

Socialist Worker

inside:

ORGANISING AGAINST WAR —PAGES 6&7

Eminem: Brat or Bard?

—page 9

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From Tokyo to Shannon a mass movement opposes Bush...

We can stop this war!

MASS OPPOSITION to George W Bush's war on Iraq is growing.

In the United States huge protests took place on January 18. On the same day thousands protested in cities in many other countries.

Two thousand came to Shannon Airport to tell Ahern to get the US military out of Shannon.

Bush and Blair are desperately trying to win public opinion, but enormous numbers oppose the war. We need to mobilise this opposition to the war into mass action, on the streets.

In Scotland train drivers refused to handle war materials. We need to build a movement to give workers in Shannon and elsewhere the confidence to take industrial action against the war.

February 15th is International Day of Action Against the War. The demonstration in Dublin on that day is an opportunity to get unprecedented numbers on to the streets. It is backed by the Irish Anti War Movement, the Peace and Neutrality Alliance, SIPTU, the Irish Labour Party, the Green Party, Sinn Fein and many others. Get organised in your locality, bring trade union banners.

Together with the movement internationally, this is the sort of action that can stop Bush and Blair in their tracks.



ALL OUT FEBRUARY 15!

This is the way to fight privatisation

TRANSPORT workers are up in arms over the plans by Seamus Brennan to privatise their industry.

Thousands walked off the job on January 15th and more protests are likely.

Brennan, says he is going to "face down the unions and proceed with de-regulation and privatisation of public transport and CIE".

He wants to break up CIE and sell off its lucrative sites to property speculators.

These will probably be the same people who make big donations to Fianna Fail.

Bus routes in Dublin will be handed over to private operators who will only want to service profitable routes.

Franchising

The franchising out is supposed to start from 2004.

Yet bus privatisation has proved a disaster in Britain.

Bus privatisation has proved a disaster in Britain.

Since de-regulation eleven years ago, fares have increased well above the rate of inflation. Passenger numbers outside London fell by 27 percent.

Investment in new vehicles collapsed so that the average vehicle is now 12 years old.

Privatisation does nothing for passengers.

The British Rail Minister, Alistair Darling, has been

forced to admit that he "does not know when Britain will ever have an efficient rail service again".

The real agenda behind privatisation is to lower costs by attacking the conditions of workers.

In Britain, busworkers wages have fallen from 7 percent below the average manual earnings to 14 percent below.

Pension schemes have been destroyed. Tough new schedules have increased stress.

Corruption

The privatisation of Eircom has proved a disaster for consumers and workers.

Phone charges are up—and thousands of workers have lost their jobs.

The sale of this state asset created a web of corruption



■ CIE workers take to the streets in January

which involved Transport Minister Lowry and fat cats such as Denis O Brian.

The privatisation of CIE will follow a similar path.

The NRBU and SIPTU should be complimented on their stance against privatisation.

Transport workers are one

of the best organised groups of workers in the country.

But they will have to keep up the pressure to defeat this Thatcherite government.

Garda inquiries reveal lies, cover-ups and false confessions

AFTER THE tribunals into the politicians, come investigations into the Gardai. The Morris Inquiry has been set up to investigate Donegal gardai.

Frank McBrearty alleged that his confession to the murder of cattle-dealer Ritchie Barron was fabricated.

The inquiry is also set to consider allegations that some gardai planted "IRA bomb materials" around Donegal in order to secure promotion and that others planted evidence on a travellers' site.

But the McBrearty case is only one among many.

★ In 1995 Gardai from Special Response Unit shot dead John Carthy in Abbeylara. John had a history of mental problems but police failed to contact his solicitor or allow family members to talk to him to help defuse a siege.

★ Det Garda Liam Donnelly and Det Garda John Fahy were caught fabricating a page of interview with Omagh suspect Colm Murphy.

They faced a secret inquiry into their "persistent lying under oath", the results of which are not known.

★ Paul Ward's conviction for the murder of Veronica Guerin was squashed after inconsistencies established that a confession was made up by Gardai.

★ Publican Frank Shortt was convicted of allowing drugs to be sold on his premises. Then two Garda witnesses were found to have fabricated evidence.

★ Gráinne and Ciara Walsh won compensation from the police after they were arrested, assaulted and charged because they were in the way of an unmarked Garda car reversing at speed in a pedestrian area.

★ Homeless drug addict, Dean Lyons, confessed to the murder of two female psychiatric patients in 1997. When another man, Mark Nash, later admitted to the killings, displaying knowledge of details not in the public domain, all charges against Lyons were dropped.

He later died.

Over the past five years the gardai have had to pay out €6 million in compensation to 70 people. Most of these were settled out of court to hush them up.

Big Brother comes to Dublin Airport

BIG BROTHER is being introduced to Ireland's Airports by the Irish Government at the behest of the Bush administration and the security freaks in the Pentagon.

Remember all those iris scans in the film "Minority Report". This could become the norm in Dublin Airport for passengers—if the Irish and American governments have their way.

The government has announced a pilot scheme in Dublin Airport which will use biometric data which will allow the author-

ities to scan people's iris and fingerprints.

Biometrics is a new technology which allows identification of individuals by measuring different physiological properties.

The pilot scheme will see the introduction of a special gate at Dublin Airport to process the new biometric passports.

Volunteer

Passports which include embedded physiological information (fingerprint, iris) about the owner of the passport.

Civil Servants will be asked to volunteer

to use the new gate.

The Irish Council of Civil Liberties has already come out strongly against scheme.

The scheme is being undertaken to prepare for a new US law which requires all 28 states (which includes Ireland) in the US government's visa waiver programme to provide biometrics data on all newly issued travel documents.

The Enhanced Border Security and Visa Reform Act was passed following September 11th.

It will prevent people with travel documents issued after October 2004 from entering the US without a new biometric enabled visa or passport.

Save Ulster from Infidels!

PAISLEY's DUP party has found a new threat to Ulster—this time from the tiny Muslim community.

Two dozen Muslim families in Portadown applied for permission to build a

local mosque.

They received outline planning permission and the building was to be funded entirely by themselves.

But Unionist councillors have blocked their efforts. Woosley Smith,

from the DUP claimed that there would be a "wailing noise" which would intimidate residents.

"I would be worried for the residents of the area as to just what they would be confronted with," he said.

Another sturdy

defender of Ulster said it would pave the way for an Al Qaida terrorist cell.

The DUP claims that free born Britons are entitled to religious liberty.

But the message from the bigots is — not if you are a Muslim.

Another Fianna Fail head rolls!

★ Fianna Fail chief fundraiser Des Richardson has just resigned.

Richardson is about to appear at the flood Tribunal where he will be quizzed about evidence given by Frank Dunlop!

There is absolutely no connection between both these events.

CROWD CONTROL

The Police Service of Northern Ireland look set to be given CS spray for crowd control.

Even the Police Complaints Authority admits that it is dangerous when used at close range.

In 1996, a young Londoner, Ibrahim Sey, died after he was sprayed with the gas while he was on his knees and handcuffed. Out of 135 complaints investigated by the PCA, eight people needed hospital treatment or suffered from the effects of the spray for hours after the event.

And there have been scores of cases where cops have misused the spray. They've used it at too close range, in police cells and even after someone had already been restrained. "Some officers ... were too keen to use the CS spray," the PCA said. Meanwhile, the Northern Ireland Office is considering a range of other crowd control measures.

These include variations on the plastic bullet—for example sponge grenades (with or without CS gas), rubber ball rounds and other projectiles, like bean bags and sock rounds. Most could have equally lethal consequences.

Bush: The biggest threat to world peace

GEORGE BUSH is justifying war against Iraq by claiming that Saddam Hussein possesses Weapons of Mass Destruction.

In the next days and weeks, evidence will be manufactured to 'prove' this.

One way this can occur is through a 'supergrass scheme' offered to Iraqi scientists.

They and their families are being spirited out of Iraq to Cyprus for interrogation.

If they come up with good stories, they will be offered a life of comparative wealth in the US.

Or Hans Blix and the weapons inspectors' team may claim they have made a big discovery.

But the real truth is that Iraq is a devastated country that barely has the capacity to launch missiles.

The biggest threat to world peace comes from George Bush.

The chances of the US resorting to nuclear weapons are far greater now than at any time in recent decades.

Radiation

According to one estimate, the US is spending 45% more on nuclear weapons activity than it did at the end of the Cold War.

It is willing to use a new range of battlefield nuclear weapons such as 'a robust nuclear earth protector' or 'enhanced radiation' weapons.

These were tested in Afghanistan and given innocuous names like a 'daisy cutter'—but they obliterate everything in sight.

Bush's new security doctrine claims the right to act pre-emptively against any state that harbours

According to one estimate, the US is spending 45% more on nuclear weapons activity than it did at the end of the Cold War.

'terrorists'.

This is a cover to attack any country that does not bow to the US.

If Maggie Thatcher had applied this doctrine, she could have bombed Dublin under the pretext of dealing with the IRA.

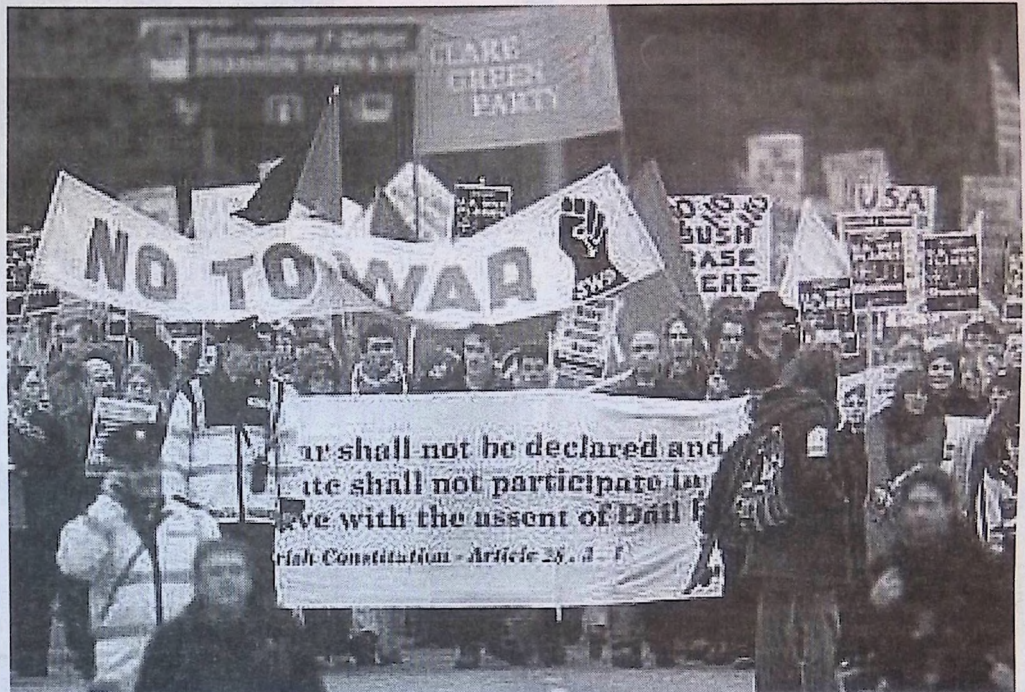
Treaty

Bush's withdrawal from the anti-ballistic missile treaty and his threat to scrap the test ban treaty are setting off a new nuclear arms race.

Faced with what the US is doing, countries like India, Pakistan and North Korea are less likely to surrender their weapons.

Saddam Hussein is a monster. He was backed by the US when he was murdering socialists and attacking Iran.

But no matter how vile Saddam Hussein is, the biggest threat comes from Bush and his allies Blair and Sharon.



Two thousand demonstrators arrived at Shannon on January 18th to protest at the use of the airport by the US military in the build up to war on Iraq. The demo was called by the Irish Anti War Movement and numbers were double those expected. The IAWM is calling for huge numbers to protest in Dublin on February 15th in a national demonstration to stop the war.

The UN is a trap

AS THE anti-war movement grows, look for its weak points.

Many Labour Party politicians throughout Europe are saying that the war could only be justified if the UN sanctioned it.

But this is a trap for the anti-war movement.

Last year, the US was able to bully and bribe all UN Security Council members to do its bidding.

Message

Bush will get the message to Hans Blix, the head of the inspectors' team, that he expects him to come up with something.

The US may still go back to the UN Security Council to get 'official sanction' for war.

Russia and France occasionally make noises against war.

But their real aim

is to bargain for some of the oil concessions after Saddam Hussein has been overthrown.

Both have already prepared ships to go to the Gulf.

Relief

Poorer countries such as Angola, Bulgaria or Cameroon will be told that debt relief and trade deals are dependent on supporting war.

And no one should rely on the Irish Foreign Minister, Brian Cowan, to vote against war.

He comments on Shannon shows that he is already bought and paid for as a US puppet!

The message of the Irish Anti-War Movement is no war—with or without the backing of the UN.

DON'T ATTACK IRAQ

National Demonstration

International Day of Protest
Saturday February 15th

Dublin: Assemble 2.00pm Garden of Remembrance Parnell Square
Belfast: See posters for details

U.S. MILITARY OUT OF SHANNON

JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE

Irish Anti War Movement Tel: 086-3074060 www.irishantiwar.org

OUT NOW!

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THE CASE AGAINST
BUSH AND BLAIR

A Socialist Worker pamphlet ● £1

Out now the new Socialist Worker pamphlet *Stop the War on Iraq*, €2.50 (£1.50) post free from SW Books, PO Box 1648 Dublin 8

Blair declares war on the Firefighters...

The case for the FBU

Blair's spin machine is targeting the fire-fighters. Here are some of the lies.

LIE ONE: The FBU has rejected a negotiated settlement.

NO. It is the government which will not negotiate. Deputy Prime Minister

John Prescott told FBU leaders last week that his demands for cuts to the fire service (outlined in the inquiry chaired by Sir George Bain) were "non-negotiable". The employers said at the start of this week that there could be no negotiation over 4,500 job losses and other cuts.

LIE TWO: The firefighters should accept the independent Bain inquiry.

THE BAIN inquiry was not independent. Bain is chancellor of Queen's

university where he has pushed through a policy of sacking lecturers and 'managing by stress'. Bain accepted government spending limits when it came up with proposals for job losses, worse pensions, reduced fire cover and forcing the public to pay extra, through insurance premiums, for fire cover.

LIE THREE: The firefighters are being greedy.

FIREFIGHTERS ARE paid £21,533 a year. They work a 42-hour week. MPs get £55,118 a year. Cabinet ministers are on £124,979 a year. The government and the press try to use

low pay in other areas as an excuse for poor pay in the fire service. New Labour has just increased spending on the military by £2 billion every year (with an open cheque book to cover any additional costs from attacking Iraq). Putting the top rate of income tax back where it was under Margaret Thatcher would bring in £19 billion.

LIE FOUR: The firefighters are being led by political dogma into an unnecessary fight with the government.

IT IS New Labour that has picked a fight with the firefighters. The government has decided to take a hard line with the trade unions while loving up to big business. It says "modernisa-

tion" means opening up public services to profit-grabbing companies. The government's assault on the FBU is so extreme that the TUC's John Monks and Brendan Barber, normally loyal to the Labour leadership, are reportedly not on speaking terms with John Prescott. More is needed. The TUC and the ICTU should stop worrying about how to come up with a rotten compromise and instead start organising action to back the firefighters.



Out with graffiti, murals and in with Starbucks?

West Belfast's lucrative trade in "revolutionary tourism" may be brought to an abrupt halt if the *Andytown News* gets its way.

The community paper so closely identified with mainstream republicanism ran a full page article in its January 18th issue calling on graffiti artists to "grow up" and stop painting political slogans on the walls of the Royal Victoria Hospital.

In an area renowned the world over for Sinn Fein murals and graffiti, the paper singled out supporters of the SWP, quoting one "resi-

dent" alleged to have complained that "the days of having to resort to writing [graffiti] were over in the 1970s".

As an example of the offensive material, the story carried a photo of a wall, allegedly sprayed by SWP supporters, which reads

Unbothered

"Bush-Blair-Sharon: Axis of Evil" and another with the slogan "Fund Public Services Not War Crimes: Pay the Firefighters".

Curiously editors seemed unbothered, though, by "dissident republican" graffiti within a five minute walk that read-until recently-"All Prods Are Targets".

Pearson's PFI Scams

A FURTHER £700 million worth of public services is to be farmed out to the private sector in Northern Ireland.

The direct rule finance minister Ian Pearson has decided more private investment will be allowed in schools, hospitals, libraries and even the fire service from 2004 onwards.

That's £725m worth of the public sector which will be leased back to the government by private businesses .. at a whopping big profit.

Yet this month, a government watchdog reported that schools built under PFI contracts are often "significantly worse". Many have inadequate classrooms, are badly laid out or have insufficient ventilation.

The Eamonn McCann column

Is Progressive Unionism possible?

THE DECISION of the Progressive Unionist Party to pull back from the peace process has dismayed many commentators and activists in the North.

The PUP has been seen by some, including some on the Left, as representing new, non-sectarian thinking, a party which, uniquely among Loyalists, has proven able to build bridges to groups in Catholic areas.

The PUP has taken a progressive stance on a range of policy areas--the 11-Plus, gay rights, defence of the public sector--and has supported power-sharing and been willing to work with a broad range of other forces.

It cannot glibly be dismissed as a phoney construct. It represents something real. But it was never really going to be able to keep to a consistently progressive

path. The PUP is the junior partner of the UVF. The paramilitary outfit announced that it was ending communication with the decommissioning body on January 16th. The PUP pull-back from talks was revealed the following day.

The key decision had been taken not by political leaders but by paramilitary commanders. (The fact that some individuals might fit into both categories doesn't detract from the point.)

This reflects a political truth which Marxists have been drawing attention to for decades--that when an armed organisation and a political party are linked together, it's the armed wing which has precedence. The party cannot discuss, much less dictate, the strategy of the armed group.

Security considerations alone make this imperative. By the same token, the "army" cannot allow the party to adopt policy positions or

take initiatives which might compromise its interests.

This applies, too, to the various Republican armed groups and their political adjuncts. It is one fundamental reason Marxists resolutely oppose the notion of armed "wings".

The UVF has had, throughout, a semi-detached relationship with the peace process. Its ceasefire has been contingent on there being no threat to the Union.

In Belfast, it is in competition with the UDA for domination of particular areas, and carried out four killings during the feud in 2000.

It was linked to the deaths of the three Quinn children in Ballymoney in 1998 and the sectarian assassination of building worker Ciaran Cummins in Antrim in 2001. The Shankill Butchers were a UVF unit.

Linked to and dominated by an organisation of that sort, the PUP was never going to be able to break free

from the sort of politics which its founders acknowledged had led Protestant workers nowhere.

The PUP doesn't claim to have broken with Loyalist ideology. "The whole of Unionism is saying enough is enough," declared David Ervine, announcing the PUP shift.

Thus, the party sees itself as an integral element of a Unionism which also embraces the UUP, the DUP etc.

At the same time, it differentiates itself from establishment Unionist groups in claiming to represent a specific and distinctive working-class interest.

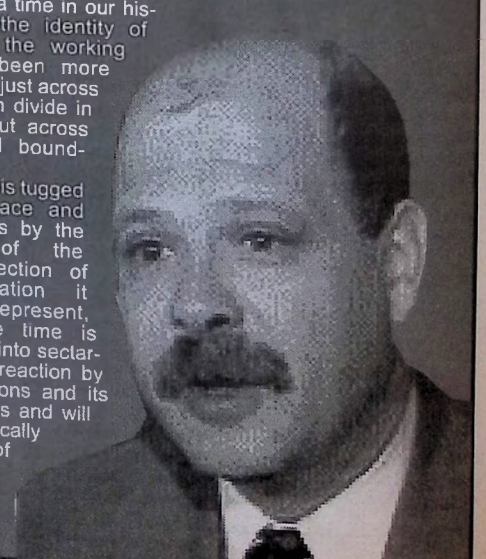
But this can only make sense on the basis of an assumption that Protestant workers have interests which are separate from and, in contradiction to, the interests of Catholic workers; that there are solutions to problems of poverty on the Shankill which can best be pursued sepa-

rately, which would not also be solutions to poverty on the Falls.

This is self-evident nonsense and a recipe for political incoherence. There has never been a time in our history when the identity of interest of the working class has been more obvious, not just across the sectarian divide in the North but across international boundaries.

The PUP is tugged towards peace and class politics by the interests of the deprived section of the population it seeks to represent, but all the time is pulled back into sectarianism and reaction by its associations and its ideology. It is and will remain politically incapable of building solidly for the future.

The working class interest requires a clean break from communal politics and a decisive shift towards socialist organisation.



Anti-Capitalism spreads to India

THE ASIAN Social Forum (ASF) held in Hyderabad in India in January ended with a closing rally of over 10,000 people.

It was followed by a demonstration that drew in thousands more. Trucks and coaches from across the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh arrived with people who had made the trip to demonstrate their opposition to imperialism and war.

A large contingent from the All-India Student Federation chanted "We want revolution!" and "Long live socialism! Capitalism-down, down!" Their chants echoed among women's groups, environmental cam-

paigned and trade unionists.

Many had improvised their own placards and banners which carried anti-war messages. An enormous puppet snake, which was there to represent the threat of anti-Muslim communal violence, threaded its way through the demonstration. Along the route there was street theatre and sideshows.

Lynched

A large raised platform was turned into a gallows on which an indebted poor peasant farmer was lynched by a World Bank executioner. A loudspeaker broadcast the message, "Now we understand the link between war, globalisation and communal violence."

The demonstration fol-

lowed a week of intensive discussion and debate held in hundreds of venues across the city. Vast meetings held in enormous tents attracted audiences of over 1,000, while smaller workshops covered every conceivable subject.

The ASF represents something new in Indian politics—a growing feeling of common interest between campaigners on many different issues. It has created a space for those who want to change society.

Anti-nuclear activists invited tribal peoples to address their meetings and tell them how uranium mining is destroying their health and environment. Those who are fighting India's caste system came to meetings about water privatisation. Like any newly-born movement, different forces are shaping it.

Within the ASF there are those who see the movement as a challenge to the dominant capitalist powers worldwide but who mute their criticism of their rulers at home. There are others who see the ASF as an umbrella group for non-governmental organisations (NGOs).



■ Anti war action spread around the world—a demonstration in Damascus

New Left in India

INDIA IS a county whose economic growth has increased the disparities between rich and poor to an incredible level.

While millions are living without a proper roof over their heads, India's new rich are constantly looking for new ways to spend money.

Enormous

The latest fads include taking cruises to Singapore for extended shopping trips, or buying enormous four wheel drive cars which help clog up the congested roads of India's cities.

A minority of delegates wanted the ASF to be part of an anti-capitalist movement that challenges the system both at home and abroad.

They see the rich in India working hand in hand with the rich in the West to privatise state-owned enterprises and cut social spending.

The Indian company Infosystems is the second largest software manufacturer in the world.

During the week of the ASF the chief executive of Infosystems demanded a total end to state subsidies of higher education in order to cut corporation taxes.

As Indian corporate greed matches its Western counterpart more people in India want to know about

the anti-capitalist movement and how it has developed from its origin in the Seattle protests in 1999.

Many delegates wanted to discuss whether radical change is possible in India, and if it is what forces could bring it about.

In a seminar on the future of socialism the Egyptian activist and academic Samir Amin argued that any transition from capitalism would "take two or three centuries".

Others felt that the collapse of the "Soviet experiment" had been a setback. But everyone was excited about the size and diversity of the ASF.

Many left wing political organisations in India talk about the need to organise among the working class, but then see elections as the best way of implementing their ideas.

Distribute

Others look to the peasantry to form armed bands which can take land from the big landlords and distribute it to the poor. But there are people who are looking for something else.

They talked for hours about whether revolution was possible, what social classes would make a revolution, and how any future society would have democracy at its core.

At the moment their numbers are small, but the audience for their ideas is growing by the day.

VENEZUELA: COUP ATTEMPT WEAKENS

THE RIGHT wing revolt in Venezuela to topple the elected President Hugo Chávez appears to be weakening.

Oil industry bosses and right wing and corrupt union leaders have been organising a "general strike" since the beginning of December.

Shutdown

Outside of the state oil company, the PDVSA, the shutdown has been very patchy and more and businesses are now re-opening.

The *Washington Post* gave an impression of how the "strike" has operated, "More and more businesses have opened in recent weeks, including Italian restaurant Limoncello.

"José Ornelas, the managing partner, kept the restaurant closed from December 2 until the day after Christmas while continuing to pay employee salaries. He said he lost \$100,000."

Joel Pantoja reported in a US socialist paper on the shortage of soft drinks, beer and flour,

"This is because Grupo Mendoza, which owns Empresas Polar,

the second largest capitalist family in the country, is solid for the strike.

They have shut down Pepsi Cola plants, Polar beer breweries, and cooking oil factories, which they own."

In the state oil company — the PDVSA — three quarters of the 30,000 production workers remained at their jobs. But the majority of the 10,000 managers, administrative personnel, skilled technicians came out on strike crippling oil production.

They sabotaged vital control equipment and computers before they left.

Privileged

These people enjoy a very privileged standard of living compared with the mass of working class people in the country with over a half the population living in dire poverty.

One Venezuelan worker reported that 70 percent of tanker crews joined the strike, "Skilled crew members on tankers used to make \$3,000 per month and officers double that—huge salaries for Venezuela."

The US government, which recognised a two-day coup in



■ Pro-Chávez demonstrator

April, and in December backed the opposition's call for Chávez's replacement, is feeling the pinch since oil production slumped.

In the past Venezuela supplied the US with 15 percent of its oil imports. Bush's government doesn't want uncertainty over oil imports to the US while it fights a war in the Middle East.

It has switched to diplomatic pressure to force Chávez to grant

the opposition concessions. Unfortunately, despite defiant speeches, Chávez has agreed to talks with the UN and US and other governments in the "Friends of Venezuela".

As oil production begins to revive, Chávez can only demoralise and weaken his supporters by making more concessions to those seeking to smash any challenge to their privileges.

War in the Middle East Blood and Oil

IN THE 1950s, the big powers of Europe granted political independence to their former colonies in Africa and Asia after they faced defeat at the hands of guerrilla armies.

But they also left because they were no longer so dependent of their natural resources.

Industrialisation meant more synthetic products and greater use of more limited primary resources. But there was one exception—oil.

The history of oil has always been entwined with blood and war.

In 1954, for example, the CIA organised a coup in Iran after the elected leader Mossadeq dared to take the industry into public ownership.

After the coup, control of the oil fields passed from British-Persian Oil Company to the US Company Standard Oil.

After the Gulf War in 1991, the US insisted that the borders of Kuwait be expanded to cover the huge Rumalia oil field in Southern Iraq.

The big winner was again Standard Oil.

Today, the US ruling class is even more determined to grab hold of the world's oil fields.

In 2001, the US Vice President Dick Cheney, drew up a new energy plan with the assistance of the disgraced company Enron.

Cheney was a former chief executive of the oil company Halliburton.

The plan pointed to the progressive decline of US domestic oil produc-

tion since its peak in 1970. It also showed that US oil consumption was rising dramatically.

An obvious solution was to cut down on the numbers of cars by improving public transport. But this was not even dreamt of.

Instead Cheney's document claimed that the United States could only satisfy its demand for oil by more imports.

At present the US imports ten million barrels of oil per day, or just over half its consumption.

By 2020, Cheney argued, it would need 17 million barrels and so "will import nearly two of every three barrels—a condition of increased dependency on foreign powers that do not always have America's interests at heart."

All of this meant that the US had to expand its sources of oil. In particular, it could no longer rely so much on Saudi Arabia.

Unpopular

The Saudi Arabian regime is deeply unpopular and could find itself on the brink of revolution in the next decade.

Cheney insisted that the US could not simply rely on market forces to gain extra supplies.

There had to be a "significant effort" by the US government to overcome foreign resistance to the "outward reach" of US energy companies.

The "war on terrorism" has provided the ideal cover for this "outward reach". Right across the globe, US military deployment is linked to oil supplies.

Supplies of oil from Latin America to the US has quadrupled in the

last fifteen years.

US military and diplomatic pressure is now focussed on two big suppliers, Colombia and Venezuela.

Bush has allocated \$100 million dollar to a counter-insurgency campaign in Colombia.

Today one in four soldiers in the Colombian army are assigned to looking after the interests of Occidental Petroleum.

The US interests is also directly behind the attempt to overthrow Hugo Chavez, President of Venezuela.

In Central Asia, US strategy is focussed on the Caspian Sea where about 16 percent of the total oil reserves of the world are located.

US bases have been established in many former states of the old USSR.

In Afghanistan, a former UNOCAL executive, Karzai has been installed as President.

US interests have effectively taken control of the new pipeline.

The coming war against Iraq is part of that pattern. Iraq has the second largest oil reserves in the world. Traditionally it has made deals with Russian interests and cut out the US.

Bush's aim is to change all that. Iraq is to be turned into a direct US oil colony with a US general such as Tommy Franks assigned to manage the country for an "interim period".

Even the UN has predicted that 10 million people could perish from the war and subsequent dislocation of food supplies.

But for the corporations, which rule the world, human life is a small price to pay for profit.

FEBRUARY 15TH DAY OF ACTION

February 15th is a red letter day for anti-war activists around the world.

On that day tens of millions will demonstrate in capital cities around the globe to show their opposition to the planned war on Iraq.

Up to a million are expected to take part in London alone. Up to 20,000 are expected in Dublin. It promises to be the largest ever co-ordinated day of global protest in history.

February the 15th was the day named in a call for action issued by the European Social Forum in Florence when it met in November last year. This was a gathering of 60,000 anti-capitalist activists from across Europe. Its proclamation sees February 15th as just the first step in moving towards strike action against war.

In December an anti-war conference in Cairo attended by 400 delegates from across the Middle East took up the call.

Activists from major cities in the US, in Australia, and in the Philippines are planning protests on the same day. And at the end of January the World Social Forum meeting in Porto Alegre are expected to endorse February 15th and bring Latin America onto the streets against Bush and Blair.

Unprecedented

In Ireland an unprecedented broad coalition has come together to support the February 15th national demonstration in Dublin. Political parties supporting the demonstration include the Labour Party, the Green Party, Sinn Fein and the Socialist Workers Party. SIPTU, the biggest union in the country, representing a quarter of a million workers is also supporting the protest.

The Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions is supporting the demo in Belfast. The demonstration is being jointly organised by the Peace and Neutrality Alliance and the Irish Anti War Movement.

Richard Boyd-Barrett chairperson of the IAWM told *Socialist Worker* that "Feb 15th will be one of the largest political protests ever held in Ireland. We are expecting upwards of ten thousand people to take part and we are organising a major concert for the evening of the demonstration."

"The IAWM has been in contact with people up and down the country about organising transport for the protest and there are buses from all major towns and cities as well as people coming from as far away as Dingle and Letterkenny.

"February 15th will be a chance for Irish people to take part in the largest ever day of international protest and we can make a difference. The demonstration will be calling for US military out of Shannon and if we can force the Irish government to retreat on this, it will have a major impact in the United States."

"The message is clear—all of us who are opposed to the warmongering of the American and British governments and the use of Shannon as a warport have got to get to Dublin on February 15th to show that we are the majority"



Anti war activists b

THE ANTI-WA
ment in Wate
gaining real n
with support
across the pr
political spec

The Waterford Trade Unions has the Irish Anti War and that should be loads of buses for Last Saturday m Greens, Sinn Fein, Workers Party and protest in Red Square some street theatre information stall.

We had queues up to sign our anti An anarchist school hoping to organise walkout of school s the war. I urge all t across the country their unions to get February 15th.

It is the sight of ple in their tens of the street in opposi that will force the I ment to end their s American war maci Dick Roche President Wa Trades Coun

"IT IS one thing to oppose war in Iraq on principle but another to do something about it. This is why I joined the anti-war movement.

Each and every one of us has the ability to make a difference even if it is just raising awareness by talking to friends family and colleagues....I succeeded in mobilising my workplace by getting everyone to sign the anti-war petition and persuading a few of them to get actively involved.

Now we are going to make a banner for the demonstration on February 15th. Participating in demonstrations also provides a real opportunity to express mass opposition, and show the world powers that the growing anti-war sentiment is a voice that cannot be ignored"

Camilla Monroe
Dun Laoghaire
Against The War

IN NCAD our students union has taken a position of strong opposition to the war and we are organising for a big pro-peace movement in the college.

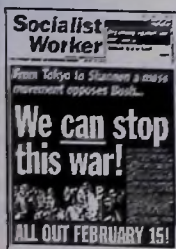
Artists have a part to play in communicating the horror of war to the wider public.

On the demonstrations we will be making a strong visual statement. We are organising a bus to go to Shannon and we are holding a teach in on the 4th of February with invited speakers from the anti-war movement

Roisin Ni Fhaolain
Vice president
NCAD students union

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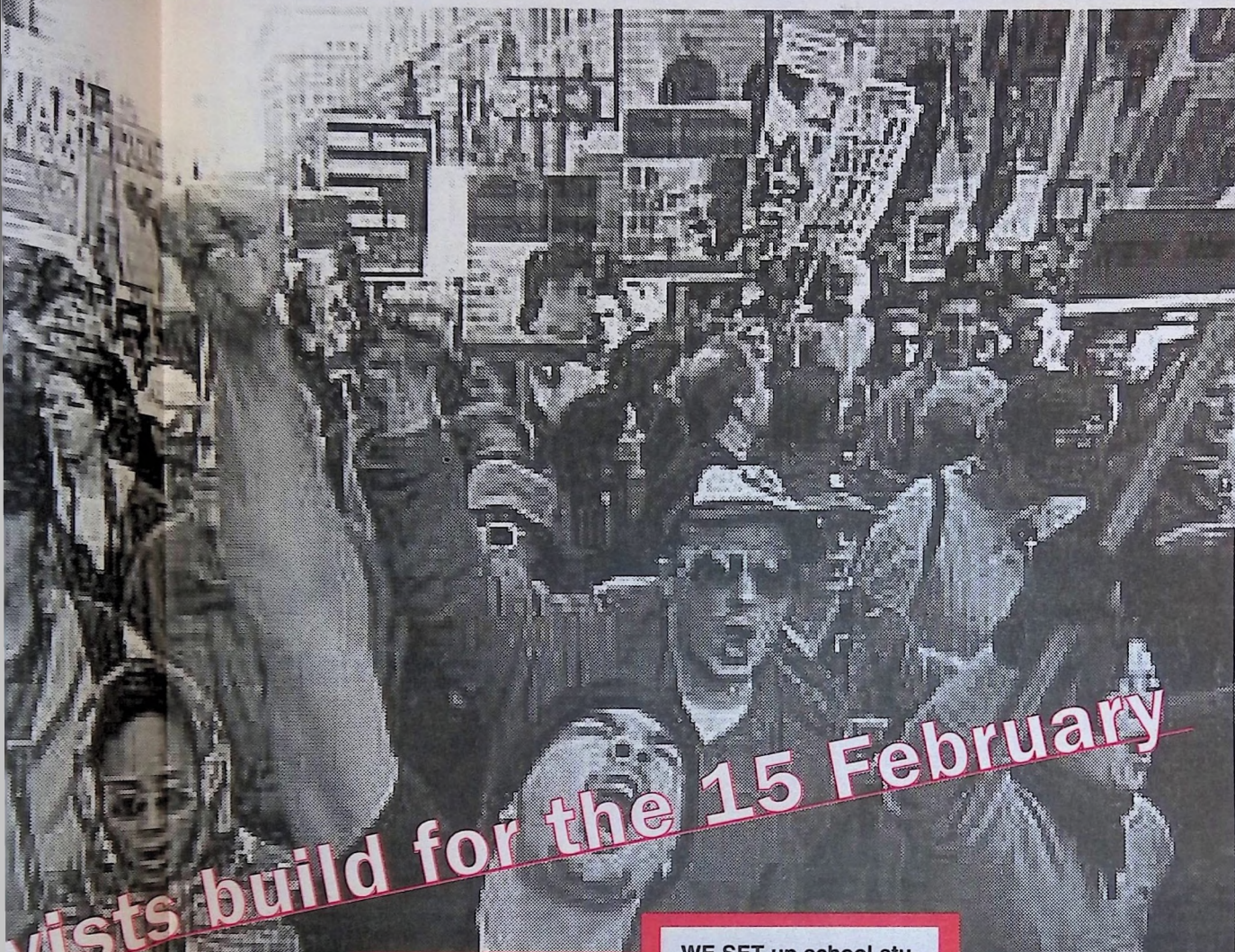
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15TH - A GLOBAL ACTION AGAINST WAR



vists build for the 15 February

THE ANTI-WAR movement in Waterford is gaining real momentum with support from across the progressive political spectrum.

The Waterford Council of Trade Unions has affiliated to the Irish Anti War Movement and that should help us fill loads of buses for Feb 15th.

Last Saturday members of the Greens, Sinn Fein, the Socialist Workers Party and others held a protest in Red Square and we had some street theatre and a lively information stall.

We had queues of people lining up to sign our anti war petition. An anarchist school student is hoping to organise a city wide walkout of school students against the war. I urge all trade unionists across the country to work inside their unions to get support for February 15th.

It is the right of working people in their tens of thousands on the street in opposition to this war that will force the Irish government to end their support for the American war machine.

Dick Roche
President Waterford
Trades Council

HEALTH WORKERS against the war was set up at the beginning of December and so far we have held three video screenings in James St hospital with a good attendance at each.

Support for our group ranges across the medical spectrum from doctors to lab technicians, from nurses to ancillary workers.

Obviously medical workers have an intimate knowledge of the effects of the kinds of weapons that Bush is planning to rain down on innocents in Iraq.

We are holding a public meeting at the end of this month with anti-war speakers from the medical professions and from that we hope to establish a national network of Health Workers Against The War.

We are asking all health workers to voice their concern and outrage by joining the national demonstration on February 15th

Jo Tully, INO rep
St James Hospital,
Convenor of Health
Workers Against the War.

WE SET up school students against war as a network for radical young people to do something about their opposition to Bush and Blair's war drive.

Young people and school students have always played a large part in radical movements. We have held stalls in Dublin city centre and got a great response from people.

We are encouraging school students to address their class and find ways of countering the propaganda which we are being force-fed in the mainstream media.

On demonstrations and protests we carry our own placards and banners and try to be very lively. I got involved because I believe we can stop Bush and Blair's war drive if enough people get on the streets to show their opposition.

The other day I addressed my class and got a very good response. People were snapping up the fact sheets prepared by the anti-war movement and some of my friends are going to Shannon to protest. We hope to have a very large contingent on February 15th

Eoin Gillen
School Students
against the War.

HOW YOU CAN BUILD

- Get an Irish Anti-War Group going in your area, workplace or college.
- Order posters and leaflets and set up street stalls.
- Go to your union meeting and put down a resolution calling for support.
- To Contact the Irish Anti-War Movement Ring 087 6329511 or website www.irishantiwar.org

WHAT SOCIALISTS SAY

Capitalism: An Empire without contradictions?

TONI NEGRI and **Michael Hardt's** recently published *Empire*, has had much influence among anti-capitalists. Both writers belong to the 'autonomist' direct action wing of the movement.

However a recent article by Hardt in the London *Guardian* (Dec 18th) on the coming war on Iraq shows, betrays an extraordinary confusion about the links between war and capitalism.

Emerging

Correctly Hardt notes, "Not even the US leaders have the illusion that his war will bring peace. They see it rather as a long-lasting and perhaps interminable war driven by continually emerging threats."

But he also argues that war with Iraq is contrary to the interests of big business.

He writes "Some of the worst tragedies of human history occur when elites are incapable of acting in their own interest."

He continues, "US military actions will, in fact, most likely only feed the antagonisms created by the inequalities of wealth and power around the world, increasing exponentially the insecurities of global elites."

Therefore US imperialism is behaving irrationally.

Instead, Hardt argues that the real interests of big business lay in promoting "empire". By this he means a global power that is organised in a decentralised form, a multinational alliance of leading nation states, organisations like the UN and the IMF, NGOs the media, etc.

"This decentred network power of empire corresponds to the interests of global elites because it both facilitates the potential profits of capitalist globalisation and defuses or potential security threats."

Support

This leads Hardt to believe, "We can be confident that in the long run their real interests will lead global elites to support empire and refuse any project of US imperialism."

On this view the drive to war is a ghastly accident, or mistake of policy. Even Negri and Hardt's write claim to write from a "post industrial age", these ideas are far from new.

Karl Kautsky—a prominent leader of the Socialist International at the time—argued just before the slaughter of the First World War that growth in world

trade made conflicts between capitalists less intense.

Capitalism, he claimed had entered a phase of 'ultra-imperialism' which made war irrational in terms of profit.

After millions died in that terrible war, Kautsky's ideas were discredited.

However if we are to take Hardt's new version of Kautsky's argument seriously, the implied strategy for anti-war activists would be to pressurise more "far-seeing" capitalists to change the policy of their governments.

It's hard to imagine a more dangerous policy because it fails to see how leaders like Chirac in France or Ahern in Ireland have a direct interest in supporting war.

Against Kautsky, Lenin argued in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, that the growth of giant monopoly companies and links between big companies and their states leads to military rivalries between imperialist states.

This made wars inevitable. Lenin claimed this was not a matter of policy (and therefore not a matter of choice) but was forced on the major states by the logic of their system.

Provoked

But these huge conflagrations also provoked major upheavals from below. This is why Lenin dubbed our epoch that of wars and revolutions.

Much has changed in the world since Lenin's time. Nonetheless, the drive to war is forced on the US by the rise of potential rivals in China and Japan. At the end of the World War Two, the US accounted for half of all world production. It could therefore dominate much of the planet by the mere force of economic fact.

Today US share of world production has shrunk to half that of 1948. It needs its military clout to strengthen its control of major oil producing regions, and to dominate the Middle East. If fears the rise of major rivals in China and Japan which could undercut its position.

It is therefore forced to throw its military weight around. This is why Bush's cabinet talks of "full spectrum dominance"—military, political and economic—across the world.

To depend on some fragment of the ruling class to oppose this development is to expect tigers to become vegans.

Countries like France may occasionally make anti-American noises, but their interest lies in wrangling for oil concessions in a post Saddam Iraq.

Only a movement from below can really oppose war.

— by KEVIN WINGFIELD

AOIFE NI FHEARGHAIL LOOKS AT THE RAPPING OF EMINEM THE AMERICAN DREAM GONE SOUR

8 Mile is Eminem's semi-autobiographical first film, portrays a week in the life of Jimmy 'Rabbit' Smith—a white 'trailer-trash' factory worker who dreams of escaping his impoverishment by making it as a rapper.

Ostensibly *8 Mile* tells the Eminem raps-to-riches story—absent father, alcoholic mother, troubled childhood, shit jobs, raw talent, record deal—but really this film is about poverty, about life on the edge in downtown Detroit, about the American Dream gone sour.

The *8 Mile* of the title refers to the line separating the deprivation of inner-city black Detroit and its affluent white suburbs.

Throughout, images of industrial wasteland, abandoned buildings, broken-down trailer-parks, domestic violence and gang war outline the poverty in which the dark underbelly of the America lives—where the American Dream has long turned into a day-to-day nightmare.

This stark imagery goes a long way to explain, not just the sheer rage behind Eminem's lyrics, but the mass appeal of

his music to the young people of an America which doesn't give a shit about them—where 31 million live in poverty while billions are spent on war.

Like *8 Mile*'s 'Rabbit', Eminem, born Marshall Bruce Mathers, grew up in a deprived predominately black neighbourhood in Detroit. Bullied at school, he found solace in rap music and spent his time between shifts in burger bars writing down rhymes which he tested at local rap contests.

He was eventually discovered at one such battle by Dr Dre of gangsta rappers Niggaz With Attitude, whose seminal song *Fuck Da Police* earned the band a 1990 FBI National Security Threat label.

Dre's initial reaction was that watching Eminem was like "watching a black guy doing country n' western" but he recognised his verbal dexterity and rhyming skills and the rest is history.

Often compared to Elvis—white boy from the wrong side of the tracks who stole black music and street style translat-

ing it into mainstream pop—unlike Elvis, Eminem writes his own songs, which spring from a massive anger and bitterness at the poverty and injustice of the society in which he grew up.

While he may be seen as a somewhat caricatured voice of poor urban white America, Eminem's controversial lyrics have generated a storm of protest, earning him a place as the *bête noire* of both the liberal Left and the reactionary Right and provoking George Bush to label him the "most dangerous threat to American children since polio".

Eminem's lyrics contain all the more thuggish elements of gangsta rap—misogynism, homophobia and a glorification of violence.

In songs such as *Marshall Mathers* 'faggots' get knocked off and 'bitches' get slapped. While in *Kim* he kills his ex-wife saying 'Bleed bitch bleed', but underneath the violence an insecure voice is imploring her to tell him why she no longer loves him and thinks he's ugly.

However, since his first album, he seems to be reacting to his critics and qualifies his lyrics. For instance, in *Criminal* he says

"A lot of people think that what I say on record Or what I talk about on a record That I actually do in real life, or that I believe in it Or if I say that I wanna kill somebody, that I'm actually gonna do it, or that I believe in it Well shit, if you believe that, then I'll kill you".

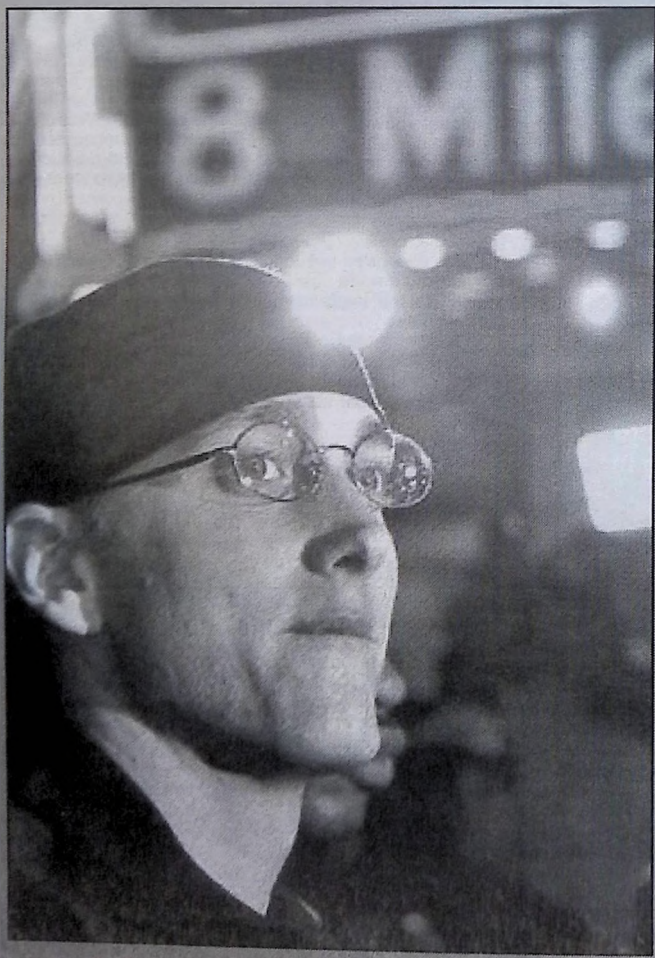
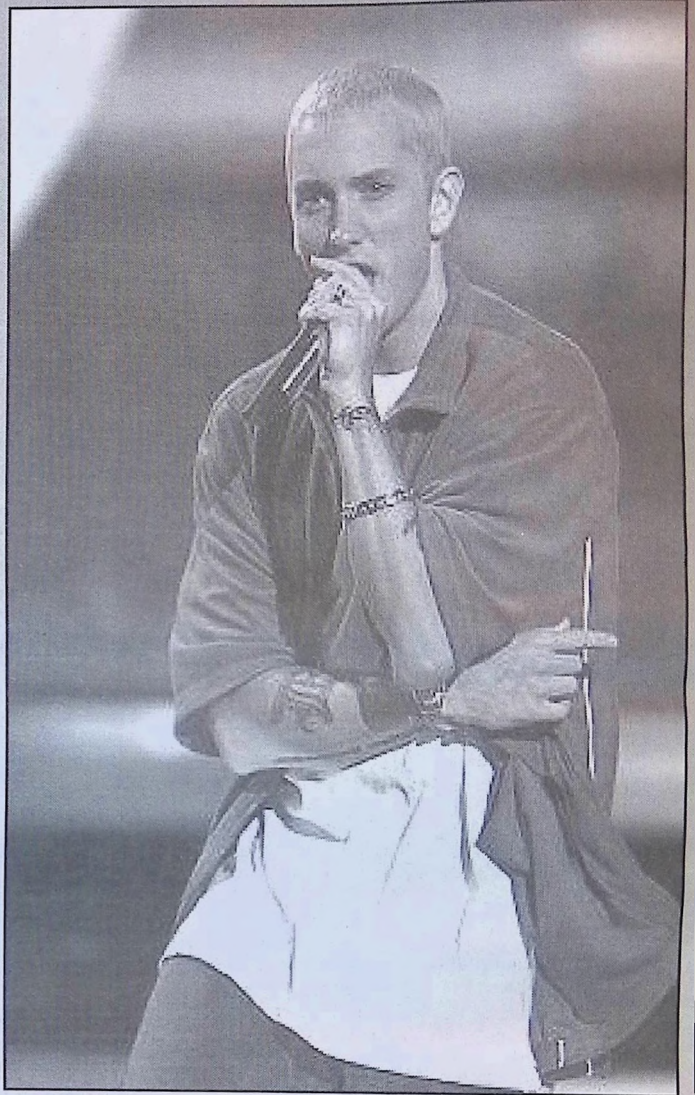
While in *Stan*—a dialogue between Eminem and a disturbed fan—the fan snaps under the increasing pressure of his life killing both himself and his pregnant girlfriend.

Writing back to Stan, Eminem pleads with him to get counselling and to look after his girlfriend in what sounds like an appeal to his real fans and critics not to take his more extreme lyrics so seriously.

There's also a strange naiveté in the fact that he produces 'clean' versions of his songs for his daughter to listen to.

Undoubtedly, his lyrics do contain homophobia and misogynistic elements but more recently they do seem to have moved on politically.

In his last album, he exposes



the double morality of the moral majority of white America who censor music they claim incites violence whilst letting their children watch Arnold Schwarzenegger music and happily waving their 18-year old sons off to war.

He's begun to take aim at some real targets, calling on young people in *Square Dance* to stand and fight against the Bush administration before they get drafted into the military.

Eminem is the voice of an increasingly alienated and impoverished white working class in an America where wage inequality is at an unprecedented level—where a young person working in WalMart would take 1,000 years to earn what the WalMart CEO earns in 1 year.

This is an America where the top 1% have more net wealth than the bottom 94% of all Americans—where no penalty is paid by the likes of General Motors which devastated the entire town of Flint, Michigan while a teenager who sprays graffiti on a wall gets sent to a

juvenile detention centre.

Eminem exposes the often unarticulated dark underbelly of the American Dream—of angry teenagers "workin at burger king, spittin on your onion rings".

He doesn't yet see this mass anger as being aimed in any particular direction, yet claims to be:

"The ring leader of the circus of worthless pawns

sent to lead the march right up to the steps of Congress

and piss on the lawns of the Whitehouse".

As the angry young people of America start to take to their streets in their tens of thousands to protest against their war-mongering President, we can only hope that Eminem will be marching with them.

Warts and all, that's reason enough to look forward to his next album.

film

Division and revolt in New York

MARTIN SCORSESE's new film *Gangs of New York* has opened with huge publicity. Its background is one of the biggest riots in U.S. history which began in New York on 13 July 1863.

The politics of the mass uprising were deeply contradictory, containing both working class anger against the rich and a thoroughly racist opposition to the emancipation of slaves.

New York in the 1860's was the most impoverished city in the Western world. A hundred thousand immigrants arrived in the U.S. each year, the greatest part of them from Ireland. These crowds of poor refugees filled the tenements and lived in the utmost squalor.

The economic effects of the American Civil War were driving down living standards for workers while making fortunes for big business.

The previous September President Lincoln had issued his famous proclamation abolishing slavery. It was by no means a popular measure at the time, but a necessary one if the North was to win the Civil War.

The Democrats, who were a pro-slavery party, skillfully played on working class fears and to some extent managed to channel them in a racist direction.

The editor of New York's leading Catholic newspaper told a mass meeting "when the President called upon them to go and carry a war for the nigger, we would be damned if he believed they would go".

On a platform that declared emancipation to be 'bloody, barbarous and revolutionary' the Democrat Horatio Seymour won the Governorship of New York in November 1862.

The racist arguments in the New York working class movement were strengthened when black stevedores, marshalled in by the police, undermined a Longshoreman's strike in June 1863.

Election

Explaining the election result Marx observed, "The Irishman sees the Negro as a dangerous competitor."

Matters came to a head with the blatant class bias in the introduction of the draft. For 300 dollars, a year's unskilled wages, you could buy your way out of the army if your name came up in the lottery.

"Did you ever know aristocratic legislation to so directly point out the poor man as inferior to the rich", cried one newspaper. With shouts of "down with the rich" a mob assembled on the first day of the draft. It quickly grew, smashing draft centres and raiding the mansions of the well to do.

Some two thirds of the rioters were Irish. The racist currents in the movement surfaced very quickly. No black person was safe during the riots and several were lynched.

The riots were brutally suppressed. The Federal Government had to establish their authority and the draft; the rich were hysterical for their property. Federal Troops shot down over a hundred of the poorest people of New York.

This is the background to *Gangs of New York*, the politics of which are as dubious as the events themselves. The atmosphere of poverty and raw criminality is vivid in the film—with a great deal of brutal violence.

The character of Bill 'the butcher' is brilliantly acted by Daniel Day Lewis and his role is fascinating insofar as it is an exploration of how those who rule by violence exist on a knife edge.

His "natives"—established New York slum dwellers—are racist and anti-Catholic. His main rivals, the Irish gangs are portrayed as being less racist although the historical facts would not justify this.

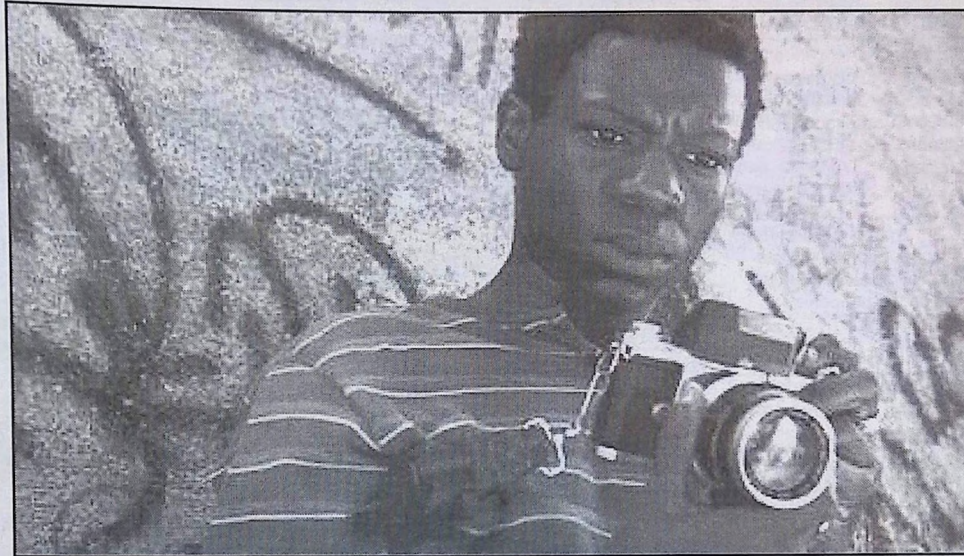
A deeper problem is that overall the viewer is expected to sympathise with these brawling gangs, racist warts and all. The final message of the film, as the skyline of New York is built up (to a renewed Twin Towers) against a shot of the graves of the gang leaders, is that the city is built on these characters and its toughness will triumph.

But these rioters were not the best that New York had to offer back in 1863. Missing from this film is any portrayal of the great number of socialists and radicals who combined fighting class issues with building an anti-sectarian, emancipationist working class organisations that brought about massive strikes for the eight-hour day only nine years later.

by CONOR KOSTICK

film

CITY OF VIOLENCE AND DESPAIR



■ Alexandre Rodrigues in *Fernando Meirelles City of God*.

by
ROGER COX

CITY OF God is a powerful film that every reader of Socialist Worker should make an effort to see.

It is a Brazilian film with subtitles, but don't let that put you off.

The "City of God" is the name of a run-down slum, called a

favela, on the edges of the giant Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro.

The film explores the lives of people who had to live there through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Portrayed

The film techniques echo those of Hollywood movies from *Goodfellas* to *Pulp Fiction* and it draws on documentary traditions too.

Many of the film's cast are not professional actors but people who live in the conditions portrayed.

The film has a sharp tempo and keeps you focused as the stories bring together the hopes and despair of the people in the favela.

Trapped in desperate poverty, their only ways forward are to find a job to escape the slum or, as most young men do, join a drugs gang.

The main story is centred on two young men.

One wants to be a photographer. The other becomes the violent gang leader.

The film records the almost endless violence that marks life in the city.

In one instance, a child shoots all the people in a brothel dead, following a raid to relieve the clients of their money.

Murders

The raid on the brothel was the child's idea, but his older

brother and his gang forced him to be the lookout instead of joining the raid.

The murders are his revenge for that.

Following this the child grows to become the principal gang leader in the city.

Side by side with the bloodletting are the hopes and expectations of the young people in the slum.

Drama

It is the balancing of these two sides of the city that drives the film along.

I remember another Brazilian film made in the 1980s set in the favela of Santa Marta.

It has none of the drama, pace and impact of *City of God*.

It does show, though, the vast range of popular movements that held life together in the slums, from work parties and different religions, to samba groups.

It shows a collective response to the problems people faced.

This side of life is not shown in *City of God*. People's hopes in Brazil today are high with the election of the Workers Party's Lula as president.

I hope that the picture *City of God* so powerfully reflects is only a partial truth, and that there are movements in the favelas ready to fight for another world.

But don't miss this wonderful film.

book

When the Left split from the 1930s IRA

by DAVID LYNCH

BRIAN Hanley's new study of the IRA from 1926 until 1936 is a detailed account of this fascinating period.

This was the decade when major sections of the IRA took up a left-wing political agenda.

Hanley's book investigates aspects of the internal life of the IRA during the period.

He provides interesting detail on the class background of the IRA membership.

The officer class of the IRA in 1933 was much more likely to come from the labouring class than the period from 1919-23.

The IRA itself said that it was "almost solely composed of workers and peasants".

The IRA in the 1930's attracted workers who had

become disillusioned with the new Irish state and who were attracted by the socialistic rhetoric used by the IRA in the pages of *An Phoblacht*.

"The IRA was made up largely of those who did not believe they had benefited from the revolution from 1917-21 and who sensed that the revolution was unfinished," as Hanley writes.

Friction

But as the IRA began to win more left wing elements into its ranks, the friction between the 'militarist' and the left wing began to grow.

The Chief of Staff of the IRA during this period, Moss Twomey, was not a socialist but for a time he did not mind the activities of left-wing members such as Peadar O'Donnell and George Gilmore.

Twomey understood that because of the radicalisation caused by the Great Depres-

sion and the rapid rise of the Blueshirts in Ireland the IRA would have to get a more radical image.

But while these two wings of the organisation existed together for a number of years, tensions were growing.

O'Donnell and Gilmore eventually became convinced that an organisation based around a secret army, was never going to achieve what they wanted, a 'Workers' Republic'.

They split from the IRA in 1934 and about 200 of their supporters met in Athlone to launch the Republican Congress.

The Republican Congress gathered together socialists, trade unionists and the left in the IRA. It was a campaigning organisation that attracted huge support.

Clashes with the conservative wing of the IRA grew.

At the 1934 Bodenstown commemorations "The Congress contingent, including a

number of Protestant socialists from Belfast, were attacked on the orders of the IRA leadership and their banners destroyed."

Tragedy

The Republican Congress was right to believe that the Workers' Republic could only be won through an open and democratic socialist party, rather than in conspiratorial private armies.

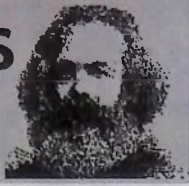
The tragedy was they split around the issue of how far to push socialist politics if it meant a break from the grass-roots of Fianna Fail.

Hanley's book is a valuable contribution to the history of the IRA and the interaction between socialist and republican politics in Ireland.

■ *The IRA 1926-36*, by Brian Hanley, Four Courts Press €24.95.

Marxist Forums

Big ideas discussed
in informal settings



Ballyfermot:

Venezuela to Iraq: The Politics of Oil, Tuesday February 4th, 8.00pm, Ruby Finnigans, Lwr Ballyfermot

Ballymun:

Imperialism, Globalisation and War, Tuesday February 4th, 7.30pm, Ballymun Community Arts Factory, 304 Balcurris Road.

Belfast Central:

Details to be announced

Belfast South:

Details to be announced

Belfast West:

Details to be announced

Blanchardstown:

Not in My Name (video showing and discussion) Wednesday January 29th, 8.00pm Castleknock Community Centre, Laurel Lodge SC

Bray:

Terror from the skies: The History of Bombing, Tuesday February 4th, 8.00pm Lenihans Bar. Speaker: Dave Lordan

Cork:

Women's Liberation; Why has it not been won?

Wednesday January 29th, 8.00pm, An Spailpin Fanach, Speaker Goretti Horgan

Dublin Central:

Marx, the first anti capitalist, Wednesday January 29th, 8.00pm Vietnames Centre, Hardwicke St

Dublin South City:

Is the US planning a coup in Venezuela? Thursday January 30th, 8.00pm, Beanery Cafe, Burgh Quay

Dundrum:

1918: When revolution ended WWI. Monday February 3rd, 8.00pm, Dun-

drum Family Recreation Centre. Speaker: Denis Redfern.

Dun Laoghaire:

The grand strategy of the American Empire, Tuesday January 28th, 8.00pm Farrell's Pub. Speaker: Kieran Allen

Fairview:

War and Imperialism, Tuesday January 28th, 8.00pm Smyth's Pub Fairview

Galway:

Venezuela to Iraq, The Politics of Oil Wednesday Jan 29th, 8.00pm, Richardsons Pub (Upstairs) Eyre Square

Rathmines:

The politics of oil. Wednesday Wednesday 29th, 8.00pm, O'Connell's Pub, Portobello. Speaker:

Donal Mac Fhearraigh

Rialto:

The politics of oil. Wednesday Jan 29th 8.00pm, St Andrews Resource Centre, SCR. Speaker: Donal Mac Fhearraigh

Trinity College Dublin:

The Grand Strategy of the American Empire Thursday January 23rd, Arts Block

3081

Tallaght:

The grand strategy of the American Empire, Wednesday February 5th, 8.00pm, Jobstown Community Centre. Speaker: Brid Smith

Waterford:

Israel - America's Watchdog in the Middle East- Thursday Feb 6th 8pm in the Old Rogue, Michael Street

College Teach-Ins on the War

Coláiste Dhulaigh, Coolock:

Tuesday January 28th, 4pm Student Union Room: "Media, Propaganda and War" and video showing of Noam Chomsky's "Manufacturing Consent"

DCU:

Wednesday February 5th, Details to be announced

NCAD:

Tuesday February 4th, 6pm-9pm, Speakers: Colin Coulter, Richard Boyd Barrett, Deirdre De Burca, Large Lecture Hall (above Library)

TCD:

Thursday January 30th, 5pm-8pm Arts Block

UCD:

Thursday 30th January, 5pm-8pm, Theatre M



WHERE WE STAND

Capitalism 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

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy. To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based on 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.

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Blair government. Like the 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!

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. We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc. We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

Anti War Public Meetings

Artane:

Wednesday February 5th, 8.00pm St Anthony's Hall Contarf

Ballyfermot:

Tuesday January 28th, 8.00pm Ballyfermot Civic Centre, Speakers: Labour Party speaker; Aingus O Snodaigh (SF); Brid Smith (SWP);

Ballymun:

Thursday January 30th, 7.30pm Axis Centre, Speakers: Proinsias De Rossa (Lab); Dessie Ellis (SF); Kevin Wingfield (SWP); Fr Peter McVerry

Bray:

Wednesday January 29th, 8.00pm Parish Centre, Speakers: Labour Party speaker; Deirdre de Burca (Green Party); Catherine Kennedy (SWP);

Dublin South City:

Tuesday January 28th, 8.00pm Liberty Hall (Social Hall)

Dundrum:

Wednesday January 29th, 8.00pm Dundrum Family Recreation Centre, Speakers: Michael McLoughlin (Lab); Eamon Ryan (Green Party); Deirdre Cronin (SWP); Sinn Fein speaker

Health Workers Against the War:

Thursday January 30th, 6.00pm William Stoke Medical Centre, Trinity School, St James Hospital Dublin

Maynooth:

Thursday January 30th, 8.00pm Glen Roul, Speakers: MaryLou McDonald (Sinn Fein), Emmet Stagg (Labour Party), Colin Coulter (Dept. Sociology, Maynooth), Gladstone Ogbonna (Socialist Workers Party)

Phibsboro:

Wednesday February 5th, Speakers from Labour, SF and SWP Details to be confirmed

Rathmines:

Tuesday January 28th, 8.00pm Lower Deck Portobello, Speakers to be announced

Rialto:

Monday February 3rd, 8.00pm Parish Centre, Speakers: Aengus O Snodaigh (Sinn Fein); Kristina McElroy (Green Party); Brid Smith (SWP)

Tallaght:

Thursday January 30th, 8.00pm Abberley Court, Speakers: Sean Crowe (SF); Jessie Jones (SWP); Labour Party speaker

To contact the Irish Anti War Movement in your area phone 086-6329511

Fill in this form and send it to:
PO Box 1648 Dublin 8

Join the Socialists

Name

Email

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TU/college/school

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PHONE REPORTS ABOUT STRIKES/LOCAL CAMPAIGNS/PROTESTS

PARTNERSHIP BRINGS PAY CUTS

The proposed new social partnership deal is a major victory for the bosses organisation IBEC.

They went into negotiations looking for a pay freeze and a system of compulsory arbitration to remove workers rights to take industrial action. They won on both counts.

PAY

The new deal means pay cuts for thousands of workers. Ireland's inflation rate for 2003 is hovering around 6 percent, according to official figures.

But even this under-estimates the real scale of price rises because it does not fully take account of house prices or rent increases.

Any pay deal that does not match this rate of inflation is a pay cut.

Yet this is exactly what the proposed partnership deal does. In the public sector, the bosses got their full demand for a six month's pay freeze.

Throughout the whole of 2003, there will now be no pay rise for workers.

In the private sector, workers get a number of *phased* increases. But on an annualised basis, these amount to 3.5% for 2003.

This again is way below the rate of inflation. But two other fac-

tors make it even worse.

First, the employers 'inability to pay' clause has been strengthened. They now have a get out from even the miserly increases if they can show 'loss of competitiveness'.

This is a huge loop hole because pay rise in other EU countries are lower - precisely because the rate of inflation is lower. So virtually any firm could claim it is losing 'competitiveness'.

Second, there is no floor payment for the lower paid. Percentage pay rise discriminate against the low paid - so, in the past, there has been a flat rate pay rise given as a floor. This has now been removed.

COMPULSORY ARBITRATION

Social partnership agreements already limit workers ability to take industrial action.

But the proposed new deal takes this pattern a good deal further.

From now on, the Labour Court will be given new mandatory powers to decide on inability to pay claims, breaches of the new deal and disputes over implementation of change and flexibility.

If an employer claim they cannot pay the deal because they

are losing 'competitiveness' workers can do absolutely nothing - they must let the Labour Court decide.

Similarly nurses will be banned from organising work to rules over hospital overcrowding because the Labour Court will adjudicate on 'flexibility.'

All of this amounts to a new system of compulsory arbitration and increasingly state controlled unions.

THE BENCHMARKING CON

Pay awards granted under benchmarking are to be used to sweeten this bitter pill.

These rises were granted under the last agreement - and were supposed to be voted on before a new partnership deal.

But in deliberate piece of manipulation, union leaders are trying to push the votes both benchmarking and a new partnership deal together.

Benchmarking is a system which removes traditional relativity payments. These were often used by public sector workers to win increases beyond the minimal partnership deals.

The new benchmarking awards represent a different system because they have to be paid by tough productivity improvements.

The employers are on the war path and are demanding major changes under the guise of 'modernisation'.

They want sanctions for 'under-performance', longer opening hours in local government, and greater 'flexibility.'

But even then the benchmarking awards are being delayed. Instead of full payment by the end of 2003 which is what the ICTU demanded - they will not finally be granted until 2005.

THE COVER

The ICTU leaders want to sell this rotten deal because they are so dug into a cosy consensus with the employers.

To do this they try to focus attention off pay and onto other 'social gains' in the deal.

They never explain why trade union members who pay their union dues have to be penalised in order to bring mild reforms to society at large.

But the most of the gains they trumpet are illusionary.

Housing: ICTU leader David Begg has claimed that the greatest benefit is the promise of 10,000 more social houses.

But he failed to see that the government is already falling back on its own commitments to social housing under the national Development Plan.

The 'new' promises are mainly a re-hash of the old one.

Union Recognition: The union leaders claim they have won on union recognition. But the main change is that individual cases can be referred to the Labour Court more quickly. There is no right granted to bargain.

Redundancy Payments. There are some improvements on the legal minimum payments here.

But 60 percent of these payments come from the taxpayers anyway.

Employers will use the change to try to stick all redundancy payments to the legal minimum rather than granting the five or six weeks payments that were once customary.

RANK AND FILE ORGANISE TO SAY NO

Plans are afoot to build a powerful campaign among rank and file trade unionists to win a NO vote.

You can help in this campaign by phoning the SWP Industrial Desk on 01 8722682 and asking for leaflets and posters from the campaign outlining the NO case.

At your union meeting insist that there is a speaker from both the NO camp alongside officials who will advocate a YES vote.

Anger at big hikes in bin charges

ANTI BIN tax campaigners have been outraged by massive hikes in bin charges.

Councils across the country have raised rates by large amounts.

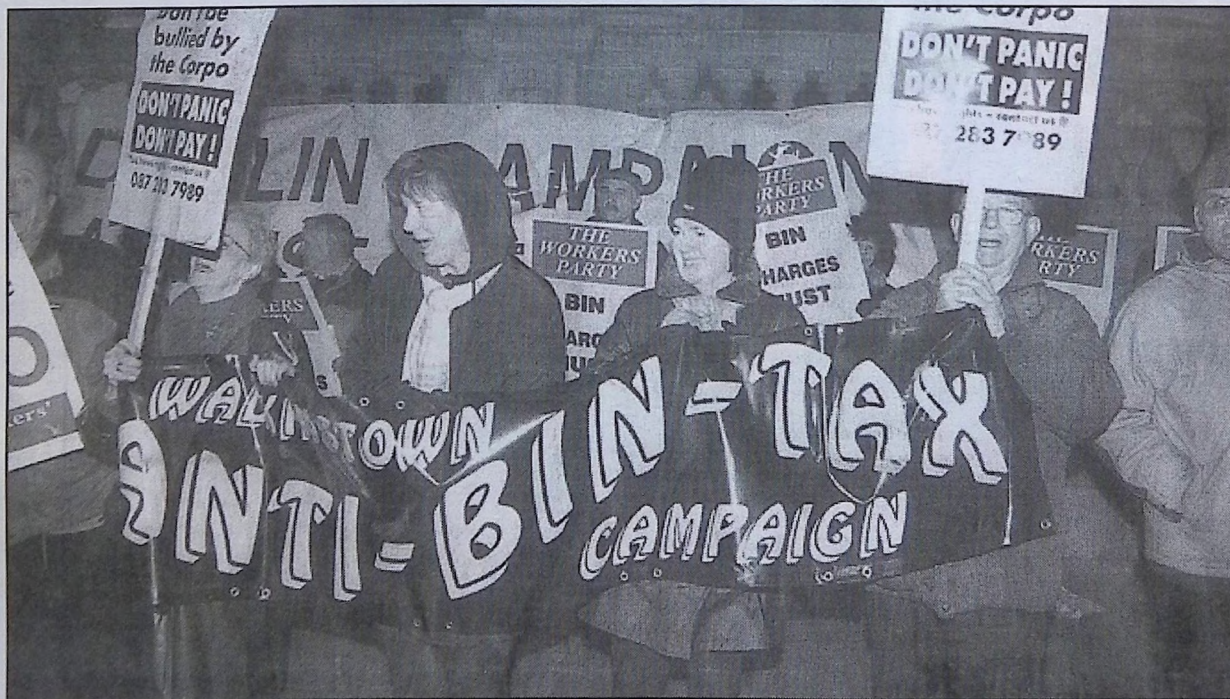
In county Waterford weekly bin charges will rise from €6 a week to €7.50 while in Galway city they have jumped to €320 a year, an increase of €70.

Managers

In Dublin City Council after protracted discussions and the threat of abolition, councillors voted an increase in the domestic bin charge.

Householders will now be asked to pay €154 for a large wheelie bin and €90 for a small one.

The manager of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown county council has proposed a 65% increase on charges in the county which would raise the tax to €330 per year.



Protestors demonstrate outside Dublin City Council meeting in January

Bin tax protesters picketed Dun Laoghaire Rathdown's first estimates meeting where a proposal for a 65 percent hike in the bin tax was discussed.

One protester said "I never paid the bin tax and I never will. Its unjust and unfair to expect people like me to fork out more and

more money for things that should be covered by all the money I've paid in tax."

The councillors deferred a decision on the increase.

A large protest greeted took place outside a meeting of the Dublin city council which finally agreed to increase charges.

Dermot Lacey broke the Labour Party whip and voted for them and was subsequently expelled from the Labour group on the council.

Sixty per cent of householders in the area are refusing to pay the tax and this decision has strengthened the resolve to maintain the campaign of mass

non payment.

According to Brid Smith, "The campaign is strong and well organised and we will resist any threats by the council to intimidate people into paying."

The Waterford Trades Council has convened a meeting of shop stew-

ards and residents associations to discuss a joint campaign against the charges.

Dick Roche, the President of the WCTU said, "We are encouraging householders to refuse to put tags on their bins and we are asking council workers to collect the bins"

GREENS ARE WRONG ON CHARGES

The Green Party have supported the increases in the bin tax because they claim it is a green tax that ensures the "polluter pays".

This is not true.

The main polluters are big business but they have not been forced to pay the real costs of their polluting habits

Much household waste is caused by unnecessary packaging that consumers have no control over

Recycling facilities are severely underdeveloped.

Ordinary people are denied the chance to recycle significant elements of their waste.

PROTEST ACTION GROWS

Socialist Worker

inside

February 15th: Global Day of Protests Against Bush & Blair's War page 6-7

Eminem: Brat or Bard?—page 3

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Blair declares war on fire fighters

FOUR AND a half thousand job losses. Over 150 fire stations to close. Less fire cover at the times people are most likely to be killed by fires. Intolerable working hours and a broken trade union.

That is what the government is demanding firefighters accept after their union has bent over backwards to seek compromise over their pay claim.

The responsibility for renewed strikes by 52,000 firefighters and control room staff lies squarely with New Labour.

Tony Blair has declared war on the FBU.

Despite the FBU leadership's readiness to compromise and seek

negotiation over confrontation, against the wishes of many union activists, Blair is determined to make an example out of the firefighters.

The firefighters are once again planning further 48 hour strikes at the end of the month.

The stakes are now higher than ever.

According to Brian Stanfield, FBU Regional Committee member, "This is not only a fight for decent pay - this is a fight for a fire service".

The firefighters are supposed to accept horrific condition contained in the Bain Report.

But their only reward for accepting these conditions will be a 4 percent pay increase this year.

There would be a further 7 percent in November, but only for some firefighters deemed to have acquired extra skills.

According to FBU

N.Ireland Regional Secretary, Tony Maguire, the employer's paper is "wholly unacceptable".

He told *Socialist Worker* that if the FBU accepted the plans "It would be nothing short of turkeys voting for Christmas".

Accused

Blair has accused the FBU of putting public safety at risk by striking.

But this is pure hypocrisy. It is the government's "modernisation" agenda that will undoubtedly put more lives at risk. I

Blair says he has no money to pay the firefighters and other claims from public sector workers. But he is pumping millions into a deeply unpopular war to murder and maim the people of Iraq.

The time for compromise with this government is over. Blair has taken previous indeci-

sion as a sign of weakness.

The FBU should start to escalate their strike and call for solidarity action from other public sector workers.

They should ask them to organise walk-outs from buildings where there is no proper fire-cover.

They should also link their pay claim to opposition to war.

Blair should be told that he will not get away with introducing Emergency laws to ban the strikes.

Instead the FBU should be to the fore in joining the February 15th demonstration in Belfast against the war.

The stage is set for massive conflict throughout Northern Ireland and Britain.

This is why *Socialist Worker* appeals to all its readers to go all out to raise support for the firefighters and oppose Bush and Blair's war.



The case for the firefighters: Turn to page four