

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p

Inside:

INDONESIA: A dictator is overthrown
—PAGE 8

THE SPLITS IN UNIONISM
—PAGE 5

THE RANK AND FILE REBELLION
—PAGE 10

Solidarity price £1

Esat Telecom boss made £10m in just one day

Lets make the Celtic Tiger pay up for workers



Meet ESAT boss Denis O'Brien who saw his personal fortune increase by £10 million in one day because Mary O'Rourke opened the way for competition in the telecommunications market.

O'Brien has prepared for this moment for some time. He made a political donation to Fine Gael and afterwards Michael Lowry persuaded the Garda to install ESAT masts on stations around the country.

Yet we are told there was no connection between these events.

Like the boss of Ryanair, O'Brien has also fought to keep unions out of his company.

These are the sharks who are benefiting from the Celtic Tiger. But Irish workers have received little from the "miracle economy". Instead they are more stressed-out and more flexible than ever before.

The union leaders are still preaching about social partnership.

But where is the partnership when the employers get super-profits and we get wages that make it impossible even to buy a house?

Now the revolt of rank and file workers has begun.

TEAM workers have said NO to privatisation. Hundreds of craft and general workers have also staged unofficial strikes.

The O'Reilly-controlled press denounced them as "wild cats" who caused chaos and suffering.

But the press never talk about the suffering caused by cutting hospitals beds by 40 percent during the ten years of social partnership.

The workers were right to strike. And there is more to come. In June, train drivers are threatening to take strike action.

At this year's union conferences huge opposition was voiced to partnership.

Rank and file organisation at ground level is the key to the future.

Linking trade union militancy with socialist politics is the way to force the Celtic Tiger to pay up.

Why the gardai ganged up on Dean Lyons

DEAN LYONS has been sent to jail for seven years. Nothing that remarkable for the courts, a 24 year old heroin addict from Tallagt sentenced for stealing some video equipment and taking £30 in cash.

What is remarkable is that Dean Lyons has already spent nine months in jail for a crime he did not commit.

Lyons was charged with the murder of 61 year-old Mary Callinan on the basis of a statement he had made while in Garda custody "admitting" to the

No officer has been charged, no explanation offered

crime.

For the Garda, it was a satisfactory outcome to a high-profile investigation.

Yet less than a month later, another man made a very detailed admission to the Grangegorman murder.

It included precise details of the crime which could only have been known to the killer.

Theories

All sorts of elaborate theories were advanced by the Gardaí to cast doubt on this second confession.

They ran a campaign in

the media suggesting Lyons had given the second man some of the details, then they tried simply to dismiss the second man's confession.

Unnamed garda sources were quoted on radio, television and in newspapers, dismissing the significance of the second statement.

That statement, according to the usual "high up anonymous sources", was "riddled with inaccuracies". Senior detectives were said to be "highly sceptical" of its worth.

Lyons was kept in prison even after an internal inves-

tigation by an Assistant Garda Commissioner in February concluded that his "confession" was unsafe.

After nine months in jail and a 75 second court hearing he was released, but the Gardaí continue to victimise Dean Lyons.

No officer has been charged, no explanation has been offered, no compensation paid.

For those crooks in the cops and the DPP the best place for Dean Lyons to be is in jail, so that is where they have put him.

Abortion facilities needed in Ireland

MORE than 5,300 women with addresses in Ireland had abortions in Britain last year. This is nearly a ten per cent increase on the previous year.

The increase may be due to the fact that less women are hiding their Irish address after the legal changes in Ireland.

It may also be that more women are availing of the service now that abortion information is freely available.

Irish women have the same rate of abortions as women in Britain. But the only reason why they have to travel there is that the politicians will not face up to anti-abortion bigots.

Women have to go to needless expense and face terrible upset from the fact that they have to travel.

Their health can also be put in danger because they are being denied important medical post-abortion check ups.

Now the Adelaide Hospital Society is arguing that the new Tallaght hospital, which is due to open in June, should provide Irish women with abortion facilities.

The Adelaide is one of four existing hospitals which will amalgamate to form the new hospital.

But there is little chance that the Adelaide's proposal will be reflected when the green paper is completed at the end of June.

The government's working group on abortion is a sham. The group has already tried to suppress the findings of a government commissioned Trinity College study into abortion, because the report's recommendations were not what it wanted to hear.

NEW RACIST CAMPAIGN...

Workers will be forced to spy on refugees

JUSTICE Minister, John O Donoghue is preparing new legislation that will make life even harder for refugees here.

The new laws will require workers in the areas of social welfare, health, education, employment training and accommodation to report any refugees they come in contact with who do not have proper documentation.

If implemented the measures give the green light to the harassment of anyone who doesn't look Irish.

Demand

It will allow civil servants, landlords and others to demand that foreigners "prove" to them that their papers are in order. If they are not satisfied they can

report them.

People, who have fled persecution and torture elsewhere, may now be too afraid to look for vital services such as medical attention and shelter.

They may now be too afraid to go to a hospital if they are sick or to look for an education for their

children.

The measures will force teachers and health workers to act as spies for the government.

These draconian proposals need to be resisted by trade unionists.

The trade union IMPACT has already called for a charter of rights for refugees at its recent conference

Gardaí try to frame refugee

At 3.00 am on May 1 seven Gardai came to the house of Belmondo Wantete, a Congolese refugee. They broke down the door of the house shouting "you black Nigger".

One plain clothes detective had a gun and put it through the letter box threatening: "I'm go-

ing to kill you if you don't open the door".

Belmondo was beaten badly and his house was searched for stolen goods.

He was taken to Drimnagh Garda station and kept there for 12 hours while Gardai shouted at him, "Monkey scream for us."

But the Gardai had the wrong man. The warrant for his arrest



These Romanian refugees were treated like criminals

was for another refugee from a different address and the charges were dropped by the Judge.

The Gardai had messed up but to cover themselves they came up with new charges that Belmondo had assaulted a Garda in his home.

He was brought into Mountjoy on remand and held there until he got bail one week

later.

Belmondo Wantete, an innocent man, now faces a possible prison sentence and eventual deportation unless he wins support quickly.

The "Justice for Belmondo Wantete Campaign" has called a picket on Court 44, the Bridewell (behind the Four Courts), 10.30 am Thursday, June 18.

TEAM workers reject offer

FIFTY-NINE per cent of TEAM workers rejected an offer for a buy-out from FLS.

They have shown that they will not be intimidated by the political establishment.

The strategy of all the main parties in Dáil Eireann is to sell-off semi-state industry.

Although many workers in these sectors traditionally voted for the Labour Party, the former left winger Emmet Stagg is now in the forefront in calling for privatisation.

Aer Lingus is

regarded as a key target for privatisation but it is believed that this cannot be done until TEAM is first sold off.

This is why the government was so determined to sell TEAM workers off to FLS even though it is a relatively small time operator that has a record of pushing through redundancies.

Since 1992 FLS has let half its workforce go and relies heavily on contract labour.

One shop steward explained the key reason why TEAM workers were not lured by the cash offer. "We could have taken the money—but

what would happen in a year or two?

"FLS could close down key sections and then tell us that we could only work as contract workers. They can call us what they like—but we believe in decent jobs and conditions."

The irony in the whole affair is that TEAM workers have an international reputation for quality work.

Even the *Irish Times* admits that "its employees' expertise is acknowledged world wide".

The company has also started to make a profit and its order books have an 80 per cent capacity for

some years to come.

TEAM workers have shown far more of a commitment to their industry than sharks like Gary McCann, the boss of Aer Lingus, who jumped ship because he felt that a salary of over £100,000 was not good enough for him.

McCann supported privatisation because it meant super-salaries for managers like himself.

TEAM workers should continue to demand that the agreement reached with them in 1990 be honoured. That specified that 1,400 of them were Aer Lingus state employees.

RINGSEND PROTESTS AGAINST BUILDING SPECULATORS

ZOE developments are planning to build a ten storey hotel and six hundred and fifty apartments on the old Gas company site in Ringsend.

But the plans are meeting with huge opposition from local people.

They do not want increases in traffic or pressure on the water and sewerage schemes. They believe that Zoe will not deal properly with the contaminated soil on the site.

Instead of Zoe, people want more space for play areas and social housing for the working people

who want to live in the area.

Many are already asking why was state land sold off purely for profits rather than to alleviate the housing problem by building local authority housing.

At a public meeting in January, mainstream politicians promised that

something would be done to address these concerns. But these promises only led to inaction and helplessness.

Meanwhile Zoe has been moving in equipment under cover of darkness and preparing the site for building. Strong protests are now needed to stop Zoe in their tracks

Public Meeting
The Housing Crisis and the Celtic Tiger
Trinity Inn, Pearse St
Thursday 4th June, 8.00pm

what we think

After the referendum: Which way forward?

THE HUGE Yes vote in the referenda on the Belfast agreement marks a turning point in Irish politics. It is a demand for peace from the vast majority of working people.

The Yes vote in Northern Ireland came from three sources.

160,000 new voters who had not voted during the conflict came out.

Peter Robinson of the DUP called them "the peacenik vote" because they refused to identify with one or other of the camps.

Then there was an incredible 99 percent Catholic Yes vote.

Equality Agenda

After the recent shift in Sinn Fein, this was a vote to pursue an "equality agenda" within the structures of the Northern state, for the moment at least.

Coupled with the enormous Yes in the South this has cut the ground from underneath armed force republicanism.

The agreement is still unstable and could break down around events like Drumcree, but for now groupings such as the Continuity IRA and the "Real IRA" have as much support as the Red Army Faction in Germany in the eighties.

Expressed

Finally, there was the Protestant vote which expressed a desire for accommodation with their Catholic neighbours.

This was a vote against the Paisleyite dinosaurs.

Just as people once voted for Mary Robinson in the South to signal their desire to break the grip of the bigots, this Yes combined both an establishment sentiment and a real desire for change.

Exit polls showed that Belfast Protestants voted 58 percent to 43 percent for the agreement while in the rural areas where Paisleyite fundamentalism is stronger the No's outnumbered the Yes voters by 57 percent to 43 percent.



Another sectarian election

YET THE desire for peace can be thwarted because the Belfast agreement sets out to organise politics on sectarian lines.

The first act of an elected representative to the new Northern Ireland assembly will be to declare themselves "unionist, nationalist or other".

The First Minister must receive a 40 percent vote from each camp. The irony is that this could give the bigoted Paisleyite minority a veto.

The election campaign for the Assembly shows how little has changed. The pressure is already on to elect the hardest communal representative to get the best deal within these institutionalised sectarian structures.

So Gerry Adams is again calling for a pact

with the SDLP while Jeffrey Donaldson has also got the same idea; "If nationalism is going to unite to put them in a stronger position against unionism ... we can find

a greater degree of unity in our ranks.

Scrapping

Everything else—union rights in multinational

plants, scrapping the 11 plus system in schools, extending the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland—is supposed to be of no importance.

The key thing for Gerry

is "if you are Green—stand by me". For Jeffrey, it's, "if you are Orange stand up to the Taigs".

Socialist Worker argued against the Belfast agreement because it

represents a capitalist solution designed to replace the armed conflict with competition between Catholic and Protestants workers for jobs in the low pay economy.

CLASS POLITICS IS THE ALTERNATIVE

RATHER THEN hoping that a "partnership" between Adams and Trimble brings a "dynamic" for change, socialists in Northern Ireland have to prepare for opposition to them.

A cabinet which stretches from Sinn Fein to the Official Unionists will continue to both argue on communal grounds and then co-operate to back up the demands of the multi-nationals.

Writing in the *Guard-*

ian, the IRA prisoner Anthony McIntyre has asked why it was necessary to pursue 20 years of armed struggle for such "an inglorious conclusion". He will not be alone.

As the former radicals swap their armalites for Ministerial cars and salaries, a mood can develop which begins to see class as the main divide in Northern Ireland.

But that will not happen automatically. The

North's new political elite know that their access to £60,000 salaries and the perks of office are dependent on their ability to play the sectarian structures to show they got one over on "the other side".

This can only be undermined if socialists consistently promotes a common class struggle and attack every move to cover for repression and sectarianism.

But there are some things the new political

establishment will not be able to hide.

Trimble, Hume and Adams will sit together in a government that implements student fees, hospital closures, and low pay in the huge public sector.

They will try jointly to attract foreign investment by promising low taxes and a "moderate" workforce.

It is now time to promote a different set of politics which sees class as the main divide.

This is why *Socialist Worker* is launching its *Charter for Class Politics*. We aim to get the support from hundreds of working class representatives for a public declaration which points to the need for action on the missing class agenda.

This will begin to show that it is only through common class struggle and socialist politics that the threat of sectarianism can be uprooted.

Socialist Worker £10,000 appeal

"I would gladly support the Socialist Worker appeal. Socialist Worker came to us with leaflets explaining the problems with the deal and showing in black and white what it said, long before we could find out from our officials. This is the only paper which openly and publicly supported the unofficial action."
SIPTU Hospital Activist

This week the SWP produced thousands of leaflets for the hospital workers dispute, getting the information on the deal out, and urging solidarity between craft and general worker. Our appeal is to raise money so we can continue to move quickly to support workers in struggle. This week we reached £4,320.

Please send cheques or postal orders to Socialist Worker PO Box 354, Tomb St. Belfast or PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

£10,000

£9,000

£8,000

£7,000

£6,000

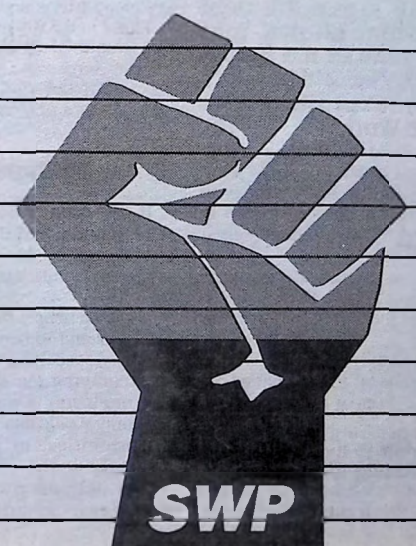
£5,000

£4,000

£3,000

£2,000

£1,000





news of the world

G8 summit

Twenty million children die because of third world debt

WHEN THE leaders of the world richest nations met in Birmingham for the G8 summit they were met by 50,000 people protesting at Third World debt.

Western governments are squeezing billions from the poorest countries in the world.

If the people of Africa spent nothing for a whole year—gave up all the basic necessities of life—they would still not have paid off the interest on their debt to Western banks.

It has been estimated that over 20 million children will die this year as a direct result of debt payments.

System

The reason is that a huge proportion of what these countries earn now goes back to the Western banking system.

Guyana, for example, is held up as one of the best countries by the IMF for its debt repayments.

But it is paying out 45p for every pound it earns to the vultures who run the Western banking system.

This means there is little money for nurses or teachers. Huge tracts of the country's great forests are sold off to Western companies.

The corrupt leaders of these countries were encouraged to

take out loans in the 1970s when the world banking system was full of cash.

In 1978 for example, the World Bank Report stated that "there is no general problem of developing countries being able to service debt"

Ordinary people in African countries never benefited from the loans but it is they who must suffer and die as developing countries pay out £450 million a day to Western governments and banks.

No wonder that many charities and development organisations are now calling such debt the "new slavery".

As these policies lead to more famines across Africa the media make a great play of the aid that Western governments give. They even talk about "donor fatigue".

But for every £1 spent on aid to the poorest countries, more than £3 returns in debt repayments.

There is openly one simple solution to this vast human misery: it is to cancel all the debts outright.

The politicians say that this is "unrealistic". But what they really mean is that they cannot contemplate the idea of bankers making sacrifices.

The only realistic solution is to end the situation where the starving keep funds flowing to the bankers.



■ **Mobutu**—got the loans but the people of the Congo still pay

★ **FOUR** times more is spent on debt re payments than on health in the poorest countries in Africa. Ghana spends £4 a year on each person's health. But it spent £26 per person on servicing the country's debt.

★ **SINCE** 1984 sub Saharan Africa has paid £800 billion to Western banks and governments. Yet Africa now owes more than three times what was borrowed originally.

★ **ONE** in five children in Niger will die before they are five from hunger measles, diarrhoea and meningitis.

★ **THE** boss of Virgin, Richard Branson, has the same wealth as the population of the African country of Benin.

These countries had their debt cancelled

"EVERYONE has to pay their debts otherwise there would be no discipline". This is what the Western governments claim. But many of them had their own debts cancelled.

□ Britain, France and Italy defaulted on US debt in the 1930s and Washington "forgave (or forgot)" as the *Wall St Journal* reported.

□ When the US took over Cuba 100 years ago, it cancelled Cuba's debt to Spain on the grounds that the burden "was imposed on the people of Cuba without their consent and by force of arms".

□ After the Second World War German debts were cut so that by 1953 it was paying just 3.5 percent of its export earnings to service its debt.

IT IS ONLY THE RICH WHO GAIN

SOME argue the debt problem shows that everyone in the industrialised world benefits from exploiting the Third World.

National Irish Bank or the Bank of Ireland not only want to rob Africa—they also try to rob working class customers in Ireland by manipulating their overdrafts.

These banks also expect PAYE taxpayers to pick up the tab for them if they incur bad debts.

When the AIB went bankrupt in the late 80's it was bailed out by the taxes of ordinary workers.

In America it was working class taxpayers who had to "rescue" the US banking system from the Savings and Loan scandal that nearly brought the

system crashing down.

Those at the top enjoy incredible wealth. Just eight million people across the world—0.1 percent of the world's population—have a personal wealth of £10,000 billion.

Millions

If that money was taken off them it could end the horror of famine that blights the lives of millions. No one else need give up a penny.

Working people in Ireland and Europe stand to benefit and not loose by cancelling the debt.

Removing the debt burden and producing a more rational economy would unleash massive opportunities for production across the world.

It is only the parasites who depend on profit that would loose out.

Continuing the poverty trap

AFTER the G8 summit the media claimed that Tony Blair and the New Labour government in Britain were pressing for the removal of Third world debt but that they were held back by countries like Germany.

But the British scheme was designed by spin doctors to give the country an ethical and humanitarian image.

The British government only wanted to extend an already existing International Monetary Fund scheme called Highly indebted Poorer Country (HIPC) initiative.

The aim of the HIPC scheme is not to abolish debt but to guarantee a steady flow of cash to

Western bankers by setting payments at a "sustainable level".

The scheme limits annual debt repayments for the countries concerned to "just" 25 percent of export earnings.

Most of the world's poorest countries are deemed "too rich" to qualify for the scheme. So Jamaica is barred because it is not

Feast and famine

World Bank policies lead to famines in Africa but the delegates at their conferences live in a different world.

Here is how the journalist Duncan Green described a World Bank dinner:

poor enough, despite the fact that a third of its population lives in desperate poverty.

Before any country can even be considered for the International Monetary Fund it has to follow a rigid austerity programme for three years.

It then has to do the same for another three years before the debt ceil-

ing comes in.

All that the British government is proposing is that the qualification period is speeded up. This would still mean a savage austerity programme and crippling interest payments.

Instead of talk of sustainable debt, there should be a cancellation of the debt altogether.

"The dinner was catered by Rigewells at £200 per person. Guests began with crab cakes, caviar, creme fraiche, smoked salmon and mini beef wellingtons.

"The fish round was lobster with corn rounds followed by citrus sorbet.

"The entree was duck with lime sauce served with artichoke buttons filled with bay carrots.

"Dessert was a German chocolate turnip sauced with raspberry coulis, ice cream bonbons and flaming coffee royale."

Northern referendum shows

by JOHN ANDERSON

The splits in Unionism

THE REFERENDUM on the Belfast Agreement has laid bare big splits within unionism. The high Yes vote has also been a slap in the face to the elements who have been openly stoking up sectarian hatred.

The mood on referendum day was overwhelmingly one of wanting to break from the past and build a peaceful future. "It may not work, but isn't it worth a try?" was the most common verdict at one east Belfast polling station.

Many Protestant voters made it clear that their Yes vote was as much against Ian Paisley as for the Agreement. "Nobody's ever stood up to Paisley before," said Brian. "He's had everything his own way for far too long. This is the best chance we've ever had to really stick it to him."

Gary agreed: "I followed that man for years. I marched with him against the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985. Now I feel he used me. He used us all."

The motives behind the massive Yes vote show that many thousands of people in the "unionist community" are looking for an alternative to the old sectarian politics. Yes votes piled up even in the worst loyalist strongholds. Unofficial tallies showed a 60% Yes in Larne, 65% in Portadown.

Conflict

Overwhelmingly it was the working class, which has borne the brunt of the conflict, voicing its desire for peace.

Hardline Unionist MP Bob McCartney, a leading No campaigner, was humiliated in his own North Down constituency by a 70% Yes on an 80% turnout.

All the indications are that this was delivered, not by the affluent Gold Coast, but by the huge, rundown estates of Tullycarnet and Kilcooley. People in these areas rarely vote—because they feel

they have nothing to vote for. Now they are making their voice heard.

A Belfast socialist explains: "The pressure for peace has come from below. This whole process and the ceasefires were brought about by the mass peace rallies in 1994, and the shipyard workers walking out after the murder of Maurice O'Kane."

"David Trimble only stayed in the talks because his own voters were telling him that they wanted peace and he had better deliver."

"The reaction to events like Drumcree has shown that the Unionist Party and Orange Order don't have the automatic mass support they used to. Sectarianism is still there, it still dominates politics in the North but it can be fought."

Stabilise

The popular mood for peace has deepened the divisions in the Unionist establishment which have existed since the 1960s. Big business has long wanted to stabilise the North to deliver higher profits.

This means modernising the Northern state and reaching some sort of accommodation with Southern capital. The CBI and Ulster Bank boss George Quigley have been talking about an "island economy" extending the Celtic Tiger northwards. This has little to offer workers but low-paid, non-union jobs in firms like Seagate in Derry.

But even this limited idea of reform has come into conflict with elements in Unionism who want to protect their power base at all costs.

Many members of the state security apparatus and the Orange Order, supported by rural fundamentalists, cannot face any gestures towards nationalists, even over tokens like the Irish language.

These people have been the driving force behind Drumcree and Harryville. Popular pressure has pushed Trimble into the "modernising" camp. But Trimble won't take on the hardliners. That would mean hacking at the very roots of unionism.



TAKE HIM away

The poverty that breeds the bitterness

"THERE ARE no jobs in this area. There are no opportunities. The kids don't work in school because they know they have no future." Claire lives on the working-class West Winds estate in Newtownards.

"Every few years at election time politicians like John Taylor come down here and tell us how concerned they are and they'll do their best to help."

"John Taylor's a rich businessman. He doesn't know how we live and he doesn't care." Claire is unemployed, has seen her local school close and feels bitter about politicians.

"I laughed my head off when David Ervine said we don't want to go back to a past when big fat men ruled the roost (meaning Paisley). He's dead right. The

leaders have never done anything for the likes of me.

"Shouting about the Queen and the Union Jack won't bring me work."

The British government's Low Pay Commission recently reported that wages in Northern Ireland were 20% lower than those in Britain. Over 150,000 people earn less than £3 an hour.

Blackspots

The worst blackspots are mainly Catholic Strabane and mainly Protestant Ballymena. Belfast's Shankill Road has some of the most appalling housing conditions in western Europe.

Most of the houses were built in the 1930s or even earlier, many are literally falling apart.

There is no chance of things getting better as the Housing Ex-

ecutive has stopped building houses. It simply does not have the money to carry out any major projects.

The economic crisis has dealt a crushing blow to unionist ideas of Protestant superiority.

In the past the Unionist Party and Orange Order could buy off many Protestant workers with jobs and houses.

This is not an option any more. As a result membership of the Orange Order has slumped from 120,000 thirty years ago to 35,000 today.

Leading Orangemen complain privately that young Protestants are no longer joining the Order and many do not identify with it.

Every poll has shown a majority of Protestants do not believe that Orangemen have an automatic right to march anywhere they like. This is a hopeful sign for the future.

Needed: A socialist alternative

UNFORTUNATELY the settlement stands little chance of building on this mood.

Elections to the Assembly will be conducted on the same old sectarian headcount, with the same old sectarian politicians in charge.

The entire set-up of the Assembly is based on the idea of two rival communities with competing demands.

Deputies will have register on their first day as unionist,

nationalist or other—with a weighted voting system meaning that the tiny number of "others" will not count.

The Assembly promises to be, not both sides working together for the common good, but squabbling over the allocation of resources and storing up more sectarianism for the future.

Advantage

Even parties claiming to speak for the working class, like Sinn Féin and the PUP, will have to play the same game of fighting for "their side" to gain advan-

tage over the "other side".

This can only strengthen Paisleyite hate-mongers who will be in action again over Drumcree this July, when the whole thing could collapse into a bloody mess.

What is urgently needed in the North is the growth of a socialist force which can speak for the whole working class, not just one section of it.

Only socialist politics can cut through sectarianism and fight for a society that can deliver real peace by removing the causes of war.

Your DNA for sale

THE EUROPEAN Parliament Biopatenting Directive has just been passed. This will allow for the patenting of genetically modified inventions. From now on big business can claim rights over what they term "novel" forms of life.

Genetic engineering is the technique of transferring genetic material (DNA) from one species to another.

In the US many genetically modified organisms are already classified as inventions.

Biopatenting gives companies exclusive rights to own and manipulate human and animal gene, cells and tissues as well as plant seeds.

This allows them to demand royalties from hospitals and medical bodies.

Property

Common foods such as strains of Basmati rice which are found in India will now become the property of the first company which gets the patent on it.

The biotechnology industry is dominated by companies such as Monsanto which are accountable only to their shareholders and are interested solely in profit.

The declared intention of Monsanto, the agro-chemical giant, is to gain control over the seed-supply of the world's major staple foods.

In their own words their strategy is "not just a consolidation of seed companies, it's really a consolidation of the entire food chain".

Monsanto has already bought up almost every major seed firm in the US. Farmers are forbidden to save their own seeds.

They must pay Monsanto a technology fee to use their patented seeds and use their brand of herbicides.

One US firm has already patented a "terminator" gene which allows it to produce seeds that do not produce second generation crops.

It is produced for the Third World where subsistence farmers will be forced to pay the company for access to seeds they previously harvested for free.

Companies like Monsanto are gaining increasing con-

rol over the food supply. According to the *Guardian* correspondent George Monbiot "the power and strategic control they are amassing will make the oil industry look like a cornshop".

Big business in Europe believes that it has already fallen behind American companies in this area. This is why it pushed the EU for the new directive—even though it is hugely unpopular.

Many forms of production are already patented to allow companies to profit.

But what makes biopatenting different is that it patents the individual body or plant parts themselves, the raw materials of production.

Life has now become a commodity that can be bought and sold.

Supporters of biopatenting argue that it will prevent famines and world hunger.

However there is currently enough food being produced to feed the world.

Since 1950 the output of world food has at least doubled whereas world population has grown by only 76 percent.

There are huge surpluses of food in the EU already. Famines are caused by unequal distribution of food and wealth and the EU bureaucrats who produced the biopatenting directive have little interest in doing anything about that.

Nor will biopatenting create progress in the search for cures in terminal diseases. It will just add to the cost.

A genetic centre in Manchester has already received demands for royalty fees, payable whenever it tests for the cystic fibrosis gene.

Patenting the gene itself, as opposed to the product or therapy, prevents co-operation in scientific research.

It also leads to amazing obscenities. The US government has already issued itself a patent on the genes of a man from the Hagahai people in Papua New Guinea.

Socialists defend the right of science to explore new areas and modify nature to suit human needs. But capitalism means that uses of science are distorted to fit the needs of profit.

The patenting of common forms of life is just another way for big business to plunder the world.

by SINEAD KENNEDY

INDONESIA:

The fall of a

SUHARTO, the butcher of Indonesia has been forced out of office. But the new president BJ Habibie is one of his cronies.

Three quarters of Suharto's old cabinet have been re-appointed including General Yosfiah who organised the bloody invasion of East Timor.

Few believe that this will be the end of the revolt. As the *Jakarta Post* put it people fought "to emerge from darkness in which all their institutions of democracy were emasculated and the economy was controlled by a privileged elite".

The Habibie government will do nothing to dismantle the power structures built up by Suharto.

Suharto stayed in power for thirty years because the West has feted, financed and armed him.

Companies like British Aerospace gave him the weapons to repress all the internal opposition and to bolster Indonesia's occupation of East Timor.

Multinational firms have made millions by exploiting Indonesia's cheap labour and Suharto's repressive labour laws.

Pro-market politicians and businessmen in the West hailed Indonesia as a success story of capitalism.

Crisis

But suddenly such talk looks very foolish. A huge economic crisis has swept the "miracle economies" of south east Asia over the last year.

The whole region has plunged into recession from Thailand to South Korea and now to Japan, the world's second biggest economy.

Indonesia has been most sharply hit. The country's currency, the rupiah, collapsed last year and there has been a huge wave of bankruptcies, with firms unable to service their debts.

The effect on ordinary Indonesians, already poor, has been savage. The International Monetary Fund, backed by western governments stepped in with a \$43 billion rescue package.

The IMF and the Suharto regime imposed a harsh austerity plan on the mass of ordinary Indonesians.

At least six million people have been thrown out of work this year.

More than a quarter of the adult population are now either unemployed or dependent on casual work. But there is no unemployment pay or social security.

But while the mass of Indonesians have seen their lives pushed to the edge of de-



struction those at the top have continued to live in luxury.

Popular anger focused on the Suharto clan, who have used their power to ensure they control huge chunks of industry.

The situation is well summed up by Tutut, the powerful daughter of Suharto. Tutut was supposed to be in charge of poverty relief programmes to help Indonesians hit by the crisis.

She regularly flies to Europe in her private jet for shopping trips. She and her wealthy husband own a string of apartments in London, the US and elsewhere. They also have a clutch of tropical is-

land hideaways where they entertain their business friends.

Tutut recently went on a tour of a poor district of Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, to launch an anti-poverty programme.

There she echoed the doomed French queen, Marie Antoinette who in 1798, enraged ordinary people who were hungry for bread by saying, "Let them eat cake."

Complaints

Suharto's daughter faced complaints from the poor that they could no longer afford chickens, a popular food, as the price had soared due to the cost of the

Who are the opposition?

UP TO now the protests have been dominated by a liberal opposition.

Although they have used radical language, their aim is simply to change the faces at the top of society rather than to fundamentally alter it.

Among these figures are Megawati Suharnoputri and Amien Rais. Megawati is the daughter of the Indonesian nationalist ruler Ahmed Sukarno, overthrown by Suharto 30 years ago. Amien is the leader of Indonesia's biggest Muslim organisation.

Both are delighted to see the end of Suharto but they also want to maintain the essential structures of the regime. They both back the IMF supported austerity plan. Amien has held meetings with people linked to the US government which has pressed for a change of faces.

Rais is also a friend of Habibie and has even said that he is "neutral" on the cabinet he appointed. He has urged the students to be "realistic" and give Habibie a chance.

The revolt in the Philippines which overthrew the Marcos dictatorship twelve years ago shows what would happen if this opposition ever came to power.

Marcos was pushed out by "people power" and a new regime, backed by sections of the military, key businessmen and the US rode to power on the back of the mass movement.

Some 12 years later nothing has changed for the mass of people in the Philippines. Elections this month look like handing power to a layer of wealthy businessmen, and the Marcos family are back as key players in the Philippines.

Socialist Worker is your paper

Buy it, read it, sell it, Join us!

- I would like to join the Socialist Workers Party
- I would like.....copies of *Socialist Worker* to sell
- I would like the special introductory offer of 8 issues for £5
- I would like to take out a subscription: six months £9
- one year £18

Name.....

Address.....

Phone.....

Cheques/POs payable to Socialist Worker
Send to: PO Box 1648, Dublin 8 or PO Box 354, Tomb St Belfast

Give your name and address to your local seller or phone (01) 872 2682 or return form

imported fi
Her resp
ment that
off by stud
form. But
mass mov
country's 2
the poverty
The regi
ping up p
Chinese m
ing to mak
crisis. Ethr
percent of
the vast m
According
omic Revi
pials tried
in an attem
from Suhar
A clear e
law, Prabow
the elite Koj
ple of mont
ence for Mu
tivists.
Prabowo
ranks" agair
ciety. To m
Prabowo dis
of the Rim,
nesses.
But while
cess they cc
butcher of Ir

by PAUL McGARR

of a butcher

Suharto's regime:

OVER THIRTY YEARS OF BLOODSHED

★ September 1965: Suharto comes to power crushing the Communist Party. Up to a million people killed in following months.

★ December 1975: Indonesian troops invade East Timor. At least 250,000 people killed

★ November 1991: Indonesian troops fire on mourners in an East Timorese cemetery of Dili killing as many as 250 people.

★ October 1997: The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) organises a \$40 billion loan to bail out the Asian Tiger.

★ January 1998 The rupiah collapses. Riots over rising food prices, five people die.

★ March: Suharto re-elected for another seven year term and appoints his family to key positions in the cabinet.

★ May 4: Fuel prices rise by up to 71 per cent. Riots break out in Medan.

★ May 20: Suharto finally resigns.

THE KEY TO CHANGE IS WORKERS' ACTION

IN THE towns many workers and the unemployed moved from passive sympathy for the students to joining the protests. But throughout the whole of the recent events Indonesia's huge working class had not yet to make its economic power felt.

This has been the missing ingredient that has given the ruling elite a chance to manoeuvre at the top. But this can change in future.

Occupying

If workers did move, striking and occupying their factories, it could decisively shape the outcome of the fight.

The prospect terrifies those at the top of Indonesian society.

"The real worry of Indonesia's rich and their western backers centres on the industrial workforce," reports the Far Eastern Economic Review.

Workers have repeatedly shown their potential power in recent years.

In 1994 workers staged huge strikes and protests in Medan, the biggest town and key industrial centres on the island of Sumatra.

And the last few years have seen a rising tide of strikes.

In 1990 the government admitted 290,000 working hours were "lost" to strikes. By 1996 that had shot up to 2.6 million hours.

The turmoil in Indonesian society can create the space for the workers movement to re-emerge.

What do socialists say?

The class they try to forget

"SOCIETY AS a whole," wrote Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*, "is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat." The proletariat, or working class, had become "the only really revolutionary class".

This proposition, the revolutionary role of the working class, formed the central core of Marxism, and no other aspect of Marxist theory has been subject to such constant attack by anti-Marxists.

The arguments have been many: the polarisation expected by Marx has not materialised. Marx did not foresee the growth of the middle class which has formed a buffer between the classes.

Instead of becoming ever poorer as Marx predicted the working class has become affluent and consequently been bought off and incorporated in capitalism.

The growth of the service sector and white collar occupations has turned the proletariat into a declining class. All in all class struggle, it is claimed, is a thing of the past.

Some of these arguments are simply based on a willful or ignorant misunderstanding or oversimplification of what Marx had to say.

Existence

In stating that society was splitting into "two great classes" Marx was not denying the existence of other classes or strata.

Indeed in his writings he repeatedly referred to "middle and intermediate strata" which "obliterate lines of demarcation everywhere".

Rather Marx was asserting that these two classes would increasingly constitute the two *fundamental* social forces in modern society.

That it would be the struggle between these classes which would decide the fate of this society.

On the question of the impoverishment of the working class it was not Marx's view that workers would become ever poorer in an absolute sense.

On the contrary he recognised that with the growth of capitalist production working class living standards would rise.

"The more rapidly the worker increases the wealth of others, the richer will be the crumbs that fall to him", as he put it in *Wage Labour and Capital*.

But Marx argues this does not remove the antagonism between the workers and the capitalists because although the *absolute* position of the workers has improved their relative positions has not.

"If capital is growing rapidly, wages may rise; the profit of the capitalist rises incomparably more rapidly. The material position of the worker has improved, but at the cost of his social position. The social gulf that divides them from the capitalist has widened."

Nor, of course, should revolutionary potential be equated with absolute impoverishment.

It was not Marx's view that workers would become ever poorer in an absolute sense: "The more rapidly the worker increases the wealth of others, the richer will be the crumbs that fall to him."

Revolutionary consciousness requires, above all, working class confidence in its ability to change the world confidence which often comes in victories gained in the struggle for reforms, whereas utter destitution may breed demoralisation.

The argument that the changed occupational structure of modern capitalism has produced a decline in the working class is also based on a misunderstanding of Marx's conception of class.

Social class is not a matter of life-style or type of work but of objective position in the overall process of production.

The modern white collar worker—the ordinary civil servant, local government officer, typist, nurse, teacher etc—is just as much a worker as a miner, docker or steelworker. The working class has not declined—it has merely changed.

But what of the test of experience? Has the working class in practice lived up to Marx's expectations?

Here it is important to note that during the nineteenth century (which Marxism is so often supposed to reflect) the working class displayed its revolutionary potential in open struggle for power *only twice*.

In the 1848 revolutions (and then only very briefly) and in the Paris Commune of 1871.

In the twentieth century it has contested for power time and time again: Russia 1905 and 1917, Germany 1918-19 and 1923, Italy 1919-20, Spain 1936, Hungary 1956, Chile 1972, Portugal 1974, Poland 1980-81 are only some of the outstanding examples.

Thus Marx's analysis has proved far more relevant to the twentieth than to the nineteenth century.

Finally we must remember that Marx always viewed the development of capitalism and the working class as a world process.

When he wrote the quotation at the beginning of this article it was true as a description of only one country in the world—Britain.

Today capitalists and the workers confront each other in all five continents.

Mass strikes in Zimbabwe, Denmark, South Korea and Australia (all in recent months) show that modern society has indeed split into two hostile camps "two great classes facing each other".

by JOHN MOLYNEUX

Two Hundred years since 1798...

The politics of the United Irishmen

by WILLIE CUMMING

Ireland in the late 18th century was a country gripped by revolutionary fervour and organisation. On the surface it appears as a period of calm and stability.

The great Georgian squares of major towns, Dublin's Customs House and the Four Courts were all built in this period.

But, as a contemporary pamphlet put it, "your colossal edifices are propped up on our mud cabins."

Society was dominated by a tiny landowning aristocracy. Anglican in religion, their edicts were supported by compulsory taxes, known as tithes, which had to be paid by all, including Catholics and Presbyterians.

There was a parliament but it was totally corrupt and unrepresentative. Seats were bought and sold to the highest bidder. The city of Belfast had a population of 15,000, yet only thirteen had a vote in the 1782 election.

The great mass of the population were peasants, mainly Catholic but in the north east they were Presbyterian. Arthur Young, who toured Ireland in 1770 described their conditions: "A landlord in Ireland can scarcely invent an order which a servant, labourer or cottier dares to refuse to execute... disrespect or anything tending towards sauciness he may punish with his cane."

"Landlords have assured me, that many of their cottiers would think themselves honoured by having their wives or daughters sent for the bed of their master, a mark of slavery that proves the oppression under which such people must live."

Many fought back in numerous secret societies. But their activities were sporadic and uncoordinated.

Between the landlords and the peasantry there was an urban class of lawyers, doctors, merchants and manufacturers.

Around Belfast they were mainly Presbyterians but in the rest of the country there were small but grow-



Wolfe Tone

This is what happened in France. Every time the leadership dithered the mob took action themselves, capturing the Bastille, bringing the king from Versailles to Paris, imposing price restrictions on food etc.

There was such a mob in Ireland. The historian Kevin Whelan writes that "there were at least 30 food riots in eighteen different Irish towns in the period 1772-94; there were 50 combinations (trade unions) in 27 different trades in Dublin in the period 1775-95."

But when weavers in Belfast and Antrim demonstrated for higher wages in 1792, the *Northern Star*—the United Irishmen's paper—denounced the agitation as the work of a "handful of idle and wicked men."

Similarly the French peasants played an important role in capturing the big estates from the landlords.

Such a peasant movement was actively discouraged by the United Irishmen.

Class is the key to understanding why such "elemental forces" were not unleashed in '98.

The *Northern Star* made it clear "by Liberty we never understood unlimited freedom, nor by Equality the levelling of property or the destruction of subordination."

It was for this reason that there was always such stress placed on help from a French invasion.

It was hoped that the mob and peasants would fight but under the leadership and control of the French troops.

For all that, 1798 is still a great inspiration. It brought together Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter in a fight for democracy and freedom.

It showed that the urge for revolutionary change could overcome the poison of sectarianism.

Today politicians urge people to respect Orangeism as a sign of Protestant culture.

But the history of 1798 shows that the Orange Order stood bitterly opposed the revolutionary instincts of many Protestants.

Opposing them today is the best ways to commemorate the fighters of 1798.

ing numbers of Catholics.

It is sometimes believed that "men of no property" led the 1798 rising. In fact many were men of quite considerable property.

The top leadership of the United Irishmen included in the north, Robert Simms—a merchant and newspaper owner, Henry Joy McCracken—a cotton manufacturer; and in Dublin, Oliver Bond—a woolen merchant.

From 1750 onwards there was a big expansion in manufacturing and trade. But this expansion came up against restrictions.

As Wolfe Tone argued "England chokes our rising commerce at every turn." Nothing could be done about this as long as political power was held by the aristocracy rather than the rising business class.

The American Revolution and Independence showed the potential for an independent democratic republic. But it was the French Revolution that

was to be the "morning star of liberty" in Ireland.

Here was a Catholic people that had overthrown its feudal king and aristocracy.

As Tone commented, "Look at France, where is the intolerance of popish bigotry now? Has not the Pope been burned in effigy in France?"

The argument was clear. An alliance of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter against their common oppressor—England and the landed aristocracy—was also possible in Ireland. This understanding was to lead to the foundation of the United Irishmen in the Autumn of 1791.

The French Revolution was hugely popular with supporters of the United Irishmen. 10,000 copies of *The Rights of Man*, Tom Paine's defence of the revolution, were sold in three months. At the same time it was serialised in four newspapers.

Two theatrical productions of the Fall of the Bastille were produced in Dublin theatres.

The organisation and influence of the United Irishmen grew massively. Links were established with the Defenders—a mainly Catholic peasant secret society.

John Beresford, a landed aristocrat, wrote, "God only knows but our heads are in no small danger, I promise you."

The government responded in a number of ways. In 1795 they funded the establishment of Maynooth College as a Catholic seminary.

A grateful Archbishop John Troy was to thunder in a sermon "Do not approach the rotten tree of French

Liberty, if you desire to live. It bears forbidden fruit, fair to the eye but rotten to those who taste it."

The foundation of the Orange Order was actively encouraged as a counter revolutionary force.

The British general John Knox admitted that his aim was "to increase the animosity between the Orangemen and the United Irishmen. Upon that animosity depends the safety of the centre counties of the North."

But above all there was a campaign of terror; a campaign of arrests, torture, deportations and executions.

By 1798 the movement was severely weakened and when the rising finally happened in Antrim and Down and in the counties around Dublin it was quickly defeated.

The only significant success was in Wexford. A Wexford Republic was established, but, isolated, it was brutally smashed after a month.

The real difficulty of the United Irish rebellion was that it was not driven forward by an urban crowd.

The strange case of Father Murphy

The involvement of Catholic priests in the Wexford rebellion was to be used as proof that it had been a popish plot.

But curiously enough those priests who did get involved were also condemned at the time by the Catholic bishops.

James Caulfield, Bishop of Ferns, stated that they "were excommunicated

priests, drunken and profligate couplebaggers, the very faeces of the Church."

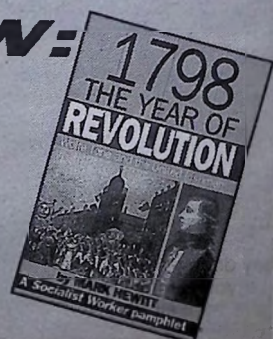
In 1877 the local parish priest prevented the erection of a statue of one of them, a Fr. Murphy, next to the church at Boolavogue.

Yet by the centenary celebrations the line had changed. When his portrait was sent to Dublin for restoration a roman collar was painted over his cravat to give him a more clerical identity!

OUT NOW:

The 1798 rebellion. A Marxist analysis of the 1798 revolution, by Mark Hewitt.

Price: £1.50, available from SW paper sellers and branch bookstalls plus 50p postage from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8



My kind of music

Soul – a message in the music

SOUL music has been seen mostly as good time, funky dance grooves or sensual love ballads, but the rich legacy of protest and message songs in soul is often overlooked.

Steeped in the tradition of gospel singing, the rhythms of R&B, jazz and the blues' use of black slang, soul artists eventually started using lyrics which expressed the struggle for equality and freedom explicitly from the mid-sixties onwards.

Artists such as The Impressions with 'People Get Ready' and James Brown 'Say It Loud I'm Black And I'm Proud' were both inspired by and an inspiration to the civil rights movement. Soul performers, like all black artists, had experienced the evil of racism first hand, often being forced to play in front of segregated audiences.

By 1963 Sam Cooke felt challenged to write a song which reflected the mood for change after hearing Bob Dylan's 'Blowing In The Wind'. The result was 'A Change Is Gonna Come'.

The song starts with a gospel refrain "I was born by the river in a little tent" and Cooke then adds the blues, "just like the river I've been running ever since".

With a nod to 'Old Man River' he sings how it's been "too hard living but I'm afraid to die, cause I don't know what's up there, beyond the sky. It's been a long time comin' but I know a change is gonna come".

He then shifts to the present as he goes downtown to the movies and gets told not to hang around. This was Cooke referring to the peaceful demonstrations against segregation and many have taken the song to reflect Martin Luther King's philosophy of peaceful, civil disobedience.

But in the bridge of the song, when he goes and asks his brother for help, he gets knocked back to his knees.

Realistic

This is a brutally realistic observation of what had gone down during the summer of '63 when police attacked peaceful demonstrations.

Other soul artists, such as Stanley Winston, Solomon Burke and George Perkins, followed Cooke's lead in the late '60's, with songs of resistance to racism and protest at the Vietnam War.

By the early 70's major artists such as James Brown, Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield and Stevie Wonder had gained sufficient control from their record companies to expand further on these themes.

In 'Living for the City' Stevie Wonder sings, "I hope you hear the voice inside my sorrow and that it motivates you to make a better tomorrow. This place is cruel, no place could be much colder, if we don't change this world will soon be over".

Against the background of Vietnam and the civil rights struggles, Gil Scott-Heron along with such groups as The Last Poets and The Watts Prophets developed a more militant, lyrically confrontational style which would be echoed in the rap form of the 80's and 90's. Tracks like 'E Pluribus Unum' and 'Whitey On the Moon' savagely mocked and satirised American society.

In 'The Revolution Will Not Be Televised' Scott-Heron found the perfect instrument to lampoon capitalist society and its mouthpiece the media.

"The revolution will not go better with Coke, The revolution will not fight germs that may cause bad breath, The revolution WILL put you in the driver's seat... The revolution will not be televised, will not be televised, The revolution will be no re-run brother, the revolution will be LIVE!"

There is one album which encapsulates all these themes and more—Marvin Gaye's 'What's Going On'.

A concept piece which ranges from the Vietnam war to unemployment, from drug abuse and spirituality to the 'Inner City Blues' in which Marvin sings "Rockets, moon shots, spend it on the havens. Money we make it, fore we see it you take it, Oh make me wanna holler the way the way they do my life, this ain't livin' no no no..."

If you want music that has a message for the brain as well as the feet check out any of the above.

by SHAY RYAN

book

When Ireland turned back Hitler's Jewish victims

by
KIERAN
ALLEN

DR ADOLF Mahr, the Director of the National Museum of Ireland between 1934 and 1939, was a German Nazi.

A top civil servant described him as "the most active and fanatical National Socialist in the German colony here".

Yet while Mahr occupied a respectable place in Irish society, thousands of Jewish victims of Hitler were denied entry.

Holocaust

The terrible story of how the Irish state responded to the Holocaust is recounted in a new book by Dermot Keogh.

Hatred of Jewish people was rife at the top of Irish society.

The Jesuit priest E.J. Cahill, who advised De Valera on the framing of the Irish constitution, believed that socialism and Jewish financial interests were the key enemies of Catholic Ireland.

At the outbreak of World War II the Emergency Powers Order was passed.

The then Secretary of the Department of Justice explained that "the main purpose of the order is to deal with Jews and other undesirables".

Many of these "undesirables", had fled the notorious Kristallnacht when almost every synagogue in Germany had been destroyed.

The Emergency Order



Kristallnacht 1938: Jews fleeing persecution were refused entry to Ireland.

gave the Irish Military Intelligence Unit G2 the power to keep a file on every single "alien". Seventy of these impoverished refugees were then deported at the outbreak of WW1.

After that applications for entry into Ireland had to go through the Irish representative in Berlin, Charles Bewley, an avowed fascist supporter. hat who claimed that the "moral degradation" of Germany "was if not caused, at least exploited by Jews".

Throughout the whole six years of "The Emer-

gency" only 60 Jewish refugees were admitted to Ireland.

Admitted

The Justice Department Secretary admitted that "our practice has been to discourage any substantial increase in the Jewish

community."

In a disgusting piece of racism he claimed that "they do not assimilate with our own people but remain a sort of colony of a world wide Jewish community".

Keogh's book pulls its punches on the racism of the Irish state. But there is

enough material in it to show that John O'Donoghue's attitude to refugees today is no different to that promoted by the Fianna Fail government in the midst of the Holocaust.

■ *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland* by Dermot Keogh, Cork University Press

book

The voice of America

TONI MORRISON is a great black woman writer. Her novels sell in their thousands and she attracts massive crowds to her readings.

Her work is all about oppression and a class-consciousness runs throughout, beginning with her first novel *The Bluest Eye*.

In 1987, with her fifth novel *Beloved*, Morrison began a courageous trilogy that chronicled the Black American experience.

Set in 1873, *Beloved* is a book haunted by the spiteful spirit of a dead baby.

Tragic

It is concerned with the tragic aftermath of slavery. Seth kills her infant daughter rather than see her face a life of exploitation as a slave.

by SINEAD
KENNEDY

Morrison continued the story of Black America with *Jazz* (1992).

Set in the 1920's, *Jazz* dramatises what happened to those born after Emancipation when they migrated from the rural South to the Industrial North to find a new way of life.

In her new novel *Paradise*, Morrison's history of Black America reaches the 1970's.

It is set in an all-black town in Oklahoma, founded by former slaves who have been turned away from other

so called "freedom-towns" because their skin is too dark.

This is a book where the marginalised have become central. It is Morrison's most overtly political book.

Critics tend to dislike her propensity for big statements.

But politics and polemics are central to her vision. "Born out of an old hatred, one that began when one kind of black man scorned another ... their selfishness had trashed two hundred years of suffering and triumph."

Her writing is sensual and magnetic.

Morrison is not an easy writer to read, she makes huge demands upon her reader, but to those who are willing to rally to her call the rewards are great.

book

Growing up in fifties Dublin

IRELAND in the fifties was a place of poverty, emigration and suffocating Church authority for working class people.

In *Another Country* Gene Kerrigan writes about growing up, not in rural Ireland, but in Cabra West in Dublin.

This working class estate was built in the forties to rehouse those displaced by slum and tenement clearance.

Gene's mother was unmarried when he was born and unusually was not intimidated into leaving the country or giving up her baby to the nuns.

Many of his aunts and uncles had emigrated to England to find a living along with some 2,000 others from Cabra West.

Leading politicians proclaimed emigration an inevitable and necessary "safety valve" to prevent explosive social tensions building up.

Kerrigan describes the heartache and loss as friends and families were separated by the necessity to leave home to earn a living.

But one theme runs like a river throughout the book: his loathing for the Catholic Church which dominated his childhood, inculcating fear and submission.

This is not an analytical or polemical book. It is a humorous and bitter-sweet recollection which will instantly strike a chord with thousands of working class people of his generation.

■ *Another Country, Growing up in '50s Ireland*, by Gene Kerrigan, Gill and MacMillan, £7.99

—KEVIN WINGFIELD



Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM
The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system. The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion. To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:
The SWP welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class. We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION
We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry. We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:
Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army. Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class.

Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states. We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:
Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it.

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

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:
To win socialism, workers need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWP aims to build such a party in Ireland.

CRAFT WORKERS

A rank and file rebellion

HUNDREDS of workers in local authorities and health boards took unofficial action over the past couple of weeks.

The workers were protesting that their union leaders signed a deal that would mean increased productivity for them. The action was coordinated by shop-stewards up and down the country.

Agreements
Analogue agreements should keep the earnings of craft workers comparable with other employments. General workers should then get 80 percent of this award. Two previous offers which fell short of their entitlement were overwhelmingly rejected by the workers and they voted massively for strike action. The action rolled around the country affecting hospitals and in some case corporation and county council services all over

the country. The biggest objection that most craft workers have to the Labour Court deal is the provision that they do the work of others in a "Main Trade Makes Good" scheme. As one craftworker in a Dublin hospital told *Socialist Worker*: "The main problem is there are too many preconditions. We need the £25 we are owed - no more and no less. We are entitled to this under the analogue. "Productivity should be a completely separate issue. It's about time the union leaders understood they should be organising the fight not running round facilitating the employers." The media has tried to trivialise the workers' case by claiming the difference between the two sides is only a few pence. But the TEEU, which is the only union officially opposing the deal, has estimated that craft workers stand to lose £1,442 from July 1997 to October 2000 if the deal is implemented.



SIPTU workers join the revolt

FOR general workers in the hospitals and health boards as well as some local authorities, the employers are demanding huge flexibility concessions. And SIPTU officials have caved in. One Dublin hospital shop steward told *Socialist Worker*: "There are four main areas which are completely unacceptable. On rosters the employers can bring in early starts and later finishes and combine long and short days. This job is hard enough already without that sort of pressure. "There is to be a Yellow-Pack grade or "Relief Rate" for new people of 87.5 percent of the proper rate. Redeployment is a real worry. This will mean that you could be working 15 years in

one hospital in the Eastern Health Board for example but you can then be told to work way across town at any of its hospitals. "You won't be given a choice—you have to go there. "You will have to work it 'under protest' and appeal to an arbitrator. But he will say that you accepted the deal so you have to go. "Another unacceptable condition is the issue of contract work. We see this as a real threat." Workers were kept in the dark about the small print of the agreement. One hospital domestic says: "It's disgraceful the way Matt Merrigan and other SIPTU officials are attempting to sell this deal." A hospital driver in a West Dublin hospital complained: "We were told nothing of the productivity clauses—we only discovered from the *Socialist Worker* leaflet circu-

lated here." Copies of the agreement were not made available to shop stewards by officials for at least a week. Anger spilled over when 30 non-nursing staff from St Mary's hospital in Dublin besieged a Dublin Health Branch meeting of SIPTU in Liberty Hall. Officials refused them the right to observe the meeting and had them put out. But the protest gave expression to anger at the sell out from the rank and file. Union officials quickly tried to defuse the situation by delaying the ballot on the deal and writing to Labour Court "for clarification". "This is just a ploy to get the workers to cool off. They hope they can polish up the deal and bring it back to us and we can be pressurised into accepting it", said one shop steward. "We need a massive No vote to show our union leaders we mean business. We want the money with no strings!"

Stewards take the lead

THE RANK and file rebellion by public sector workers was coordinated by shop stewards organised in Action Committees across the regions. These committees have the respect of the mass of union members and can stand up to the attacks of the media, the employers and trade union officials. Two hundred shop stewards meeting in Mullingar on 23 May called for a massive No vote in the ballots and for immediate strike action from 15th June, when the ballot result will be announced. Although some stewards had argued that they should organise a national stoppage before that time to maintain the impetus, the majority unfortunately decided to suspend

one-day actions until June 15th. The meeting also demanded the replacement of the chair of the craft group's negotiating committee for the consistent attacks on the strikes. **Stoppage**
One of the delegates told *Socialist Worker*: "We have to make sure there is a complete stoppage unless our claim is fully met when the vote comes in on June 15. "We need to keep this organisation together. The next few years we will face fierce pressure. "The real agenda is privatisation and contracting out health services. "We should be leafleting general workers to keep them in the picture and maintain unity across the workforce."

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS
If you want to join the Socialist Workers Party, fill in this form and send it to: PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682

Name

Address.....

Phone.....

SWP branch meetings

BELFAST CENTRAL
Meets every Thurs 8pm, Garrick Bar, Chichester Street.

BELFAST SOUTH
Meets every Weds at 7:30pm, Renshaws, University Street

CORK
Meets every Tues at 8pm in Dennehy's Pub, Commercial St.

DERRY
Meets every Tues in Badgers Bar at 8pm

DUN LAOGHAIRE
Meets every Tues at 8pm in Christian Institute.

ENNISKILLEN
Meets every fortnight Contact national address for details

GALWAY
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square

MAYNOOTH
Meets every Thursday at 16.30pm Class Hall D Arts Maynooth college

WATERFORD
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in ATGWU Hall, Keyser St.

DUBLIN NORTH-WEST
Meets every Tuesday at 8:00pm in The Snug, Dorset St.

DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK
Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm Artane/Beamount Recreation Centre opp Artane Castle

DUBLIN DRIMNAGH
Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Black Forge (formerly the Bentley), Drimnagh Rd

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL
Meets every Wed at 8:30pm in Conways, Parnell St.

DUBLIN RATHMINES LOWER
Meets every Wed at 8pm in O'Connells Pub, Richmond St.

DUBLIN RATHMINES UPPER
Meets every Mon at 8pm in O'Connells Pub, Richmond St.

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL
Meets every Thur at 8pm in the Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

DUBLIN TALLAGHT/CLONDALKIN
Meets Monday at 8pm in the Steering Wheel, Clondalkin

There are *Socialist Worker* members in:
COLERAINE; LURGAN; CAVAN; DONEGAL; NAAS; KILKENNY; DUNDALK; ATHLONE; DROGHEDA.
If you would like to get in touch, contact our national office at (01) 872 2682, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

SOCIALISM into the MILLENNIUM

Friday 5th & Saturday 6th June Queens University Students Union
FRIDAY 8pm: After the Peace Settlement—the Left in Northern Ireland—Kieran Allen (Editor, *Socialist Worker*)
SATURDAY 10.30-11.45: Irish Patriot or Revolutionary? Wolfe Tone and the legacy of the United Irishmen—Mark Hewitt;
12-00-1.25: Trade Unions, their leaders and the Rank and File—Colm Bryce
2pm-3.15: Women's Liberation, Marxism and Oppression—Joan Gallagher
3.30-4.45: The Protestant Working Class and the Struggle for Socialism Today—Niall Morton
5pm: Building the Revolutionary Party—Kieran Allen
Tickets £2 (£1 students/unemployed) For more details contact SWP, PO Box 354 Tomb Street Belfast

News & reports—politics; the unions

send in your reports: telephone (01) 872 2682; fax: (01) 872 3838; e-mail: swp@clubi.ie

Conferences show anger at P2000

CPSU

THE CIVIL and Public Service Union conference voted by a big majority to hold a special conference to discuss withdrawal from Partnership 2000.

If the special conference results in a withdrawal it could pull the rug from under partnership.

The vote came after another motion for immediate withdrawal was defeated. That vote shows that a strong campaign is needed over the next few months to win the argument for withdrawal.

CPSU general secretary Blair Horan claimed that there is no mechanism to pull out of P2000!

Increases

But he also argued that Partnership could work better for low paid civil servants if the union sought flat rate increases.

It is true that flat rate increases can help the lower paid but Blair Horan's idea is to claim a low percentage increase on the overall pay bill and distribute it as flat rate increases.

In reality this would leave workers who are slightly better off with the same tiny increases that have always been given under partnership. Instead the union should insist that the government pay substantial increases by taxing the rich rather than robbing one

group of workers to pay another.

Also at the conference, Blair Horan announced that the Executive was calling off industrial action over job cuts. The members had voted two to one to take action over the loss of 200 posts but it was called off on the basis that the figure had been reduced to 100.

There was some anger over this climbdown but unfortunately no motions emerged to overturn the Executive's decision.

A motion calling for an amnesty for refugees was defeated at the conference. This is particularly unfortunate since CPSU members deal with refugees in the Departments of Justice and Social Welfare.

There is a core of good anti racists in the union but they need to carry an argument with the members to counter the government's racist lies.

THE CPSU conference voted to ballot members in Telecom Eireann for industrial action to force the company to pay Partnership 2000.

Delegates condemned "bullying and blackmail" by Telecom for threatening to refuse P2000 increases if staff do not agree to the new ESOP share deal.

Telecom delegates also exposed the huge gap between the rank and file and the union officials over the share deal itself. The ESOP is unpopular because it gives major concessions to the company in return for an uncertain reward from the shares.

Disgracefully, the leaders of the CWU—Telecom's biggest union—are so anxious to sell the ESOP that they appear to accept the blackmail on P2000.

Rank and file pressure has forced the CPSU leaders to at least threaten action over P2000. This pressure is needed across all the unions to force Telecom to pay up and to urge a No vote on the ESOP.

IMPACT

THE IMPACT union conference clearly demonstrated a mood of frustration and anger.

Speaker after speaker denounced McCreavy's last budget, the rhetoric about partnership and the scandal of low pay.

Revolt

Delegates were in revolt against the union leaders.

When the Central Execu-

Right wing win CPSU executive

THE RIGHT wing of the CPSU has recaptured the Executive Committee from the left. The supporters of Blair Horan and partnership won a higher share of the vote and a number of more left wing figures lost their seats.

utive Committee opposed a motion from branches, this almost always guaranteed that it would be passed.

Against CEC recommendations, delegates voted for a change from biennial to annual conferences.

A motion that union officers should be elected by the general membership received a straight majority but was lost because it did not get the required two thirds majority.

A special delegate con-

ference in 1999 to discuss strategies in a post Partnership 2000 era was also agreed.

Conference also voted to support the right of refugees to work and committed the union to oppose any attempts by the state to forcibly deport them.

But because of the lack of an alternative leadership and strategy much of the anger remained unfocussed.

The leadership put on a left face to try to relate to the mood. Peter McLoone, General Secretary, declared that "we can't have a repeat of the 1998 budget."

A policy document on the next pay round, committing the union to seeking a flat rate increase in the first year followed by percentage increases in the following two years was passed as it seemed to go some way to addressing the issue of low pay.

But the reality is that it will do nothing to eliminate the huge differential between the top and bottom rates of pay.

Coordination between branch activists will be required if the mood for change is to be given any positive direction.

This is a significant result because last year a group modelling itself on the Broad Lefts of the 1980s won a majority for the first time.

They had built their credibility by convincing the members to reject a grade restructuring deal.

Unfortunately the same group split over a slightly improved deal which still included job cuts and "atypical recruitment".

Opposition to this deal was left to a small group outside the Executive and the deal was accepted.

The left's weakness was to focus on winning positions at the top of the union instead of building around a clear set of arguments for union action.

Socialist arguments are needed to consistently challenge the right when they push for compromise.

But rank and file organisation is also needed to turn these arguments into action from below.

Michael's Hospital strike vote

WORKERS AT St Michael's Hospital in Dun Laoghaire have voted overwhelmingly for strike action.

They are protesting against bullying on the wards and roster arrangements.

Hospitals have a terrible tradition of petty harassment. Although the ICTU has produced a code of practice on bullying, the St Michael's workers now feel they have to take action.

The hospital has both public and a private wing. On the private wing a practice has developed on not replacing staff who leave.

Workers are now considering bringing in no cover policy to stop these backdoor attempts at cost cutting.

Health service

Student nurses protest at gross exploitation

STUDENT nurses across the country have staged a series of lunch time protests.

The students are demanding an increase in financial support from the government.

They have to survive on a grant of just £54 a week.

In the past the students had free accommodation but now they have to pay rent, ESB and gas.

Many work from 12 to 18 hours a week to supplement their grant.

The students are demanding a £75 a week allowance in addition to costs incurred when on placement away

from their main hospital.

One student nurse told *Socialist Worker* that the government and the health boards are "exploiting the vocation" of nurses.

They have already voted overwhelmingly to reject the £1 million package offered by Health Minister Cowan.

Delegates at the recent INO conference voted to give full support to the students.

Unfortunately the wave of protests has been suspended until June because the Fine Gael spokesperson on Health Alan Shatter is introducing a private members bill on the issue then.

Waterford nurses vote to strike

SIX hundred nurses in Waterford Regional Hospital have voted overwhelmingly to strike over staffing levels and conditions at the hospital.

The health board is cutting back to stay within its budget, which it says is

"hopelessly inadequate".

But the board is now planning to give more beds to private consultants to balance the budget.

This will mean cuts in "non-emergency" procedures like hip operations.

If the nurses strike they can force the government to provide proper funding.

NIR

Train drivers strike

TRAIN DRIVERS in the North took unofficial action on 22nd May against management's decision to suspend a driver involved in a rail accident last month.

Around 30 drivers phoned in sick, leaving 50 per cent of trains in the depot.

Translink managers went on TV to condemn the action. But drivers phoned in to say they had "gone sick because of stress caused by management changes to working conditions".

The drivers' union, the AEEU, had refused to call action to support the suspended driver.

Officials

But union officials moved quickly to get a resolution, getting management to withdraw the suspension, and recommended an immediate return to work.

Train accidents have increased across Britain due to the run down in investment and privatisation.

It is the same in the North. Richard Branson, who operates Virgin trains, was in Belfast the previous day pro-

moting the peace agreement with Mo Mowlam. Branson offered to get involved in privatising trains in Belfast. Branson's Virgin line in east Scotland has the worse record for service this year.

Anger at the effects of privatisation is growing among rail workers. British rail union leader, Llew Adams, was

beaten in the election by left-wing candidate, Brian Rix in early May.

The vote reflected anger among drivers that the union had not opposed privatisation and had even set up a joint training company with Branson.

Dublin Bus

Viability plan to attack workers

DETAILS of the Dublin Bus viability plan began to emerge at recent NBRU annual meetings.

One proposal is that the school bus service be contracted out to private businesses.

This would be the thin end of the wedge for wider privatisation. *Sunday Tribune* journalist Shane Coleman who has close access to Mary O'Rourke has argued that Dublin Bus could face privatisation in five years.

Private contractors would also provide a ready made scab force in the event of strike action. This has already happened in Bus Eireann.

The viability plan also includes a scheme for a yellow pack entry grade where new drivers would face lower wages for seven years.

The union leaders of SIPTU and NBRU are already arguing that compliance with O'Rourke is the only "realistic" way forward. It will fall to rank and file workers to resist these sell-outs.

Cork Home Helps

'LOW PAY, No way' was the slogan of the lively protest march in Cork city on Saturday last.

About 150 attended to support the home helps for decent pay campaign. The march was organised by the Home Helps campaign in association with the ATGWU.

Home helps are employed by the health board as an auxiliary service meeting the needs of invalid outpatients.

The Southern Health Board pays home helps at a rate of only £1.70 an hour. This was described by many of the home helps as a "slave wage".

One woman told *Socialist Worker* that without the service provided by the home helps many of their elderly and disabled patients would be unable to cope.

Despite this, she said that the Southern Health board had so far refused to meet representatives of the home helps.

The chairperson of the Home Help campaign,

Mary Arro-Smith said that they were going to continue the campaign until they had won their pay claim.

Clearly the home helps are joining the growing ranks of Irish workers who are gaining the confidence to stand up to their employers.

Where does the home helps campaign go from here?

Joining the union is a step in the right direction but the home helps should push within the ATGWU for sym-

pathy action from other workers.

Strike action would see the health board concede their pay claim far quicker than the threat of a few votes gone astray in the next election.

Socialist Worker encourages its supporters in the Cork area to show solidarity with the home helps by attending the picket of the Southern health board executive planned for Saturday 2nd June. See posters for more details.

QUEENS LECTURERS

OVER 100 lecturers at Queens University are threatened with redundancy, under plans announced by new vice-chancellor, George Bain.

Only academics who were actively involved in research would be able to avoid redundancy.

The moves are part of the general attack on spending on universities, with departments forced to look outside for funding and many staff employed on casual contracts.

A report to the AUT conference, held in May, said that universities now ranked with the hotel industry as among the highest concentration of casual workers.

Bain has been promoted as a fresh face at Queens by student union leaders.

But Bain has been head of Blair's Low Pay Unit until taking his post in January. His attacks on university staff show that he will be ruthless in imposing student fees and the cuts to grants next year.

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p

Inside:

INDONESIA: A dictator is overthrown
—PAGE 8

THE SPLITS IN UNIONISM
—PAGE 5

1798 and the Politics of the United Irishmen: Page 8

Solidarity price £1

As sectarian politicians dominate Assembly elections

WE NEED CLASS POLITICS

AS THE media hype on the North's referendum dies down, politics has slotted back into its sectarian mould.

Unionist politicians say that the only majority they were concerned with in the referendum was a majority of Protestants.

They raise sectarian fears about Gerry Adams in cabinet and complain that prisoners have been released.

But the main reason why Northern Ireland has one of

the highest number of prisoners per head of the population is because of the political situation they helped to create.

There are strong hopes that parties based in working class areas, such as Sinn Fein and the PUP, will promote a different type of politics focused on social issues.

Link Up

But both parties remain locked in their communal camps, emphasising "identity" and "cultural" issues which encourage workers to

line up with the middle class of "their own" community.

Already the Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams is calling for an electoral pact with the middle-class SDLP in an effort to increase the nationalist vote.

After the vote, PUP leader David Ervine said that "he had to take his hat off to David Trimble".

The one certainty is that the new Assembly will not tackle these problems. All the main parties in the Assembly are completely committed to running capitalism in the North.

The SDLP, Sinn Fein, the PUP and the Ulster Unionists are all in favour of the massive tax cuts to business announced by British Chancellor, Gordon Brown.

Prosperity

Their aim is to copy and compete with the "Celtic Tiger" of the South, by attracting high-tech investment.

They claim that this will mean new jobs and prosperity.

Yet the NI Chamber of Commerce admitted last week that the millions in

grants handed out by the Industrial Development Board had not created a single extra new job in the last year.

There has been a wave of redundancies and factory closures since last November.

We should support any left candidates who are standing in the assembly elections.

But a party that becomes the voice of workers will have to be forged in the day to day struggles outside these elections.

A charter for class politics

SOCIALISTS in the North have launched a charter for class politics which every trade unionist should endorse.

For years we have been told that either defending the union or getting rid of the border had to come before everything else. Now there are no more excuses.

■ There should be a decent minimum wage to end the scandal of poverty pay in the North.

■ The Tory anti-union laws, which were used to threaten the Montupet strikers with jail for being on a picket line last year, should be repealed.

■ The 11 plus exam, which each year dashes the hopes of thousands of working class children in the North, should be abolished.

■ Taxes on business should be raised to pay for free education and the health service.

■ Privatisation, which will destroy jobs and wreck public services, must be stopped.

The charter commits trade unionists to supporting any group of workers involved in struggle. That is where the new politics, the politics of socialism, will be forged in the North.

Order your copy of the charter now from SWP, PO Box 354 Tomb Street Belfast