

# Socialist Worker

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For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

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## EARTH SUMMIT IN SOUTH AFRICA: Protesters take to the streets



Protesting against the summit

**ANTI-CAPITALISTS** are taking to the streets in protest against the world leaders gathering at the Earth summit in South Africa.

But the response of the South Africa government has been to repress the protesters even before the summit started. Hundreds of people were arrested in the week before the summit. Here we print a report from a South African socialist of one of the protests

“The South African Police attacked a march in Johannesburg. At least three marchers were injured and a prominent South African film maker was arrested.

The march was as a public statement of protest against the South African government's increasingly brutal repression of those who would dare voice dissent against the WSSD and government policies that are wreaking such devastation on the poor.

Armed with candles, several hundred marchers were attacked without warning by the police with concussion grenades.

One activist was hit by one of the grenades and had to be rushed to hospital, suffering from serious burns. Another was taken to hospital with a dislocated knee.

Several children who had joined the peaceful march were left in a state of trauma.

Several internationally renowned anti-globalisation activists and intellectuals, including Vandana Shiva and Naomi Klein were caught up in the police attack.

### Rally

After the attack, marchers regrouped in the street and faced-off against a small army of heavily armed and aggressive police. March leaders attempted to reason with the police to allow the march to proceed, to no avail.

The police responded by indicating that they were prepared to forcibly arrest everyone. After a spirited street rally, marchers peacefully dispersed.

These events are a confirmation of the ever-narrowing space in the 'new' South Africa, for the exercise of the basic constitutional and human rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

It is crystal clear that the South African government is hell-bent on smashing legitimate dissent by whatever means they deem appropriate, including attacking peaceful marchers and terrorising children.

The ghosts of the South African past are returning with a vengeance.

The South African government is making a serious mistake if it believes that it can bludgeon into submission, those who seek to expose the WSSD for the fraud that it is and who oppose government policies against the poor.

The freedoms that so many South Africans fought so long for will not be given up because of the arrogance and authoritarianism of a new set of elites.

It is time for all those who support such freedoms to stand up and be counted. ”

For more on the Earth summit turn to pages 6-7

# STOP THE WAR ON IRAQ



# BUSH IS THE REAL ENEMY

NOT TO WAR PAGES 3 & 8

## ESB union busting in Georgia

**UNDER PRESSURE from the IMF the Georgian government has sold off its electricity network.**

One of the companies to cash in is the ESB

When ESB International took over two electricity companies in Georgia they threw out the existing union agreements. The first the union heard was when it was announced that there were to be sackings as part of a "restructuring" programme

under the new owners.

According to Vadim Borisov, of the international trade union federation, ICFTU, "Of all CIS countries, Georgia has the sad honour to be in the first place regarding wage arrears. Most of the concerned workers make no more than the minimum wage, which does not even secure the most minimal level of subsistence. The situation has been exacerbated by the policies of multi-nationals whereby profit comes at the expense of all other factors."

## FF fast tracks poison plants

**FIANNA FAIL have introduced fast tracking for waste management that will mean the pushing through of plans to build incinerators.**

Plans for waste facilities are now to be sent directly to An Bord

Pleanála, eliminating direct local authority involvement.

Since two thirds of the amount allocated in the National Development Plan is meant to come from private companies, IBEC welcomed Dempsey's decision.

County managers are using the decision to push ahead with incinerators despite mass opposition.

The main incinerator company in Ireland is Indaver. The parent company, Indaver N.V. is a major incinerator owner in Europe.

### Applied

The company, which has also applied for planning permission to build a waste management facility in Car-

ranstown, Co. Meath, is behind the planned incinerators in Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork and in Dublin.

On August 14th Indaver were forced to shut down a incinerator in Belgium after the poisonous dioxins released from the plant were found to be 280 over the agreed levels. The incinerator is situated next to a residential district.

# Protest after racist murder

**"THIS IS the second time a Chinese man has been killed in Dublin. I have friends who are abused in the street, many of them have been physically attacked and if they go to the Gardai there is no response or they are very slow.**

"Other friends have had their windows broken by teenagers and been attacked.

"Many of the Chinese suffer this, and I think the Government are responsible for this, and especially the Garda authorities."

### Getting worse

Wan, who is working in Ireland for a year, took part the protest against a racist murder in Dublin. He said, "Racism is getting worse.

"I have been working as a software engineer for a year, others I work with feel that the conditions in Dublin are getting worse."

In August, 50 year old Leong Ly Min was brutally beaten to death by a gang who racially abused him. He died a few days later in hospital.

### Owned

Mr Ly Min had lived in Ireland for thirty years and owned take-aways in Tallaght and Ballymun. He was singled out for attack simply because of his skin colour.

This murder comes eight months after another Chinese-man; Zhao Liu Tao, was murdered in Dublin.

The climate for immigrants and asylum seekers has got worse in that time. McDowell's first act as Minister for Justice was to send hundreds of Gardai out to "sweep" for so called illegal immigrants.

### Marched

His priorities are not to clamp down on serious criminals or the Ansbacher account holders, but the most vulnerable section of Irish society.

On Saturday the August 24 some 200 people marched from O'Connell Street to the spot in Temple bar where the attack occurred and lay flowers in his memory.

The march was called by Globalise Resistance and Chinese Students United and number of the Chinese and Vietnamese communities were present, as well as human rights, anti racist and left-wing groups.



Mike Jennings of SIPTU speaking at the protest, said "Racist attacks are unacceptable and we should stand shoulder to shoulder against them. Ethnicity and race are irrelevant"

He mentioned that many politicians had "played the racist and xenophobic card in the last general election" and that the Nice Treaty debate should be free from it.

Khalid Abraham, anti-racist campaigner and member of the Campaign to End Sanctions on Iraq said, "This man was a law abiding human being we have heard nothing from officials on this issue we must be united on multi-culturalism.

"McDowell didn't start with drug dealers or criminals, but refugees."

Kieran Allen from he SWP pointed out that there was no condemnation of the attack from the government. "Dublin City Council

should have called this rally.

"In Germany when Jewish and black people are attacked the government leads the demonstrations.

"The government has been stoking up the racist rhetoric that fuels these thugs.

"When the UVF and UDA murder Catholics in Northern Ireland we are quick to blame the politicians who stoke up that hatred.

"No one in government has paid tribute to the Chinese community in Ireland, they only talk about 'bogus' asylum seekers."

Maggie, a Chinese student in Ireland for two and a half years, said, "From last year it has become more dangerous.

"I was back in China the previous murder [Zhao Liu Tao] and I saw the newspapers and I know this story, and we are very, very angry."



## Do you want this man running your schools?

**COLIN SKELLETT is chairman and chief executive of Wessex Water. He received a £1 million bribe during the sale of Wessex Water to YTL, a Malaysian company.**

Wessex Water was owned by the crooked company Enron but when they went bust it was sold to YTL. Skellett received a £1 million consultancy fee. He was arrested by the fraud squad in England earlier this month.

Skellett, is also chairman of Jarvis PLC

### Running

Fianna Fail are handing over the running of schools to Jarvis as part of there privatisation madness.

They have the contract for building and running five secondary schools,

The company is one of the main beneficiaries of the Public Private Partnership scam. It is involved in PPPs in the education, health and transport sectors in Britain and its record is appalling.

It recently hit the headlines when it was revealed, following the horrific Potters Bar rail crash in England that shoddy maintenance was at fault.

Jarvis was the company charged with providing the rail maintenance on this line. This is not the first time that Jarvis's safety record has been called into question.

Jarvis plc, rather than saving the taxpay-

ers' money as PPP proponents claim, has actually ripped off the British taxpayer.

In one example, an initial estimate of stg £12 for building a school in Dorset rose to stg £15.2 million and ultimately ended up costing stg £22 million.

Jarvis get an astonishing stg £4.4 billion of British government contracts.

Skellett is a logical choice and should feel right at home with Fianna Fail. He has a home in the Cayman Islands.

Privatisation is a licence to print money for Fat Cats. But apparently that wasn't enough

We need to organise to stop Fianna Fail's privatisation madness.

**★ Former Elan chairman and chief executive Donal Geaney is to receive his "basic" salary of more than €1.02 million per year for remaining as an adviser to the collapsing company's board. Former chief financial officer Mr Tom Lynch will also receive \$687,500 for remaining "available" to the company.**

## €65.7million on consultant

**LAST YEAR the government spent €65.7million on consultants—the equivalent of 700 new hospital beds**

All McCreevy's talk of cuts doesn't apply to consultants and spin doctors. The Government has just signed 31 advisers with new contracts carrying pay rises of up to €13,000 a year.

Agriculture Minister Joe Walsh headed the spending spree on consultants, sanctioning payments of almost €12.5m to private consultants in 2001 alone.

Arts and Sport Minister John O'Donoghue lavished €7.9m on "experts" when he was minister for Justice. PricewaterhouseCoopers was the big winner with a €5.7m contract.

The Department of Health spent more than €1.7m on private consultants. That includes more than €1.3m to Davy Corporate Finance and William Fry Solicitors.

The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, then led by Dermot Ahern, spent a €9.9m on independent experts. Accenture got a

€4.3m contract while DMR Consultants was paid €2.2m.

Public Enterprise Minister Mary O'Rourke authorised bills for outside experts amounting to €6.7m. The Department of the Environment clocked up

almost €4.4m.

The Department of Education saw fit to spend €85,500 on public relations advice on the role of its press office and on how to spin the teachers' strike.

McCreevy spent €1.2m on consultants last year.

## Hidden housing cuts

**LOCAL authorities have been ordered by the Department of the Environment to get approval for all future housing developments in as part of the Government's public-spending curbs.**

In a private circular issued to local councils on July 30th, the Department said that "due to the general budgetary constraints in current economic circumstances... No additional funding will be made available above that allocated to each authority.

"The Department will closely monitor each individual authority's

programme to ensure that the maximum output is obtained from the resources available to the programme nationally."

There are an estimated 50,000 people in need of social housing around the State, an increase of 11,000 on 1999.

In Cork, single parents with one child are waiting up to seven years for a local authority house in some cases.

The circular also bans local authorities from using so-called "turnkey schemes", where they buy an entire development to meet the housing demand.

This year, "turnkey schemes" will account for up to 1,000 of the 5,500 local authority homes being built.



# Organise to stop Bush's war

**IT COULD not be clearer. George Bush is going ahead with his invasion of Iraq.**

Bush has gathered together all the weapons of modern war to attack a country ravaged by sanctions and the effects of his father's war on the country. In the last Gulf war the US-led coalition killed over 100,000 people

War is crucial to Bush's drive to tighten US grip over oil supplies in the Middle East, and to demonstrate US global dominance to potential rivals.

The US government has accelerated the military build-up in the Gulf. But Bush's build-up for war takes place at the very time that divisions over the war are deepening.

## Warmongers

Even hardened warmongers in the US establishment, who Bush should be able to rely on, are wary. Their concern is not for peace, but that Bush's war drive risks backfiring. Among those expressing unease are Cold War veterans who orchestrated war and intervention in Vietnam and Latin America.

They include Henry Kissinger, Brent Snowcroft, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Lawrence Eagleburger, and former presidents Gerald Ford and George Bush Sr. Of course these brutes are not part of the anti-war movement.

But the growing unease is creating more space for such a move-

ment to grow. Bush has responded by promising to "listen to Republican critics". But he has made it known he is still determined on war.

And US diplomats are trying to bully Arab states into falling in behind a war. One official says, "Many countries have been hiding their heads in the sand."

"Now there are the beginnings of a realisation that they must ensure they remain on the right side of the Americans." The lack of support from Arab governments for war is in sharp contrast to the 1991 Gulf War.

Then every Arab state with the exception of Jordan went along with the US. Saudi Arabia stationed hundreds of thousands of troops, and its Prince Sultan airbase was critical to the US air force. Now Saudi Arabia says it will not allow US planes to take off to attack Iraq.

Most of the US establishment does not go along with the view expressed by Bush's adviser Richard Perle, who called for setting fire to Saudi Arabia's oil fields. But there are certainly worries in the US government about Saudi Arabia's stability and reliability.

Fear of stoking an anti-imperialist movement that could topple pro-US Arab regimes stopped Bush bombarding Iraq immediately after the war on Afghanistan.

Now many in the White House believe they have waited long enough and can withstand the fury war will bring.

Their allies are far from sure. The rulers of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and

Jordan have told Bush they fear rebellion in the streets if he attacks Iraq.

The heroic struggle of the Palestinian people in resistance to Israel, the main US ally in the Middle East, produced a huge outpouring of solidarity. It is that solidarity they are scared of.

## Impose

The most extreme members of the Bush gang believe they can impose regimes as favourable to the US as Israel across the whole Middle East, not just in Iraq.

Some European leaders have had to respond to mass anti-war feeling.

German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder supported the war against Afghanistan. Around 100,000 people held a mid-week demonstration against Bush in Berlin three months ago.

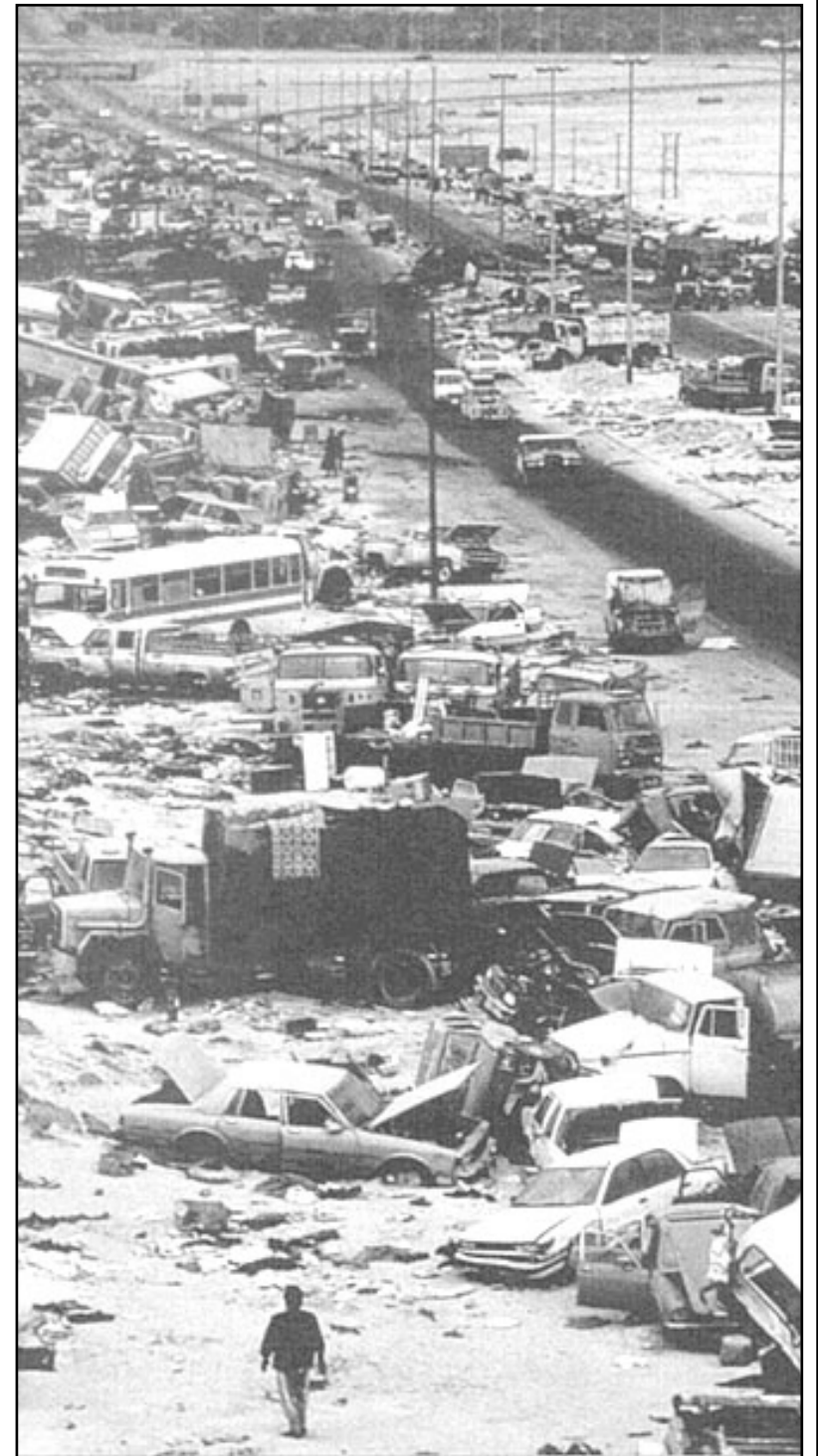
Here Fianna Fail have stayed quiet, but have opened up Shannon for the use of the US military to carry out there war on Iraq.

But here as elsewhere an attack on Iraq already faces far greater opposition than at the start of previous wars by big powers.

There is mass opposition. We have to make sure that our voice is heard in the coming weeks.

What we do can make the difference. We all have to urgently start organising now.

**Everyone should get out on the streets, build for the Irish Anti War Movement National Demonstration on September 28th.**



*The carnage on the Basra road the last time America invaded Iraq*

## FIGHT FIANNA FAIL'S CUTS

**FIANNA FAIL has pushed ahead with devastating cuts across the public sector.**

The government is determined to slash public spending at our expense.

They are attacking health and education most of all.

### Devouring

No talk of the Ansbacher gang having their assets taken—rather the services working class people need most are the ones the crooks of Fianna Fail are after.

Even though the bosses made mega bucks in the boom years it is working class people who are supposed to shoulder sacrifices.

Inflation is devouring our wages and salaries. Ireland is the second most expensive place in Europe.

In 1995 it was the twelfth. Yet the government want to hold back pay and attack the already run down public services

There is already resistance to this.

Junior doctors and care assistants are already fighting to try and save the health service.

Thousands of trade unionists are sick of low pay, long hours and privatisation.

They are sick of their leaders

talking about partnership with a government that sucks up to big business while attacking ordinary people.

This growing mood among workers for action means we can build resistance to stop McCreevy's cuts and start to fight for our rights.

## Unite against Nice

**THE progressive side of the anti-Nice campaign is starting to get under way. Socialist Worker is hosting a series of Socialist Forums on the Treaty.**

The first of these titled *Yes To immigrants No to Nice* in Dublin—with speakers from AFRI and the SWP—drew over 60 people.

For a number of months Socialist Worker has been arguing for the Left in Ireland to come together to discuss a socialist campaign over Nice, we also

sent letters to other socialist organisations and argued our case in a number of forums.

It now looks likely that a progressive anti-militarist, anti neo-liberal campaign will be formed.

Joe Higgins TD of the Socialist Party is hosting a discussion to set-up such a campaign — this timely move is to be welcomed.

Hopefully the Left can now get on with the business of defeating the government over Nice.

**(For arguments against the Nice Treaty turn to page 10)**

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## Government slashes health services

# McCreevy's cuts cost lives

**CHRISTINA KNOX lived just ten minutes down the road from Monaghan General Hospital.**

**On July 2, Monaghan hospital went "off-call".**

**Because of general under-funding and neglect of the hospital the College of Anaesthetists felt it was no longer suitable as a training ground so all surgical procedures were terminated.**

On the morning of August 14, Christina began vomiting. Her husband became worried and rang the local doctor.

He was advised to call an ambulance immediately. It arrived within minutes and was directed to bring Christina on a 45 minute journey to Louth General Hospital in Dundalk.

Christina died in the ambulance as it approached Dundalk. Attempts to revive

her failed. Christina thus became an early victim of the government's health cut-backs.

The people of Monaghan took to the streets of Dublin at the start of August to demand that their hospital, serving a population of 50,000, remain open as an acute hospital.

Over 100 acute beds lie idle while patients are relocated to Cavan General Hospital.

The already overstretched facilities there have been pushed beyond breaking point. Trolleys pack the corridors in A&E while the effect of a shortage of nurses is felt even more sharply.

The North Eastern Health Board had a €9 million overrun for the first half of the year. This is a reflection not of extravagance but of the increasing number of people who are using hospitals in Drogheda, Dundalk, Cavan, Navan and Monaghan.

The health board reported an 18 percent increase in day cases, a 12 percent increase in casualty departments and a rise of 13 percent in births.

It is a scandal in these circumstances that a much needed hospital faces downgrading to little more than a

9 to 5 health centre when its services are so badly needed.

The budget overruns across the country are a genuine reflection of increased strain on hospitals due to the winter vomiting virus and rising medical inflation.

Annual increases in the level of funding for health boards reflect increases in the general level of inflation but not the more relevant rate of medical inflation which is 7 percent higher.

One doctor told *Socialist Worker*, "The health cut-backs have been working in a very sly way.

"The government takes on an idea, gets a lot of publicity for it and then doesn't implement it. It's all politics and spin.

"From my experience over the last number of years there has been little or no increase in spending on service delivery.

"In the area of drugs treatment there has actually been a fall in the number of drug treatment places because a number of clinics have been closed.

"The initiative to transfer drug treatment patients to GPs was announced but its implementation was never thought through. Many GPs wouldn't be able to take the



estimated 30 extra patients onto their lists as they're already too busy.

"But this didn't stop the initiative being announced and many people think drug treatment has been tackled

by the government.

That's Fianna Fail and the PDs record in all areas of health—lots of spin and in reality little or no money spent on services for people over the years."

### Benchmarking insult to nurses

**THE IRISH Nurses Organisation is holding its special delegate conference on September 5 to discuss the outcome of the benchmarking report.**

**Nurses were recommended an increase of just 8 percent, with payment of three quarters of this**

**dependent on the delivery of productivity.**

**Demands that the length of the working week be reduced in line with other health professionals were completely ignored.**

**The deal should be thrown out and a decent pay claim lodged.**

## Health workers fighting back

**THE CUTS are not going unchallenged. The campaign to retain Monaghan Hospital as an acute hospital is one indication**

**of this.**

In addition, across many parts of the health service, workers are beginning to fight to defend services and to demand decent pay for the work they are doing.

### Home Helps

HOME Helps in Cork are almost all unionised after years of struggling for better pay.

The chairwoman of the local ATGWU section, which organises most of the affected workers, and shop steward for Cork home helps, has said that they will be fighting these cutbacks.

"We are getting patients to get letters from their GPs which say that they cannot afford to have their existing

levels of help cut back

"These old people genuinely need our help, its not just for a chat or for the company that we call to them for.

### Retired

"We are also still fighting for pensions for retired members even though all other workers in the Health board receive them."

SIPTU, which organises the remainder of home helps are organising meetings to highlight the issue and to resist the attack on home helps hours.

### Care Attendants

**CARE attendants in six Dublin hospitals are in the middle of a campaign of industrial action to win parity with attendants in acute and maternity hospitals.**

Workers in the psychiatric hospitals and hospitals for the elderly were excluded from a deal made in 1997 and their rates of pay are currently 8 percent below those of their counterparts throughout the rest of the Dublin hospital system.

The first day of strike action took place on August 22 and will escalate to two days the following week and then four days in the third week of action.

Management has stated that this claim can be dealt with in the context of profiling, a similar process to benchmarking, but SIPTU has been adamant that pro-

filing cannot be relied upon to deliver equality for these workers.

Workers are demanding that the money is paid and backdated to 1997.

At St. Mary's Hospital in the Phoenix Park all the domestic staff came out in support of their colleagues on the first day of strike action.

Domestics and porters in all the affected hospitals are due to be balloted to join the upcoming strikes.

This is an important step in the campaign as, if extended, the type of solidarity delivered by St. Mary's workers will help win this battle.

**The hospitals affected are St. Ita's, Portrane, St. Mary's, Bru Chaomhain on Cork Street, St. Columcille's in Loughlinstown, Clonskeagh Hospital and St. Brendan's, Grangeogor-man.**

### Doctors

**SOME 97 percent of non-consultant hospital doctors have voted in favour of industrial action up to and including strike action over the issue of rosters.**

In reducing the number of hours worked, which is welcomed across the board, hospital management are demanding that doctors spend more time working after 5pm. This will limit their access to decent training opportunities and damage the level of daytime service provided to patients.

Following strike action in Waterford Regional Hospital and Tullamore Hospital in the last few weeks, the Labour Relations Commission has convened talks which are expected to continue until mid September but industrial action is still firmly on the cards.

### Socialist Worker exposes McCreevy's health cuts

**● 800 JOBS are to "remain unfilled" in the health boards. The reality is that we are going to see lay offs.**

The Western Health Board quickly revealed that the planned savings they were to deliver would require up to 200 jobs to go.

All vacancies had been filled, there were none in the pipeline so cutbacks would mean existing staff would have to be made redundant.

According to one member of IMPACT, "This is a very serious attack on health board jobs and it must be resisted. The fact that the government is moving so quickly after the election to push through major cuts like this is a warning

"We need to fight it tooth and nail. It is clear that if they get away with this in the health boards it won't be long before there is a programme of job losses introduced across the public sector.

"It's funny how quickly workers are targeted to make sacrifices. The boom is barely over and they're after us again.

"We saw little enough of the Celtic Tiger without having to suffer the pain when growth rates begin to falter. Let management and the multi-nationals take the burden this time round."

**● PROVISION of services has also been hit.**

On June 24, just days before the downgrading of Monaghan hospital, all elective (planned) surgery at Cavan General Hospital was suspended indefinitely.

Budget over-run was cited as the reason for the cut-back.

The five major Dublin teaching hospitals have consistently warned that lack of funding will shortly lead to ward closures and the cancellation of procedures in the capital before the end of the year.

The promise to abolish waiting lists within two years has all but been abandoned.

According to a nurse in Cork, "The supposed progress on waiting lists was in general a tissue of lies.

"The most frequently quoted statistic by the Minister for Health for reductions in waiting time related to the Southern Health Board, but it has since been revealed that these were incorrectly calculated.

"This was no surprise to nurses who see patients in the South continuing to endure unacceptable delays in obtaining treatment"

The health boards home help service is another vital service coming under attack. Home helps work with the elderly, disabled, families under stress and many others who need basic help with everyday living.

The Southern Health Board has told workers that their hours are being reduced from 12 hours per week to 10 without any consultation. Similar cuts are being implemented across the country.

**● CHARGES for visiting an A&E unit without a GPs letter will shortly rise by 26 percent to €40.**

The threshold for the drugs refund scheme will increase by 22 percent. This means that patients will have to spend €65 per month on their prescriptions before they will be entitled to a refund. VHI subscribers are facing an 18 percent increase in their premiums from September 1.

## Sectarianism in Northern Ireland

# Fight over a dead end street



AN ANTI sectarian rally in Belfast earlier this month

**THE USUAL** media view of the violence in North and East Belfast is that it is irrational hatred between rival Protestant and Catholic gangs, in which the police are caught in the middle and respectable politicians of “both sides” are doing everything they can to bring calm.

The “two tribes” idea takes no account of the common fears of working class people living with the rise in violence, nor their shared circumstances and willingness to stand up to sectarian-

ism.

All that a new investigation by the Stormont Executive could come up with in August was another proposal to build higher fences between the different areas.

Tom, a health worker who lives on the Antrim Road in North Belfast told *Socialist Worker*:

“Every time I go out my door I fear for my life. In the hospitals we’ve received a lot of death threats from loyalist paramilitaries, it plays on your nerves.

### Encouraging

“It is really encouraging to see that all those workers walked out when the death threat was received”

Some of the incidents are indeed clashes between rival Protestant and Catholic

gangs.

The despair of run down areas like North Belfast is easily directed onto “the other side”.

Gerry, a building worker from north Belfast, explains: “My ex-wife and my family live near the Glenbryn area.

The poverty is unbelievable. It looks and feels like a ghetto and most people there feel that the whole world is against them.

It’s the same in the Ardoyne and all the other places where there is violence.”

But it also suits the politicians and the media to present it as a clash between “two tribes”.

One Short Strand resident last week asked a UTV camera crew why they didn’t show attacks on Catholic homes that they’d filmed the previous night.

are going to do something, you don’t issue threats.”

The same night as the Lennon death threat, a Catholic family in North Belfast narrowly missed being killed when eight shots were fired through their living room window.

The attack happened a few hours after loyalists (using a recognised code-word) issued a threat to Catholics living near Glenbryn.

The threat came from the Red Hand Defenders, widely accepted as a cover for the UDA.

It came on the same day that members of the UDA, including John White, met the Northern Ireland Office for talks about “interface tensions”.

The reply was that they were only interested in showing clashes between the two sides.

The “two tribes” idea runs through all the new political institutions in Northern Ireland.

It means that the politicians never have to take any responsibility for the effect of their own manoeuvring and petty posturing in both Stormont and in the local councils.

### Engaged

It is obvious that for the last two years the UDA has been engaged in an open campaign of violence against Catholics, with the aim of bringing down the Assembly.

As Trimble scrambles for the anti-Agreement vote with Paisley, claims by the UDA that “the Catholics are getting in everywhere”, are given a greater legitimacy.

Last week, a variety of unionist politicians and clergy issued a joint statement on the violence in East Belfast, including Peter Robinson of the DUP, Reg Empey of the UUP and David Ervine of the PUP.

### Defuse

The statement claimed they wanted to help defuse tension.

“However,” they said, “the real challenge is to the republican movement to end its orchestrated aggression and allow people living at the interface to do so in peace.”

The night before this statement, hundreds of loyalist rioters had battled for

hours with police in East Belfast, using fireworks and blast bombs.

The fighting was so intense that the local ambulance station was forced to close.

The effect of the statement, is to confer legitimacy on this violence.

In recent weeks, both Robinson and Empey have done anything but defuse tensions.

In August, at the height of the trouble, Peter Robinson released a pamphlet called “VICTIMS: The experience of unionists living at the interface with republican Short Strand”.

The pamphlet lists attacks on Protestant homes, but hardly mentions loyalist attacks on Catholic homes.

Robinson, the MP for the

area, even claimed that he drove into the Short Strand and from what he could see from his car, people were living a normal life, with children playing in the street.

Two weeks ago, Reg Empey claimed that Sinn Fein were manipulating the violence to discredit the police force and that loyalist rioting was an “understandable response” to this intense provocation.

Danny from the Short Strand explained the real situation,

“It feels like we’re under siege. There have been unprovoked attacks nearly every night last week.

“I’ve seen friends of mine trying to repair damage really early in the morning having to stop because

missiles and stones were thrown at them as well as the usual bout of abuse.”

The Unionist politicians don’t speak for all Protestants in East Belfast, many of whom are disgusted by the actions of the loyalist paramilitaries.

Stewart from the mainly Protestant Cregagh Road in East Belfast told *Socialist Worker*, “Most people I know don’t want this. At the end of my street there is graffiti put up by the UFF warning all ‘Republican Taigs’ not to come into ‘Loyal Protestant’ areas to shop or anything. Most of the people I talk to don’t want to go down the same old road to sectarian hatred again but a lot of people think that’s what going to happen”

## What way forward?

**THE STRUCTURE** of official politics in Northern Ireland allows no room for expression of such views.

It corrals people into a nationalist versus unionist framework. Sinn Fein and the SDLP accept this logic, as do the fringe republican groups such as the Real IRA and the “Catholic Reaction Force” who have issued death threats against workers.

Sinn Fein and the SDLP are also engaged in a scramble for votes at the next election, as to who can best represent “their community” as against the “other side”.

Sinn Fein make no attempt to offer any real solution to the problems faced by working class Protestants, but instead hold out the pipe-dream of a united Ireland in 2016.

The way out of the impasse is for working class people to find a way to express their common revulsion at sectarian attacks and start to build

a new politics of solidarity that can challenge the hold of communal politicians.

That means putting class interests before communal ideas and rejecting the dead-end of the “two tribes” framework.

The magnificent walk-outs and rallies against sectarian show the potential for this.

There is both an opportunity and a challenge for the small forces of the left in the North to work together to amplify and solidify the feeling for solidarity.

## Giving sectarianism the boot?

**NEIL LENNON’S** decision to end his international soccer career after a loyalist death threat before a match with Cyprus, was headline news in August across Britain and Ireland.

Virtually every political leader and sports personality condemned the death threat from the Loyalist Volunteer Force. Northern Ireland soccer fans, some of whom had booed Lennon at Windsor Park after he had signed with Celtic 18 months ago, expressed their disgust at the threat by

chanting Lennon’s name during the match. Some fans showed their sympathy with Lennon by ripping up their tickets.

Not everyone took the same view. John White, former UDA killer and now spokesperson for UDA leader Johnny Adair, said that it was Lennon who had “reinforced sectarianism” and had “let down the team” by refusing to play.

White, interviewed on Channel Four news, claimed that the death threat against Lennon and his family wasn’t that serious, as there hadn’t been a recognised code-word used.

The LVF are based in Portadown, near to Lennon’s home town of Lurgan. According to White, “if you

White also claimed that “the police and security forces continue to work under such threats all the time”.

Perhaps Lennon took more notice of the hundreds of health workers and postal workers who have walked out against similar death threats.

The soccer authorities said they understood Lennon’s decision and expressed their concern that the incident had undone the good work of their recent “Give Sectarianism the Boot” campaign.

How much more of a message would have been sent out if the whole team had refused to take the field?

## Stormont to impose water charges

**DESPITE THE** posturing by the political parties at Stormont, when it comes down to the serious business of fleecing the people, they are falling over themselves to take a united stand.

News reports last week warned that the Executive is likely to impose new household water charges before January. The twelve ministers, from the DUP, Sinn Fein, Ulster Unionists and SDLP are likely to make a joint decision, so that no one party gets the blame, shortly before an election.

The British Labour gov-

ernment is using direct blackmail by threatening to withhold tens of millions of pounds in extra budget funds, unless the Executive implements household water charges.

### Refuses

DUP deputy leader Peter Robinson, is the minister in charge of the Water Service. Robinson refuses to even attend meetings of the Executive, because Sinn Fein are there. Now Robinson is warning other ministers that they have to “grasp the nettle”.

“This looks increasingly like a collective decision,” said one Stormont source, quoted in the *Belfast Telegraph*. “When it comes down to it, they will want to do it together.”

Reports said that the “burden” would be shared between the parties.

But the “burden” will be put on ordinary people.

The Executive is currently reviewing the rates system, the only method it has to increase taxation. But the other thing that the Stormont ministers agree on is that business taxes need to be lowered to “attract investment.”

The result is that the burden for repairing the creaking water and sewage system in Northern Ireland will fall on workers.

In recent years, a mass non-payment campaign backed up by protests defeated similar plans for water charges in the South. That could be an example of cross-border co-operation that none of the Assembly parties envisaged.



## Environment

# Swept away by drive for profits

**FLOODS, FAMINES, hurricanes—such wild and unpredictable weather patterns seem to have got more common over the last few decades. And there is a growing body of evidence that points to the increasing impact of greenhouse gas emissions and pollution as the cause.**

The latest report on the way capitalist society threatens people and the planet we live on comes from a team of scientists working for the United Nations.

### Burning

They identified the "Asian brown cloud", a haze of man-made pollutants, ten million square miles across and two miles thick, high in the atmosphere above the Asian continent. The cloud is made up of what the report calls a "dynamic soup". It is made from pollution and particles from cars, industry, and ash and soot from the burning of forests and from the wood used for cooking.

To this noxious mix are added greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, from many of the same sources. The resulting chemical haze, say the scientists, cuts sunlight reaching the earth's surface by up to 15 percent. It also traps heat in the lower atmosphere, so raising temperatures there.

The result is to change weather patterns in unpredictable ways. The scientists estimate that the haze could cut India's winter rice harvest by up to 10 percent, threatening millions of people.

Some 13 states in India have recorded the worst drought in memory this year.

Elsewhere in India floods and resulting landslides had killed scores of people by the start of this week. Northern China has seen its most severe drought and its highest temperatures for 50 years, threatening to ruin vast areas of crops. Yet elsewhere in China over 800 people have already died in severe floods. The same pattern of extremes has been repeated across much of Asia.

### Severe

Cambodia is seeing its worst drought in 20 years, hitting vital rice production. In Vietnam over one million people face severe water shortages as parts of the country have their worst drought for almost 30 years, while in the country's Mekong river delta floods are threatening disaster.

The scientists say the haze is behind a big rise in respiratory disease in Asia and could cause "several hundreds of thousands" of premature deaths. The impact of climate change is not confined to Asia. The "brown cloud" is high in the atmosphere, and under the right conditions can quickly spread around the globe.

The Czech city of Prague flooded as Europe experienced one of its wettest summers ever.

In the northern hemisphere the first six months of this year were the hottest since official records began 143 years ago.

The threat of unstable and extreme weather is fuelled by pollution and global warming, itself caused by the emission of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide. According to UN scientist Dr Klaus Toepfer, the key causes of such pollution include "dramatic increases in the burning of fossil fuels in vehicles, industries and power stations, and emissions from millions of inefficient cookers".

By far the biggest culprit for greenhouse gas emissions is the US, which accounts for 25 percent of all the world's carbon dioxide emissions. Europe accounts for another 20 percent. Press coverage acknowledges that a key cause of the "Asian brown cloud" is growing car use in the sprawling Asian cities. The giant car and oil and other corporations want to expand their profits by selling ever more cars, tyres and petrol, as well as profiting from linked road building programmes.

Companies like BP, Ford and General Motors drool over the "market potential" in countries like India and China. Instead of planning clean, cheap public transport, these companies and the governments which back them want to inflict the kind of traffic and pollution chaos cities in Europe and the US already have.

Only they want to do it in even bigger cities where they can ensure even less regulation on pollution and environmental standards than exist in Europe and the US.

### Intensive

The press have also focused on the role of burning of forests and on the use of wood stoves for cooking in Asian countries. Forest burning is linked to the intensive drive by big logging and mining companies to exploit the world's resources, and to the poverty that drives people to clear forests to obtain land.

Poverty is also the key cause behind the use of wood-burning stoves for cooking, as people have no access to cleaner alternatives. The solution to these problems is simple and obvious—to curb the activities of the giant corporations which are plundering the world's resources, and to lift people out of poverty.

Curbing global warming and pollution, stopping the plundering of the world's resources and tackling poverty should be the agenda at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa.

But the real agenda will be dominated by what summit organisers have dubbed "type two partnerships".

They amount to the implementation, on a global scale, of Private Finance Initiative and Public-Private Partnership schemes.

The Christian Aid charity has denounced the summit, saying, "Business has greater access and influence than any other groups and we are concerned that the agenda is being unduly skewed towards the wishlist of companies."

## EARTH SUMMIT — POVERTY, DISEASE, GLOBAL WARMING

# Rulers' ten years of broken promises

**AT THE EARTH Summit in South Africa's Johannesburg, world leaders have been gathering to talk about tackling poverty, dealing with the environmental crisis and embracing "sustainable development".**

### Gestures

US president George W Bush is hostile even to making such gestures.

This could lead some people to think that the summit must contain something worthwhile.

The truth is that the gathering is dominated by those responsible for the awful state of the world.

The plans they will push in Johannesburg will make things worse, not better.

Ten years ago world leaders gathered for the first Earth Summit, in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro.

They pledged action on poverty and the environment.

A key promise was that richer countries would massively step up aid to the poorest countries.

Every one of the rich countries at Rio vowed to at least double its aid budget, to 0.7 percent of economic output. Since then aid has been cut.

It is down to a miserable 0.22 percent of economic output across the rich countries.

In Rio governments also pledged to cut the debt burden on the world's poorest countries. Instead it has soared by a third to £1.7 trillion, and now kills 19,000 children every day.

Tackling the threat of climate change and global warming was another key pledge at Rio.

Leaders said they would cut emissions of carbon dioxide, the main gas responsible for climate change.

But between 1990 and 2000 global carbon dioxide emissions grew by a staggering 9.1 percent a year.

That madness means we will see more of the extreme weather that has occurred recently.

These catastrophes have been accelerated by the policies of the giant corporations, governments and institutions such as the IMF, World Bank and WTO.

### Threat

They argue that nothing should stand in the way of global capitalism.

Yet it is this system that lies behind growing poverty and the threat of environmental disaster.

In Johannesburg they are offering more of the same.

Gone is even the pretence that global regulation of the system is the answer.

The best hope for the future for the world and its people lies in building the movements—against capitalism, its poverty, environmental catastrophes, and its wars.

## Protesters brand summit a sham

— by a South African socialist

**SOUTH AFRICAN workers, landless labourers, campaigners and activists were preparing a massive demonstration outside the Earth Summit in Johannesburg.**

Inside the plush corridors of the conference complex in Sandton, surrounded by police and barbed wire, politicians and businessmen were set to meet.

They claim to care about the poor and the environment. But really they are discussing how best to protect profits.

Outside a huge protest was planned for 31 August. "The summit is a gathering of the rich and powerful, it is a gathering of the hypocrites, it is a gathering of the exploiters. We'll take Sandton," said Trevor Ngwane, a protest organiser.

As a South African newspaper commented, "South Africa can expect

the same vocal protest that has accompanied major global gatherings since the 1999 Seattle summit of the World Trade Organisation."

Dennis Brutus, a veteran anti-apartheid campaigner and political prisoner, called the gathering "a summit designed to increase hunger and hardship".

■ In the run up to the protests hundreds of demonstrators were arrested as the South African government clamped down

Up to 100 the arrests followed a peaceful march and demonstration by about 4,000 landless people from more than eight different informal settlements around Johannesburg which are currently facing apartheid style forced evictions.

According to the Landless People's Movement and National Land Committee, "The SA government has made clear that it will not tolerate people marching to 'embarrass the government' by exposing South African poverty and landlessness while the eyes of the world are focussed on the country."



Members of the Landless People's Movement protesting at the WSSD

**The protesters outside are the ones who are making the most coherent case for sustainable development today.**

**Peter Doran is an environmental activist from Derry, who is travelling to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. He spoke to Socialist Worker about the main issues at the summit.**

**SW: What has happened since the Rio Summit in 1992?**

SINCE RIO the record has been really mixed. In a few areas, such as parts of Europe, there has been some progress on things like air quality and climate change, mainly led by

government policy.

But in general, sustainable development has been undermined because there has been no money provided to developing countries to implement it.

**SW: What has been the impact of corporate-led globalisation on the environment?**

JUST A few years

after the Rio Summit, the sustainable development agenda was completely overtaken by the emphasis on trade liberalisation, especially with the setting up of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Since then, environmental concerns have been playing second fiddle to the WTO agenda of trade liberalisation. The tension between free-trade and the environment is

going to be a major issue at Johannesburg.

**SW: George Bush has refused to attend the summit. What are the implications of this?**

MY VIEW is that he would have been a hypocrite to go anyway. Someone said that he was afraid that someone might throw something at him, and I think he is probably right!

The Bush administration is heavily influenced by policy bodies who are in the pockets of the major corporations. They say that every measure on climate change is too expensive. They push for



Floods in China

an agenda known as a "light touch", meaning voluntary codes by industry and avoiding anything that advocates government regulation.

The two main strategies

and NGO's.

The US is pushing the second option, which it sees as way to privatise delivery and create investment opportunities for US corporations.

**SW: There will be mass protests at the WSSD Summit. What do you think has been the impact of the anti-corporate globalisation movement?**

THERE IS no doubt that the agenda of the WSSD has been influenced by the movement outside.

For instance, "globalisation" is on the agenda. It never was at Rio. There are of course plenty of other things

not on the agenda, especially the link to militarism and war.

The protesters outside are the ones who are making the most coherent case for sustainable development today.

They are the ones who are making the connections between the environment and trade, militarism, poverty, debt and all the other issues that affect it.

The summit will of course put all this through a blending machine. But the movement on the streets is registering.

The crucial factor is the active citizenship, the politicisation of people, to open up the democratic debate about the distribution of resources and to be constantly pressuring governments.

**SW: What has the record of the British and Irish**

**governments been on the environment?**

I AM sure that Blair will grandstand as a champion of the environment. But the fact is that Blair doesn't pay any attention to these issues.

At the preparatory meeting in Bali earlier this year, the Irish government undermined an agreement between Europe and the developing countries, because they objected to the language on subsidies. But it shows that the Irish government has no serious interest in sustainable development.

The clearest example is Noel Dempsey undermining local democracy to force through decisions on incinerators last year.

## WHAT SOCIALISTS SAY

### Does a movement need its 'theory'?

**Socialist Worker looks at some of the issues that will be raised at the European Social Forum**

THE European Social Forum, which takes place in Florence, Italy, in November, promises to be one of the most exciting political events for years.

Thousands of activists, from across Europe and from a range of political backgrounds, will be discussing how we can create a better world.

This is the first in an occasional series in *Socialist Worker* highlighting some of those debates and the ideas socialists are putting forward.

**MANY PEOPLE who have been involved in the growing anti-capitalist movement are questioning old ideas and ways of organising that have gone before.**

One of those discussions is whether we need to have "theory" that tries to explain the whole world. Some people argue that "big theories" are part of the past they want to reject.

There is the unyielding "free market ideology" that hails privatisation around the globe and multi-nationals plundering the world's resources.

Some people argue that socialism is also a set of dogmatic ideas which does not fit in with the many-faceted nature of the movement today.

They say that "grand narratives", such as Marxism, are out of date. Rather we need a movement where different and diverse ideas about society can coexist and are equally valid.

Above all, some argue, it would be wrong for one particular set of ideas to be imposed on and to dominate the movement.

Revolutionary socialists are also totally against imposing a set of ideas on the movement.

People are quite rightly opposed to the idea of top-down domination and fake democracy in mainstream political institutions like parliament.

Socialists want to forge the maximum unity in the movement, working alongside people with a wide range of views.

But there are crucial moments when it is important which particular ideas are dominant and hold sway in the movement.

Political ideas are not just free floating or abstract. In a capitalist society the ruling class does not just own the businesses and factories, or the "means of production" as Karl Marx described them.

He argued that they also own the "mental means of production"—the newspapers, TV and radio that constantly broadcast a view of the world which suits the ruling class.

They want to mask the real exploitation that is at the heart of the capitalist system.

Most people in our movement agree that we need to cut through these false explana-

tions and present an alternative way of looking at the world.

But the spontaneous coming together of the "multitude" to fight capitalism, which Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri write of in their much talked-about book *Empire*, is not likely to sweep away the hold of the global ruling class.

We need to develop political strategies to combat capitalism. By doing this we can organise to win support among wide groups for those ideas.

In other words, we have to clearly say what our ideas are if we are to be successful in challenging capitalism.

Already in our movement there are real, important differences about ideas.

At the second World Economic Forum in Porto Alegre earlier this year there was a more radical atmosphere among most of the ordinary 70,000 delegates.

People were arguing that our strategy should be mass protests against neo-liberalism and war.

But there were also six ministers from the French government at the forum. Jacques Chirac, now France's right-wing prime minister, even sent an envoy to Porto Alegre. Clearly these people are at one extreme end.

But there are others in our movement who argue that we should aim to reform aspects of the system we live in and do not agree with a movement that is built from the grassroots upwards.

The ideas adopted by the movement are linked to people's practice.

In Barcelona there was a big argument about whether anti-capitalists should have supported the trade union demonstrations against privatisation, for example.

We obviously can't just agree to differ on these kinds of questions. A decision has to be made and acted on if the movement is to have any impact.

The strength of Marxism is precisely because it does explain the totality of human relationships under capitalism.

Marxism is able to show the connections between globalisation, racism, imperialism and war.

And because it understands that capitalism is based on a system of exploitation, where it is workers who produce all the wealth in society, Marxism points to the force which has the collective power to overthrow capitalism—the working class.

Inside the movement we want to build a coherent revolutionary organisation that puts these ideas forward.

In the coming weeks and months revolutionary socialists will be building for the biggest possible turnout at the ESF, and among a wide range of people.

But at the same time we will be hoping to convince people that Marxism offers the best way of understanding capitalism and how we can overthrow it.

**ESF mobilisation Ireland**  
www.irish2esf.webworld.com  
Tel: 086 4098186

— by KEVIN OVENDON



## NO TO WAR IN IRAQ

# How they have 'changed' every regime in Iraq

**"REGIME CHANGE" in Iraq is the cry from George Bush and the warmongers. Western powers, particularly Britain, have been changing regimes in Iraq since its creation with disastrous consequences for its people.**

Britain set up Iraq in 1922. The area had been three separate provinces—Basra, Baghdad and Mosul—which were part of the Ottoman Empire run from Turkey. Britain's rulers wanted the territory after oil reserves were discovered there in the late 19th century. The Anglo-Persian oil company had drilling rights across 500,000 square miles in the region.

### Seized

Britain seized its chance during the First World War to occupy Basra and Baghdad. The allied powers defeated Turkey alongside Germany. As Lord Curzon, the British foreign secretary, said, "The allies floated to victory on a wave of oil."

He said he wanted the Persian Gulf to become a "British lake". The British military moved quickly to subdue Iraq. The RAF bombed Kurdish areas in northern Iraq in 1919 and 1920 where there were uprisings against British rule.

Arthur "Bomber" Harris said, "The Arab and the Kurd now know what real bombing means in casualties and damage. Within 45 minutes a full-size village can be practically wiped out and a third of its inhabitants killed or injured."

Winston Churchill, secretary of state for war, said, "I am strongly in favour of using poisonous gas against uncivilised tribes."

### Allowed

The League of Nations, the forerunner to the United Nations, allowed Britain and France to carve the Middle East up. Britain got a mandate to run Iraq and Palestine in 1920. It drew up the borders creating Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in 1922. The main aim in creating Kuwait was to prevent the new Iraq from having access to the Gulf—this could have allowed it to threaten British dominance. Britain installed a ruler in Iraq it could rely on. A Foreign Office official said, "What is wanted is a king who will be content to reign but not govern."

Britain and the US formed the Iraqi Petroleum Company, which got the right to drill in every part of the old Ottoman Empire in 1928.

Britain granted Iraq independence in 1932 after a wave of strikes and protests. But retained a stranglehold on power in Iraq, keeping control over oil and maintaining air bases.

Even most of Iraq's upper

classes were excluded from power. There were repeated coup attempts. Iraq's rulers were prepared to use force against workers and to defend British oil interests. Some 5,000 workers went on strike in the Iraqi Petroleum Company for higher wages.

The strike united workers across ethnic and religious lines. The government sent in mounted police who killed ten workers at a mass meeting.

The pro-British monarchy in Iraq was a bulwark against radical change in the Middle East. It was at the centre of opposing the radical movement of Gamal Abdul Nasser, which overthrew the British-backed monarchy in Egypt in 1952 and which preached radical change uniting all Arabs against imperialism.

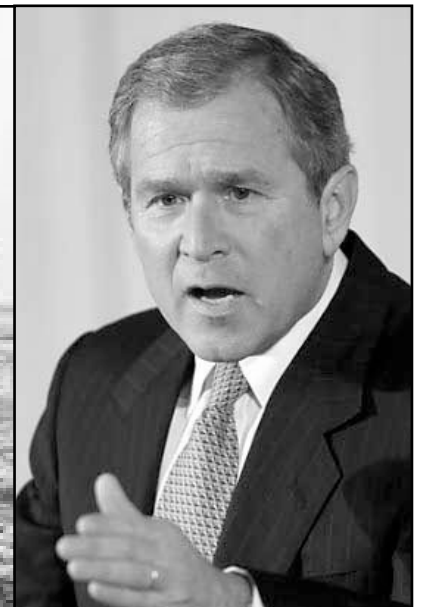
The Iraqi monarchy fell in 1958 to a military revolt led by Abdul Karim Qasim.

Qasim made popular promises of land reform and negotiations for a greater share of the oil wealth. Britain sent troops to neighbouring Jordan. The US sent troops to Lebanon. They were desperate to crush the Qasim government and turned to the Ba'athist Party (which Saddam Hussein now leads) to spearhead right wing resistance in Iraq.

The CIA backed a Ba'athist coup in 1963. The head of the CIA in the Middle East, James Critchfield, said, "We regarded it as a great victory."

Saddam Hussein first gained notoriety when he attempted to assassinate Qasim in 1959.

After the Ba'ath Party seized



**BUSH AND the oil industry use the US marines to keep control of the oil resources**

power from Qasim their national guard attacked working class areas and murdered thousands of Communists and trade union militants.

### Booted

Although the Ba'ath Party was booted out by its former allies in the military after just six months, it seized power again in 1968. Western oil companies offered their cooperation to the new rulers.

The Ba'athist regime posed as anti-imperialist, but it did not champion the cause of the Palestinians. In 1970 King Hussein of

Jordan launched his Black September assault on Palestinians in his country. There were 15,000 Iraqi troops in Jordan. They did nothing to help the Palestinians who were butchered.

The Iraqi regime courted support from both superpowers. In the early 1970s the US relied on Israel, Saudi Arabia and the pro-Western Shah of Iran as its principal allies in the Middle East. The Shah, with US backing, armed Kurdish rebels in Iraq, while putting down his own Kurdish population.

Iraq and Iran signed a treaty in 1975. Saddam Hussein put down the Kurdish insurgency without a murmur from the West,

and consolidated power in 1978. The US swung firmly behind him when the Shah was overthrown in 1979. Saddam Hussein went to war with Iran in 1980, with Western support.

### Terrified

The US was terrified by the Iranian Revolution. The bloody eight-year war saw Saddam use poison gas against Iranian troops and Kurdish civilians. There was no outcry from Western governments.

At the end of the war John Kelly, the US assistant secretary of state, visited Baghdad to tell

Saddam Hussein, "You are a force for moderation in the region, and the US wants to broaden her relationship with Iraq."

Saddam was so confident of support from the US that he believed he had its agreement to invade Kuwait in 1990.

But that risked upsetting Western interests in the Middle East. So the US turned against him.

The US and Britain have helped create every oppressive regime in Iraq and orchestrated the removal of the one government that had some popularity. We should not let them interfere.

## The United Nations —A council of war, not peace

**SOME PEOPLE who are horrified by the prospect of an attack on Iraq are looking to the United Nations (UN) to stop the slaughter.**

It is tempting to look to anything that might rein back Bush's murderous plans. But it is very dangerous to say that war on Iraq is wrong "unless endorsed by the UN".

The US can normally pressure, cajole and bully other countries into supporting the decisions it wants from the UN.

It used debt write-off, threats and promises to get backing for the 1991 Gulf War. It was able to bring its allies into line over bombing in Bosnia and Kosovo.

In neither case did China or Russia use their veto powers. There are 15 members of the Security Council, the key UN body. Five of them are permanent (Russia, China, France, Britain and the US) and there are ten others which serve for a temporary period.

Russia needs the backing of the US to get investment from multi-nationals and financial help from bankers. And Russia wants the US to help it secure full membership of the World Trade Organisation.

Without Russian opposition, France will not want to use its veto. China has a consistent policy of abstention.

As leading strategic analyst Dan Plesch pointed out recently, "Some of the non-permanent members of the Security Council will be keen to help the US."

### Turned

Ireland sits on the security council and has so far shown support for every move Bush has made.

Shannon was turned over to the US military for refuelling in the run up to the war in Afghanistan, and the US military continue to use the airport at the moment.

Bulgaria wants to join NATO. Colombia depends on the US government for arms, money and political support in its civil war.

Norway has a conserva-

tive government and wants to be sure that the US will stand by it in any clashes with its neighbour Russia.

Mexico (and Ireland) have strong economic ties with the US-based multi-nationals.

This leaves Syria, Cameroon, Guinea and Singapore.

The US will therefore be able to find a majority of positive votes with a few abstentions.

The problems with the UN are more than the composition of the Security Council.

The UN was set up by the great powers in the wake of the Second World War as an instrument of their will. It was used to sanction the carve-up after the war where the victors marked out their control of the countries they had "liberated".

The UN first partitioned Palestine, dispossessing the Palestinians and creating the state of Israel.

Then the UN assisted imperialist forces murder the nationalist Patrice Lumumba, the elected leader of the Congo.

The 1991 Gulf War against Iraq was sanctioned by the UN. Even the UN's

"peacekeeping" operations have ended in disaster, as the 1992 intervention in Somalia shows.

At the centre of the UN stand the most powerful, most violent, most heavily armed states.

They do not become any less imperialist when they act together through the UN rather than separately.

The "Big Five" permanent members of the UN Security Council have been allowed to get away with brutality on a breathtaking scale. The US government has the bloodiest hands.

### Remove

It carried out the carpet bombing of Vietnam and Cambodia, helped remove the elected regime in Chile, backed terror groups in Nicaragua, Mozambique and Angola, invaded Grenada and Panama, bombed Libya and Iraq and supported murderous governments in Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti and many other countries.

France has been allowed to conduct colonial wars in Algeria, and Vietnam, and to blow up the Greenpeace

## Handing natural resources to the multi-nationals

IN AUGUST 2001 planning permission was granted to Enterprise Energy Ireland to build a gas terminal in north Mayo. The terminal will process gas from the Corrib field in the North Atlantic.

The multinational companies involved expect to make an income of approx £2.2 billion from exploiting this resource. Local people have campaigned against it and the project is currently under investigation by An Bord Pleanála.

Maura Harrington has been involved in the campaign for the last two years. She spoke to *Socialist Worker* about the issues involved.

"It's important to point out at the start that we are not opposed to the development of natural resources, but we have a very high degree of concern about the proposed method of doing so in north Mayo at the moment.

"The oil companies have known about the existence of gas in this region for a long time. Going back to the 1950s, they were sniffing around Belmullet. In 1983 Enterprise Oil, which was formed as part of Maggie Thatcher's privatisation programme in Britain, sent a rep over. We now know what they were planning.

"In 1987 Ray Burke started tinkering with the licensing terms and conditions, and eventually the state's stake was reduced and removed and the claim to royalties from oil company profits abandoned.

In 1995 Michael Lowry issued a whole swathe of licenses to oil companies. In 1996 Enterprise Oil announced that they had found a modest gas field. "On the day of this year's election Frank Fahy, then Minister for the Marine, speedily issued a foreshore licence.

"The companies involved claim that the Corrib field is two thirds the size of Kinsale but the scale of their operations suggest that it is much bigger than they are letting on. It's only logical really but the whole of the Atlantic Shelf must have significant oil and gas deposits.

"Energy Enterprise Ireland, consisting of Enterprise Oil, Marathon Oil and Statoil, was established to exploit the reserves but this has recently been bought up by Shell plc. They are proposing the building of a 40 acre plant in the middle of the village of Ballinaboy, where the closest house will be just 300m from the terminal.

"All the villagers are involved in the campaign against the building of this processing plant and we have been attempting to exercise what few rights are left to people in this country by objecting through the planning process.

"However we got very little satisfaction as Mayo County Council treated it as a bricks and mortar application which meant that neither potential emissions nor effluent would be considered when making the decision on the granting of planning permission. As local people we had to get our heads around the intricacies of this process which took a long time.

"We discovered that in planning terms the whole project is broken up into onshore and offshore aspects, the Bord Gais pipeline and the terminal building. No-one is obliged to look at the implications of the project in total.

"However we did manage to get An Bord Pleanála to listen to our objections and the project is under appeal at the moment. We used local experience and knowledge of the land and the sea to make our case.

"Health is the biggest concern of the people of Ballinaboy. One local woman went on the Net one night, found the name of a doctor who knows about all this, plucked up the courage to contact him and a colleague of his did an independent report for us for free.

"He outlined the experience elsewhere of the health and pollution problems associated with refinery and distribution terminals of this kind.

"There are many dogged fights like ours going on all over the country but the problem can sometimes be that when you are so taken up locally you have no time to think nationally. There would be an awful lot of advantage in some co-alescing taking place.

"Once the petroleum lease was signed on November 15, control of the Corrib reserve was handed over to the multi-nationals. The only tax they will pay will be corporation tax at the standard rate and this is not due to be paid until expenses run out. Expenses will basically continue ad infinitum.

"At a time when the government is cutting back, reserves like these are out there to finance health, education and welfare services. The way in which natural resources are handed over to the multi-nationals is nothing short of scandalous."

# A bright light among the Hollywood dross

IT HASN'T been the best summer for movies, with "Resident Evil" competing with "Reign of Fire" for people's hard-earned euros.

by JAMES REED

But better late than never, along comes a John Sayles film which delivers the sort of provocative insights that we don't even expect any more from films.

Of course, that's what John Sayles has always done.

### Strike

His CV is that of a filmmaker who has not been afraid to make films that on paper are probably hard to sell in Hollywood.

One of his finest films to date has undoubtedly been "Matewan", the story of a miners' strike in West Virginia set in the early twentieth century.

Hardly the stuff of blockbusters, but then again that's hardly the aim of a director who re-writes Hollywood scripts (the best known of which was the script for "Apollo 13") in order to be able to afford to make the movies he really wants to make.

### Determined

This time round Sayles has chosen to locate the action in Plantation Island, Florida, an area which is coming under threat from property developers, keen on turning the area into a commercial resort.

Into the story are woven the lives of the locals, from the doctor who is determined



to fight the development, to the former football star returning to his home town.

"Sunshine State" succeeds where two previous Sayles' films "Limbo" and "Lone Star" have also succeeded—that is in developing a complete character study of the people involved.

He refuses to offer simplistic caricatures of people,

instead presenting them as complex human beings, with layers to peel away before they can be understood.

This would be enough to hope for from most films. But Sayles manages to do even more than this.

### Tackling

His tackling of the issue of profiteering developers adds a whole other layer to

the story.

What is saddest of all is how realistic his portrayal of the situation is—it's not a big leap for people to make the connection between what's happening on screen with the ruthless development in towns and, possibly even more so, in rural areas that we've seen in recent years.

The film jaunts along at such a leisurely pace that it's over before you know it (and

that's no mean achievement for a film that runs to 140 minutes).

At the end of it all though Sayles has once again crafted a film where the issues that real people face in their lives (whether issues of race, environment or gender) are raised.

This is intelligent stuff, which also happens to make for a really enjoyable movie. And you couldn't really ask for more than that.

# Storming the heavens

**FROM SEATTLE to Johannesburg, millions have chanted, "Another world is possible" only to be told that it is not. That idea failed miserably in Russia proving that power corrupts and that all revolutions inevitably end in tyranny.**

### Exposes

Mike Haynes' excellent book is a valuable resource to anyone seeking to understand the last 100 years in Russia.

He exposes the standard history of Russia where the "bad-guys" (the Bolsheviks) seize power cre-

ating a totalitarian nightmare from which Russia is saved by the "good-guys" (Bush senior & Co.). Equally, he dispels the ridiculous myth of the workers' state still claimed by some on the left.

The book opens with the excitement of the early revolutionary days, when hated foremen were carted from factories in wheelbarrows and thousands poured onto the streets in a mass revolt against both the horrors of World War I and the system which spawned it.

However, a decade later the gains of the revolution were lost as war, international isolation and a counter-revolution from above combined to smash the embryonic workers' state.

Haynes shows how the bureaucracy around Stalin transformed itself into a new ruling class.

He describes the horrific repression used to consolidate power and

quash all opposition.

And how the workers was transformed into a system which contained all the basic features of Western capitalism—class, exploitation, competition and alienation.

This system, bureaucratic state capitalism, grew initially at a tremendous pace thanks to its global military competition, but was eventually pulled asunder in 1991 by the sheer weight of its own inefficiency, internal crises and a massive political revolution from below.

### Re-emerged

Since then the old "communists"—party bosses—have re-emerged to manage banks and corporations, while the people of Russia face food shortages, economic depression and a brutal war in Chechnya.

Haynes argues that this "bitter fury of broken hopes" could once again find its expression on the streets.

In 1991, Bush Snr. declared, "The jury is no longer out. History has decided". As his son scorches the planet and re-arms his war-chest, a movement is emerging to reclaim our world.

This time around there is no dark force in the East preventing Russian workers from linking up with the wider global movement.

For today's anti-capitalists this is an extremely useful book. History is very far from decided. We still have a world to win.

**Russia Class & Power: 1917-2000 by Mike Haynes**





where  
we  
stand

The present system has led to huge inequalities of wealth. The greed for profit is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet. A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

#### REVOLUTION

That cannot be done on a gradual piecemeal basis. Socialists can use parliament to expose this system but fundamental social change will not come through parliament. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy. They all ensure there is one law for the rich and another for the rest. To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based much greater political and economic democracy.

#### AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth. Bush's "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance. We oppose this war and see imperialism as the greatest enemy of peace.

#### FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression. This divides and weakens 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.

#### FOR AN END TO RACISM

We fight to end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry. We oppose immigration controls which are always racist. Asylum seekers and refugees should have full rights of citizenship, including the right to work. We oppose deportations.

#### FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

The Good Friday Agreement brought an end to armed struggle but it also institutionalised sectarianism by setting Catholic and Protestant communities in competition with each other for under-resourced services. The communal politicians from Sinn Fein to the DUP push policies of privatisation — while building a political base from the competition between 'both communities' We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Blair government. Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction.' We want to see an Irish workers republic where all workers gain. Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

#### OUR WORLD IS NOT FOR SALE

We oppose the sell-offs of public services to private interests. We fight for direct labour. We want properly-funded, publicly run services democratically controlled from below. We participate in the wider anti-capitalist movement.

#### FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. We oppose Social Partnership agreements which restrict wages while letting profits thrive. We fight for 100 percent trade unionism, free collective bargaining and fighting trade unions controlled by the rank and file.

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

#### 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 here. We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc.

## People before Profit and War:

# Vote No to Nice

IN OCTOBER, we will be once again voting in a Referendum on the Nice Treaty. Last year the same proposals were defeated but the Irish and EU governments, as well as the big business interests, won't take No for an answer.

The full power of the

government, politicians and the churches are being mobilised to secure a Yes vote.

Disgracefully, without consulting its members, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and other union leaders are spending members' money to encourage a Yes vote.

The SWP is campaigning for a No vote on a socialist basis.

## A charter for a bosses' Europe

ARTICLE 133 of the Nice Treaty demands "the achievement of uniformity in measures of liberalisation".

This means more privatisation and the break-up of public services.

Welfare provisions are under attack. EU bureaucrats have attacked Sweden's "far too generous and unconditional unemployment benefit".

(GATS) which will further deregulate all public services.

Its aim is to ensure that services such as posts, hospitals, education and waste are all opened up to multinational "service providers".

Nice means the EU Commission can "fast track" secret negotiations on GATS as well as "commercial aspects of intellectual property rights". None of this is accountable to the European Parliament.

#### Forcing

EU pressure, as well as the greed of Irish bosses, is forcing the privatisation of Aer Lingus and ESB, for example. Nice continues and expands the privatisation agenda.

Behind the scenes big business bodies such as the European Services Forum and the European Round Table of Industrialists are setting the agenda.

This lobby group has an inside track on EU negotiations. It brings together 47 European based multinationals including Nestlé, Unilever, BP Amoco, Renault, Marconi, ICI, Olivetti, BT and Fiat.

Nice means an unelected EU Commission will negotiate with the World Trade Organisation. Dominated by big-business interests and the US government, this body is spearheading the General Agreement on Trade in Services

## Nice means more power for the Big Four

WE ARE told that the Nice Treaty is necessary to make way for an enlarged and more peaceful Europe.

Not true. EU Commission President Roman Prodi declared, "Legally ratification is not necessary for enlargement. It's without any problem up to 20 members [from the current 15], and those beyond 20 have only to put in an accession agreement some notes of change, some clause."

Nice does mean centralising power in the big four states: Germany, France, Italy and the UK.

Nice will treble the votes these countries hold. In all key

## Nice means a militarised Europe

AMERICA IS fighting to establish global dominance for its empire. That is why George W Bush is rushing into war in Iraq, following the still unfinished war in Afghanistan.

EU leaders don't want to be left out in the cold. They want the economic advantage and global influence that comes from military might.

Under Nice the EU itself becomes a military alliance with the European Rapid Reaction Force. This 60,000 strong body of soldiers can be placed in a battle zone up to 4,000 kilometres beyond Europe's borders for up to a year.

In July 2000, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain launched a "Framework Agreement" to "harmonise military

requirements". Nice will give the EU new structures to develop and expand its military-industrial complex.

#### THE TREATY CALLS FOR:

- "The progressive framing of a common defence policy, which might lead to common defence".

- "Co-operation between EU states in the field of armaments". EU firms are already major arms dealers. Now they can sell even more weapons and fuel wars in third world countries.

- A "Political and Security Committee to monitor the international situation in areas covered by the common foreign and security policy."

This committee will command the Rapid Reaction Force and send troops into areas of strategic importance.

Troops will be sent under the pretence of "crisis management" and



McDONALDS needs the backup of McDonald-Douglas

"peace-making".

But as former Fine Gael leader John Bruton said in the Dail in 1999, "Peacemaking means imposing, by use of force, peaceful conditions under terms laid down by the peacemaker.

It is very difficult to distinguish that from war making."

The committee will have close links with NATO and its military policy will NOT be under the control of the EU Parliament.

- **FACT: Ireland is already sending 850 troops or one tenth of its army to join the Rapid Reaction Force.**

## STUDENTS ARE under attack from the government's spending cuts.

The cut in the third-level education budget is to be paid for by a massive rise in the student levy to €670, which in reality will be over €700 when individual colleges add their surplus levy to this.

Students are often on the frontline of poverty, with over 1,000 Dublin-based students living in hostels last year, according to USI.

Only 6% of students are housed in campus accommodation, compared to a European average of 17% and 28% in the UK.

Yet, many universities are actually selling off land for private development rather than using it to build accommodation for their own students.

Given that many workers on better-than-average wages can't afford accommodation in the private rented sector, what chance do people living on a grant, or

off whatever their parents can afford.

Adding to student hardship this year is the fact that the grant payment will be delayed because the Department of Education didn't send the application to the VECs (Local Education Authorities) on time.

Poverty is now the single biggest deterrent for young people looking for education, with someone from the North Inner City being eight times less likely than someone from Foxrock to pursue a third-level education.

The right wing media like to portray students as if they spend all their money socialising and scrounging taxpayers' money.

In reality, most students work part-time jobs to fund their education and raise enough money to live, which has a draining effect on their studies.

Also as part-time workers, they pay more in tax than the Irish rich.

A campaign of occupations across the colleges could stop the government and the colleges in their tracks.

## SWP activists are organised in the following areas

## Postal workers

## National vote starts on strikes

**POSTAL STAFF** are balloting for a national strike involving all 180,000 postal staff in Britain and Northern Ireland.

It has been called by the CWU union in opposition to management plans to launch a joint venture with one of Britain's nastiest multinationals.

## Transfer

Bosses want to transfer 4,000 CWU members in the Romec cleaning and maintenance section to a new company 49 percent owned by construction group Balfour Beatty.

Post Office executives have refused to give the

CWU assurances that they will not sell their remaining stake to Balfour Beatty, which would affect CWU members' pension rights.

"Management have refused to give the basic guarantees that the union has requested," says Ray Ellis, the union's assistant secretary.

## Balloting

"The union is balloting to ensure that the whole membership can unite to protect our Romec colleagues."

The strike vote covers Royal Mail, Parcelforce and high street Post Office staff.

Resistance against the Romec joint venture can be a big step towards throwing back the Post Office bosses' privatisation agenda.

For too long CWU leaders have hesitated to start

real resistance to the bosses' and government's programme of "opening the market" to private firms.

Now is a chance to fight alongside others as a new mood of resistance gathers in the public sector.

## ATGWU

## Fight for reinstatement of Mick O'Reilly continues

**THE RANK** and file elected executive of the ATGWU has a clear right wing/left wing split of 19/19 on the issue of reinstatement of sacked officials Mick O'Reilly and Eugene McGlone.

This is making life very uncomfortable for the dictatorial style of

General Secretary Bill Morris.

In the recent election for Deputy General Secretary, the members across Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales voted by a huge majority for the left supported candidate, Tony Woodley.

He has committed himself to the reinstatement of the two Irish officers.

In a recent ballot, the officers across the whole Union have returned a 70 percent majority for strike action in support of reinstating O'Reilly and McGlone.

## Headed

Union Executive and Socialist Workers Party member Jimmy Kelly who made reinstatement an election issue and headed the poll in Ireland says "The dismissal of Mick O'Reilly is a reflection of what is wrong in our Union."

We are fighting for the control of our Union to be given over to the membership who need more than ever a Union which stands by the workers in their battle against employers.

"Those who support Bill Morris are on the side of centralised control with Morris acting like the chief executive of a business rather than the spokesperson for our workers' organisation."

"We should also reject the position that this is an internal ATGWU matter."

Members of all Unions in Ireland should be asked to support the fight for lay member control of our Unions.

We welcome the fact that the Dublin Council of Trade Unions have now joined the fight for reinstating Mick O'Reilly"

## BATU

## Bricklayers strike over sackings

**SIX BRICKLAYERS** who joined the BATU trade union in Cork in August were sacked from their jobs immediately after by Pierce Construction Ltd.

In a fantastic act of solidarity pickets have been placed on four sites in Cork and work-to-rules took place in several parts of the country. Bricklayers in Cork earn less than

half of what their counterparts in Dublin.

Years of cosy deals between local officials and construction bosses have left building workers with terrible conditions and their union had almost collapsed.

Workers are fighting to improve their general working conditions by demanding direct employment and an end to so-called "lump work".

Earlier in the summer one group of bricklayers

walked off a site in Ballincollig, placed pickets on a number of sites and organised a march through the city centre in support of their demands.

Local BATU official Tom Fitzgerald has said that since they began the campaign against sub-contracting membership has increased significantly.

"They have also received good support from labourers and the recent sackings has strengthened their determination to win their demands".

## SIPTU

## Vote Des Derwin for General Secretary

**RANK AND** activist Des Derwin is standing for the position of General Secretary of SIPTU. Des Derwin, is President of the Electronics and Engineering Branch, a shop-floor worker and an experienced activist.

As his campaign leaflet puts it, "The Unions should not be in partnership with the rich and powerful. It's time for an end to wage restraint."

"Members need be able to lodge substantial claims on their own employers. Our public sector members should be able to reject the

Benchmarking report and seek better deals.

"The Union has got to oppose privatisations with action as well as words. Its time the National Minimum Wage was upped to €8 an hour."

Contact Des' campaign at 087-6229686 or dderwin@gofree.indigo.ie

## Bin tax

**AT A** campaign stall in Prussia Street on Saturday 24 August *Socialist Worker* spoke to anti-bin tax activists in the local area. 18 new households joined up to the campaign and the legal defence fund.

The importance of getting people to join up to the campaign is now clear as Dublin City-Council has issued summons to three people in the Finglas area to appear in court for non payment of the bin charge.

## Bullied

Many people were unsurprised but angry at hearing of the summons.

John Sheeran, a founder of the local Stoneybatter campaign said, "This is an unjust double tax and we won't be bullied or intimidated into paying."

"A majority of people

are continuing to refuse to pay.

"It is important too that we highlight that this is not a green or environmental tax. This is one of the lies people have been told by Dublin City Council and by many of the politicians".

The local campaign has leafleted the area to build for the forthcoming demonstration on the 2nd September at 6.30pm at City Hall, Lord Edward Street, Dublin 2 when the next council meeting takes place.

## Using

Local campaign member Frank Lynch said, "Look at what they are using the millions of euro they have taken in from the plastic bag tax, to build more roads. PAYE workers are being hit every time while the manufacturers and big business who produce most of the waste get away scott free."

"We already pay for basic services through our tax to central government and VAT."

"As long as we stick together and don't pay we can beat this unjust tax like

we did with the water charges".

A public meeting is being arranged for 8pm on Monday 23rd September in the Aughrim Street Parish Centre, 13 Prussia Street, Dublin 7

To get involved in the Stoneybatter area ring Paul 087-9163246

● Three summonses have been issued in Finglas for non payment of the bin tax. These are the first summonses issued by Dublin City Council. Two householders in Finglas South and one in Finglas West will appear in court on September 20. The Council is seeking payment of outstanding charges from last year of €120, plus an additional €38.

According to Dessie Ellis who is the local campaign organiser "we are calling on people to stay calm and keep up the non payment. The campaign is well organised and we will be fighting these attempts to intimidate people into paying the charge. A meeting has been organised in the local area and we will be mounting a big picket on the court in September."

**A NUMBER** of members of the teachers' union ASTI recently produced a highly critical study of the benchmarking report.

The report begins by noting, "The small print of the Benchmarking Report is worrying in many respects. It contains many hidden dangers, errors and unexpected pitfalls".

In relation to teachers specifically, the authors warn: "The Benchmarking Body fails to deliver for teachers now! At the moment all that is on offer is 3.25 percent (provided that teachers accept the whole deal)."

This award is only about one tenth of what is needed to bridge the gap between the pay of teachers and that of

comparable professional groups.

The Benchmarking Body fails to deliver for teachers in the future. The other 9.75 percent is to be phased in (over an undefined period of time, entailing further cumulative losses for teachers and pensioners), provided the teachers accept:

## Phasing-in

● The arrangements for phasing-in of the award, which only the Public Service Committee of ICTU are allowed to negotiate (decision by that committee on 21/05/02),

● The strings attached, the details of which are still largely unknown, but which include:

(a) extra productivity (possibly including any or all of the

following — assessment of own Junior Cert. pupils, parent teacher meetings at night, in-service at weekends or during holidays, oral and practical exams during holidays, shorter summer holidays—Government submission to the Benchmarking Body),

(b) performance related pay and the validation processes that go with it, (pay being related to adaptability and change, flexibility and modernisation, whatever these might mean for teachers),

(c) non-core payments like the 1 percent non-core non-pensionable payment last April, (these payments, whether pensionable or not, are not guaranteed to be passed on to present pensioners—when the long service increment was introduced it was not passed on to existing pensioners and in 1997 the

Community and Comprehensive School Principal's Allowance was not passed on either),

(i) the terms of a not-yet-negotiated new national pay agreement, to which this deal will be inextricably linked in an unexplained way, which will deliver an undecided amount to workers at some time in the future in an unknown context, together with its own strings attached and its own phasing-in arrangements, and which may be used to claw back some of the already inadequate pay offer made to teachers under benchmarking,

## Copper-fastened

(ii) that teachers will never be rewarded for extra productivity already being delivered, including develop-

ment and implementation of various new courses delivery of courses in shorter time to make way for new subjects in the school timetable; teaching extra groups each year because of this all the extra teaching, marking and examinations and other work involved, and

(iii) that the pay gap between teachers and comparable professional groups is now copper-fastened and will never be closed "

On the issue of casualisation of the teaching profession they point out

"When the Benchmarking Body considered "security of tenure" of teachers, did they consider the nearly 4000 post primary teachers who hold non-permanent jobs. It appears that they are completely ignored in the report."

The authors are highly critical of the failure to shorten

the 25 year pay scale and point out that the demands for extra productivity and the emergence of a role for performance related pay in the public sector pose a serious danger both to teachers conditions and the type of education that is delivered to students.

A very pertinent question is raised in the course of their study "Will the benchmarking offer amount to a pay increase at all, during a time when inflation is running at over 4.5 percent per year plus house-price increases plus Euro changeover increases plus the recent spate of hikes in service charges including VHI, ESB, College Fees, Medicines and Accident and Emergency charges?"

## Peerless Rugs

**THE PEERLESS** Rugs workers in Athy have been fighting since July 2001 for a redundancy package from their former employer of three weeks per year of service.

They remain in occupation in the factory 24-hour hours a day, seven days a week. Ester from the strike committee recently updated *Socialist Worker* on the struggle

"We are currently in the process of handing out fliers outside branches of Dunnes Stores who stock products from the company's plant in Cork."

## Boycott

We are calling on the public to boycott mats, bath sets, pillows and duvets produced in Cork and we are getting a great response.

"We've also got a lot of

media coverage recently. We've been in Kilkenny four times, Waterford, Dublin and Portlaoise and we're planning a trip to Cork.

There are 39 workers involved and we're going to keep on going because someone somewhere is going to break

## Unusual

"Bertie Ahern told us during the election campaign that it was very unusual when Fianna Fail were in power for workers not to get their redundancy deal. Needless to say we haven't heard from him since his re-election!"

"We feel very disappointed with what SIPTU have done for us. They basically walked away from this dispute and we've had no solidarity. We're going to keep the fight going ourselves though."

"The government should be stopped from handing money to companies to start up here and then allowing them to walk away leaving workers with no jobs."

## ASTI members' comment on Benchmarking

A NUMBER of members of the teachers' union ASTI recently produced a highly critical study of the benchmarking report. The report begins by noting, "The small print of the Benchmarking Report is worrying in many respects. It contains many hidden dangers, errors and unexpected pitfalls". In relation to teachers specifically, the authors warn: "The Benchmarking Body fails to deliver for teachers now! At the moment all that is on offer is 3.25 percent (provided that teachers accept the whole deal)."

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inside

**Stop Bush's war plan for Iraq** page 3 & 8

**Protesters take to the streets against Earth summit** page 6-7

## Thousands march in Belfast:

# FIRE FIGHTERS LEAD THE PAY FIGHT

**A magnificent demonstration took place in Belfast on August 24th.**

Over 2,000 fire fighters and their supporters converged from around Britain and Northern Ireland as part of the fire fighters' demand for decent pay.

With the sound of a samba band in the background one fire fighter from Derry described to *Socialist Worker* what he thought of the march, "It's amazing just to see this level of solidarity at home. It feels more like Seville or Genoa than Belfast."

The march consisted mainly of members of the FBU in Northern Ireland but also brought delegations over from England, Scotland and Wales.

Paul, a fire fighter from Lancashire told *Socialist Worker*, "I've been to a few of these demonstrations, but this has to be one of the best. We are getting confidence from the people watching us march down here today, and in return we are starting to give them confidence to think about what



**Determined to win**

they're getting paid."

John from Newcastle in England said, "This is putting to rest the legacy that Margaret Thatcher left on workers, this is only the beginning of the fight back and you can feel the confidence that we have just on this demonstration, a lot of people think that we shouldn't stop at £30k."

Karen from County Down just joined the fire service, she told *Socialist Worker*, "I joined to help people, and I can't help people if I find it too expensive to get the bus to work or to put

food on the table it's ridiculous."

She continued, "Some people I have met in the last six months put most of their working lives into the fire brigade and barely get £7,500. They survive on benefits to feed their families. For others they don't even get benefits. I don't want to live like that."

Colin, from north Belfast explained why he was marching, "Every night I literally put my life on the line. We get missiles thrown at our crews and abuse hurled at us and I get paid a pittance for the work I do."

"The other night a colleague of mine was hospitalised because he responded to a house fire. But action like this gives me confidence to know that there is another way and that we are stronger united."

Peter Bunting from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions addressed the rally following the march by pointing out the link between capitalism and low pay, "Those in power refuse to give us decent pay yet these are the same people that cosy up to the likes of World-Com and Enron."



**Marching in Belfast**

## Inspiring others to fightback

**THE MOOD for a serious fight over pay in the fire brigade is hotting up.**

A strike ballot is set to be called from a special FBU conference in Manchester on 12 September.

Fire fighters and control room staff are demanding:

★£30,000 a year for a professional fire fighter.

★Fire fighters working the retained duty system ("part-time fire fighters") should be recognised as providing a professional service and be paid an hourly rate of £13.74. They are currently on £6.20 an hour.

★A rise along similar lines for control room staff. They are currently paid 92 percent of the fire fighters' rate.

★A revision of the pay formula, which since 1978 has determined fire fighters' pay rises. The original pay formula came out of the last and only national fire fighters' strike in 1977.

Employers in the early 1970s responded to calls for higher pay by announcing a series of inquiries. They are trying the same trick today.

The inquiries, however, meant that fire fighters' pay fell in the years running up to the 1977 strike.

That's why no one is falling for the offer of an inquiry today.

The pay formula linked fire fighters' pay to male manual earnings. But the growth of the service sector pay rises in white collar jobs over the last 25 years has meant the formula has delivered smaller and smaller rises.

The fire fighters' campaign is at the sharp end of the pressure for higher pay across the public sector.

A victory for them would increase the confidence of nurses and health workers, council workers, teachers, lecturers, post workers and