

Socialist Worker

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inside:

CHILE 1973:
THE OTHER
9/11 -PAGE 8

WTO AND THE
AIDS DRUGS
CARVE-UP
-PAGE 2

IT'S BLOWBACK
TIME FOR BUSH -PAGE 5

END THE OCCUPATION

Global Day of Action

DEMONSTRATION

Saturday Sept 27th

Dublin: Parnell

Square, 2pm

Belfast: Art

College,

2pm



NO IRISH TROOPS FOR IRAQ

THE US and British occupation of Iraq is facing growing resistance.

Ten US/UK soldiers a day are being injured in action and two to three killed.

There is huge discontent among the troops. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld had to cancel a victory speech in Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit – because he was too frightened of his own troops!

'I don't give a damn about Rumsfeld. All I give a damn about is getting home' is how one soldier, Rue Gretton, summed up

the mood.

US commanders want to increase the occupation forces by 60,000. Bush is desperate to get other countries to supply troops and pay for the occupation.

The US is putting enormous pressure on governments that need its favour, to supply troops.

Countries like Turkey, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have indicated they will supply troops provided they are covered by the fig leaf of a UN resolution.

So far, France and Ger-

many have resisted giving this sanction. However, they are also afraid of being left out in the cold from the carve up Iraq's oil interests. They are playing hardball to get concessions from the US.

Concessions

Russia has already said it will commit troops if the UN passes a resolution. Baghdad owes Moscow about \$8 billion in debt and Putin will want concessions on this before he moves.

According to US government insider Kenneth

Adelman, Bush thinks he can get UN help largely on US terms. "They had it in their heads that the UN would take over and run the whole thing," he said in early September. "But we can have it both ways. We can have a UN mandate, and American and British military control."

A UN mandate would not make the occupation any less unpopular with the Iraqi people.

Iraqis have no reason to thank the UN. Over one million people, 600,000 of them children, died because of UN sanctions

on the country throughout the 1990s.

UN troops would only be freeing up the US army to threaten more wars against Iran, North Korea, Cuba, Syria and other states.

Co-operation

During the US/UK invasion of Iraq the Irish government gave full co-operation to the US military by refuelling war planes at Shannon and allowing military over flights of Irish airspace.

They are now preparing the ground to send Irish

troops to Iraq under cover of a UN mandate. General Gerry McMahon, the former Chief of Staff of the Irish army has even said that deploying troops would involve 'minimum risk and cost' and would 'ensure that Ireland would remain a prime location for US investment.'

We have to make sure that they do not get their way.

The first step is to build for the biggest possible protests in Dublin and Belfast on September 27 against the barbarous occupation of Iraq.

O'Leary's wedding bash

THE Irish royalty are at it again – showing off at society weddings.

Michael O'Leary's wedding gave yet another glimmer of how this country is run. In attendance were tribunal stars, PJ Mara and Donnie Cassidy.

Also present was, of course, Harney and McCreavy.

Harney was accompanied by her husband Brian Geoghan, former head of the bosses organisation IBEC and now the head of the state training agency FAS.

Then was that neutral economics academic, Sean Barrett, who once argued against funding the DART – because it was public transport.

And, not to mention his bride, Ms Annita Farrell. Before she got on the altar, she signed away her right to Mr O'Leary's 500 million fortune.

True love indeed.

Irish workers produce more

Irish workers are the third most productive workers in the world behind the US and Belgium.

Output per worker has risen to \$52,496 in 2002.

But IBEC still wants to keep wage rises below inflation.

And far from workers getting benchmarking rises for free, some are even being presented with demands to come in to work half and hour early—to be even more productive and flexible.

Firms' patents will still mean more than AIDS patients

Poor will lose out in new AIDS drugs deal

“POOR PEOPLE suffering from AIDS will now get cheap life-saving drugs.”

That was the myth pushed out this week by the giant pharmaceutical companies and the US and British governments.

In fact the deal hammered out in the run-up to this month's World Trade Organisation meeting in Cancun, Mexico, will make matters worse in some respects.

“Today's deal was designed to offer comfort to the US and the Western pharmaceutical industry,” said Ellen ‘t Hoen of Medecins Sans Frontieres.

“Unfortunately, it offers little comfort for poor patients. Global patent rules will continue to drive up the price of medicines.”

It has thrown up new legal, economic, and political obstacles to the production and export of copies of expensive medicines.

As part of an agreement allowing African countries to import cheaper drugs, the US made other poor countries agree that they would not break patent laws to develop their own drug industries.

Terrified

This will reduce the range of cheap drugs available to African and other countries.

The big drug firms are terrified of what could happen if companies in, say, India or Brazil could break patents.

This could mean a challenge to the pharmaceutical companies in those countries or even break into the super-profitable Western markets.

Over 40 percent of drug sales are in the US and more than 60 percent of profits come from that market.

Drug company statements during the past year have been full of concerns that competitors might produce cheap copies of the anti-ulcer, anti-depressant and antibiotic drugs.

The giant drug firms are the enemy of people in Africa and they are enemies of ordinary people in the West as well.

“The drug companies are not interested in lesser developing



■ AIDS campaigners in Uganda earlier this year

countries,” says Michael Bailey from Oxfam's policy department. “The fight all along has been about those developing countries that are potentially significant markets and competitors to the drug companies.”

Even under the new deal, life-saving drugs will remain too expensive for most African countries.

Debt and exploitation also mean they do not have the health infrastructure to use them in the most effective way.

Issues

The US government has been blocking a deal over AIDS drugs for Africa since December last year.

During the eight months of delay more than two million Africans have died from AIDS.

These issues, and many others, will mean up to 20,000 people are expected to demonstrate at the WTO summit in Cancun, according to protest organisers.

www.foodfirst.org/wto/

On the agenda at the WTO

AT THE WTO ministers will be present from more than 150 countries.

But the big players are from the US, European Union (EU), Japan and Canada.

If they agree, very few countries will dare to oppose them for fear of losing crucial trade and investment deals. The Irish gov-

ernment, working through the EU, has pressed to get four new issues on the agenda, despite opposition from over 60 Third World countries.

These are:

■ **Investment Agreement:** designed to stop governments regulating foreign investors and curbing multinationals in mining, manufacturing, fish-

eries and agriculture.

■ **Competition Policy Agreement:** requires poorer countries to develop “competition” regimes to ensure market access for Western multinational companies.

■ **Transparency in Government Procurement Agreement:** requires countries to publish details of government procurement contracts.

It's seen as a first step towards requiring governments not to “discriminate” against multinationals when purchasing goods.

■ **Trade facilitation:** requires countries to improve the efficiency of their customs procedures so that Western exports cannot be blocked by “unnecessary” health and safety rules.

Patients on hunger strike

PATIENTS at Dublin's James Connolly Memorial Hospital went on hunger strike recently to protest at the terrible conditions they have to put up with due to the construction of a new unit.

To express their anger at being treated as if they were in a ‘Victorian workhouse’, the patients, suffering from the dust and noise of the construction refused to eat their breakfasts.

The Eastern Regional Health Authority has since agreed to halt the construction until the patients have been moved to the new premises assigned to them.

Illegal dump on Garda land

OVER 100,000 tons of waste has been discovered in an illegal dump owned by Garda Ritche Reddin and his brother Paddy in North Wicklow.

Wicklow County Council was informed about the issue six years ago but nothing happened until this year.

The brothers are also listed as directors of a waste company, Alert Waste Re-Cycling.

ESB prices

ESB prices have risen faster than most electricity prices rise in the EU.

They are due to go up another 5 percent in January following a previous 13 percent hike sanctioned last autumn.

And prices are due to rise even further. According to the ESB, they are at a ‘turning point for deregulated Europe. Prices are generally converging towards the higher European norm’.

To translate: they have to increase prices in order to attract the fat cats who are waiting for privatisation.

Spooks, spies and ‘counter-terrorism’

DAVID KAY heads the Iraq Survey Group, which will soon produce another report on weapons of mass destruction.

Kay's background shows how “impartial” that report will be.

Under President Reagan, Kay was a chief scientist for the Pentagon,

as well as serving as a section chief for the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Administration of the UN) from 1983 until 1991.

After the first Gulf War in 1991, the US used its influence to get Kay made chief nuclear inspector for the United Nations Special Commission (Unscm) on Iraq.

Removed

He was removed from the job as evidence mounted that he was acting as a US spy.

He sent military information about Iraq straight to the US authorities rather than going through the UN.

From 1993 until recently Kay was also vice-president of Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), a company with extremely close ties to the Bush administration.

Last year Bush commissioned SAIC to construct a replica of a mobile WMD laboratory of the sort allegedly used by Saddam Hussein, supposedly for training teams searching for WMDs in Iraq.

During the last 18 months SAIC has received US government contracts worth \$1.6 billion.

Much of the work is connected to the Star Wars programme and electronic measures to “counter terrorism”.

Several SAIC employees were named as members of the Iraqi Reconstruction and Development Council earlier this year.

Exiles

The council is an organisation of Iraqi exiles who have now been sent back to aid the US occupation.

SAIC is now involved in the construction and operation of a US propaganda radio station at Umm Qasr.

This is intended to be part of a network including a nationwide propaganda television channel and an “independent” propaganda newspaper.

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An insult to victims of child abuse

EDUCATION Minister Noel Dempsey has an 'empathy deficit' when it comes to dealing with victims of child abuse, says Christine Buckley, a survivor of the horrific Gold-bridge institution.

So does the rest of his nasty right wing government.

The resignation of Justice Laffoy shows that the Irish state and clerical authorities were colluding over plans to obstruct her commission.

Several victims of abuse had informed the Department of Education about their experiences in Christian Brothers schools but nothing was done..

Justice Laffoy claims that 'she was worn out' looking for co-operation from the Department on these cases. They continually delayed sending her papers. Even before she resigned she said, 'It beggars belief where we are today. We are 18 months down the road and the Department is still not dealing directly with requests from this commission'.

Remember this is the same Department of Education which in the dying days of the last government did a deal with the Church authorities that for a mere £127 million they would be indemnified by the state against all claims from their victims.

There was no talk of delay when it came to saving the property of the Catholic Church from legal claims!

The former Education Minister Michael Woods, who made this deal, had the cheek to later

say that he would have to abide by the Pope's teaching about same sex marriages.

If he had shown half the zeal in dealing with clerical child sex abusers than pontificating about gay people, we might have had a slightly better country.

The Catholic Church has behaved exactly like other corrupt institutions and individuals who have had to face tribunals. They hired expensive barristers and slowed the whole process down by lengthy cross-examination.

The Christian Brothers are still taking an action at the High Court to prevent the Laffoy Commission naming members of their order who are deceased

Distressed

One victim, Michael described, the treatment meted out to him by the Catholic Church at the tribunal. Instead of being four hours in the witness box as he expected, he was kept for four days.

The man he accused gave evidence and made 'a cod of the whole thing, denying that he knew me'. Afterwards he was so distressed that 'if my wife hadn't been in the car with me, I'm afraid I would have killed myself'.

The Catholic hierarchy regularly makes 'expressions of concern' for what happened. Bertie Ahern has also made a public apology.

However, the main interest of the Church and the state lies in protecting the property of the Bishops and keeping their hold over our schools and hospitals.

In secret and closed networks, state officials work with clerical authorities to maintain their power base in Irish soci-

ety.

After the Portuguese revolution in 1974, a cry went up for 'sanieamento' - a cleaning out of all the old fascist officials who terrorised the population.

For all the talk of modernisation, no such cleaning ever occurred in Ireland. Instead, the ruling class developed a technique of sending all charges of corruption, child abuse and bribery to tribunals.

They knew that they had the money to play legal games with these tribunals for years - and none of their members need to suffer.

The situation has become so farcical that even two judges, Flood and Laffoy, have lost patience with the tribunals they were chairing.

The ruling class got away with this farce because major organisations like the unions refused to act on the prompting of their members for mass demonstrations to demand the



■ Noel Dempsey: Covering up for the Church

jailing of the crooks that ran this country for decades.

Casual

The poor, who get on the

wrong side of the law, get hasty appearances at a District Court and then are ordered to prison, sometimes in the most casual of fashions.

The rich and the clerical

child abusers are protected with tribunals that last for years and are obstructed by powerful ruling class networks.

This sick society needs changing.

GET THIS BULLY OUT

THE Irish Daily Star recently designed a logo with the slogan 'no to police state' underneath a picture of the reviled PD Minister for Justice Michael McDowell.

McDowell is certainly waging a war on civil rights. He has issued deportation orders against parents of Irish children who are asylum seekers. Even the right wing judges on the Supreme Court said that families should not be broken up unless there are "grave and substantial reasons associated with the common good."

Instead of granting an amnesty, McDowell has written to hundreds of families with Irish-born children asking them to give reasons within 15 days why they should not be deported.

Disgracefully he is denying those families legal

assistance in offering such reasons.

Another Big Brother scenario has arisen with McDowell's Criminal Justice Bill (2003). This will increase the time that a suspect can be held in custody from 12 to 24 hours - plus any time the suspect is asleep.

Detention

The experience of detention in Northern Ireland shows that the longer the detention period, the greater the potential for unnecessary use of force or brutality.

The same bill will allow senior Garda to issue a search warrant. The Bill also allows for the creation of a DNA database and gives Garda the power to use 'reasonable force' when taking samples.

While DNA testing has the potential to prove innocence and prevent miscarriages of justice, if samples

were contaminated, DNA evidence could easily be used to sway juries to unwarranted convictions.

The fact that the Garda do abuse their powers is well established, from the Nicky Kelly case to the recent revelations concerning Abbeylara and Donegal. Some 6 million has been paid to some 70 victims of Garda assault and wrongful arrest over the past five years.

This is why the ICCL and other civil liberties organisation are opposed to the proposed database, while not against the use of the technology in principle.

Gossip

McDowell is also proposing up to five years jail sentence for a member of the Garda who gives information to the press.

The real concern about this proposal is not that it would be used to stop celebrity gossip reaching



■ Michael McDowell: 'I'll throw the book at you'

the press, but that it would prevent those Garda wanting to speak out against injustice from coming forward.

This is why the National Union of Journalists are opposed to a measure that they describe as seeking to "muzzle" members of the force.

McDowell is rapidly becoming a comic figure, and as the cry of civil liberty is raised from even conservative ranks, it helps spearhead the way to getting rid of him and all his draconian legislation.

END THE OCCUPATIONS OF IRAQ & PALESTINE US MILITARY OUT OF SHANNON DEMONSTRATE

* DUBLIN: Saturday 27th September, Assemble: Garden of Remembrance Parnell Square 2pm

* BELFAST: Saturday 27th September, Assemble: Art College 2pm

comment



Eamonn McCann

Why honour a Nazi collaborator?

Just because Kevin Myers (*Irish Times*), Ellis O'Hanlon (*Sunday Indo*) and Henry McDonald (*Observer*) attack something doesn't mean sensible people have to defend it.

Take Sinn Fein's annual commemoration of ex-IRA chief of staff Sean Russell at Fairview Park in Dublin last month.

The usual media suspects—rabid supporters of political violence when it suits them, including the killing of innocent civilians—wound themselves up to the peak of high dudgeon to pour down vilification on all concerned.

Russell was a Nazi collaborator who travelled to Berlin during World War Two to try to persuade Hitler to help the IRA, they pointed out. He was on his way back to Ireland with plans to link up with Nazi agents and foment revolt in the North when he died from natural causes and was buried at sea.

How could people who advertise themselves as progressive gather reverently to mark the death of such a man?

Even though it's reactionary wretches who are doing the asking, this is a good question.

Why, indeed, did Brian Keenan, Marylou McDonald and Ciaran Mac Anraoi step forward in turn to deliver eulogies to a Nazi collaborator?

An *Phoblacht* described Brian Keenan's speech as "the main oration" and quoted him: "I don't know what was in the depth of Sean Russell's thinking down the years, but I am sure he was never far from Pearse's own position, who said, 'as a patriot, preferring death to slavery, I know no other way'... There are things worse than bloodshed, and slavery is one of them. We are not and will not be slaves."

A moment's thought about the millions enslaved by Nazism puts the repulsiveness and sheer stupidity of this remark into perspective.

So what aspect of Irish Republicanism prompted Keenan to make it?

Watchword

We can take it that Keenan is in no way soft on Nazism. But we can take it, too, that, generally speaking, he holds to the old Republican adage, "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity"—the exact sentiment which sent Russell on his mission to Berlin: before setting out, in October 1939, he'd spelt it out plainly: "England's difficulty, Ireland's opportunity" has ever been the watchword of the Gael."

For Russell, driving the Brits out of Ireland took precedence over everything else. No consideration of class differences within Ireland, nor of solidarity with persecuted peoples elsewhere, no thought of the implications for the 4,500 Jewish people living in Ireland, nothing could be allowed to cloud the shining vision of an Ireland freed of British rule. In this perspective, the question of what force it would be proper to ally with was secondary.

Russell's willingness to collaborate with Nazis, then, did not stem from a fondness for Nazi ideas but from the intensity and exclusiveness of his Nationalism.

The Nazis were at war with Britain—and so was the IRA. Ideological affinity didn't come into it. If Hitler would help get the Brits out of Ireland, it would make no sense not to avail of that help...

Myers etc. suggest that the Russell commemoration exposed Sinn Feiners today as, if not sympathetic to Nazism, at least well-disposed to Russell's collaboration with Nazism.

But what the Fairview Park event actually revealed is simply that Sinn Fein hasn't broken with the notion that the "national cause" takes precedence over everything else.

The most important practical application of this notion in 2003 came not at Fairview Park but in Hillsborough Castle in April when the SF leadership glad-handed the leader of US imperialism even as his bombers revved up for the Iraq runs: the interests of Irish freedom, now deemed to be enclosed within the Belfast Agreement, took precedence over all else. If staying close to George Bush would advance the Nationalist cause, opposition to Bush's imperialism had to be put in abeyance.

Herein lies the link between the perspective of the Republican Movement in Russell's time and the politics of Sinn Fein today.

The scandal of poverty wages

AS THE Unionist Party continues to tear itself apart and in the process hold up the long-overdue Assembly elections, working people in the North continue to live on poverty wages.

New government figures show that low-paid Northern workers are paid considerably less than even the lowest paid in the poorest British regions.

Mainstream press reporting of the government's New Earnings Survey has concentrated on the "headline" figures that show average annual earnings in Northern Ireland ahead of Wales and the North East of England.

But average earnings are always deceptive, especially in a region with huge levels of inequality.

The reality why this average is so high is because those who are low paid are VERY low paid and those in 'professional' and 'managerial' jobs are very well paid indeed.

So, 38 percent of manual workers in Northern Ireland are earning under £250 a week or £13,000 a year.

Three quarters of all manual workers are earning under £350 a week or £18,200 a year.



■ Trimble and Donaldson: Like the other Assembly politicians they have nothing to say on low pay



Meanwhile, one in ten manual workers earns less than £180 a week for an average 42.5 hour week.

This contrasts sharply with the pay of non-manual workers.

Explains

This group of workers includes low-paid civil servants, clerical workers, youth workers and so on, which explains why 20 percent of non-manual workers earn under £250 a week.

But on the other end, 40 percent of non-manual earn more than £450 a week, or

£23,400 a year - considerably more than the NI average.

In fact, 10 percent of non-manual workers earn more than £707 a week or £37,000 a year.

And even these figures don't actually include the real rich - they only include employees in employment, not the self-employed, the business men and women who we see driving around in BMWs and Mercs that cost more than £40,000 each.

Nor do they include the desperately poor - they only include full-time

employees on adult rates. Part-time employees who are often lone parents at the mercy of their employers and forced to 'do the double' are not included.

Nor are young people under 18 who are not entitled to any minimum wage and those aged 18-21 whose minimum wage rate is set at just £3.60 an hour.

Concentrates

These figures tell us a lot about society in the North.

Politicians rant and rave about "acts of completion", membership of the Police

Board and talk of the "deep divisions" between the two communities.

While everyone concentrates on these sectarian divisions, there is little or no awareness of, or action about, the ever-increasing division between the rich and the poor.

Statistics like these that expose the reality of poverty wages in Northern Ireland.

A united socialist alternative at the next Assembly elections, whenever they happen, could bring the issue of low pay and poverty to the fore.

Campaign against water charges grows

MEETINGS are being organised across working class communities in the North to build the campaign against plans to introduce new charges for water.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Communities Against the Water Tax and the Northern Ireland Anti Poverty Network co-hosted a meeting in Belfast on August 30th to launch a co-ordinated campaign against

the proposed "reform" of the Water Service.

The Coalition Against Water Charges, agreed to oppose any form of privatisation of the Water Service, any job losses in the Service and any imposition of further charges for water.

Benefits

People in the North already pay domestic rates, over 40 percent of which go towards paying for water and sewerage services.

Speakers at the packed meeting pointed out that many people

thought that because they are on benefits they won't have to pay the new water charges. While people on benefits get their rates waived, that isn't the case with water.

People on benefits have to pay their own water bill, just as they have to pay their electricity or gas bill.

So, the proposed charges will hit the poorest people hardest.

An example of the kind of meeting that is needed in every area of the North was the one in the Ballynaveigh area of South Belfast.

There, residents were out in force at the first meeting organised by the South Belfast Anti Water Charges Campaign which was held in the last week in August.

Effects

Fifty local people gathered in the local community centre to hear FBU leader, Jim Barbour, and NIPSA President, Carmel Gates outline the effects the government's plans would have on those living in working class areas such as the Ormeau Road.

Campaign Secretary,

Ryan McKinney told *Socialist Worker*, "A small group of people came together to organise this meeting and the turn out has been great, everyone present stated that they knew that their friends would also want to get involved in the campaign.

"They expressed total opposition to any form of charging for domestic water usage and supported calls from the speakers for a mass campaign including mass demonstrations and if necessary a non-payment campaign".

TWO YEARS AFTER 'WAR AGAINST TERROR'

It's blowback time for Bush



BUSH'S poll ratings are falling as resistance grows in Iraq. Two years ago he was winning approval ratings of 82 percent in the wake of September 11.

However, the most recent Zogby America poll only gave Bush a 45 percent approval rating.

Millions of Americans now believe that the war in Iraq is costing them dear.

Bush's budgets have pushed up military spending and cut taxes for the top 1 percent of US earners.

The tab is being picked up by working people. This year's US budget brought cuts in Medicaid, a limited state run health insurance scheme, school lunches and veteran's benefits.

Even before the cuts, more than 43 million Americans had no health insurance and the country holds the record for having the highest proportion of children born into poverty in the developed world.

Poverty

The growing unpopularity of war is feeding into a low morale in the US army.

US army recruitment is biased towards ethnic minorities who join for a chance to escape poverty or the promise of higher education.

A disproportionate number of the US casualties in Iraq have Latino names, for example.

The British Labour MP, George Galloway, has reported that on the weekly Atlanta radio show in which he participates, callers have repeatedly claimed that Blacks and Hispanics are the fodder army recruiters are after.

Incredibly, nearly 40,000 frontline soldiers are not US citizens. They joined up to expedite their chance of getting a US passport.

Gaining US citizenship has been especially hard since draconian immigra-

Army morale has plummeted and splits have opened up in Bush's gang

tion rules were imposed after September 11. By joining the US army, the application process can be cut to about six months.

Army morale has plummeted because many troops hoped to be back in the US by now.

Instead, according to figures released by US Central Command, they are sustaining nine wounded for every one killed in an intensifying guerrilla campaign. One US soldier dies nearly every second day in Iraq.

The result has been a growing 'Bring Our Boys Home' movement.

The sinking popularity of Bush has led to new



■ Anti-US-government protesters in Islamabad in Pakistan burn effigy of Bush

splits inside his junta. The *Washington Post* reported that the Pentagon top brass backed up Colin Powell's demand for a return to the UN against opposition from Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz.

Big business however stands to gain from the war.

One third of the monthly \$4 billion cost of keeping US troops in Iraq is being handed to big business contractors led by Halliburton and Bech-

tel. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Bechtel's Iraq contract was increased by \$350 million on top of the \$680 already given in a 'secret, no bid contract'.

The US Defence Depart-

ment has also asked Israel to provide a feasibility study for re-opening the Mosul-Haifa oil pipe line so that US companies can use the Zionist state to rob Iraq's oil.

War lords run Afghanistan

THE US still has some 10,000 troops in Afghanistan but all is not going to plan.

At the end of August, a helicopter with five soldiers was brought down.

Mullah Abdul Jabar has claimed that the Taliban are able to defend themselves and inflict heavy casualties on the US and pro-US forces.

The Taliban has

mounted attacks on US bases, such as that at Shkin, in the eastern province of Paktika a few miles from the Pakistani border, which left two US troops dead.

Control

Pro-US forces only control the area around Kabul where they guard a former oil executive

Hamid Karzai who they installed as President. The country has once again reverted to the control of local warlords.

The much vaunted championing of women's rights has also come to an end.

The US has turned a blind eye as women are denied the right to education in many parts of

the country.

Afghanistan has also resumed its role as a major producer of heroin.

Claimed

In October 2001, Tony Blair, claimed that the 'arms the Taliban are buying today are paid for with the lives of young British people,

buying their drugs on British streets'.

Yet two years later opium production has shot up. In 2001, just before the US launched their war, only 30 square miles of land were in use for growing opium.

A year later and after US and British troops removed the Taliban, it has shot up to 285 square miles.

Abbas resignation: Another defeat for Bush

THE resignation of the Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas is a defeat for Bush's 'road map' plans for the Middle East.

The roadmap was launched soon after the US victory in Iraq and was part of a wider strategy of reshaping the whole region under US domination.

Under the plan, Palestinians were to be granted a Bantustan type state by

2005 provided they accepted a regime that collaborated with Israel in suppressing Palestinian militants.

Capable

The Palestinian authority was supposed to prove itself capable of dealing with these forces – even though Israel was allowed to continue building an apartheid wall that robbed more Palestinian territory.

Abbas was seen as the favoured candidate to implement the project of collaboration.

Arafat had been willing to compromise – but he was not bending down sufficiently to the demands of Israel for the liking of the US.

Abbas' resignation came after he wanted control of all security handed over to his interior minister Mohammad Dahlan.

Dahlan is already reputed to have used torture against more militant opponents.

After Abbas' resignation, Israel launched an assassination attempt on Sheik Ahmad Yassin, the leader of Hamas.

Support

Hamas is an Islamic organisation that has huge support from the Palestinian people.

However, Israel was encouraged in its assassination attempt by a proposal by EU foreign ministers to add Hamas to a blacklist of terrorist organisation.

Israel is also expected to follow up their assassination attempt by moves to deport Yasser Arafat.

This brutal repression of the rights of the Palestinian people is the real face of Bush's war against terror.



■ Mahmoud Abbas

Will the Democrats stop war?

AS BUSH'S popularity declines, many are looking to the Democrats to stop the drive to empire.

In the 2000 election, many left wingers supported the Green Party's Ralf Nader who won nearly 3 million votes.

However, despair with Bush is now leading many to support Democratic Party contender Howard Dean who is rising in the polls.

The Democrats, however, have never offered a real alternative. The Democratic Party supported the Vietnam war and in more recent times, the war in Afghanistan and Yugoslavia.

The new era of 'permanent war' is not simply driven by a clique around Bush. Its roots lie in growing imperialist rivalries between the EU, US and in future China. A Democrat president would continue much of Bush's policies.

Howard Dean is a good example. As governor of Vermont, he spearheaded a 'workfare' scheme, which conscripted the unemployed into low paid jobs. The Associated Press describe him as a governor who has at times 'tried to cut benefits for the aged, blind and disabled'.

He is opposed to cutting routine US military expenditure, which is running at \$1 billion a day.

He does not support the pull-out of US troops from Iraq, claiming 'We cannot permit ourselves to lose the peace in Iraq'.

He says he wants to be a president who 'who is prepared to use our brave and remarkable armed forces to defend against any actual or imminent threat to our friends and allies'.

The real opposition to Bush and US imperialism will have to come from resistance in Iraq and a vibrant anti-capitalist movement that taps into the deepening anger in US society.

The despair of Zionism

SOCIALIST Worker has continually opposed the idea of an exclusively Jewish state in Palestine.

The creation of a Palestinian mini-state alongside Israel, as envisaged by Bush's proposed road map would not end the conflict or vindicate the rights of the Palestinians driven from their homes by the creation of Israel in 1948.

Only a single state in Palestine with equal rights for Palestinians and Jews offers a solution.

For many, this has seemed a distant and unlikely prospect given the enormous military machine of Israel.

But a number of Israelis are beginning to despair of the Zionist project and of the so-called two-state solution.

They are instead advocating a solution where Palestinians and Jews share the land on the basis of equality – called a "bi-national" solution.

It would be foolish to expect the impetus for change to come from within the militarised and US subsidised Israeli society.

But the fact that two thinkers associated with the two state solution were recently interviewed in the Israeli paper *Ha'aretz* repudiating their previous views is a straw in the wind.

Here are some extracts from one of them, the elderly Haim Hanegbi

When I was 10, at the end of the Mandate period, our landlord was an Arab named Jamil.

The word "Alhambra" was chiselled in stone on the house in Arabic and English.

And the house next door was not only owned by Arabs, it was also inhabited by Arabs.

The whole neighbourhood from our house west was mixed.

And at my dad's place of work, the Jerusalem municipality, Jews and Arabs worked together, too.

My dad took me on outings in and around Jerusalem.

I remember Palestinian Ein Karem very well, and Malha and Lifta and Beit Zmzim.

So the Arabs were never strangers to me.

They were always part of my landscape. Part of the country.

Disappeared

And I never doubted the possibility of living with them: house next to house, street next to street.

At the end of 1947 they disappeared. It was in the winter, in the middle of eighth grade.

And the strange thing is that it wasn't in the least traumatic.

It was all done quietly, without any dramatics.

They just sort of evaporated. I'm not even sure I saw them packing.

I'm not really sure I saw them collecting their things and melting away down the slope behind Schneller Camp.

But I remember Deir Yassin well.

I remember that we were in our class-

room in the Beit Hakarem high school when we saw the smoke rising from Deir Yassin [an Arab village on the western edge of Jerusalem where Zionists perpetrated a massacre to drive out Palestinians in 1948].

Years later, when the "Peace Process" began Hanegbi hoped that this could lead to two states and reconcile Palestinians to the State of Israel.

When Oslo came, I thought it was really something great.

I read the accords thoroughly, under a magnifying glass, and I reached the conclusion that there really was mutual recognition, that the possibility existed of closing the conflict file.

I believed in the dynamics of Oslo.

I also believed in [Yitzhak] Rabin.

After the assassination I even joined the Labor Party.

In the past couple of years I realised that I made a mistake: that, like the Palestinians, I too was taken in. I took Israeli talk seriously and didn't pay attention to Israeli deeds.

Rejected

When I realised, one day, that the settlements had doubled themselves, I also realised that Israel had missed its one hour of grace, had rejected the rare opportunity it was given.

Then I understood that Israel could not free itself of its expansionist pattern.

It is bound hand and foot to its constituent ideology and

to its constituent act, which was an act of dispossession.

Speaking of the wall Israel is building across the occupied territories Hanegbi comments:

The purpose of the wall is to separate, to isolate, to imprison the Palestinians in pens.

But the wall imprisons the Israelis, too. It turns Israel into a ghetto.

The wall is the great despairing solution of the Jewish-Zionist society.

It is the last desperate act of those who cannot confront the Palestinian issue

Minority

There will be no other choice, anyway.

We will have to come to terms with the fact that we will live here as a minority: a Jewish minority that will no longer be squeezed between Hadera and Gedera,

but will be able to settle in Nablus and Baghdad and Damascus, too - and take part in the democratisation of the Middle East.

That we will be able to live and die here, to establish mixed cities and mixed neighborhoods and mixed families.

But for that to happen... we have to forgo that mad dream, which has caused so much bloodshed here, has inflicted so many disasters, has generated a hundred years of conflict.

■ The full text from which these brief extracts are taken is available at: <http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=22&ItemID=4100>

CE and JI scheme workers fight cut backs

AN ATTACK ON WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES

by KEVIN WINGFIELD

FIVE hundred jobs are being lost in the Irish economy every week.

But to make matters worse, workers on Community Enterprise schemes and Job Initiative programmes are facing swingeing cut-backs.

The government has announced that CE places are to be cut by 5,000 from 25,000 to 20,000. This comes on top of previous cuts of 5,000 places. These schemes help long term unemployed workers and those with disabilities to get work in socially useful schemes in local areas.

In addition FÁS is reducing the number of Job Initiative places by 15 percent impacting on the generally older long term unemployed that the JI schemes cater for.

Job Initiative is a special support scheme for people aged over 35, who live in a designated partnership area and have been unemployed for more than five years. Participants are paid a weekly wage of €297 by FÁS, and most work in the community and voluntary sector.

Politicians like Mary Harney do not believe that working for the community is 'real work'.

Fast Food

They would prefer to see working class people behind the counter at McDonald's or some other fast food joint making profits for multi-nationals.

Her cuts are destroying lives. With many of the JI workers in the 50s, and having spent years on the dole before being taken on JI contracts, their prospects of getting mainstream work in the declining economy are extremely bleak.

Niamh from North Clondalkin's Action Against Cuts in Community Services pointed out, "I suspect that 99 percent of those cut from JIs will not work again. The JIs were particularly useful for workers who had fallen out of the regular economy, because of age and long term unemployment or sickness in the past. For example it offered a way back for older building workers who became jobless in the slump in the eighties and have not had a job since."

Over the past few weeks there have been a number of protests against the cut-backs in the CE and JI schemes.

Community workers from Dublin's North Inner City held a 24-hour fast and vigil outside the GPO. As the workers pointed out, "Many voluntary and com-

munity organisations are dependent on JI workers to maintain essential services in Dublin's most disadvantaged areas."

Their protest was organised after they were told that the JI contracts, which were due to run until the end of the year, would be terminated in October. Up to 325 face redundancy by the end of the year from the JI programme. Areas worst hit will be the poorer areas of Dublin and Limerick.

Speaking of the JI cuts, Eric Conroy of the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed said, "These cutbacks are part of the savage expenditure cuts across the social sector of government."

"These services provided by those working on JI are being lost and this will get worse in the months ahead."

"They will send people back to the dole and lead to further desolation in marginalised communities."

"They will further exacerbate poverty and social exclusion levels in Irish society."

Harney: Ireland's Maggie Thatcher

COMMUNITY workers began a campaign of protest at the cuts over the summer.

Betty commented, "We have been picketing Mary Harney's clinic in Clondalkin and more protests are planned. We got



■ Scheme workers fight back in Clondalkin

great support from people going by. Cars were beeping in support.

"Harney and this government don't care about people like us. Underdogs are left there. Everything is for the people with money."

"I am now on the committee organising local protests. We're going to link up with others and fight these unfair cuts."

One community activist in North Clondalkin told *Socialist Worker*, "There is now no exten-

sions and no new recruitment to the schemes. Clondalkin is losing 107 places.

"These cuts are set to destroy twenty years of community development work to try to improve the area. Much of that

work started out as volunteer work but has been put on a more long term basis through community service schemes. This represents a destruction of the work put in over the years. This is an attack on the community."



■ Amenity: The canal in Clondalkin

NIAMH of Action Against Cuts in Community Services pointed to an example of the work of JI

and CE schemes and the effects of the cuts.

"For several years scheme workers

have been employed in cleaning up the canal in Clondalkin. Before that the canal was very overgrown,

littered and dirty. But thanks to the work of the scheme it has been turned into a local amenity.

"As well as JI workers who would find difficulty finding work in the open economy there were about 12 CE workers on 32 hours. As well as cutting back overgrowth of trees and generally cleaning up the canal, they built a jetty for fishing. It was made into a safe place for children and families to use. It looked really fantastic."

"People could walk along it again. Now ten years work could go down the drain as the scheme has been wound up due to cuts in the CE and JI programmes."

"Now the canal is set to go back to being neglected and derelict again. It is heart breaking."

I don't know how I'll manage

BETTY is 45 and from North Clondalkin. She is one of the CE scheme workers who have been chopped. She spoke to *Socialist Worker*.

"I lost my job as a security guard in the Irish Financial Services Centre working up to 60 hours a week after I was diagnosed with MS a couple of years ago. I was then on Disability."

"At first I got very depressed, stuck in the house, not meeting anybody."

"When I got a place on the scheme at Arus Rualach in Neilstown I was much happier."

"I worked 20 hours a week as a receptionist. The centre offers services to the local community. For example has a jobs club and helps people with getting a CV together to apply for a job."

"There is also a crèche operating out of the building."

"There is also training provided. I have just passed the European Computer Driving Licence certificate. I have learnt how to use computer programs like Excel and Access and have the certificate to prove it."

Upset

But Betty has now become a victim of the cuts.

"I worked for a year on the scheme and would be in line for a further two years, but in July I was cut. This was a killer. I am now in dire straights. The little I got on top of the disability helped pay the rent and bills, now I don't know how I'll manage."

"I am upset because I will miss the people in the job that I worked with."

"I think the centre will have to cut back on opening hours and that will have a big effect on the services and the crèche."

"There are hundreds like me. I know of the DBD centre in Bawnogue. It offers a range of services to the local community. It is set to close down in October because of the cuts."

November in Paris

ALEX CALLINICOS writes on the background to the European Social Forum later this year

"THE FAR Left Is In Fashion". That was the headline in the right wing French daily *Le Parisien* on Wednesday last week.

It was part of the deluge of media coverage that attended the summer university of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), which took place in Gourette in the Pyrenees last week.

I was lucky enough to attend, along with 700 activists from all over France.

The event-like French society generally-reflected a growing radicalisation. This began with the wave of mass strikes that swept France in May and June in protest against the right wing government's attack on pensions.

The strikes marked, with May-June 1968 and November-December 1995, one of the great peaks of the class struggle in modern France.

Though the government won that round of the struggle, the French summer has been fizzing politically. The deaths of thousands of old people in the heatwave have fed the anger against the ruling right.

At last month's anti-capitalist festival at Larzac, 350,000 people gathered to welcome back peasant activist José Bové, just freed from prison.

The signs for the next great gathering of the movement, the European Social Forum in Paris in November, are excellent.

Surprisingly these developments are not welcome to everyone. Chief among these is the opposition Socialist Party.

Since its humiliating defeat in last year's presidential and legislative elections, the Socialist Party has been in disarray. It is caught between two strategies.

On the one hand there is "social liberalism", the French version of Tony Blair's Third Way.

Leading figures such as ex finance minister Laurent Fabius are strongly committed to free market orthodoxy.

On the other hand there are the social movements – rank and file union militants, the anti-capitalist networks, the anti-war and anti-racist coalitions.

Larzac's anti-capitalist festival showed that these are growing in strength and confidence.

The French political world is obsessed with next year's elections for the European parliament and regional councils. To do well in them, the Socialist Party needs the support of the social movements.

But the movements despise the Socialist Party for its record in office.

The party's stand at Larzac was overturned.

Moreover, the movements have

more natural political allies. In last year's presidential elections, the far left—principally the LCR and Workers' Struggle (LO)—won over 10 percent of the vote.

Hence the media attention on the LCR's summer university last week.

The LCR and LO are discussing running a joint slate in next year's elections. In the present political climate, this could provide a focus for all the different struggles and activist networks.

The Socialist Party is desperate to stop this happening.

The party leader, Francois Holland, and other prominent figures have been mounting frenzied attacks on the far left, accusing it of doing the dirty work of the ruling right.

Strangely enough, these attacks have found echoes within the anti-capitalist movement. Jacques Nikonoff is the president of ATTAC, which campaigns against financial speculation.

After the Larzac festival he wrote an article in the left-liberal daily *Libération* that denounced the far left in the crudest terms.

"Free market liberals always prefer the far left, because they know it has never won and that it will never win," Nikonoff wrote.

More recently Nikonoff has repeated his attacks on the far left. He has been backed up by the founder of ATTAC, Bernard Cassen.

Cassen has accused the Fourth International—to which the LCR belongs—and the Socialist Workers Party of trying to manipulate the movement.

These are absurd accusations. LCR activists played a prominent role in founding and building ATTAC.

At ATTAC's summer university a fortnight ago, Nikonoff and Cassen found themselves isolated.

The very vehemence of their attacks reflects their fear that the movement is growing and radicalising beyond their control.

Meanwhile at its own summer university last week the LCR stood firm against the right's blackmail.

The comrades know that Jean-Marie Le Pen's Nazi National Front can exploit the government's unpopularity.

"There needs to be a force on the left that is as firm in its anti-capitalism as the National Front has been in its nationalism," says Francois Sabado, a leading LCR member.

With all this going on, the European Social Forum should be great.

■ The European Social Forum takes place in Paris from 12 to 16 November. All meetings are translated. To book you must register at <http://www.fse-esf.org/>

How to get to the ESF in Paris

Aerlingus and Ryanair both fly to Paris or get to London and get the Eurostar train with the British ESF mobilisation <http://www.mobilise.org.uk/view/ESF/TrainParis>.

There are lots of hotels and hostels-but book now and there will be accommodation available in the Irish section in the general accommodation (football stadiums).

For information, leaflets to distribute and a motion to pass in your community group, trade union or activist network phone 086 1523542.

Check out Irish ESF website at www.esf2003.org or the ESF website at www.fse-esf.org.

CHILE 1973:

The other September 11

SEPTEMBER 11 marks the anniversary not just of the attacks on the World Trade Centre, but also of General Pinochet's brutal coup which deposed the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende with the murder of 30,000 people – ten times the death toll in the Twin Towers.

Three years earlier Allende, at the head of the Popular Unity coalition, was elected President.

He headed the poll with 36 percent of the vote against a divided right wing opposition. Allende spoke of "people's power" and millions hoped that his "Chilean Road to Socialism" could usher in an era of peaceful, constitutional socialist change.

The previous three years had seen a rising tide of struggle as anger by workers and the poor against the Christian Democrat government, the employers and the huge landowners reached a crescendo.

There were over 5,000 strikes in 1970 involving a third of a million workers, 30 percent of whom did not earn a living wage. Landless labourer were occupying the land of the wealthy ranchers and there was an active student movement which organised a national march on Santiago in 1969.

Despite the myths and his occasional left wing rhetoric, Allende was not a Marxist.

He was a reformist politician. He established a coalition of organisations associated with the working class – the Communist and Socialist parties and the middle class Radicals and MAPU.

His aim was to establish a government that could calm social tensions by enacting reforms within the system.

His economic strategy was entirely Keynesian - he aimed to stimulate the economy without challenging the capitalist framework. He was also wholly committed to parliamentary legality.

BEFORE taking the presidency, Allende signed a 'Statute of Guarantees', promising he would not use his powers to interfere with the church, the education system, the media... or the armed forces.

He would play the game by the enemy's rules. The other side gave no undertakings that they would respect their own precious legality.

Allende's initial reforms were moderate - wage rises to stimulate demand, land reform and nationalisation of part (but only part) of the economy. But they meant real progress for the working people of Chile.

But the powerful vested interests of Chilean capitalism would have none of it. By November 1971 the opposition was regrouping.

Hundreds of middle class women, claiming that shortages were making life intolerable, came onto the streets waving empty saucepans.

But the real shortages were being felt by working class people as shops and businesses hoarded goods to create a panic.



■ Pinochet: The army coup launched a massacre of 30,000 people.

The reforms instituted by Allende were modest enough and on their own posed no real threat to the rich.

But many workers had grown in confidence and were prepared to take matters into their own hands and go beyond what Allende proposed.

During 1971 the number of strikes rose rapidly. Many workers wanted not just nationalisation, but some real exercise of power in their workplaces. And that the bourgeoisie could not tolerate.

In the autumn of 1972, the truck

owners organised a strike - a bosses' strike. The aim was to bring the country to a halt, cause economic chaos and force Allende to resign or abandon his reforms.

WORKERS organised to break the bosses' blockade and their committees began to exchange goods with the countryside to keep the economy going.

This alarmed the privileged even

more. The stakes were getting dangerously high.

Allende denounced the land occupations and independent workers actions and even sent the army in "to restore order".

He still hoped that by offering these concessions the bosses could be persuaded to co-operate.

In spring 1973 copper miners, one of the best organised sections of Chilean workers, went on strike. The government denounced them.

AS the right wing threat grew, workers formed their own organisations, cordones, to link up the factories and organise resistance.

The working class was organised into unions on a factory basis, and these unions were grouped into federations of the various industrial branches.

The class tensions were developing to a point where there had to be a decisive shift one way or the other. What was developing was a pre-revolutionary process, and as always on these occasions the masses were beginning to create new organisations that were more responsive to their struggle, though for the moment they were not abandoning the old ones.

Talk of a military coup became commonplace. Still Allende refused to support the independent action of working class people or workers' self defence organisations or even opposition elements in the army.

Allende insisted, 'There will be no armed forces here other than those stipulated by the constitution... I shall eliminate any others if they appear.' With Allende still in power, the army embarked on a series of arms searches directed exclusively against left wing organisations committed to defending Allende's government.

TWICE Allende reorganised his government, giving senior positions to generals, in order to show his willingness to work with the military. This only exposed his weakness. When, on 11 September, the army moved to take power, they were able to kill Allende with impunity.

Though there was heroic resistance in isolated areas, there was no centralised focus for opposition - all the left had, to a greater or lesser extent, followed Allende's parliamentarism and disarmed themselves.

Now the army ran riot. A reporter from the US magazine *Newsweek* described entering the Santiago morgue and finding a pile of bodies: 'Most had been shot at close range under the chin.'

Some had been machine-gunned in the body... They were all young and, judging from the roughness of their hands, all from the working class.'

Some of the violence was random, designed to create a climate of terror. But much of the killing was specifically aimed to eliminate the rank and file leadership of the working class - the shop stewards, union representatives and militants from the cordones - in order to destroy working class organisation for a generation.

Probably 30,000 died, in a country of under 10 million, compared with 3,000 in the World Trade Centre. Chile became a laboratory for neo-liberal economic policies. Union activity was banned, pensions were cut, social welfare was destroyed.

The rich had shown just how brutal they could be in defence of profit.

Did the CIA cause the coup?

The US moved immediately to give diplomatic support to the Pinochet take-over.

The US had already cancelled all economic aid to Chile on the election of Allende but maintained military aid to the army – which Allende had promised not to interfere with.

In fact, the US had spent a million dollars on training Chilean army officers, and the CIA was there with advice and

encouragement.

But US intervention was not the sole reason for the coup.

The US would have been unable to act without serious local allies.

The point was that the Chilean ruling class – the captains of industry, the media moguls, the gombeen truck owners, the army officers and the pampered judges – were united in their desire to destroy Allende's government.

They feared that Allende would not be able to control the workers and poor and stop them challenging the privileges and economic power of the rich.

Welcomed

The Chilean bosses of course welcomed the support and encouragement of the US.

Allende had tried to reign in workers' militancy and make concessions

to the rich.

This only dug his grave and those of tens of thousands of others.

The only force that could measure up to the power of the ruling class and their army, was the self activity of the working class, something Allende had spent every effort seeking to dampen down.

Sensing his weakness General Pinochet at the head of the army pounced with tragic results.

comment

Playing with the truth

by DAVE LORDAN

A MINOR but revealing literary controversy surfaced recently in the *Irish Times*. The focus was a play produced by a new company, Stray Dog Productions, who promise to stage original, provocative and innovative theatre, exploring the untold stories of our time.

Keep Coming Back, written and directed by accomplished actress Rynagh O'Grady (Reds, Commitments), is an unsentimental examination of the phenomenon of mass addiction through the experiences recounted by three recovering addicts. The stage contains only a table, five chairs and a few posters for Narcotics Anonymous.

The stories told by the three actors are based on real life tales and do not make for easy listening.

Nora was forced into small town prostitution by her mother. For two decades, she has chewed tranquilisers to numb herself against the horrible reality of her abuse.

Les is a journeyman musician drawn into heroin in the downtown scene in early eighties Dublin. Heroin gradually kills off everything dear in his life.

Colm comes from a large Dublin working class family. He embarks early on a career of crime, violence and addiction, which leads him to Mountjoy and leaves him with Hepatitis.

They recover from their addictions by helping each other to face the pain they took drugs to erase.

What comes across in the play is the sense of the everyday reality of addiction, how common it is to spend ones life under the merciless rule of a drug.

And the evil of institutional abandonment, the washing of hands and the raising of noses by the medical, legal and political authorities.

Formally *KCB* mirrors the process of recovery it dramatises. By telling the truth, it helps us to confront the truth about our sick green island in which thousands are daily sinking into oblivion.

Question

We must then ask the obvious question. Why? If so many people turn to drink and drugs to escape then what are they escaping from?

KCB makes clear that, though every addict has their own story, the blame for mass addiction lies with a social system which reduces people to the status of plastic toys, denying them the right to joy and the ability to master even the tiniest segment of their lives.

KCB received excellent reviews, drew enthusiastic responses from audiences around Dublin, and was nominated for a Fringe First award at the prestigious Edinburgh Festival.

None of this was good enough for the *Irish Times* critic Mary Leland, who in a bitterly patronising review stated that the show was excruciatingly well intentioned monotone misery and nothing to do with theatre.

This is haughty nonsense. There are many kinds of theatre. Much is abstract and uninviting if one has been deprived of the education needed to engage with it. More is designed to entertain rather than to challenge, a sort of opiate for the uppity.

Most involved with theatre are drawn from a college background. So is the majority of theatres audience. By contrast many who went to see *KCB* were just like those depicted on stage, struggling workers trying to draw strength from each other and live a dignified life against the odds.

They were drawn to the play not by critical recommendation but by word of mouth. *KCB* provoked reflection and debate among hundreds of people about an issue of real importance in their communities. That alone proves it is good theatre.

While the institutions of the elite, including the *Irish Times*, conspire to marginalise or simply put down the home truths of the hoi-polloi, there will always be a vital role for artists who bring issues of contention and mass relevance like addiction into the public arena. That it is done with the skill, empathy and commitment displayed in works like *KCB* is a bonus.

O'Grady writes that *KCB* is intended to challenge some of the misconceptions and ignorance that is held onto so resolutely around addiction. Mission accomplished.

book

A new book shows how the multinationals sell us junk food and junk diets

Getting behind the dieting myths

by HELEN SHOOTER

THE ATKINS diet has been splashed all over newspapers and magazines recently, and has spawned a bestselling book.

It claims you can lose weight by eating as much fat and protein as you like. No need for old-fashioned healthy eating and exercise, says Atkins, bacon and eggs will make you slim.

This is the latest diet fad to play on many people's insecurity about their bodies.

The reality of oppression in this society means the diet is being targeted at women. The pressure on women about their body shape is constant. Newspapers and magazines lambast high-profile women for having cellulite and attack others for looking too thin.

Many women's response to the most basic human need—food—is completely distorted. US journalist Greg Critser has written a new book, *Fatland: How Americans became the Fattest People in the World*.

He argues that real health problems linked to weight are being ignored. The idea behind the Atkins diet is nothing new. Critser says, "It has popped up with astounding regularity about every 25 years," since it was first popularised in the 19th century.

He says it is "full of medical mumbo jumbo and fraught with potential



■ McDonalds chips contain three times the calories compared to 1960

peril for anyone who followed it for a sustained period of time". A diet that deprives the body of carbohydrates can damage your health.

Diet crazes trivialise a serious problem. "Some 61 percent of people in the US are overweight enough to begin experiencing health problems. Children are most at risk from obesity," says Critser.

Type two diabetes, a disease almost exclusively seen in adults, is now

on the increase in children. It is linked to the increase in obesity and can cause painful physical disabilities.

Vultures

Drug companies are circling like vultures to profit from this health hazard. Critser quotes a spokesperson from a top US drugs firm saying, "These days you've got to be in diabetes."

Critser points to the free market and the growing dominance of giant

food corporations as helping fuel the rise in obesity since the 1970s.

The introduction of a cheap new sweetener in the 1970s drastically cut the costs of producing high-sugar products.

Critser argues that this had an impact on everyone's weight, but the poorest were most affected.

But cheap meals are not necessarily healthy. A serving of McDonald's chips contained 200 calories in 1960 compared to 610 calories today.

Corporations wanted families to use their food as a staple diet. For example "Happy Meals" targeted at children are used to lure customers.

Critser says that in poor communities there is a lack of access to cheap, fresh foods.

Few safe areas for children to play mean they can end up watching TV and snacking.

Less access to health provision means medical problems associated with weight can go unnoticed.

theatre

Rage on the stage

by AOIFE BRESLIN

POLITICAL theatre plays a prominent role in this year's upcoming Dublin Theatre and Fringe festivals with Liberty Hall hosting a promising selection.

Collectively termed Playing Politics, the event takes place over the weekend of October 4th and 5th.

Watch out for *Genoa 07* by young Italian playwright Fausto Pravidino. It is about great demonstrations against the G8 which culminated in the



■ Arthur Miller

murder of Carlo Giuliani by the Carabinieri.

Also recommended is the public interview with

Arthur Miller, the octogenarian leftist who famously refused to rat on his friends to the McCarthyite

Committee for UnAmerican Activities in the 1950s. There is also a reading of Miller's play *Resurrection Blues*.

Hurl is an anti-racist comedy which has been winning rave reviews.

Prejudice

Produced by Barabbas, it follows the adventures of a multi-ethnic hurling team as they overcome the barriers of fear and prejudice to contest the Hurling Club Championships.

It is showing in the Tivoli theatre on Francis street from the 1st to the 5th of October.

Perhaps the greatest treat is the teaming up of *Asian Dub Foundation* with 1995s classic French movie *La Haine*.

The movie follows the antics of a teenage gang from Paris. ADF have toured Europe playing a set introducing the film.

This show is a once off in the Temple street theatre on Monday the 22nd of September.

■ For more info check the websites at www.fringefest.com and www.dublintheatrefestival.com or phone 01 6778899 for a programme.

Letters

Send to: Letters, Socialist Worker, PO Box 1648 Dublin 8, or swp@clubi.ie

I was forced to flee over tea plantation strike



Tea Plantation in Sri Lanka

MY NAME is Madura and I am an asylum seeker living in Cork.

I was a Supervisor on a tea plantation until recently when I was forced to flee my country.

Harepark S.P used to be a state owned and managed tea plantation.

However in recent times the Government of Sri Lanka has decided to lease its tea plantations to private individuals.

Harepark itself was supposedly leased to a company called W.E.F on 1st February last.

The Minister of the Ministry of Development

of the central province did this transfer of the estate to a private individual in order to raise money for his election campaign and intends to reap all profits anyway in what workers say are very corrupt practices.

Prior to the transfer of the plantation the govern-

ment made a commitment to pay all its "former" employees at Harepark a gratuity and to honour bonus payments that in some cases dated back to 1973.

However the government of Sri Lanka has reneged on its commitment and has led to the

workers going on strike.

Over 500 workers at Harepark S.P tea plantation Sri Lanka have been engaged in an ongoing strike since April 1st.

On April 4th, 2003 I started to receive anonymous phone calls and letters and was stopped and threatened to leave my bungalow where my wife and children live or I would be killed.

I have had to leave my wife and children who remain along with the other workers who remain on strike.

A great injustice has been done to us and I am asking for your support.

You can send messages of support to K.K Wimala Sena, No.3 Kiri Pattiya, Uda Dumbara, Sri Lanka. I also urge you to write letters of protest to the Sri Lankan Government expressing your concern.

■ MADURA, Cork.

□ DAVY CARLIN, Agreed Convener, Belfast

Fight racism in Northern Ireland

OVER THE past while we have seen the rise of racist incidents and attacks on ethnic minorities around Northern Ireland.

We have also seen the overt rise of racist material, graffiti and groups springing up in various areas.

This would be of concern to all those progressive forces that seek a socially just and inclusive society.

Following a recent meeting held in the Multi Cultural Resource Centre in Belfast attended by human rights organisations, ethnic minority support groups, asylum seeker lawyers, practitioners, development organisations, and other interested parties, it was decided a second

meeting should be held.

This meeting is to discuss any practical and visible strategies that can be developed to raise awareness and to tackle this increasing problem.

Various groups and organisations are and have been actively trying to tackle this problem but it was suggested a broader meeting to discuss all the various strategies and maybe finding some practical activity together, could be yet another way of helping to bring this issue to the fore.

The meeting is to be held in the Multi Cultural Resource centre, Sept 17th at 7pm. Address 9 Lower Crescent Belfast 7. The street is

across from the Empire, and is beside the One World Centre in South Belfast.

Those groups, organisations and individuals who would be interested in attending the meeting are welcome.

It will be informal and open to all to have an input.

For further information contact Nathalie at the Multi Cultural Resource Centre at:

Nathalie@mcrc-ni.org or alternatively you can contact myself at: carlindavid@hotmail.com, Phone: 07974632485

□ DAVY CARLIN, Agreed Convener, Belfast



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 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.

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 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.

Marxist Forums

Big ideas discussed in informal settings



Ballyfermot:

Chile 1973: The Other 9/11, 8.00pm Thurs Sept 18, Ruby Finnegan's Pub

Ballymun:

Chile 1973: The Other 9/11, 7.30pm Thurs Sept 11, Axis Centre Ballymun

Belfast Ormeau Rd:

Noam Chomsky and the role of the media under capitalism, 7.30pm Thurs Sept 11, Whites Tavern

Belfast South:

Racism - Where it comes from and how to fight it, 7.30pm Wed Sept 10, One World Centre

Belfast West:

Chile 1973 -74, 7.30pm Thurs Sept 18, Conway Mill

Blanchardstown:

Chile 1973: The Other 9/11, 8.30pm Wed Sept 17,

Castleknock Community Centre, Laurel Lodge

Clondalkin:

Chile 1973: The Other 9/11, 8.00pm Thurs Sept 18, Oakfield Lodge Hotel, Clondalkin Village

Cork:

Lenin: What can we learn from the man who lead a revolution? 8pm Wed 24 Sept, An Spailpin Fanach

Crumlin:

What can we learn from Lenin and the Russian Revolution? 7.30pm Wed Sept 17, Cashel Road Community Hall

Derry:

Chile 1973-74, 7.30pm Thurs Sept 11, Badgers Bar

Drogheda:

Chomsky, ideology and the corporate media, 8pm Wed 8 Oct,

McHughes Pub, Drogheda

Dundrum:

Chile 1973: The Other 9/11, 8pm Wed Sept 17, Dundrum Family Recreation Centre

Dun Laoghaire:

Chile 1973: The Other 9/11, 8pm Tues Sept 23, Farrell's Pub, Dun laoghaire Shopping Centre

Galway:

The attack on civil liberties: The collateral damage of Bush's war, 3pm Sat 13 Sept, Java Coffee Shop (upstairs) speaker: Kieran Allen

Harolds X:

Chile 1973: The Other 9/11, 8pm Wed Sept 17, Rosie O Grady's Pub, Harolds X

Lucan:

Chomsky and the Media, 8.00pm Wed

Sept 10, Foxhunter Pub, Lucan

Rialto:

Chile 1973: The Other 9/11, 8.30pm Wed Sept 17, St Andrews Community Hall, SCR

Ringside:

Chile 1973: The Other 9/11, 8pm Wed Sept 17, Ocean Bar, Charlotte Quay

Tallaght:

Chile 1973: The Other 9/11, 8.00pm Wed Sept 17, Tallaght Welfare Society, Tallaght Village

Waterford:

Malcom X and the Fight for Black Liberation, Speaker: Marie Clifford, 8.00pm Thurs Sept 25 Olde Rogue, Michael St

■ For details of other Marxist Forums contact (01) 872 2682

Anti War meetings

Blanchardstown:

Mon Sept 15, 8pm Myos Pub, Speakers: Joe Higgins TD, Michael O'Brien, (IAWM)

Cork:

Sat 20 Sept, 8pm The Metropol Hotel, Cork

Dundalk:

Wed 17 Sept, 8pm

in the Spirit Store

Lucan:

Wed Sept 17, 8pm Foxhunter Lounge Lucan, Speakers: Colin Coulter (NUI Maynooth), Harry Brown (Irish Times)

Tallaght:

Wed Sept 10, 8pm Abberley Court

Hotel, Speakers: Sean Cronin TD, Aoife Breslin (IAWM)

■ For details of other anti war meetings and activities contact:

Irish Anti War Movement 087 6329511

www.irishantiwar.org

SWP ACTIVISTS ARE ORGANISED IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

I want to join the Socialist Workers Party

Name.....
 Address.....
 Phone.....
 Email.....
 Union/College.....

Join the Socialists!

To join the Socialist Workers Party or for more information:
 Fill in the form and Send to:
 ROI: SWP PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Phone (01) 872 2682
 NI: SWP PO Box 143, Mallusk Road, Mallusk, Phone 0774 2531617
 Email swp@clubi.ie Web: www.swp.ie

Aer Rianta vote for action

WORKERS at Aer Rianta have voted by more than an 80 percent margin to take industrial action to stop the break-up of their company.

The vote follows the failure of Transport Minister Seamus Brennan to give any guarantees on pay or conditions after a year.

The workers believe that the reason is that he plans to fully privatise the company.

Nearly three hundred of the staff recently attended a meeting in the North Terminal in Dublin Airport to hear politicians state their position on Aer Rianta.

No Fianna Fail TD turned up and particular anger was reserved for Jim Glennon from Dublin North who had promised to attend.

The Fine Gael rep, Richard Bruton, also got a

hard time because he said he agreed with the break-up of Aer Rianta.

Workers pointed out that three recent reports on the company, including the Malarky Report,

had come out against the break-up.

Announced

Yet, Seamus Brennan announced the change

after a mere 15 minute meeting with union representatives.

Workers also complained that their side of the story was not featuring in the media.

One speaker from the floor said, 'The Independent group of newspapers gets millions in advertising from Michael O'Leary.

'They are not even

giving us a look in'.

The unions will now seek a new commitment from Brennan and if none is forthcoming, then industrial action should soon commence.

Royal Mail workers in national strike ballot

POSTAL workers in the North and across the UK are voting in a national strike ballot, which began at the end of August and will run to 17 Sept.

It looks as if the vote will be an overwhelming YES to industrial action. As Jane Loftus, a mem-

ber of the CWU union national executive (speaking in a personal capacity) told *Socialist Worker* "The issue is simple.

Deserve

"We want a higher basic pay, and we deserve it."

"Those who say we don't should try doing the jobs our members do, a six-day week on shifts or early starts come rain or snow."

"CWU members are angry with the government, angry with our management".

But Jane admitted that people are critical of

the union too "for not having fought enough in the past to win a higher basic pay!"

Angry

"They are angry with the media, because they only report the management view, never the union or the workers'

side.

"If the meetings I've done or heard about are typical then people are prepared to fight."

"We need to win this ballot and then turn it into action to force Royal Mail to give us the pay rise our members deserve."

We need accommodation!

A COUPLE have been forced to sleep rough outside the housing office of Waterford City Council due to the refusal of the council to provide suitable accommodation for them.

James and Mary-Ann O'Brien have been sleeping rough in the doorway of the housing office for more than a fortnight.

The council have claimed that they are unable to find accommodation for the couple and have only offered single hostel spaces, splitting the couple up.

Due to Mary-Ann's pregnancy and ill health, she suffers from asthma and deep-vein thrombosis; they refused to be separated.

James, who is originally from Waterford, told *Socialist Worker*: "We were in Clonmel, but couldn't find any decent accommodation there. Clonmel council would only give us a room in a bed and breakfast one night at a time.

"They then claimed that there were no beds left in the whole city during the Fleadh Ceoil and gave us the bus fare for Waterford to get rid of us.

"We stayed for a night with my sister, but she has ten kids and we couldn't stay there any longer".

"When we came to the housing office, they would only offer us separate accommodation in single hostels.

"We had no money and nowhere to go so we had to sleep on the streets. We're

sleeping outside the housing office to try and shame them into doing something for us.

"There's a hostel nearby with asylum seekers. We don't know what we would have done without them.

"They've fed us and allowed us to use the facilities. A lot of people on the housing list blame refugees for the lack of housing, but that's rubbish.

"There's a lack of housing because the government won't put the money into building them.

"The people passing have been terrific. We've collected 800 signatures on

our petition.

"People on the housing list know what it is like dealing with a council who don't care about anyone".

Election

Local councillors have refused to meet with James and Mary-Ann, but that hasn't stopped them attacking the couple through the local media.

Both PD councillor, Ollie Cleary and Labour councillor Pat Hayes vilified James and Mary-Ann on local radio for 'trying to jump the housing queue'.

James said in response: "It's no surprise that a PD

politician says that kind of stuff, but you'd expect more from a Labour Party member.

"It just goes to show that all these politicians are the same, they're all interested in keeping the status quo".

Ollie Cleary, Pay Hayes and the 13 other Waterford councillors preside over a city with the worst housing record in the country.

With approximately 1,500 people on the housing list in the city, Waterford has per capita the longest housing list in the state.

Despite, this only 52

social houses were built in 2001, less than any other local authority, and only 560 houses are planned over the next five years, despite the city's expanding population and the exorbitant cost of private housing.

Protest

Nationally, it is estimated by Focus Ireland that 50,000 families are homeless, a total of 140,000 men, women and children.

Members of the SWP and people on the housing list joined James and Mary-Ann at a protest outside the City Council meeting on

Monday last, where the local councillors were confronted.

"They're not interested", James said after. "They just want to get rid of us because we're an embarrassment, but we're not moving until we get somewhere to live.

"Having a roof over your head is the most basic thing anyone can expect from any society, but this council are trying to deny us this.

"With the support of other people who have to take on the council everyday, we'll win this fight".

—ROY HASSEY

Free speech in Galway

Galway corporation and its elected councillors expecting a low key return to business on Monday September 8 will be extremely disappointed that the opposite is the case.

In its attempts to introduce a new park and open spaces byelaw, a wave of opposition has emerged and united to fight under the banner of Defend Free Speech, Assembly and Activity (DFSAA).

In a campaign reminiscent of the movement to oppose the building of a waste incinerator in Galway, where there was a mass groundswell of

grassroots opposition, the first meeting of the city council since the summer holiday will be met by a colourful picket of community groups, NGOs, local activists, trade unionists, political parties, buskers, street performers, and sporting organisations.

They will be putting across their outright opposition to councillors, many of whom are now wavering on the issue, as they arrive to debate the proposed bye laws which are on the top of the agenda.

The byelaws seek to prevent the holding of public meetings greater than 100 people without getting a special licence from the authorities.

A host of sporting and

leisure activities will be banned except in designated areas.

The erection of tents, camps and advertisements (posters) would also be banned without prior approval.

Election

Another byelaw proposes to ban the distribution of leaflets anywhere inside the city boundaries, but, significantly, not election or referendum material.

The process of introducing byelaws has also come in for severe criticism. Alderman Catherine Connolly (Labour) explained at the launch of DFSAA that the byelaws had been passed at a special policy com-

mittee of the corporation earlier this year.

This committee had a large majority of right wing politicians, council officials, and so called community representatives.

Naturally this committee passed the proposals.

The proposals were then supposed to be displayed to the public and submissions were invited.

The proposals were displayed without drawing the public's attention to them. The proposed byelaws attracted only one submission, and that was in support of the proposals.

At the recent SIPTU conference, which was held in Galway, an emer-

gency motion was passed unanimously condemning the proposals and urging SIPTU members to actively oppose them.

DFSAA Chairperson Dette McLaughlin, a MANDATE shop steward and local SWP activist, urging as many people as possible to get along to the protest said, "This is another infringement on our civil liberties and our right to protest.

"In a climate where there is widespread opposition to government policies and issues such as the Bush war on terrorism, this is an attempt to block people, who are increasingly showing their opposition on the streets, from venting their feelings."

SIPTU Annual Conference

FOUR hundred and fifty delegates attended SIPTU's annual conference in Galway only to hear long speeches eulogising outgoing President Des Geraghty and little by way of any lead in tackling the major issues facing trade unionists.

Incoming President, Jack O'Connor, warned that workers were facing the greatest assault since WW2. However, you would not recognise it from the conduct of the conference.

Resolutions on privatisation and bin charges were pushed right to the end and dealt with briefly. Speakers from the Aer Rianta branch called for a national transport strike to resist privatisation.

However, the silence from the top table was deafening.

O'Connor even came back on resolution calling for a repeal of the Industrial Relations Act by claiming there were some good things in the act and the union wanted to amend it rather than repeal it.

In a disgraceful contribution, he opposed a resolution from the union's Education branch calling on members not to cover for staff laid off by cuts by raising the absurd spectacle of patients dying in hospitals if SIPTU had a 'no cover' policy.

The real reason for his opposition was that he is determined to agree another partnership deal and needs give management the complete flexibility they are demanding.

An important resolution on democratising the political fund so that it was opened to left wing parties beyond Labour was defeated through by a nasty McCarthyite campaign against SWP members who proposed it.

The union leaders did not however get everything entirely their own way and were defeated on attempt to restrict attendance at regional conferences.

Socialist Worker

inside:

*Schemes cuts:
An attack on
working
class
communities*

—PAGES 6/7

***LAFFOY SCANDAL:
AN INSULT
TO VICTIMS
OF CHILD
ABUSE***

—PAGE 3

PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY €1.00 / £0.70p

BIN CHARGES SHOWDOWN

DUBLIN CITY manager John Fitzgerald will direct council workers to collect the bins of only those who have paid the bin tax from Monday September 18.

Dublin City Council will initially target a number of areas in Rathmines and Terenure.

Hundreds have attended meetings all around the city to prepare to resist non-collection.

In Ringsend, 150 people attended a campaign meeting while in Finglas over 350 met to co-ordinate their response to the council's new tactics.

In East Wall, two hundred people attended a lively and enthusiastic meeting.

'We are ready for the fight.'

'We have co-ordinators for every street in this area and a history of community action.'

'We will not be beaten' one local activist told *Socialist Worker*.

The council plans to tag the bins of those who have paid and only those with a tag will be collected in areas around Terenure and Rathmines.

Opposition

But opposition from bin workers themselves will pose difficulties for city management.

The SIPTU Section Committee in Dublin Corporation is opposed to bin charges and many of the workers have signed up to the anti-bin charge campaign.

Corporation officials attempted to address the

'We are ready for the fight. We will not be beaten'

committee directly to get them to change their minds but they were rebuffed.

Supervisors rather than bin workers have been given the job of tagging.

But there will be huge resistance, as protests will be mounted to insist that every bin is collected.

This is not a 'green tax'

MARTIN Cullen says that the bin charges will help the environment. It is nonsense.

Most waste is produced by industry – not the domestic consumer.

Survey

The PAYE householder can do nothing about the useless packaging that supermarkets use.

Bin charges can often make matters worse.



■ Martin Cullen

A survey in Cullen's own constituency in Waterford showed that eight out of ten people had started to

burn rubbish since the introduction of bin charges and 38 percent attempted to burn all their rubbish.

WAIVERS SET TO BE CURTAILED

BIN charges are only the first step to privatisation.

Once introduced, the charge rises every year.

In Sligo, the charges have risen to over 500 euros a year.

High charges are designed to guarantee profits for waste collection companies.

Burning rubbish increases dioxins in the atmosphere.

These companies also get rid of the waiver scheme for social welfare recipients.

A recent Supreme Court case stated that private companies were not obliged to have a waiver scheme.

In Limerick, for example, the waiver scheme was halved after privatisation

WHAT TO DO

THE message to non-payers all over Dublin is prepare to resist the council

Make sure your estate is organised. Get campaign leaflets into every house

Approach your local bin workers and ask them to support the campaign by refusing to implement non-collection. Leaflets aimed at workers are available from the campaign

If non-collection is planned in your area, organise people on the streets to resist the non-collection.

No bins should be allowed to be collected if any are going to be left behind

HOW TO WIN

IN 1996, the government was forced to withdraw water charges when people got organised, resisted disconnections and took to the streets.

People stuck together and refused to pay – despite the advice of the bigger political parties. Hundreds turned up to protest outside court cases against non-payers.

By sticking together, the establishment was defeated.