on public services.

As one protester in Wicklow told Socialist Worker "They want to turn Ireland into somewhere like the Isle of Man - where only the rich can live. Privatisation is about making you a guest in your own country".

## Roches Stores

### Strike against low pay

**33 MEMBERS of MANDATE in the Roches Stores head office in Dublin are on strike against low pay.**

The workers, in the accounts payable section, deal with the companies payroll. They are the worst paid of all those doing the job in the industry.

Their pay scale begins at a paltry £8,000 per year going up to about £12,000 with bonuses at the end of six years.

This compares with people doing the same job in SuperQuinn who start at about £12,000 going up to about £18,000 at the top end of the scale.

As one worker pointed out, "the money we get at the top end of the scale is worse than people in other places get starting out."

The Labour Court recommended a new pay-scale for the workers in line with Penney's and Brown Thomas, but the company is refusing to pay.

Roches are also refusing to pay the 2-3% local bargaining increase. They want

the workers to provide cover until six in the evening each day as opposed to five thirty. They also want workers to work the day after St Stephen's Day and Good Friday!

But as the workers on the picket line explained:

"More productivity, they must be joking. There used to be seventy-two people working here. Now there are thirty-three doing the same amount of work. We are all double and treble jobbing. Why should we do more?"

Members of the Roche family who own the company had been revealed by the *Sunday Independent* as holding substantial amounts of money in the Ansbacher accounts.

The Roches Stores strike shows the reality of low pay behind all the talk of the Celtic Tiger and social partnership.

Every worker should support this important strike against low pay. Collections can be brought down to the picket-line on Strand St.

The local branch of the Socialist Workers Party are also organising a fundraising social for the strikers. Keep an eye out for the posters and come along.

## Firefighters under attack

**FIREFIGHTERS IN Northern Ireland have received a kick in the teeth from the new Assembly.**

Across Britain, the New Labour government has been pushing local fire authorities to undermine conditions and implement cuts to the fire service. After a sustained campaign last year by the FBU to save the Grey Book, which contains their national minimum conditions, the employers have tried to avoid an all-out national confrontation and instead are trying to cut conditions region by region.

Many regions have negotiated better local conditions above the minimum. These are now under attack with the employers attempt-

ing to start new recruits on lower conditions.

Faced with strike action and votes for strikes in Derbyshire, South Yorkshire and London, the employers backed off. But the measures were implemented in Northern Ireland by New Labour before the new Executive was formed.

Firefighters in the North were hoping that the Assembly would reverse the decision. The fire service now comes under the Department of Health, Social Security and Public Safety headed by Sinn Fein's Bairbre de Bruin.

But in early January firefighters were told that de Bruin was leaving the arrangements in place, claiming that the crisis in the hospitals meant savings had to be made elsewhere.

Local FBU leader Jim Barbour said, "It is now essential that firefighters in Northern Ireland organise to resist these cuts."

## Elections

# Vote left in union elections

**SOCIALISTS ARE standing for union positions in two of the major unions.**

Jimmy Kelly, the convener of Waterford Crystal, is one of three candidates who is standing for the executive of the ATGWU. The ATGWU organises work-

ers in both Britain and Ireland and Jimmy is seeking to become one of the two Irish representatives. A committed opponent of social partnership, Jimmy believes that the ATGWU needs to match its militant rhetoric with action. He is also campaigning for the union to adopt an

aggressive recruitment campaign so that it breaks into areas like call-centres and the computer factories.

Voting for the position continues until February 4th.

Carolann Duggan, a Waterford shop steward, has made it onto the ballot paper for the SIPTU election for Vice President. Carolann

has been nominated by the Education branch and the Dublin Electronic and Engineering branch. In the vast majority of other branches, the SIPTU machine delivered for the establishment candidate Jack O'Connor. Attendance at meetings averaged just less than 20 and was often packed with supporters of the union headquarters.

Carolann Duggan is the only anti-partnership candidate in the race and stands to pick up on discontent with the latest rotten deal the officials are pushing. However the election will not take place until April.

Jimmy Kelly and Carolann Duggan are both members of the Socialist Workers Party.

## Issues for the labour movement

# Harney creates loopholes on Minimum Pay

**A NATIONAL minimum wage will be implemented on April 1st. Mary Harney has been forced by massive pressure to bring in this measure. It is estimated that one in ten Irish workers will gain. If the figure had been set at £5 an hour, one in five workers would get extra pay.**

But Harney has also created many loopholes to allow employers to get out of paying the minimum wage.

One major loophole lies in exactly how an hourly rate of an employee should be calculated.

The obvious way would be to take the basic rate for a week and divide it by the hours worked.

But Harney has introduced a special schedule that allows employers to calculate for other items so that it appears they are paying above the minimum rate.

The hotel and catering area is notorious for low wages. But under the new Bill, employers will be able to claim that board and lodgings has to be calculated as part of the pay offered to an employee.

They will also be able to claim that tips which are gathered centrally are part of workers wages.

Low paying factory owners will also be able to include shift premium and bonus rates as part of the hourly rate.

Harney has also allowed

employers to cheat younger workers. Someone who gets their first job after they are eighteen will be only given 80 percent of the minimum wage for the first year and 90 percent for the second.

If the employer claims they are on a training programme this can be reduced further to 75 percent for a period. This would allow employers to pay these workers just £3.30 an hour.

### Exempted

Harney has also made sure that the minimum wage is not tied to overall wage rises so that it increases automatically. Instead government Ministers have to make a direct order to raise the

wage and this will allow them to hold low paid workers hostage until other workers accept lower wage rises.

Employers can also appeal to the Labour Court to be exempted from paying the minimum wage if they claim they are in financial difficulty. The exemption can last for up to a year.

**But the real incentive for employers lies in the low fine for breaching the law.**

The employer will only be liable for a £1,500 fine for the first offence or six months in jail or both.

However, the normal pattern of Irish law means that they will only get a fine, and many will calculate that they could try avoiding the minimum wage for some time



Harney

cover their fine.

Despite all these loopholes, there are provisions in the law which workers could still

Employers are now compelled to keep written records of their wage payment systems on their premises and workers can demand a formal statement of their hourly rate of pay.

Workers can also take matters to a Rights Commissioner and ensure that an inspector is sent out to their workplace.

But the law alone will not protect workers. The employers can get plenty of legal advice to allow them to use the loopholes that Harney has provided.

The key is to unionise as many of the low paying workplaces as possible. The unions should be giving a simply guarantee to every low paid worker, that if they join the union, they will get full backing in their fight to



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## DECOMMISSIONING:

# TRIMBLE THREATENS TO WRECK THE PEACE

**IN THE** same week that the Blair government was exposed as selling millions of pounds worth of lethal arms to the corrupt government in Zimbabwe, the Northern Ireland peace process lurched to another standstill over the decommissioning of IRA weapons.

Trimble claims that decommissioning is about the republican movement "demonstrating its commitment to purely democratic methods." The British government says it is necessary to "ensure that violence is never again used for political ends."

It is the utmost hypocrisy from both of

them. Blair didn't hesitate to use violence for political ends when British planes bombed Serbia last year (killing many more innocent civilians than the Omagh bomb). When it comes to the Troubles, the Ulster Unionists and the British government have both supported violence.

Far from using exclusively democratic methods the RUC and British Army maintained a secret state of Special Branch and MI5 agents, using torture, false confessions, watchtowers and informers.

The changes to the RUC proposed by Mandelson leave all the important parts of this mechanism of state violence intact. In Eastern Europe, the hated secret police were

dissolved, their leaders arrested and their secret files opened after the 1989 revolutions.

But in Northern Ireland, the Special Branch remains and not a single police officer will be brought to trial over collusion in the murders of Pat Finucane, Rosemary Nelson or countless others. It has taken over 25 years to get a new inquiry into Bloody Sunday and none of the soldiers or government ministers responsible will be charged.

When Trimble poses as the defender of the RUC against "concessions to terrorists" he is trying to claim that the IRA alone caused the Troubles.

He is unlikely to be very worried about

the anti-Agreement Unionists. The hard-right wing of unionism around Paisley's DUP are a declining minority. Their rallies and marches to save the RUC have been miserable affairs.

Trimble is close to the business elite who want the Assembly to work. They want political stability and protection for themselves. But Trimble also heads a party that was built on patronage, control of the police and discrimination against Catholics. The only thing that can hold Unionism together is its opposition to republicanism. That is why he is again making decommissioning such a major issue.