

Eye witnesses appeal through Socialist Worker.



"YOU MUST protest at this-I appeal to you!".

These are the words of Irish nurse Mary Kelly who spoke from Bethlehem under siege to Socialist Worker. "The Israeli army has the Church of the Nativity surrounded. They have

refused to allow food, water or medical supplies to reach those inside. "They say there are no wounded

in the church, but we know there are badly wounded people in there in urgent need of medical attention. "The Israelis refuse to allow the

International Red Cross to intervene of the church has announced that he considers those inside political refugees.

Mary Kelly, from Baltimore, West Cork, is in Palestine with the human rights group Atlantis Foundation.

"A number of us marched peacefully to the church with water, food and cigarettes. The Israeli tanks fired on us.

"Here in Bethlehem two ambulances were crushed by IDF tanks. The whole town is surrounded by tanks, streets have been trashed, building bulldozed to rubble, water pipes and tanks broken and power cut. There is a shortage of food. "Families cannot even bury their dead."

them permission to do this!"

Before the phone line to Bethlehem went dead Mary Kelly commented, "The spirit of the people is not crushed-it won't ever be crushed. This is their land!"

Heather Guyton, another of the international volunteers, spoke to Socialist Worker from the Occupied Territories. She told how internationals were inside a number of refugee camps in an effort to put a brake on the IDF's human rights abuses.

"We know the Israelis are shelling the Balata camp and Nablis. There are horrible reports of the fighting in Jenin. Sharon has replaced the military commander with Chief of Staff Shaul Mosaz to speed up the fighting. "Civilians have been tied to tanks

as human shields-there is video footage of this. From what we hear the slaughter in the Jenin refugee camp is unprecedented."

On the spot observers told Social-ist Worker, that at least 400 people were rounded up in Bethlehem alone. IDF tanks began shelling Azza camp leaving many killed or critically wounded.

British comedian Jeremy Hardy was in Bethlehem with the International Solidarity Movement and spoke to *Socialist Worker* when he returned, "The situation is desperate. IDF troops are firing into homes, shelling randomly. "In the Church of the Nativity civilians and fighters are holed up. IDF forces have been firing shells at

the doors of the Church. The fighters will not surrender because they will be summarily executed by the Israelis.

"Most Palestinians don't agree with the suicide attacks, but there is overwhelming support for the armed resistance.

"The Palestinians at this stage just want to live in peace. Sharon wants to crush and completely destroy the Palestinians."

Those Socialist Worker spoke to in the Palestine territories were delighted and encouraged when told of

The Israeli Defence Forces claim the nuns and Franciscans in the church were being held hostage by Palestinian fighters. But the Patriarch

"Bush and Tony Blair are giving

recent 2,000 strong protest in Dublin.

We must now pull out all the stops to build an even bigger Anti War Demonstration in Dublin on April 27. ■ Now turn to centre pages

3pm Saturday 27th Apri Parnell Sq. Dublin

Yet more curbs on protest...

JOHN O'Donoghue is attacking our civil liberties again.

The latest Public Order Bill includes a provision for exclusion orders making offenders stay away from certain locations where "trouble" has taken place in the past.

People can be banned from premises or locations for up to 12 months.

Breaching the order can lead to a three-month prison sentence and a fine

AUSTRALIA

up to € 650. O'Donoghue John claims the Bill, would "strengthen considerably the powers of the Garda

Síochána in dealing with the problems of late-night

...and

rushed through a piece of legislation which gives sweeping new powers to gardaí and local authori-

drunken hooliganism on urban streets." Yet according to the Department of Justice

street violence accounts of only 2.3 percent of recorded crime.

According to Liam Herrick of the Irish Council Civil Liberties. for "Existing public order legislation was being used at the moment against peaceful political demonstrators and protestors and to suppress freedom of speech.

"Giving the police such wide powers is very questionable, especially as there is no independent complaints body.

attacks vellers on

THE government ties to "move on" Travellers.

They added amendments to a housing bill at the last moment which will allow gardaí to confiscate caravans

and cars and to force Travellers off lands they are occupying.

The amendments strengthen the trespass laws in ways that could limit protest as well but they are mainly intended as discriminatory legislation against Travellers. There are only 111 units of Traveller-specific accommodation.

400 jobs were worth just £1

LEAKED memos reveal that Ireland's only steel plant, Irish Ispat, was stripped of its assets by Indian parent firm Ispat International before it closed.

direct

The

other expenditure.

The documents also show that most of a £4mthem redundancy money. Irish Ispat faces charges of breaching the Health and plus Government grant for environmental Safety Act at Cork Circuit Criminal Court next month. upgrades was diverted for An Ispat worker, Tom Mulcahy, 53, died in a fire in January 2001. plant-formerly

The key negotiators of the Irish Steel sale were former Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds (FF), Ruairi Quinn (Lab) and Richard Bruton (FG).

Irish Steel-was sold to

Ispat in 1996 for £1. The

leaked memos, minutes of a

meeting which took place at

Ispat's headquarters in

London in June 1999, show

that the company considered

sacking all workers at the

Cork mill with less than two

years' service so that they

would not be forced to pay

US THE A defence department announced last month that a satellite positioning device had been found in an Afghan cave. They said the equipment was lost in Somalia in 1993.

The discovery, they proclaimed, was concrete evidence at last that Bin Laden's Al Qaida network was behind the deaths of 18 US soldiers in the disastrous raid

on Mogadishu. The device bore the name G Gordon, one of the soldiers whose death was shown in the film Black Hawk Down. Then red faced

officials admitted that the high-tech global positioning device had been lost by a US soldier in the cave a few

weeks ago. It was manufactured in 1997 at the earliest. G Gordon had transferred his positioning device to another soldier, who lost it during the US's latest assault Afghanistan.

A report shows women in the defence forces in the South suffer series ous sexual harassment

One woman soldier anonymously informed an inquiry into harass ment and bullying ir the Defence Forces that she was raped but was too afraid to report the incident, it emerged vesterday.

Protestors liberate refugee camp

PROTESTORS briefly liberated a refugee camp in Australian the desert last month. "A thousand people

streamed across the desert, a sea of red, orange and black banners, with music playing and flares flaming.

"The fence came down through sheer weight of numbers," Melbourne activist Damien Lawson from No One is Illegal told Socialist Worker. "It was a magnificent display of people power-people saying that enough is enough."

Chanting

"When we got to the fence we could see women and children screaming. The detainees were chanting and shaking the fence with us," said Kristalo Hrysicos from Refugee Action the Collective in Victoria (RAC). "A 10-year-old boy jumped

into our arms. He said, 'Please miss, don't send us back. We'll die. We are not illegal." Kristalo added: "As demonstrators, we could see we had the power to stand our ground. We helped the refugees fight for freedom.

"There's now a strong mood to come back to the cities and mobilise thousands more people to end mandatory detention."

Action

"This action is a big contribution to building the movement," said RAC steering committee member Judy McVey. "The previous weekend more than 30,000 people across Australia marched in support of refugees.

Mass direct action and mass rallies are not counterposed-they build each other. The Woomera protest will give a big boost to the campaign in the cities."

Detainees in the camps are treated like animals, known by numbers not names, and suffer beatings, water cannon and tear gas from prison guards. Among those who fled Woomera



Protestors at the refugee camp

were women and children Melbourne put it: "It was who had been rotting in the desert for more than a year. Karina

important to see that the refugees are not nameless

"One of the most important achievements was to give refugees hope and prove to them that what the guards

say about them not having support in Australia is an absolute lie," added Kurt from Melbourne.

Report slams Ireland as corrupt, racist and repressive

A REPORT by the Joseph Rowntree trust says corruption is a central feature of Irish politics and human rights standards are below internationally acceptable levels.

The study of justice and social issues, by an independent social policy consultant, says Ireland has become one of the richest EU countries, as well as one of the most unequal.

inequality, extraordinarily low levels of investment in public services and a depressing record on environmental protection".

Other criticisms include

A US firm has come up with a bizarre excuse as to why their workers voted for union recognition

F in helicopter scandal

WHAT WAS the US ambassador, Richard Egan, doing talking to the Irish government about Sikorsky? The US firm was granted a contract for the €100 million helicopter deal earlier this year, following a second tendering process by the Department of Defence, and after it had dropped its price by about 27 percent.

Price

According to the Department of Defence the US ambassador had handed over a revised bid on behalf of Sikorsky to the Minister during the course of a "courtesy call" on October 11th. They accepted the document, he said, but it had not been taken into account by the Department because the closing date for tenders had passed.

While not wanting to accuse the government of lying, on October 24th, 2001, the ambassador wrote to the Minister "I want to thank you again for our enjoyable meeting on October 11. I look forward to continuing our positive exchanges in the future.

"During our discussion, I left you Sikorsky's latest proposal which included a revised bid approximately 27 per cent lower in price than their initial offer.

"We understand that, to date, the Department of Defence has not yet responded to this Sikorsky proposal, although it appears quite advantageous in cost terms to other bids."

Politics

The report states "corruption is a central theme of Irish life and politics. Ireland is now regarded as one of the more corrupt European states."

Although tribunals have "done much to determine the nature of corruption, changes to improve the political and administrative system have been minimal."

It highlights the "widening levels of

■ Inadequate treatment of refugees and asylumseekers:

■The lack of a fully independent police complaints procedure and poor safeguards for people in detention

■ Difficulties for poor people in getting speedy access to justice and lack of use of alternatives to prison-Ireland has the second fastest-growing prison population in Europe.

■ The continued operation of emergency legislation, including the nonjury Special Criminal Court.

Workers at a nursing home, the Mount Sinai-St Francis Nursing and Rehabilitation Centre, balloted to have their union recognised.

Hospital manager Barbra Bynum has claimed "voodoo" signs frightened the staff into joining the union.

These "signs" include ominous half empty water cups and necklaces with beads black on them.

Two other women respondents and one man said that they had victims been 0 attempted rape.

The report found that 30 per cent of women soldiers, who make up only 4 per cent of the Defence Forces-which has a strength of around 10,700-had experienced sexual harass ment.

what we think

Privatisation = corruption

PUBLIC PRIVATE Partnerships are the big idea for all the mainstream parties. Back door privatisation is supposed to improve public services and develop the country's infrastructure. The reality is the opposite.

PPPs are now revealed as the same old Fianna Fail corruption and the transfer of taxpayers money to big business. The Sports Campus Ireland (Bertie Bowl) scandal has revealed the reality of what PPP schemes mean.

The bizarre story of how a paper company in the Virgin Islands was awarded a contact to run Waterworld in Abbotstown leads straight to the top of Fianna Fail.

The original proposal to grant the contracts for the project where proposed by Bertie Ahern.

Bertie Ahern. Paddy Teahon headed Campus Stadium Ireland, the private company in charge of the project. Teahon used to be Ahern's closest ally in the civil service before he was appointed to run Sports Campus Ireland by Ahern.

Teahon, had been heavily involved in setting up the tax avoidance scam that is the IFSC. Teahon is head of Digital Media Development in Smithfield. Teahon also joined the board of Treasury Holdings, the huge property developers. Though he resigned as head of Sports Campus Ireland he still sits on the board.

Laura Magahy's consultancompany received €127,000 a month for Sports Campus Ireland. The contract is for "executive services", team-building and "masterplanning"—whatever they Magahy's company also has a similar contract for a new hospital on Dublin's Eccles Street. Magahy told the Public Accounts Committee that she left Temple Bar Properties in August 2000. She used to run Temple Bar Properties under Paddy Teahon. She also held the contract for Digital Hub run by Teahon. The accountants for all these projects were Deloitte & Touche who also prepared the accounts of Teahon's companies. Teahon, Deloitte and Touche and Magahy all share a PR firm: Wilson Hartnell

Public Relations (WHPR). WHPR were also a beneficiary from Stadium Ireland, charging £1,655 a day for the services of former Labour Party spin doctor Fergus Finlay. Teahon provided consultancy services to Deloitte & Touche.

Lavish pay and perks packages were awarded to spin doctors, accountants and planning experts associated with the Campus and Stadium Ireland management structures.

Payments of up to €2,500 a day have been paid to key figures in the project in addition to generous retainers and expenses.

Magahy, who told the Dail Committee on Public Accounts that she was not "involved in public projects for the money", was nevertheless charging £1,050 a day for her personal time in addition to the normal fees and retainers charged by her company.

She was also in charge of dividing up the money—well over €1 million a year between various companies involved in planning the project. Despite the fact that it was taxpayers' money, how it was spent is secret because it is "commercially sensitive"!

The showpiece PPP has been shown to be nothing more than a scam for consultants and mysterious off shore firms to get their hands on taxpayers money.

The government and opposition parties all are committed to PPPs. Some schools have already been handed over to the PPP scam. Fianna Fail are pushing ahead with similar schemes and health. They want to deliver all local government services and building projects to the pri-

Protests against church abuse



Over 150 angry protestors, mostly victims of clerical abuse, outside Mass for the Christian Brothers. The Church hierarchy is refusing to open its files to admit what it knew of abuse by priests. For more on the Church abuse scandals turn to page 4.

Thousands march in solidarity with Palestine

PROTESTS have taken place around the world in solidarity with the Palestinians. Over 2,000 people demonstrated in Dublin against Israel's war on Palestine.

The protest, organised by the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign marched from Temple Bar to the GPO. Most of the protestors then marched to the Israeli embassy in Ballsbridge, shouting "Israeli Ambassador, Out, Out, Out!" tion, on April 27th, needs to be even bigger and better.

The focus is not just on Israel, but also on its paymaster, the US government, which is preparing an attack on Iraq.

Members of the Ireland Palestinian Solidarity Campaign in Belfast held a number of protests in Belfast to show their anger at Ariel Sharon's part in the "War on terror".

Protestors managed to highlight American involvement in Palestine by briefly The Belfast anti-war movement is sending a bus down to Dublin for the march on 27th of April.

To find out more phone Tom on 07900 353 816. For march information ring 087 632 9511

STOP THE DRIVE TO WAR! Say NO to Bush's

War on Irag

vate sector.

Fine Gael have said they want to sack thousands of public sector workers by giving over public services to the private sector.

We need a fight against privatisation to keep the profiteers of our services. The growing anti bin tax campaign shows that opposition to privatisation can be built.

We need a political alternative to the privatisation parties. Voting Socialist at the upcoming election in the South can be a start to breaking the power of corrupt parties of croney capitalism. If you would like to help build the Socialist vote in the election campaign, telephone 01-872 2682

Boycott

At the embassy, the demo gathered around a tree where two Irish women have set up a permanent protest vigil.

The campaign launched a boycott of all Israeli goods, in the same way that goods from apartheid South Africa were boycotted in the 1980s.

Protestors also called for the Irish government to break off all diplomatic relations with Israel, while they are in occupation in Palestine.

The next demonstra-

ment in Palestine by briefly occupying the American consulate in Belfast. "The anger of the peo-

"The anger of the people in Belfast is just reflected in what we are doing," one organiser told *Socialist Worker*, "Not one person opted out of the occupation of the consulate lobby. The only reason that people didn't get in was either because there was no room or the police stopped them."

At another protest, which organisers expectedto be a small picket, 150 people marched through Belfast city centre with Palestinian and red flags. Some 150 people held a

Some 150 people held a rally in Derry in solidarity with the Palestinians and 20 people protested in Tralee.

Justice for Palestine ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATION Assembling at The Garden of Remembrance Dublin SAT April 27th @ 3p.m.

Organised by the Irish Anti-War Movement www.irishantiwar.org—with support from: End sanctions on Iraq campaign, AFRI and Globalise Resistance

Eamonn

McCann

Why church will keep covering up

"GOVERNMENT ACTS on abuse allegations", ran a daily newspaper headline. It will have led many to believe that the victims of paedophile priests like Sean Fortune were at last being taken seriously at government level. But, "act" was putting it a bit strong.

The story told that the Ahern government was considering appointing the former Fine Gael TD George Bermingham, now a senior barrister, to investigate what action might be appropriate. Which falls some way short of "Government acts".

This has been par for the course for at least a decade now. A newspaper or book or television programme highlights the suffering of children at the hands of depraved clerics. There is a flurry of sympathy and concern in the rest of the media, statements from senior Catholic officials claiming that they'd never realised such things were happening and that when they did have an inkling they hadn't understood how to react, and assurances from government that the interests of the victims would now be put first.

Discovered

And then it's discovered there are all sorts of legal and constitutional difficulties preventing action being taken. And the issue is parked on the sidelines, unresolved. This sequence of events has been repeated half a dozen times over the last decade. Dublin archbishop Desmond Connell is back in the headlines over the revelation that he paid out hundreds of thousands to the victims of Fr. Ivan Payne. Except that this isn't a revelation. The fact that Connell paid one of Payne's victims, Andrew Madden, £30,000 was a front-page story in October 1995.

In the same year, the sexual abuse of children in Ferns by Sean Fortune was a major story. The newspapers were full then of the same outraged letters to the editor which we are reading now.

Each time the issue arises, somebody says that this time it won't be let slip. But already it's being said that it would be "impractical" to decide on any particular course of action this side of the general election. Action is being long-fingered again.

Despite all, the Irish ruling class, in both its political and media manifestations, has no stomach for direct confrontation with the Catholic Church. There was a mind-boggling example just 18 months ago when "Justice" Minister John O'Donoghue intervened in EU discussions to ensure that Catholic bishops could continue to discriminate in State schools against gays, unmarried parents, atheists and anybody else who didn't conform to the "ethos" of Comiskey, Connell etc.

The story was scarcely mentioned in the media and was ignored in the Dail. But is was spread across the front page of the Irish Catholic (October 26th, 2000). It told that at a meeting of the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg O'Donoghue had successfully threatened to use his veto against an Equality Directive if other ministers didn't agree to insert a getout clause computing Church rup schools from its

BIGOTTED BALLYMENA COUNCILLORS ... DUP 'downright racist'

THE REAL face of the Democratic Unionist Party was once again exposed recently when three DUP councillors in Ballymena Borough Council refused a gift, symbolic of the Islamic faith, which had been presented to an SDLP councillor on behalf of the local Muslim community.

Opposed

The three councillors, James Alexander, Robin Sterling and Sam Gaston, refused to accept the gift given to the council on the grounds that they were opposed to the Islamic faith and "were suspicious of all Muslims after the attacks on New York and Washington".

Dr Mamoun Mobayed, Muslim Chaplain at Queens University, condemned the three "disrespectful and out of date councillors" and reminded them that Muslims were also killed on September 11th.

However Ishmail, a student at Queens went straight to the point. "The refusal of DUP councillors to accept the gift is downright racist" he told *Socialist Worker*.

This is not the first time that the

unionist controlled Ballymena council has been involved in controversy.

The council infamously failed to act or even to condemn the loyalist picket outside St Mary's Catholic Church in Harryville which at one stage in the year long action prevented Catholics from attending Saturday evening services.

Attacked

The racist attitude of the DUP will do nothing except lead to even more attacks on members of the Muslim community.

Since September 11th the Islamic centre in Belfast has been attacked twice and to stereotype all Muslims as extremists the DUP gives credence to those racists who need very little encouragement to attack ethnic minorities.

Imagine the uproar from the DUP if someone said they were suspicious of all Protestants after the Greysteel and Loughinisland massacres.

It is time all politicians who encourage racism are exposed for what they are.

It is the responsibility of all of us in our schools, colleges and workplaces to dispel the myths fuelled by racism in all sections of society and by the real crazed fundamentalists in Northern Irish society, also known as the DUP.



New police—same sectarians

THE START of the month saw the graduation of the first batch of new police recruits in Northern Ireland, amid much fanfare in the media.

Outgoing police chief Sir Ronnie Flanagan, declared: "This is a chance for a new beginning and it is a chance for the public to get behind the police—the public from all traditions, all backgrounds, all cultures."

But in the days before, the PSNI were involved in a series

taken in the raids.

raduatch of its in

Claimed

Later in the week, two more raids took place in Derry, with former hunger-striker Raymond McCartney and his brother Andrew arrested.

The PSNI claimed the arrests were in connection with the breakin at Special Branch headquarters at Castlereagh barracks, on St Patrick's Day. But everything suggests that

this was carried out by British military intelligence.

Even Ronnie Flanagan admitted it was an "inside job".

British military intelligence, which has been exposed for running agents among loyalist murder gangs, have a clear motive for the break-in as does the RUC Special Branch which was equally involved in the dirty war.

in the dirty war. Most of those arrested were released without any charge, the only person held was charged with offences entirely unrelated to Castlereagh.

All say that, in the course of their questioning, they were not once asked about the Castlereagh break-in.

The raids were clearly about the police trying to take the spotlight away from the role of Special Branch and army intelligence, in particular in the Pat Finucane murder.

They also show how little has changed in the police in Northern Ireland.

out clause exempting Church-run schools from its provisions.

In an editorial, the Irish Catholic noted that had it not been for this intervention, "schools would have been forced to employ openly declared atheists, gay activists and others whose views and life-styles were obviously contrary to the ethos of their employer".

The only thing inaccurate in that was the reference to "their employer". The directive applies not to schools owned and financed by the Catholic Church but to to State schools managed by Catholic bishops—schools built with public money and with teachers trained and employed by the State.

After all the revelations about the abuse of children by agents of the Catholic Church, not least in schools, the Irish Government intervened to copper-fasten the Church's control of children not just in Ireland but across the EU. And there was no storm of protest in politics or in the media.

Against that background, there is no reason for confidence that this time the State will take serious action against Catholic Church savagery towards children. The victims, and all who want serious change, will have to continue to organise independently. of brutal raids in Belfast and Derry, which looked just like the old RUC from the 70s and 80s.

Over 200 boiler-suited police officers, broke down doors and smashed their way into homes and offices in Derry and Belfast.

Broken-in

In Derry, the home of Sinn Fein MLA Mary Nelis's daughter Cathy was broken in and her partner, a local community worker, arrested.

The offices of Tar Abhaile, a republican prisoners support group and Cunamh, an organisation offering counselling to those traumatised in the Troubles, were also raided.

Files, some of them about the counselling of families of people killed on Bloody Sunday, were

to Cathy Nelis, whose house and workplace was raided supposedly in relation to the Castlereagh break-in.

SW: What happened when they raided your house?

"They used sledgehammers to break down the front door and within ten seconds there was eight of them in our bedroom, screaming and roaring at us not to move. I was trying to pull some clothes on and keep the baby from getting too frightened. Luckily, our two-year-old was in the bed with us."

"But our five year old daughter was in her own bedroom and I could hear her squealing and they wouldn't let us move to comfort her.

It was awful to hear the child screaming and not be able to do anything. In the end, I did what any mother would and pushed my way past them to get the wain."

SOCIALIST WORKER spoke to Cathy Nelis, whose house and workplace was raided. SW: How did you feel about your children being subjected to this kind of violence?

"Well, I grew up in a house that was raided frequently—as often as once every six weeks. But that was fairly normal for a republican family. There was a war on and we accepted that house raids were part of that war. The experience was normalised for us and we understood why it was happening.

"The irony is that here I am now as a mother of two children who were not even born when the IRA cessation commenced in 1994. Yet eight to ten years into the peace process my children are being subjected to this inhumane kind of treatment.

It makes me question really whether the British are interested in conflict resolution because they are acting like there is still a war on. The way they entered my home and the offices of the community group I work for, it was as if they think the war is still on, like they haven't heard of the peace process!

Election NEWS...Election NEWS...Election If the bosses parties make you sick... Vote for these socialists in the election SUPPORT YOUR

THE COMING election will be the most But where will this opposition come from? important election for decades because a fight is now on to give a voice to the massive discontent of working class people.

Conservative politicians will promise more spending. But while Ireland was in boom we all watched as the wealthy made a killing and we were stuck in miserly partnership deals.

And their promises now are a fraud. After the election there will be new attacks on our public services. This will come in two forms:

• Privatisation: All the main parties are pushing 'public private partnerships'. This is the latest code word for handing our public services over to the profit makers. There are already plans to hand over the care of geriatric patients to private companies!

• More charges: All the main parties have at various stages voted for refuse charges. They want working people to pay on the double rather than taxing the rich.

At the same time the employers have started to sack workers and demand that we 'tighten our belts'. We need to build a strong opposition to this creeping Thatcherism.

Get involved to back these policies:

 Tax the Rich—Fund quality local services

Scrap service charges

No to Privatisation

 No to War—Oppose Ireland joining an EU Rapid Reaction Force

 Nationalise the Banks—Fund job creation

 Oppose Racism—Don't let the rich scapegoat refugees

Protect the Environment—

Don't let Big Business destroy it

• Put people before profit

The Labour Party barely offers an alternative. Its most radical proposal is to take £5 billion from the pension fund to pay for the public services. The Labour Party does not dare on call for taxes on the rich

The terrible record of Labour in coalition shows why support for Sinn Fein and the Greens is growing.

But both these parties want to join a future coalition government. Instead of denouncing the Tweedledum-Tweedlee policies of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, they claim that either one is "more nationalist" or "cleaner" than the other.

It is vital that the largest possible number of votes go to openly socialist candidates—Not to unite with the right but to build an alternative to them.

It's time for workers to organise themselves. No one should rely on politicians who make great promises at elections and then rush into Ministerial Mercedes afterwards.

The Socialist Workers Party is implacably opposed to any coalition with right wing parties.

Instead of co-operating with them to manage capitalism, we want to promote opposition to them. Get active in the campaigns of these socialists.



Privatising Public services for Profit

LOCAL SOCIALIST



Richard Boyd Barrett 087 632 9511



Brid Smith (Dublin South Central) 087 9090 166



Ritchie Brown (Dublin North) 087 203 5207

Jimmy Kelly (Waterford) 087 787 0621

Catherine Kennedy (01) 282 9802



Shay Ryan (Dublin South East) 01 872 2682

Michael O'Sullivan **Ò86 389 4712**

News from the campaign trail

scored a victory once again as protesters gained access to the exclusive golf club. They are demanding to restore free access to the land to use as a public amenity

On the campaign trail Local authority tenants in Kerlogue Road in Dublin's

Dublin South Central

In Ballyfermot some 90 people attended a bin tax meeting to organise the next stage of the campaign and to organise building for a major protest on Mayday. Twenty eight people signed up to work in Brid Smith's election campaign.

In Drimnagh over 130 people attended a lively anti-bin tax meeting 15 people signed up to Brid's campaign. Across the two meetings a 100 people joined the anti-bins campaign.

According to Socialist Worker candidate Brid Smith, "The success of these meetings shows how despite council threats the bin charges campaign is growing from strength to strength."

Brid's campaign is organis-

ing a major public meeting on "Our Public Services are Not For Sale" with a teacher, a bus worker and the chief shop steward of James Hospital speaking on the fight against privatisation.

Dun Laoghaire

As campaigners have hit the streets for Socialist Worker candidate Richard Boyd Barrett one major issue that has emerged is the lack of a regional hospital the Dun Laoghaire / for Rathdown area.

The nearest hospital with a full range of services is Vincent's hospital. Richard is demanding St Columkills in linstown should be that Loughlinstown should upgraded as a matter of urgency. According to Richard, "The A&E Dept in St Michaels Hospital in Dun Laoghaire has now also been transferred to

Vincents. We need to mobilise people the way they did in Waterford recently over Cancer facilities to get adequate hospitals in this area."

The campaign against service charges held a series of eight successful meetings across the area in response to the new bill sent out by the council.

Non-payment rates are still over 50 percent after three years of the campaign.

At the meetings people voted to use the election to increase the pressure on councillors and the political parties.

The campaign agreed to produce a leaflet to circulate before the election stating which candidates and parties voted for the charge and calling for a vote for the Richard and Lisa Maher of the bin tax steering committee.It will also produce an election

window poster saying "don't canvass here if you voted for the bin tax"

Waterford

The Waterford branch of the Irish Anti-War Movement is to hold a public meeting in the Granville Hotel, Waterford on Thursday 11th April at 8.00 p.m. The speakers include Jimmy Kelly: Socialist Workers Party general election candidate, Waterford Crystal shop steward and ATGWU Executive Committee member. And Seamus Healey TD amongst others Healey TD amongst others

Cork

Campaigners for Jimmy Kelly joined campaigners for Cork Socialist Worker candidate Michael O'Sullivan in the fifth mass trespass of the Old Head Golf Links in Kinsale which

Dublin North Central

Across the constituency Socialist Worker candidate Ritchie Browne and supporters organised a series of meetings against the bin charges.

Ritchie is also involved in fighting the dumping of waste in Dublin Bay.

According to Ritchie "The Government has brought in bin taxes claiming that they have an environmental policy yet here they are in filling 52 acres of Dublin Bay to dump rubbish.

"This is a long standing, EU designated special protection area, and as an amenity for local people it needs to be defended."

Dublin South East

Ringsend have been complaining to the Corporation for months over the state of their homes.

Over sixty residents in the road complain that their homes are overdue for upgrading.

But even basic repairs have been ignored and many are affected by damp. Local activist Laura Kinsella said, "Despite continually getting on to the Corpo our needs have been completely ignored." SWP candidate Shay Ryan said

"This highlights the inadequacies of council services. The contracting out of services to private companies has led to a deplorable run down in our services.

"Another issue I am highlighting is the fact that after the floods, while their are empty maisonettes in the area, old people are being moved out to areas far away from their neighbours and families. This is a scandal."

Italy Workers can defeat Berlusconi again

LAST MONTH three million Italian trade unionists, students, immigrants, unemployed workers and pensioners marched through the centre of Rome. They were demonstrating against Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi's plans to "reform" laws protecting workers. This points to a growing radicalisation in Italy.

The government wants to scrap a law which gives workers facing the sack some minimal protection

Berlusconi, a billionaire media tycoon, heads the coalition government consisting of his Forza Italia party, the anti-immigrant Northern League and the National Alliance

The National Alliance (AN) changed its name from the MSI in the early 1990s. The MSI openly stood as the political followers of former Italian Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. Gianfranco Fini, the leader of the AN, is Berlusconi's deputy.

Millionaire

Berlusconi is a multi-millionaire who controls a vast media empire. One of the richest men in Europe, Berlusconi owns three national television channels, a football team, numerous insurance and advertising companies, one national newspaper and hundreds of other companies, as well as seven villas in Sardinia

Berlusconi was once a member of the secret (and banned) Masonic lodge known as P2, exposed in the 1980s. whose members vowed to control Italy through infiltrating democratic and information-based institutions. This power-crazy tycoon-he has claimed to be annointed with "the oil of god" —is a rabid anti-Communist who entered politics primarily to protect his corrupt media and business interests from criminal investigation.

Italian workers have already shown they can stand up to and beat him. Berlusconi was prime minister once before, in 1994 but held office for only 226 days.

During forty years of continuous Christian Democratic rule in Italy, political corruption acquired colossal proportions.

The Christian Democrats collapsed, amid dramatic convulsions, in the early 1990s.

In April 1992 the ruling coalition-dominated since the 1980s by Giulio Andreotti, of Christian Democracy, and Bettino Craxi, the boss of the Socialists—was once again returned to power at the polls. It seemed to be business as usual.

But a month later, magistrates in Milan issued the first official warnings to leading figures in both dominant parties that they were under investigation for corruption.

At virtually the same moment, the motorcade of Giovanni Falcone, the prosecutor who had become a symbol of determination to root out the Mafia in Sicily, was blown up in an ambush outside Palermo. The old order suddenly began to disintegrate.

Over the next months, the Milanese magistrates unleashed a blizzard of further investigations against politicians and business dubbed "Tangentopoli"— Bribesville. Within little more than a year, Craxi had fled to Tunisia and Andreotti was charged as an accomplice of the Mafia.

By the autumn of 1993. more than half the members of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies had been served notices that they were under suspicion of corruption.

The only alternative was the Communist Party but in the 1970s it had adopted the "historic compromise" which involved it supporting the Christian Democrats government. Berlusconi stepped in to reunite the right.

Berlusconi was hailed as the strong man who could overcome the historic weaknesses of Italian politics. His control of the media, it was said, gave him the muscle to impose a new political agen-

But Berlusconi was entangled in corruption scandals too. His brother and business associate were jailed at this time. But the key reason for his demise was his failure to achieve the Thatcherite proiect he set himself.

Extra-parliamentary opposition was immense. In November 1.5 million

people demonstrated in Rome against Berlusconi's plan to cut state pensions. He was doomed from the

moment that he backed off in the face of a general strike. It was then he lost the confidence of the Italian ruling class.

Berlusconi's retreat on pensions marked the beginning of his downfall, and brought to the fore his open warfare with Northern League leader Umberto Bossi.

At one point, Berlusconi threatened to call on his supporters to come on the streets in protest. Nothing happened. The "centre-left" coalition povernment that replaced Berlusconi pushed through pro-market policies which led to mass disillusionment and the re-election of Berlusconi.

Again he has attacked workers' rights, again workers have mobilised to defeat him. Today a radical movement

can begin to challenge the failed politics that allowed Berlusconi back last time.

JUSTICE FOR THE PALESTINIANS - VICTORY TO THE INTIFADA America's watchdog breaks leash

ISRAEL HAS abandoned any pretence of being interested in peace with the Palestinian people. It is using all its force its US-supplied tanks, weapons and fighter jets to crush a people's resistance. Israel has inflicted decades of repression, brutality and humiliation on the

Palestinian people. It has occupied their land, bulldozed their homes, impoverished their children, and murdered those who dared to resist. Israel has killed over 1.300 Palestinians, almost 300 of them under the age of 18, since the intifada (uprising) began 18 months ago. Last month Israel slaughtered 222 Palestinians in just ten days.

Now Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon has launched a bigger and more brutal assault. He has called up 20,000 more troops to inflict a new round of butchery. Israeli tanks totally sealed off the towns of the

West Bank. Civilian areas are shelled, homes bulldozed and hundreds of men rounded up, some arrested others summarily executed.

Israel Defence Forces declared whole areas "closed military zones" and expelled all journalists as it set about savage attacks on the civilian population. Red Crescent and Red

Cross medical teams have not been immune. The Danish Red Cross reported that several of their ambulances had been deliberately destroyed by Israeli fire.

Wounded

Palestinian medical personnel were killed, wounded or arrested and international observers and peace demonstrators were fired on and arrest. Among the arrested was French anti-capitalist José

In just one example in Bethlehem, the Abdeh family lived in one room a kitchen prevent them from spending and a toilet. The Israeli soldiers opened the front door and the night in front of their dear killed the grandmother and the uncle in front of five children,

Oil, imperialism and Zionism

MIDDLE Eastern oil canal which led to a British, accounts for over half country of the world's supplies.

Yet the mass of the populations of the region have seen little of the penefits. Instead the profits flow to the Western multinationals.

US Department of Commerce estimate in 1970 of the net assets the petroleum industry in the Middle East came to 1.5 billion dollars, yielding profits of 1.2 billion dollars, a return on investment of 79 per cent. This is six times the profit rate in extractive industries n Third World countries.

In the face of this a nationalist movement arose demanding to reap the benefits of the "black

Coup

In Iran, the nationalist Mossadea came to power and in 1951 nationalised oil. Shortly after the US helped organise a coup to replace him with a pliant pro-Western Shah.

In Egypt a group of junior army officers overthrew the corrupt King. Nasser, their leader subsequently nationalised the Suez French and Israeli invasion of the After the second world war the major Western imperialist pow- received 48 per cent of all US milers-the British and then the itary aid world-wide and 35 per Americans-saw how setting up cent of all US economic aid.

tion across the Middle East and per Israeli citizen the highest anykeep the oil profits safe from Arab nationalism Ha'aretz, an influential Israeli

daily newspaper commented in special discount prices, not to 1951

Middle East have had to make tions and citizens. such concessions to the nationalist movements ... that they become ed the world's fourth military more and more reluctant to supply Britain and the United States with their natural resources and military out the region. bases ... Strengthening Israel helps the Western powers maintain equilibrium ... in the Middle East.

"Israel is to become the watchdog... If for any reasons the western powers should sometimes prefer to close their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or reporter that the coup which

A torrent of US dollars have kept the West's watch-dog in military hardware:

their mother and their father.

ambulance to take the bodies

children in the toilet room to

dead grandmother and dead

uncle. The Israeli soldiers ...

"The mother has put the

to the hospital.

Between 1978 and 1982 Israel the new state of Israel in Palestine In 1982 the US aid to Israel

could establish Western domina- was worth at least 1,000 dollars where in the world

In addition there is a regular ed upon just those principles of Palestinian towns is the pattern of loans, and weapons at terror mention tax deductible "charita-"The feudal regimes in the ble" contributions for US corpora-

And this investment has creatpower, with nuclear weapons trained on Arab capitals through-

Arms exports to some of the world's most vicious regimes long ago replaced oranges and grapes as Israel's main export earner.

In Guatemala the bloody dicta tor, General Rios Montt, actually boasted to an ABC television several neighbouring states whose brought him to power had been so discourtesy to the west went successful, "because many of our beyond the bounds of the permissi- soldiers were trained by the Israelis.'



will shoot the father and moth-An eye witness takes up the er if they go out to call for an head at close range. story, "Now they can't call an ambulance."

how the Israelis executed five human shields in their military support.

A state built on ethnic cleansing Israel's

against terrorism" has racist abuse on them. previously persecuted mal".



Israeli invasion of the "war on terrorism". In desperation numbers of Palestinian young men have volunteered to be suicide bombers and martvrs.

cleansing.

destruction of the Israeli state. The state of Israel was found-Assassination At its foundation Israel

Palestinians

Middle East.

in 1956, and in 1967.

expelled three-quarters of a million Palestinians through assassination and murderous destruction. The "terrorists" that Israel and the US want put to death are often the sons and daughters of those same dispossessed

Blair's. Bush's and Sharon's outrage is hypocritical—Israel was built on terror attacks on Israel was maintained by the Palestinian civilians and ethnic US as an armed camp in the And Ariel Sharon was the mili-This brought war—in 1948, tary commander whose forces sent



given the green light to Israel's war on Palestinians. The US hands \$3 billion in military and economic "aid" to Israel every year. The US sees Israel as a "watchdog" in the Middle East to protect its profits from oil. **US Secretary of State** Colin Powell admitted that Israel informed the US of its plans to attack Arafat's compound. Powell condemned "Palestinian terror attacks", but he said nothing about the Israeli terror.

THE US has

Palestinians by shots in the

convoy. The responsibility for Israel's new assault lies not Troops then arrested five only with Sharon, but also with Observer journalist Peter ambulance drivers, handcuffed the US and British govern-Beaumont, who was in and blindfolded them, and then ments which supply the Ramallah last week, described used the ambulances as a money, the weapons and the

"struggle Arabs their rights and pouring

Meir told The Times newspaper: "There were no such things as been presented as a Former Israen Time Latestinian people Minister Begin described there were a Palestinian people heroic struggle by a Palestinians as "two-legged ani- and we came and threw them out and took their country away people against evil- In 1969 Israeli leader Golda from them. They did not exist."

eyed assassins and bloodthirsty fanatics hell-bent on murderous How can Israel be defeated?

These tactics have resulted in horrific civilian casualties in Israel and have allowed Sharon his chance to hit out brutally at Palestinians

in Falange fascist forces to mur-Israel's has officially promot- dered thousands of unarmed civiled racism denying Palestinian ians in Sabra and Shatila refugee

The excuse for the camps in Lebanon twenty years leader Yasser Arafat—can form the

Courageously, a number of Israelis have protested at the policy of Sharon and some soldiers have refused to serve in the occupied territories.

But, when polled, very few Israelis favour a settlement by withdrawing to the pre-1967 borders. And a majority support the continued settlements on the West Bank. Because of the level of US aid. Israelis eniov a standard of living unheard of by the majority of people in the Middle East.

To expect a mass movement within Israel to granting equal rights to Palestinian Arabs-includ ing to right to return to their lands from which they were driven—is utopian.

It is also unrealistic to believe supported by Palestinian Authority going.

basis of a lasting or just peace This plan involves the Israelis withdrawing from some areas of the Occupied Territories and leav ing a number of "Bantustan" style Palestinian Authority areas, economically and military dominated by Israel—with no right of return for Palestinian refugees. Rather than more partition

what is needed is a single secular state where Arabs, Jews and every minority can live together with equal rights.

Concessions

While Arafat hopes the pressure of the Arab states and the US can force Israel to offer a few concessions, many Palestinians now understand it is precisely these that the Saudi Peace Plan—which is people that keep the injustice

Israel's and Imperialism's accomplices include the corrupt and brutal Arab regimes in the regions.

While the Western media have played up the suicide bombings for the past year and a half a heroic intifada or uprising of Palestinians against Israel's brutal occupation has continued.

Poorly armed they have fought the Goliath of the Israeli state.

Extending and deepening the intifada to involve the mass of the Arab population, workers and peasants, across the region, rising against Zionism and against the rotten regimes in their own countries, could deliver the knock-out blow.

Here we must do everything we can to build a mass movement to support Palestinian rights and to oppose Western support for Israel's barbaric attacks.

WHAT SOCIALISTS SAY What's special about workers?

THE against aspects of global capitalism has diverse many strands, from poor farmers, environmentally conscious small businesses, NGO's, to developing nations. In that sense it is understandable that the language of many of those attempting to organise the anti-globalisation movement talks, as do Attac for example, of its participants being "citizens" and "people".

Socialists, while recognising the importance of the breadth of the movement have nevertheless urged that it devote particular energy in attempting to connect to the working class.

One simple reason for doing so is that working class organisations are among the most solid of those with an interest in opposing the giant corporations.

Conservative

There can be difficulties overcoming the conservatism of trade union structures and the officials that staff them, but when they do move, they bring enormous resources to the movement.

The Seattle protests against the WTO were a watershed not least because of the involvement of the steel workers' unions, which brought tens of thousands of people to the marches. The same strength of numbers and organisation has been shown since, especially in the recent anti-capitalist protests in Italy.

Trade unions are themselves a reflection of a more fundamental reason why workers can provide an enduring organisational backbone to the anti-globalisation movement

As citizens we are individuals, scattered, only sporadically united by marches or public meetings

But workers are automatically part of a collective. Brought together in the

workplace, in continual contact with one another, workers can organise very resilient ILLES

It was a hard fight to establish trade unions, and a fight that still has to be waged in many companies, but the collective nature of work experience makes it possible to organise as workers in a way that is not available to us as simply citizens.

So, for strength of organisation, it makes sense to involve workers in the antiglobalisation movement.

But even more significant is how the working class holds the answer to the question of how to defeat the massive international power of the corporations.

One starting point, adopted by many of the constituent parts of the movement, is to of unleashing that power advocate the use of consumer against the global capitalism.

movement power to effect change. This, for example, is a major theme of the current issue of Focus.

Particular instances of boycotts of the products of certain companie**s** have been tremendously effective.

Perhaps the best example from recent times was when Shell attempted to dump an oil rig in the Atlantic, and spontaneously a boycott grew up across Europe.

A consumer boycott can be an effective way to agitate over injustice although on its own it has limitations.

Many important aspects of economic life are out of the control of consumers. For example it's hard to single out any particular Irish bank to boycott when they were all proved to be rotten with their aiding of tax evasion.

Quite rightly activists have organised against Nike for its particularly bad practices, but is Adidas that far behind?

Another tactic has been that of a minority of the movement, which is to pursue confrontation with the police and property damage against the most notorious multinationals

These tactics are unlikely to amount to a real challenge to the corporations, such actions cannot be sustained and they demobilise, rather than energise, people.

By contrast the working class has a fundamentally effective potential power that has yet to be seriously tapped by the movement.

Effect

thousand people engaged in a boycott, or in clashes with the police can begin to present a challenge to the corporations, but the same thousand, if they are airport workers at Dublin airnort can have an enormous effect on the **s**hipment of freight if they withdraw their

Similarly a strike by power workers has the potential to shut down the country.

Telecom workers have nearly the same concentration of economic power in their hand**s**.

Even groups like nurses have a great deal of power, not least because they can inspire solidarity action from workers more able to take action directly against the

The point is that the wheels of global capitalism are turned by workers.

The boardrooms of global corporations only seem powerful because they preside over the daily labour of millions of people. Their dependence on workers is their Achilles heel.

Inspired by the great workers' struggles of the past, socialists can see the potentia



French Presidential Election 21 April One in ten will vote for a revolutionary

ONE IN ten people in one of the world's key industrial countries say they will vote in two weeks time for a socialist who calls for "revolution" to sweep away a "bankrupt capitalist system".

That poll finding is sending shockwaves through the French political establishment as the country gears up for the 21 April presidential elec-tion. PAUL McGARR reports from France.

AMIENS, is a small provincial town in northern France. Over 500 people packed into a marquee erected in a town centre park there to hear Arlette Laguiller on Thursday of last week.

Arlette is the presidential candidate of the revolutionary socialist group Lutte Ouvrière (Workers' Fight), and polls suggest she is on course to get 10 percent of the votes. "Always with the workers" read the banner behind her as she spoke on Thursday. The audience gave her a standing ovation as she entered the marquee.

For one hour people listened attentively as she denounced the mainstream political parties. As she finished people rose to their feet to join in singing the socialist anthem, the Internationale.

Startling

Similar meetings are taking place almost every night as Arlette, a retired former bank worker, criss-crosses the country. Over 1,000 people came to hear her in Strasbourg, 900 in Reims, 900 in Limoges, and almost 700 in Nancy.

In smaller towns the size of the meetings is even more startling. In the small town of Saint Lo 500 people turned out there to hear Arlette. Over 400 people came to hear her in Montlucon, another small town.

France's presidential election takes place over two rounds, with a run-off between the two leading contenders following the 21 April first round. That run-



Struggle has produced this mood for change

THE SUPPORT for Arlette Laguiller is a reflection of deep anger with France's governing parties. It is also one expression of a more general discontent with capitalist society.

The entire political land-

only force in French

society capable of

benefiting from disaf-

fection with the gov-

ernment and society.

THE LEFT are not the comeback.

Voting not enough

scape in France underwent a seismic shift in the wake of the great public sector workers' strikes in December 1995.

Millions of workers struck and demonstrated against attacks on welfare by the conservative government. The strikes beat back the attacks and gutted the government.

In 1997 the Socialist Party,

equivalent to the Labour Party, and its Communist and Green allies, won a landslide election victory.

The government has been pushed by struggles and protests since to deliver some of its promises, such as a law limiting most people's working hours to 35 a week.

Bowed

But Jospin, backed by the Communist Party, has also bowed to pressure from big business to push through attacks on working people.

His government has privatised more public services than the two previous right-wing governments put together. And it has pushed through some of the welfare attacks that workers struck against in 1995.

Even reforms like the 35hour law have come with the price of allowing many bosses to impose "flexible" working. No wonder that three in four people said in a recent poll that

they could see little difference between the policies offered by the two main presidential candidates

Meanwhile there is a continuing level of workers' struggles.

Poverty among plenty

money around. Look entirely on such immediate and pay people have to put u

One recent wave of strikes and protests involving mainly young workers in fast food outlets and major stores is significant in indicating the mood at the base of society.

McDonald's workers in Paris led the way with a strike which won major concessions from the multinational firm.

Now young workers in Go Sport and in the Fnac book and music stores have protested 'Everything belongs to us!" was the chant on one recent demon stration on Paris's Champs Elysees by young workers from Fnac, Go Sport, McDonald's Virgin, Disney and Quick.

"THERE IS plenty of Arlette's speech focused almost insecurity, and the kind of job

The biggest current in society is still flowing to the left. The challenge for socialists in France is to build on that in the months

ahead.

off is likely to be between current French president, the Tory Jacques Chirac, and France's Socialist Party prime minister, Lionel Jospin. Chirac and Jospin are on around 20 percent each, with Arlette Laguiller vying for third place, according to a series of polls.

She is well ahead of the Green candidate, though the Greens are part of the country's Socialist Party-led coalition government and hold several ministerial posts. The polls also suggest Arlette could get double the vote of Communist Party leader and presidential candidate Robert Hue.

The Communist Party is also part of the government, and has long been the key left wing and working class force in France, dominating the most powerful trade union federation. If the polls are right then the election will show just how many people are prepared to support a strongly left wing alternative to the traditional parties.

Jean-Marie Le Pen. leader of the Nazi National Front party, has been rising in the presidential election polls to around 10 percent.

In the 1980s and early 1990s Le Pen and his party grew to be a serious threat.

They were beaten back by a wave of anti-Nazi protests in the mid-1990s, and by the shift to the left in society on the back of workers' struggles.

Disillusionment with five years of the Socialist and Communist parties in office has created the space for Le Pen to try and make a

The support for Arlette Laguiller shows the potential, but to realise that potential will mean more than winning votes.

Activity

It means involving in activity as many as possible of those who will vote for Arlette. And it means relating struggles on jobs, wages and privatisation to wider social movements and protests—against racism, corporate globalisation, capitalism, and against war.

Unfortunately no organisation on the left in France is doing this consistently.

The greatest failing in recent months is to have failed to seriously build an anti-war movement.

how the rich have got richer year after year," argued Arlette Laguiller in Amiens last Thursday.

At the same time "wages are held down, insecurity spreads, and six million people in this county are living in poverty, some unemployed, some working for poverty pay".

She attacked the government for creating "a two-tier health serviceone for the rich and one for the people".

"The French government," she argued, "like all the governments of Europe, is pursuing a policy of liquidating public services through privatisation".

bread and butter issues, before ending with a call for a transformation of society.

'The capitalist organisation of the economy is bankrupt. It is incapable of solving the basic problems facing humanity, to feed and clothe everyone, to allow everyone access to healthcare, education and culture.

Changed

"It must be changed, and the only force capable of doing that is the working class," she told the audience. Afterwards people quickly filed out of the marquee into the night. Many had heard enough to convince them to vote for Arlette.

Laurent, a student, had come to a political meeting for the first time in his life: "It is true what she says, especially about with

"Many of my friends will no vote at all. They think all polit cians are the same. But I thin I'll vote for Arlette."

Michelle is unemployed, an also liked what she had heard "Arlette understands the prob lems of ordinary people, not lik all those politicians who just li and are corrupt."

Jean-Michel works in a loca supermarket: "All the others just go along with the bosses. The don't stand for working peopl any more.

"Arlette gets attacked for saying the same things she ha when she has stood in previou elections. But I think it's goo she has not changed. She say what she believes in and stick to it. You can't say that about th Socialist Party or th Communist Party any more, ca you?'

in my Give Bush book Moore stick

MICHAEL MOORE is an author who has managed to write books-and make films-with serious content, that are popular with the mass audience.

He first came to notice with Roger & Me, a film about how General Motors destroyed his home town of Flint, down factories and layworkers.

Slashing

book, His first Downsize This! was a broadside against corporate America in the 1990s. American firms were claiming recordbreaking profits at the same time that they were slashing jobs and relocating to Third World countries, all with the blessing of the Clinton administra-

Moore's latest release, Stupid White Men, picks up where Downsize This!

workers.

describes how Bush lied, cheated and bought his way into the White House. Other targets include the Democratic Party—for letting him away with it and racism in America.

Moore breaks from what "liberal" America has to say on race and Instead racism. argues the reason the been solved is that America never overcame the legacy of slavery.

Not only have black

political

Michigan, by closing ing off thousands of

tion.

left off.

A new president in the White House, more exploitation for American

The first chapter

he "race problem" has not

Resisted

story of a colleague who was so poorly paid that he food qualified for stamps-reserved for Americans living below the official, extremely low, poverty line.

The chapter con-cludes, "never get on a plane where the person flying you is paid less than the kid at McDonalds!"

publication was halted.

that it would have to be edited to reflect "the new climate". Moore stood his

ground and the original text was published. The book is currently

No.1 on the New York Times Bestseller list. On his tour around the

who turn out to hear him speak.

This is a sure sign that the anti-capitalist movement in America has not gone away, despite Bush's attempts to whip up patriotism and silence protest.

As the Enron scandal continues to roll and war in Iraq looms, the American public might just give a slap in the face

year, out of which pilots have to pay their employ-Moore finished Stupid US, Moore has to put on er \$4,000 for their train-White ing. The pilot told him a Men before additional dates to cater September 11th and the for the massive audience to the Toxic Texan. Media Making sure news gets out

THIS MONTH saw the launch of Indymedia Ireland. It is a part of a



shaken not stirred THIS YEAR sees the fiftieth birthday of James Bond, the ageing superspy who should probably have been killed off or been charged under the Official Secrets

Act several decades ago. The main problem with Bond is that he was a creation of the Cold War and so he, much like the plotters of American foreign policy, has spent the last ten years looking around for a new villain to take on.

50 year imperialist

It was all so much simpler when all that Sean Connery had to deal with were double-crossing nuclear scientists selling secrets to the Russians. Nowadays the screenwriters who keep lan Fleming's spook alive have to come up with ever more dastardly villains with increasingly implausible plots for world domination. Strangely, as the plots have grown more complex, they have also grown thinner.

Information

A recent Bond had to overcome a megalomaniac newspaper and television magnate-not Rupert Murdoch, honest-who was intent on taking over the world (what else) by controlling the flow of information.

Sounds interesting enough, but all that Pierce Brosnan can do to stop him is the same bundle of tricks and explosions that Connery, Lazenby, Moore and Dalton have performed in every previous filmblow up a building using a fake Rolex, slide down a tunnel and punch a bad guy in the face.

Oh and get the girl of course. How is it that in every episode, the wife of the villain is always a former lover of Bond's ?! It's cinema from the Carry-on school of thought-if the jokes worked once, change the scenery and costumes and use the same script again.

There's something sinister about James Bond and it's not just the rather dodgy ideas about women. The man whom we're all supposed to get excited about is a British version of Henry Kissenger. He travels around the world with impunity, overthrowing governments and blowing up small islands at will, in order to keep the world safe. Safe for who exactly?

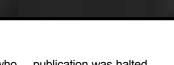
It was precisely these Cold Warriors who brought us the atomic bomb and the prospect of Mutually Assured Destruction, the amassing of large quantities of missiles that will never be fired in order to prevent "the other side" from firing the missiles they've amassed in order to prevent...

Strikebreaking

In other words, there's very little intelligence in the "intelligence community". MI5, MI6, the CIA have many talents.

They are keen on at smashing left wing organisations, strikebreaking, arranging the overthrowing of democratically elected governments and so on, but when it comes to the one thing they're supposed to do-gathering information to protect the population against attack, their "intelligence" is strangely lacking. The CIA and FBI, supposedly the best spy networks in the world, knew absolutely nothing about four Al Qaeda cells plotting the single biggest attack on the United States. British intelligence is so watertight that the information it holds on republicans in the North routinely ends up in the hands of loyalist murderers, yet ask them who killed Pat Finnucane or Rosemary Nelson and they scratch their heads like children asked to solve a difficult calculus problem. No doubt the next Bond will have to seek out a Bin Laden type character in a remote cave in Afghanistan, which will be a real pain as it's so hard to get a dry Martini in Kabul. However, if Bond really wants to save the world, perhaps he could get Q to come up with some sort of repellent spray to keep George Bush away from the nuclear button or any sort of position of power for the next four years. This would not only prevent the outbreak of world war, but I have it on microfilm that Laura Bush used to go out with Sheik Osama before she became a Republican!

His publisher told him



bv PAUL McCARTHY

people not been compensated for what was done to their ancestors, but the white ruling class has resisted every attempt to redress the balance— from positive discrimination to reform of the welfare and legal systems, both of which affect black people disproportionately. One startling fact highlighted in Stupid White *Men* is that the average black person earns 61 per

cent of the average white income-the same ratio as in 1880.

What makes Michael Moore's books worth reading, as well as the humour, is the fact that they are written for and about workers in America. In Stupid White Men,

worldwide alternative to the corporate media.

Michael Moore

one industry he focuses

on is aviation. Moore

starts a chapter with a

conversation he had with

an American Airlines pilot

only earned \$16,800 a

year, an increase from

just \$13,000 in the first

The pilot told him he

in Detroit Airport.

The first Indymedia centre started in Seattle in 1999 durdemonstrations the ing against the World Trade Organisation.

Indymedia offers grassroots, non-corporate cover-age. The website www.indymedia.ie enables anyone with a basic computer and modem to post immediately onto the website's "newswire"

Text, images, video and audio can all be published in a matter of seconds. It means people around the globe can see breaking news in unfiltered coverage.

With the corporate media's ability to distort what is happening this is an important step forward.



Seattle 1999

Other people can add their source to explain what is really comments to an article and start a debate.

Now obviously not everyone has access to the Internet, not everything published on the Internet is true, accurate or fair. Not every piece of news or opinion is vital and interesting, not every comment makes sense. But Indymedia has proved, particularly in the big anti-capital-

going on in the street.

Already video footage taken by Irish Indymedia activists has led to the dropping of Public Order charges in one case after the Gardai where shown to be lying.

So if you have important news of a strike, campaign, demonstration or meeting, log on and post it up. Don't hate the media, be the ist demonstrations, to be a useful media.



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 domi-nation 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 control over schools and hospitals; an end to dis-crimination 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 sys-tematically 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

N.I. POSTAL WORKERS Action needed to fight 40,000 job axe plan

EVERY DAY that passes increases the urgency of a fightback against job cuts and privatisation in the Post Office in Britain.

weeks ago, Two 15,000 job losses were announced. Around 150 jobs are to go in Northern Ireland, as Parcel Force offices in Portadown, Derry and Belfast are closed. This is only the beginning of a massive series of job cuts to prepare for privatisation.

Determined

Last week the Post Office confirmed there would be many more, pushing towards the bosses' target of 40,000. Post Office chairman Allan Leighton is determined to make workers pay the price of making the business profitable again.

Yet the CWU postal workers' union leaders seem paralysed by the scale of the attacks. Union activists are still waiting for a detailed briefing from union headquarters in response.

A report in last Friday's Guardian said that CWU union leaders were putting the finishing touches to deal that would allow the massive job losses—as long as they were 'voluntary'-and prevent any strike action over the summer.

Reported

The deal is reported to be based on a redundancy package of up to four weeks pay for each year of service, but only two weeks pay for those who have worked for less than five years. This is a pittance.

But union leaders are linking the redundancy deal to the settlement of the recent pay dispute, in which two hirds of postal workers voted for strike action.

due to be balloted again on both deals, with the bosses and the CWU leaders aiming to prevent any industrial action.

Jane Loftus, a CWU member on Merseyside, says, "It is not good enough to let jobs go through 'voluntary' means. There are Parcelforce depot closures and mail depot closures which should be fought.

"Everyone is asking how it is possible to run the service with 40,000 fewer workers. It can't be done unless they expect loads of work to go through privatisation and the workers who remain are pushed even harder than they are now.'

Managers still fear action. the Sunday Business newspaper reported last weekend, Central to Allan Leighton's thinking is the need to avoid industrial action by postal workers.

The Post Office chairman is acutely aware of how damaging a summer postal strike would be to his plans to turn the company around."

One good sign in the last week has been some union branches beginning to gear up for campaigns to stop depot closures in their local area.

In the absence of a national, official lead areas will have to push for action locally. They should prepare to fight unofficially and to pull other areas out themselves.

And the left in the CWU has to begin pressing hard for an alternative strategy for the union

The basic demands should be:

• Cut hours, not jobs. Implement CWU conference policy of fighting for a 35-hour week.

• Stop all privatisation-no to job losses or closures.

• Strike for a decent pay rise, and against job losses and privatisation.

• Call a national demonstration alongside other public sector unions.



Exhausted postal worker goes home after a shift

Socialist Worker Appeal Help us raise €20,000!	€20,000
Socialist Worker Raffle winners: 1st Prize € 200.00: Sean Donegan, Mitchelstown, Co Cork 2nd Prize € 150.00: Cathia Kennedy, Bray, Co Wicklow 3rd Prize € 100.00: J Samra, Leixlip, Co Kildare 4th Prize € 50.00: Fergal Griffin, Malahide, Co Dublin	€ 12,000

struggle for a better world. Please find enclosed the following donation:

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Donations in Republic of Ireland should be made payable to: Socialist Worker, AIB, 37 O'Connell Street, Dublin 1.

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 the betray workers. We s for independent rank file action.

FOR A REVOLUTIONAR PARTY

To win socialism socia need to organise in a olutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ide and for overthrowing system. The SWP aim build such a party her

The strike was called off and union members are now

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Donations in Northern Ireland should be made payable to Socialist Worker, First Trust Bank, High Street, Belfast Account No: 00812073, Sort Code: 93 80 92 Return Slip to: SW Appeal, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

SWP activist meetings—all welcome

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8 pm in Telecom Eireann Club, (opp. Artane Castle) Sth. Richmond Street Dublin 2. for details Hall, Keizer St.	a rev- is e deas ig the	□ BELFAST WEST: ring for details □ BELFAST QUEENS UNIVER- SITY: Wednesdays 4pm, Peter Froggatt Centre □ CLONAKILTY: Phone (01) 8722682 for details □ CORK: Meets Mondays at	8722682 for details DUN LAOGHAIRE: Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the Christian Institute DUBLIN ARTANE / FAIRVIEW: Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane / Beaumont Recreational Centre	Tuesdays contact for details DUBLIN FINGLAS / BALLY- MUN: Phone Kevin on for details DUBLIN RATHMINES: Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm downstairs J O'Connells (Pub)	Jobstown Community Centre DUBLIN DCU: Meets 2 pm Thurdays in CGO2 DUBLIN TCD: Meets Wednesdays at 1 pm contact for details DUBLIN UCD: meets Wednesdays 1 pm contact	tact for details SLIGO: Phone for details TRALEE: Phone for details WATERFORD: Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the ATGWU	Tickets €2 on sale in local workplaces, on the door or from any Socialist

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PHONE REPORTS ABOUT STRIKES/LOCAL CAMPAIGNS/PROTESTS 🕋

Teachers

ASTI to fight on as left gains

SECONDARY teachers continue to show determination to win in their pay battle. This is the lesson of the ASTI conference in Bundoran in early April.

The right wing had orchestrated a campaign to derail the fight but were decisively defeated at the conference.

A letter circulated to press before the conference claimed teachers in Galway wanted to retreat on the union's pay policy and that the CEC was out of touch with real teachers' feelings.

Invitation

As one ASTI activist told Socialist Worker, 'That was organised by head office who organised a meeting by invitation only dominated by school principals. As conference showed it was not representative of grassroots feeling."

Ten past presidents were wheeled out to condemn the union's nonparticipation in supervision and substitution and rejection of benchmarking.

A number of CEC members have stood out against the obstructionism of Charlie Lennon and his allies.

This group stand for a concerted fight to push forward the union's democratically agreed policy on pay, benchmarking and supervision and substitution.

These saw their position vindicated. Pat Cahill, was elected Vice President on the first baland Bernadine lot O'Sullivan was nominated as the union's candidate for the senate.

Delegates voted two to one to reject a call to enter talks on substitution and supervision until their pay claim is dealt with satisfactorily.

As Pat Cahill told Socialist Worker, "The issue of supervision and substitution was raised as a red herring to divert us from a decent pay claim. "It would mean no

more than five or six hundred pounds a year after tax and PAYE."

Limits

Two years ago ASTI withdrew from the ICTU because of its opposition to the limits imposed by the PPF.

Kieran Mulvey-ex general secretary of the union and now chief executive of the Labour Relations Commissionwas invited to the conference to back up Lennon's and the Right's attempt to get the union to revise its policy.

So great was the anger at these manoeuvres to get the union to backtrack on benchmarking and affiliation to the ICTU that his speech was booed and heckled.

Sensing the mood. those promoting the widely flagged motion to rejoin the ICTU withdrew it at the last minute rather see it face humiliating defeat.

The teachers are seeking a 30 per cent pay rise and have refused to participate in the benchmarking process.

They reject benchmarking as "industriali-sation" in the words of Bernadine O'Sullivan past president and a key figure in the fight for decent pay. They rightly

regard their pay claim as justified on its own mer-

Commenting on the conference, incoming Vice President Pat Cahill told Socialist Worker,

'The conference had delegates from every branch from the smallest to the largest and accurately refects the mood in the schools.

are angry.. They have been led up the garden path by ICTU and socalled 'partnership' during the biggest boom Ireland has seen.

"While the fat cats with their millions can come to nice arrangement with the government over tax, education is left behind.

"Teachers feel left down by the union officials and the ICTU. But we are going to fight on."

INTO

"Grass roots members

Teachers march to the Dail last year

Battles ahead in National Schools

by an INTO member

TRIBUTES to Joe O'Toole cut the time available for discussion of motions at the INTO congress in Limerick.

However when business was finally got down to the issues of class size, the state of school buildings, the need to protect pension parity and the demands that must be met in the benchmarking report figured high on the agenda.

The leadership has com-mitted itself to winning from the process an increased salary scale starting at € 25000 and reaching € 50000, on a scale reduced from 25 points to 12. Whatever benchmarking

a few hundred Euro.

reduce working hours

below the level needed

who spoke to Socialist

Worker said, "The low

pay in this country is a

disgrace, I was paid

nearly as much ten

years ago before I left

The workers are

One striking worker

for full time status.

offers, and it may be significantly less than this, the danger is likely to be in the detail And the rank and file

members made it clear that they wanted their conditions of service protected and that they will not be prepared to trade them for increases in pay.

Pensions

On the issue of pensions a number of speakers made reference to the dangers of once off non- pensionable payments and increases in allowances to the protection of pension parity.

Reference was made by one speaker to the Report of the Commission on Public Service Pensions which threatens to break the link between pay and pensions by proposing that instead of

rising in accordance with the rates of pay of the serving equivalent, pensions will be index linked to public sector pay as a whole, including the pay of non-permanent civil servants.

There is a clear agenda to attack the right to a decent pension and benchmarking is likely to reinforce this trend by recommending some non-pensionable increases.

Protecting the integrity of the school year from September 1st to June 30th was won despite opposition from the Central Executive Committee who are pre-pared to defend a 183 day school year but wanted the freedom to negotiate July working in the special education sector.

While supporting the right of autistic children and children with other special needs to year round education on foot of the Jamie Sinnott judgement, delegates felt that it was the responsibility of the Department of Education and Science, and not schools and teachers, to organise and provide summer programmes.

Delegates felt it was important to pass this motion so that no teachers could be pressurised into this supposedly voluntary July working arrangement.

The Congress provided a clear signal that any Benchmarking report with a derisory pay increase and/or conditions attached will be greeted with contempt by primary teachers.

The rounds of applause for those speakers who referred to the ASTI's pay battle showed that, despite the hostility of the INTO leadership to our sister union, teachers themselves

want to make common cause and industrial action may soon be on the agenda across the education system

The Minister for Education in his speech to Congress mentioned that in response to the crisis of school buildings public private partnerships would be introduced into the primary sector to facilitate building and refurbishment programmes ..

This is a typical strategy of a government who wants to introduce privatisation into the public sector- starve the service of the necessary funds and then get the pri-vate sector to "bail it out".

Unfortunately, the leadership made no criticism of this approach and it will be now up to teachers to raise the issue of PPPs in their branches and to fight to resist corporate incursions into our education system,

Irish Activist in danger in South America AMERICAN fearing to travel back to the PHONE: 00 44 207 589 9177 LATIN

CATERING work- tracts.

Strike at Cork Airport

More details contact the Latin

ers at Cork Airport -members of SIPTU—have been on official strike for the past three weeks in a bid to win a Sunday working premium equivalent to double time.

Cafe **Kylemore** reneged on a Labour **Relations Commission** recommendation 18 months ago after buying out Campbell Catering and ever since have not issued workers with con-

multi-ethnic The workforce have received huge support from bus workers and taxi drivers who refused to pass the picket lines-one driver even giving a donation every day to strikers to buy tea and sandwiches.

Scabs

the country. This is what I'm returning to". The company have reacted by bringing in potentially in a strong scab labour from outside the country even position, particularly if though it is estimated they called on solidarity action from other that paying up would only have amounted to workers in the airport.

strike go to Labour Cafe Kylemore also began cutting tea-Relations Commission. breaks in order to

> MANDATE has called off its sixweek strike at the South African embassy after securing a 5.5 per cent pay increase for members backdated to October 2001. It is the first pay rise local employees at the embassy have received since 1998.

> The embassy has described the increase as a "cost-of-living" payment. It has still not recognised Mandate's right to represent staff or accepted that it needs to pay increases under the Programme for **Prosperity and Fairness.**

Solidarity Campaign member Gearóid O'Loingsigh, who is working voluntarily for Sembrar, a human rights organisation in Colombia, is in hiding in a remote part of Colombia.

O'Loingsigh and a German colleague were recently detained briefly by the military at a regional airport en route to meet with farming and mining communities in the Bolivar province, in order to assist with investigation and documentation of human rights abuses.

That night, the hotel to which the military had taken them and instructed them to stay in after their release, was searched by a paramilitary death squad looking for Mr. O'Loingsigh.

He remains in the area, FAX: 00 44 207 581 1829

relative safety Of Barrancabermeja, the city where he is based, as long as the Paramilitaries are searching for him.

Sembrar has expressed serious concerns for his safety should he leave the area.

Please write to the authorities listed below by

Urging them to take every measure possible to ensure that the Colombian authorities co-operate with Sembrar in taking immediate and protective action to ensure safe passage of Mr. O'Loingsigh from the area to which he is confined

Ambassador Victor G. Ricardo, Embassy of Colombia, 3 Hans Crescent, London

"The oil company failed to show in court," explained Alicia Poapanta, a legal aide who attended the court hearing

Hundreds of protesters arrived instead."

fax, letter or email

American Solidarity campaign at lasc@iol.ie

At the same time in

Ecuador Nick Jones, an Irish environmental activist detained in Ecuador, was released from prison.

Jones and 17 others were arrested and imprisoned in Quito, the nation's capital after peacefully protesting against the construction of an oil pipeline through the Ecuadoran Amazon rainforest.



140,000 waiting for a home 100 richest have €16.8 billion VOTE PEOPLE PEOPLE BEFORE BEFORE BODCELLE

It's time for a vertice to the second second

ELECTION NEWS - PAGE 5