

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p Solidarity price £1

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HARNEY'S



■ Harney

WAR ON



■ Thatcher

WELFARE

MARY HARNEY is establishing herself as the Maggie Thatcher of Ireland. Since the start of September she has launched a campaign to harass and threaten the unemployed with the loss of social welfare.

Unemployed people have been hauled in for interviews and are being pressured to take up low paid work. Harney's aim is to set up a pool of cheap labour for the employers.

Her ambition is to make Ireland a low pay economy. In 1994, she told the Progressive Democrat conference that "we need a low wage economy where people keep more of their disposable income. In Hong Kong, for example, a very successful economy, people work for low wages. They're not rich but they're happy and they cope."

Now Harney is stepping up her war on welfare. A report commissioned by her department has recommended that lone parents who are aged under 25 be excluded from Community Employment

schemes. People with disabilities are also to be restricted.

Under this Community Employment scheme people work seventeen and a half hours for a little more than their social welfare.

Deprive

They are also allowed to keep other benefits such as rent allowance. But now Harney wants to deprive single parents of these meagre benefits.

Brendan O'Donoghue, is a principal of

a school in Harney's own constituency of Tallaght. He has said that local people are 'absolutely outraged and fuming at the proposals'. Half of the lone parents who had gone on the scheme in Killinarden, Tallaght had found full time jobs as a result.

Harney's mission is to attack the poor and underprivileged in Irish society. She has launched a war on welfare to help cut the taxes on the rich and to force workers to take low paid jobs.

It is time she was stopped.

THE RICH ARE THE REAL SCROUNGERS

...War on the poor...War on the poor...War on the poor...War on the poor...

RICH HAVE THEIR TAX BILLS WRITTEN OFF

WHILE MARY Harn-ey launches her war against social welfare recipients, the rich are being let off their tax bills. Last year the Revenue Commissioners wrote off a staggering £281 million from the rich.

Among the taxes written off were:

- £41 million in Corporation Profits tax. Ireland has the lowest rate of taxes on profits in Europe.

But the greed of the Irish rich knows no bounds.

- £61 million in PAYE taxes. These taxes were deducted from workers

but they were pocketed by their employers.

The Revenue Commissioners have a notoriously cosy relationship

with the Irish rich. During the period when Haughey was amassing his personal fortune, there was no inquiry into the sources of

his funds.

Now the Revenue Commissioners are again letting the rich off their tax bills because it was 'un-

economic to pursue' to issue. But their own report shows that this excuse is a blatant lie.

A three person audit

unit who worked on Capital Acquisitions tax which covers inheritance and gift taxes was able to find £3.4 million in undeclared taxes.

The same unit estimated that underpayment of taxes occurred in nearly 80 percent of these cases.

But when they asked their superiors for more staff they were refused.

The reality is that the Irish state will do everything to protect the wealthy law breakers who donate to the political establishment.

ONE LAW FOR THE RICH...

THE CONTRAST between the treatment of social welfare recipients and rich tax fraudsters is shocking.

In 1997, for example, there were only three successful prosecutions for tax evasion by the rich.

No one was sent to prison even though millions was involved.

Yet in the same year, there were 119 criminal court cases for the small number of people who abused unemployed assistance and benefits schemes.

Some of this number even included employers.

Seven prison sentences were handed out.

Social welfare fraud amounts to a mere 0.33 per cent of total spending.

Stalin's Spanish gold

THE SPANISH Civil War inspired millions of working class people around the world. From Europe and America nearly 60,000 volunteers joined the International Brigades to defend democracy in Spain—nearly one in six was killed.

Hitler and Mussolini supplied Franco with fleets of modern warplanes and tanks.

For decades many believed that the Soviet Union supplied proper guns to the Republican forces and was a bastion in the struggle against Franco's fascist forces.

Swindled

However secret accounts discovered in the Russian archives by historian Gerald Howson have revealed that Stalin swindled the Republic out of several hundred million pounds in arms deals.

Stalin's scam was to fiddle exchange rates and make the Republic pay over the odds for the arms it needed to fight Franco.

It is estimated that Stalin embezzled £377 million from the Republic which was fighting for its life.

A tyrant at home, Stalin was a disaster for the workers struggle abroad.

WHY WAS THIS FF TD PAID BY A DEVELOPER?

TDS AND councillors are only supposed to represent their voters. But Liam Lawlor has different ideas. Being an elected representative for him is an important business opportunity.

The Fianna Fail TD for Dublin West was paid a £3,500 fee each month in the early eighties to represent the interests of Tom Gilmartin, a major property developer

Lawlor's consultancy fee to help Gilmartin expand his property interests.

Centre

One of his major projects was a proposed shopping centre site in Quarry Vale.

This 200 acre site was to draw shoppers from the new Dublin orbital motorway which would meet the Galway Road.

Coincidentally, the shopping centre lies in the heart of Lawlor's constituency. Lawlor, of course, trots out the usual Fianna Fail line that no



Liam Lawlor

favours were asked for or received. Yet he saw little reason to refuse the generous donations.

After all his party

leader was getting a regular 'consultancy fee' of £30,000 a month from Ben Dunne.

Lawlor was also a

member of the Board of one Larry Goodman's major companies. But again there were no favour asked or given to Larry!

Belmondo charge thrown out

BELMONDO WANTETE who continues to endure racial harassment by police, scored a minor victory in the courts recently when a Garda case against him was dismissed after forty minutes.

He was charged with not

having adequate identification. By this the police meant a passport.

However the judge ruled that "other reasonable documents" was enough to suffice.

It also emerged that the

gardai had not read Belmondo his rights properly.

The case of Belmondo Wantete is a clear case of police racial harassment and Belmondo is still facing a number of serious charges including the assault of a Garda.

Bumper harvest

THE GOVERNMENT has just granted Irish farmers a special £13 million package to compensate them for the Russian Beef crisis.

The farmers held only one protest march and before they knew it Bertie Ahern was at the National Ploughing Championship announcing their £13 million grant.

Although the package was welcomed by farmers they still claim they need more to save them from bankruptcy.

The real story is very different. Irish farmers are massively subsidised by European and Irish PAYE workers.

Staggering

Last year a staggering £900 million was handed out in subsidies from Europe.

Most of the money goes to the the large farmers who have survived the huge changes in Irish agriculture.

Without selling a calf, a lamb or a litre of milk a farmer can get thousands of pounds from Brussels.

In the past farmers made money producing food but today it is earned by filling out subsidy forms".

Every animal earns money.

An individual cow or calf yields a £140 premium per year plus an £84 beef premium in disadvantaged areas, plus a £90 special beef premium for castrated male calves in disadvantaged areas, plus £30 extensification premium for cows, plus £30 extensification premium for calves.

That comes to a grand total of £407.

Sometimes the less work farmers do, the more money they get.

Every Irish farmer is paid £125 per hectare for not removing a stone wall A farmer who surrenders newly born calves to be slaughtered gets a £90 premium.

A farmer who retires at 55 and gets paid £920 per month courtesy of the EU.

Yet farmer's organisation regularly denounce trade unionists for seeking the right to early retirement for nurses or busworkers.

Even if farmers get caught trying to make illegal gains, its not a problem. EU subsidy fraud is not a crime under Irish law.

The Irish state is only interested in pursuing the crimes of the poor.

...world economy in crisis...world economy in crisis...world economy

The day the system almost collapsed

"THE MOST serious financial challenge in 50 years". This is how Bill Clinton described the recession which is sweeping the global economy.

Panic has hit the stock markets of the world and millions of workers have already lost their jobs. The predictions that the Celtic Tiger will boom until 2010 is now looking like a sick joke.

A fortnight ago, one of the largest financial institutions in Wall Street effectively collapsed. Long Term Capital Management had run up debts of at least £200 billion which is several times greater than the total output of Ireland.

Crazy

The company is a leading player in the crazy world of hedge funds where vast amounts of money are borrowed to take bets on currency movements.

Many of the directors of Long Term Capital Management were gurus from the so-called 'Chicago School' of free market economics. They included two Nobel prize winners who drew up computer projections on how currency movements were supposed to work.

Yet the collapse of the Asian economies destroyed all their predictions and their huge

Bombing Serbia to establish domination

POLITICAL INSTABILITY and the threat of war have always followed economic crises.

The rulers of the Western powers are desperate to assert their control over a world that is torn by new rivalries and greed.

This is what lies behind the NATO plans to bomb Serbia in retaliation for their actions in Kosovo.

Atrocities

NATO claims they are taking action for humanitarian reasons in order to warn Milosevic against atrocities.

But the Western powers have stood by and watched atrocities in African countries and often supplied the guns used in the massacres.

empire came crashing down.

Because the collapse of Long Term Credit Management threatened to leave behind a black hole in the world's financial markets, the US Federal Reserve contacted 15 of the world's top banks to raise a special £2 billion rescue programme.

One senior economist claimed it was like 'the Armageddon asteroid about two inches from earth'.

Far more serious than the panic on the stock markets is the devastation in the real economies. In the early nineties, wealthy investors poured money into the 'emerging markets' in the hope of super profits.

Yet today Brazil, which is the ninth biggest economy in the world, totters on the brink of an economic meltdown after more than £20 billion was removed in the last month.

The government has been forced to raise interest rates to 50 per cent in a vain attempt to persuade international capital not to destroy its economy. It will mean massive suffering for Brazil's huge working population.

If Brazil goes the way of the Russian economy, Latin America, and even the US, will face a new round of economic devastation.

The chaos that is spreading in the global economy shows the nonsense behind the free market dogma of recent years.

The reality is that we live in a world dominated by the greed and the logic of the madhouse.

NATO action against Serbia is taking place after Milosevic has concluded his brutal war against the Kosovans. It will do nothing to reverse the conquest.

The real target of the attack is in fact Russian influence in the region. Although wrecked by crisis, Russia is still a military power — an 'Indonesia with missiles' as one commentator labelled it.

Its recent economic collapse has brought forth a more nationalist regime.

The threats of NATO bombing of its Serbian neighbour is a cynical warning to Russia not to step beyond its own doorstep.

These cynical war manoeuvres will accompany the growing crisis across the globe. That is why opposition to war has to be linked to a fight against capitalism itself.



Can the US organise a rescue plan

FINANCE MINISTERS from the G7—the seven richest countries of the world—met in Washington last fortnight.

They were told by US President Bill Clinton that the rich nations had to establish an emergency fund to stave off a 1930s style economic collapse.

Some have argued that this new Marshall Aid type programme can stabilise capitalism and make it work effectively.

The reality is that the Marshall plan was introduced in 1948 when the world economy was starting a major boom.

Unite

The US had a surplus of funds available to help rescue the devastated economies of Europe. There was also agreement within the Western powers to unite in order to counter Russia in the Cold War.

Today the proposals for the new rescue plan come after a decade of low growth and declining rates of profit. And the major capitalist powers are now more deadly economic rivals.

This has meant huge opposition inside each national economy to providing funds for bailing out rivals. The US congress has already put up fierce opposition to a £18 billion capital contribution to the IMF.

Even if a modest rescue fund is put together, this pro-

vides no guarantees that capitalism will revive.

The Japanese government recently established the biggest ever public investment

programme, yet its economy is still facing its greatest recession since the 1930s.

Government intervention in the market can stimulate de-

mand, but it cannot force the rich to invest and create jobs.

That will require far more decisive measures to tackle the power of capital.

WHY WE NEED A REAL SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

THE GLOBAL economic crisis shows why a real socialist alternative is needed. However it will not be found in the proposal to merge Labour and Democratic left.

The 'mission statement' for the merger combines support for big business with a policy of social justice.

But these are two contradictory aspirations. Supporting cuts in taxes on company profits can only mean less money for schools, hospitals and public transport.

As the economic crisis grows, the policy of relying on the market is even more absurd.

This is why a real socialist alternative is needed to press for concrete measures that will transfer the costs of the market system onto the rich and not the working class.

In response to the housing crisis for example, the Socialist Workers

Party has advocated an action programme to demand rent control to curb the greed of landlords, the nationalisation of building land, and a new tax on the rich to fund an emergency local authority house building programme.

Instead of allowing 40,000 people to languish on the housing waiting lists we need measures that tackle the greed of the rich.

Global

It is the same story in every other area of the economy. The worse thing we can do is believe the propaganda that 'nothing can be done' about the global recession.

The key is to press for workers action around concrete issue that starts to transfer the balance of forces to our class - and away from the greedy minority who have once again brought the world to the brink of chaos.



Germany:

Workers sweep out Kohl

MILLIONS OF voters swung left in Germany's general election on Sunday, driving Tory leader Helmut Kohl from office.

The elections saw the SPD, equivalent to the Labour Party, become the largest party in parliament with over 41 percent of the vote.

SPD leader Gerhard Schröder looks set to form a coalition government with the Green Party which got 6.5 percent of the vote.

The elections are a stunning defeat for Helmut Kohl, who has been leader of Germany for 16 years and who oversaw the unification of West and East Germany eight years ago.

His conservative CDU party got only 35 percent of the vote—its worst result since 1949. Kohl himself was beaten by the SPD candidate in his home district.

Fate

The same fate befell every other CDU government minister and the party was only returned to parliament through the proportional representation element of the election.

The results confirm the shift to the left among voters in Europe over the last few years.

There are now only two countries, Spain and Ireland, out of the 15 members of the European Union which are governed by conservative parties.

Just three years ago Europe's four most powerful countries—Germany, France, Italy and Britain—were led by the Right.

Now each has a Labour type government.

Germany has been held up as a model of economic and political stability for 40 years.

But the past few years have seen the return of mass unemployment and sharp battles between trade unions and the bosses.

All the evidence shows it was a working class vote which brought the SPD to power, despite Schröder's claim that it was "a victory for the New Middle in German society".

The SPD polled higher in working class than in middle class areas. It also won over 60 percent in most parts of the Ruhr, Germany's industrial heartland.

There was also a huge swing to the SPD in the former East Germany. Kohl's party won support in the east in the elections of 1992 and

1994 on the back of hope that unification would bring Western living standards. This time Kohl's party did worse in the east than the west as the free market has led to unemployment of 17 percent.

Schröder has tried to portray himself as a "Clinton/Blair" figure who could win the backing of big business and move the SPD away from the trade unions and reliance on working class votes.

Germany's employers' organisations expressed some sympathy for Schröder earlier this year, but as the election drew closer they threw all their support behind Kohl.

And Schröder's Blairite campaign ran into the ground in the summer.

His poll lead over the Tories dwindled from 12 percent to almost nothing as he campaigned on law and order and pro-business policies.

The SPD was forced to shift left from August onwards.

Oscar Lafontaine, the left leaning party chairman who embodies the SPD's traditional wing, played a prominent role in the election campaign.

Schröder too echoed the concerns of workers.

The two central campaign issues were unemployment and welfare.



Celebrating in Bonn

Over four million workers in Germany are unemployed—11 percent of the workforce. Schröder promised to create jobs and make

it harder for small firms to sack workers.

He promised to restore 100 percent sickness pay which the Tories abolished.

Schröder promised to increase bad weather payments for Germany's hundreds of thousands of construction workers.

SPD strategists also distanced the party from Blair over the summer, saying it was electorally damaging for the party to be associated with someone so pro free market.

Australia:

Government scrapes in but Hanson defeated

AUSTRALIA'S right wing coalition managed to scrape back into office at last weekend's general election, with a much reduced majority.

The election also saw the racist One Nation Party heavily defeated, with leader Pauline Hanson losing her seat.

The National/Liberal coalition, headed by prime minister John Howard, is far from being out of trouble, with its fragile majority and the economic crisis guaranteeing a period of instability.

The coalition, which came to power just two and a half years ago after workers punished the right wing Labour government at the polls, saw its parliamentary

majority cut severely.

In fact most people voted for Labour—51.5 percent as opposed to 48.5 percent for Howard—but the complicated voting system put the National/Liberal coalition back into office.

The election saw a 5 percent shift to Labour. In its heartland Labour did well, but it did not attract enough votes in marginal seats.

Bruised

It is clear that many workers still feel bruised by the experience of Labour's 13 years in office, when it savagely attacked its own supporters and loved up to big business figures like Rupert Murdoch. Labour also ran a lack-

lustre campaign, asking people to vote for it without offering radical solutions to the coming economic crisis. Australia is linked to Asia, and there is already a slowdown in the economy.

Although not all the votes had been counted before Socialist Worker went to press, it is clear that the racist One Nation Party suffered a severe blow.

From an opinion poll rating of 16 percent at the start of campaigning, its support collapsed to around 8-10 percent of the vote.

However, One Nation did get a significant "primary vote", showing that Hanson's party still has appeal, especially in the rural areas. But for now the party is out of the game.



Hanson's One Nation Party suffered a severe blow

The National/Liberal coalition will now try to push through the unpopular privatisation of Telstra—the state telecommunications industry—and a version of value added tax called the GST.

The election will not stop struggles breaking out, such as the dockers' fight against the government earlier this year.

Last week in Melbourne 4,000 people marched against plans to develop a uranium mine on Aboriginal land, and 10,000 marched against anti-union laws.

And the Victoria state government is hugely unpopular because its privatised and deregulated gas processing plant exploded last week, leaving the population without gas.

Don't trust Schröder

SCHRÖDER would still like to push pro-business policies even though he was forced to shift left to win the election.

He wants to cut taxes on profits from 45 to 35 percent and lower the top rate of income tax from 53 to 49 percent.

This can only mean spending cuts and further attacks on workers' living standards.

Schröder is committed to deregulation and extending the free market, though not as far as Tony Blair.

He made it known before the election that he would prefer to govern in coalition with the CDU rather than allow the Greens into his government.

But opposition from SPD members and trade unionists to an alliance with the CDU meant he was forced to seek a coalition with the Greens.

Schröder will sooner or later have to confront the millions of workers who voted for him if he wants to cut welfare and attack workers' living standards.

The Greens, the probable partners in a coalition, face the same problem.

Leader

They began as a protest party in the early 1980s, drawing in many former radical socialists, like their current leader Josha Fischer.

They are still seen as a left wing party, but in recent years Fischer has moved the party towards the political mainstream.

The Greens call for environmental controls and are opposed to NATO and Western military intervention around the world. They also want tax cuts for the rich, ecological taxes which will hit workers and "greater labour flexibility".

Playing second fiddle in Schröder's government will sharpen the split in the Greens between left and right and is likely to bring the Green Party leaders into conflict with those who voted for them.

Trimble's brinkmanship on decommissioning

THE BELFAST agreement has already run into major trouble as David Trimble has upped his demands on de-commissioning.

But the issue is only being raised to please the ultra-right wingers in the Unionist party who voted against the agreement.

Ever since the majority of Catholics and Protestants voted for the peace deal, some Unionist politicians have worked hard to scupper it. They have won a considerable hearing from the rank and file members of the Unionist Party who are steeped in sectarian politics.

Warned

One of their leaders, Jeffrey Donaldson, has warned that if Trimble joins Sinn Fein in a cabinet he will consider setting up a new Unionist alliance with the DUP.

Another arch conservative, William Ross, has claimed that Trimble is now forced to run the Unionist Party as a PR machine rather than face his own members.

In reality, the issue is a smokescreen to prevent any form of power sharing emerging in Northern Ireland.

At the Young Unionist conference several speakers claimed that de-commissioning was not enough. They wanted Sinn Fein to prove that the IRA had been

disbanded before they could take their seats in a cabinet.

The tiny number of weapons that the IRA and the UVF have, pale into insignificance beside the large number of legal weapons that the Unionist fur coat brigade possess.

At the moment there are 138,727 legally held firearms in the North. Trimble's supporters claim that this number reflects the fact that Northern Ireland has a high number of farmers.

But this is nonsense. Scotland is similar to Northern Ireland but it has only 100,000 legal firearms even though its population is nearly three times the size.

Many of those who hold a licence for guns in the North belong to the 52 authorised firearms clubs. Many of these were set up between 1969 and 1970 by former B Specials whose regiment was disbanded because of its notorious sectarian reputation.

Trimble wants to work the Belfast agreement because he sees it as a way of modernising the sectarian structures of the North.

As an arch Tory, he knows that if politics continue to be organised around the competition of Catholics and Protestants the labour movement will remain weak. But he is frightened of taking on his own ultra right wing because the Unionist Party has built up its support through sectarianism.

In the background, Blair and



Trimble and Mallon

Ahern are working to 'choreograph' yet another solution to this issue. But even if they succeed it shows the future style of Northern politics.

While all the parties from Sinn Fein to the DUP will support policies which cut the taxes

on the rich, they will play the sectarian game of communal politics to the last.

As the growing recession threatens to devastate many jobs in Northern Ireland, it is time that class politics were pushed to the fore.

Blair's business backers

WHY IS THIS MAN STILL FREE?

This is Carlos Salinas, a former President who fled his country in a welter of allegations about corruption.

Fianna Fail which is attacking refugees lets him stay here because he has some friends in high places. Tony Ryan, the boss of GPA, and Albert Reynolds both meet him regularly.

During his reign several opponents were jailed and tortured. Community workers who spoke out against his corruption 'disappeared'.

But now Salinas is living in a luxurious £1.3 mansion in Dalkey. He is driven around Dublin in a black Mercedes by one of two bodyguards from his former presidential guard.

If there were any justice in this country, the gardai would take Salinas to the nearest plane to answer a variety of charges in Mexico.

The evidence against Salinas is shocking:

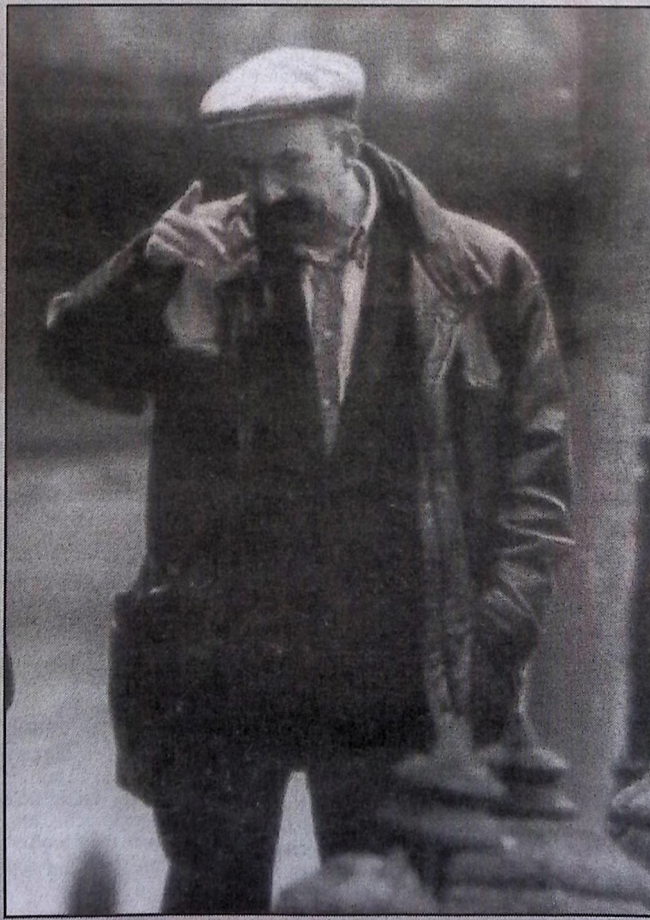
- He has amassed personal fortune which has been stashed away in secret banks accounts in Switzerland.

- Witness testimony given to the US Justice Department has named him for being involved in drug trafficking

- His brother Raul, who he appointed to office is in jail for arranging the murder of a rival politician

- In 1993, Salinas invited thirty of Mexico's richest businessmen to his 'billionaires banquet' where he asked them to pledge £25 million dollars each to his political fund. Many of those present were involved in drug trafficking.

Salinas is just the sort of refugee that Fianna Fail love. No wonder the grateful Salinas said, 'They trust a lot, the Irish'.



DELEGATES TO the recent British Labour conference described the atmosphere as being more like a business management seminar than a Labour conference.

The trappings of Blair's corporate agenda were everywhere.

Many of those attending were shocked at the sheer level of business sponsorship. Even delegates' name badges were sponsored by the Somerfield chain of supermarkets.

A checkout operator in Somerfield is paid £3.81 an hour. The company's boss David Simons makes £233.81 an hour. Not surprisingly, alternative name badges from the GMB union sold like hot cakes.

Peter Mandelson shared a platform at a fringe meeting with one of the fattest of all corporate fat cats.

Sir Clive Thompson, chairman of the CBI and boss of Rentokil, pays his staff miserably low wages, has attacked the introduction of a minimum wage and recently described dealing with unions as "pest control".

It says something about the modern Labour Party when its leaders would rather hob-nob with Clive Thompson or Rupert Murdoch than deal with the concerns of their own supporters.

Even though the conference was carefully stage-managed and speakers vetted to keep a lid on dissent, widespread anger at Blair's betrayal of the people who voted for him still appeared. As the conference opened, a massive demonstration of 12,000 work-

ers and students called for Labour to tax the rich to pay for public services.

Four left-wing opponents of Blair were elected to the ruling NEC in spite of a nasty witch-hunt by party officials. And even within the hall the government was attacked by the rank and file over a range of issues.

Trade unionists condemned the public sector pay freeze, and a CWU delegate was given a thunderous standing ovation after attacking Mandelson's planned privatisation of the Post Office.

But still the government showed no sign of paying any attention. When delegates pressed Blair on job losses he simply shrugged and said there was nothing he could do against the market.

Restricted

Even worse was the behaviour of Education Secretary David Blunkett.

On the eve of the conference he re-appointed Chris Woodhead, the right-wing Chief Inspector of Schools who is hated by teachers across Britain and Northern Ireland, and gave him a 46 percent pay rise at a time when teachers are restricted to 2.5 percent. Blunkett then made a speech branding teachers "sneering cynics".

When millions of working class people voted Labour last year, they hoped a new government would change their lives for the better after 18 years of Thatcherism.

New Labour now seems determined to continue Thatcherism by another name.

Kosova

No Western intervention

SERBIA'S clamp down on Kosova has brought terrible suffering to the ethnic Albanians. The Kosovans have lost a battle for independence and are suffering the consequences.

However now their new found friends among the Western powers look likely to bring more murder and oppression as they threaten to carry out air strikes on the Serbs.

Albanians make up 80 per cent of the population of Kosova. When the imperial powers carved up the Balkans in 1913 and created Albania, Kosova was given to the Serbs. The area was treated as a conquered territory and between the wars 40,000 Albanians were forced out of the region.

After the second World War, Croats, Slavs, Serbs, Slovenes and others were all given their own republics. The Albanians were merely designated a nationality and suffered political and economic discrimination. A Serb-only housing policy was developed and factories were built that would only employ Serbs. The first wave of ethnic cleansing in the recent Balkan wars took place against the Albanians of Kosovo in 1989.

Illiterate

Kosova is the poorest part of Europe. It has always lagged behind the rest of Yugoslavia. Per capita income in the 1970s in Kosova was 33 per cent of the rest of the state. Before the current intervention, unemployment ran at over 60 per cent and over 70 per cent of women were illiterate.

After the collapse of the old regime during the 1980's Serb forces killed hundreds of Kosovan 'terrorists', but Kosovan terrorists did not manage to kill a single Serb soldier. Kosova has also been the cornerstone of Serbian nationalist politics. Kosova Polje is the site of a famous battle against the Ottomans in 1389. It is the Battle of the Boyne of the Serbian right-wingers.

It is supposed to be the argument for why Kosova must be kept under Serb control. The right wingers conveniently ignore the fact that during battle, Albanians and Serbs fought side by side.

After the Kosovans rose up against their rulers earlier this year, they openly demanded independence. But they lost against the military strength of Serbia and the massacres are the consequences.

The Western powers are now seriously considering intervention.

The most ruthless player in the Balkans is the US. Initially America tried to hold the former Yugoslavia together but when that failed they gave military backing to Croatia and Bosnia. They forced the Serbs to the negotiating table and imposed the Dayton deal that left the nationalists, who stoked up ethnic hatreds, in power, in all three areas. At this stage the Americans referred to the Kosovans as terrorists.

The US was more frightened of the Kosovans uniting with Albania and the Albania minority in Macedonia.

What has changed now is that NATO wants to send a message to the crisis ridden Russian government, which backs the Serbs, that they should not try and resolve their difficulties at home by trying to spread their influence abroad. That remains the job of the world's policeman: America.

Nationalists

NATO bombing will only push the Serb population into the arms of Serb nationalists. It will also do little to help Kosovans win their right to independence.

The Kosovans are unfortunate enough to be in a similar position to the Kurds in the Middle East who were repressed and became a pawn in the imperial countries power games.

The oppression of the Kurds by Turkey and Iraq was ignored by the West for decades. In some cases they actively encouraged the Turkish crackdown. But when the Western powers wanted to impose their will on Iraq, the Kurds became the excuse for military intervention.

The former British Tory Prime Minister John Major created the idea of 'safe havens' for the Kurds but these later became ghettos of poverty which local warlords presided over.

The Kosovans are in the same position. NATO is again using their case to further their own imperial ambitions. NATO missiles will be no 'smarter' when they are dropped on Serbia than when dropped on the Gulf. They will murder ordinary Serbs while thugs like Milosevic will cling to power.

The alternative to NATO intervention lies in the potential strength of the Balkan working class. Earlier this year Albanian workers took to the streets and overthrew their leader. Working class action across the region is the only way of undercutting the nationalist thugs who whip up hatred to defend their privileges.

SIMON BASKETTER

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As Fruit of the Loom try to

Occupy to stop the closures!

"The car will have to go, I just hope we can hang onto the house" says Margaret. She and her husband both work in one of Fruit of the Loom's Buncrana plants.

They first met there over ten years ago. At first she thought it was great that the company provided a creche which meant she could return to her old job when she had her kids.

Now she's not so sure.

Almost 3,000 jobs are under threat in Fruit of the Loom factories in the North West.

2,300 are in Donegal and around 530 are in Derry. 700 redundancies have already been announced, hitting the smaller factories dotted around Donegal.

The T-shirt and other sewing jobs are under immediate threat, because the

**Special report by
GORETTI HORGAN**

company is moving production to Morocco in pursuit of higher profits.

It assured the workers that the spinning and dyeing jobs are safe but this

should be taken with a pinch of salt.

At the start of 1998, Fruit of the Loom chief executive, William Farley told the Donegal workers there would be no redundancies. In June, he even repeated this assurance to Mary Harney.

The redundancies are a disaster for workers, especially older ones with children and mortgages to worry about. But they are a sign of what could happen to many more workers when the Celtic Tiger comes crashing down with the global recession. There are few other jobs around and most workers are not qualified to do them.

Some younger workers, especially in Derry, are more ambivalent. 'I hate the

The fat cat who brings redundancies

RIGHT WING politicians always urge workers to be grateful to the 'entrepreneurs' for 'giving them a job'. However it is the company bosses and shareholders who should be thanking Irish workers for making them fabulous profits.

US companies claim to make an average profit rate of 25% from their Irish operations. They may exaggerate the figures (to help avoid tax in the US) but it is one indication of the level of exploitation in these plants.

Bill Farley is one of those 'entrepreneurs' which the Irish government praised. A member of the Democrat Party in the US and an associate of Bill Clinton he seemed to be just the right

sort of businessman they wanted to attract.

A former encyclopaedia salesman, Farley built up an empire of clothing companies by borrowing huge sums. He made millions by speculating in the stock market in the 1980s. One of his closest associates was Michael Milken who was jailed for fraud.

Tax dodge

Today he is involved in a major tax dodge. He wants to move the parent company to the Cayman Islands to avoid paying \$100 million in corporate tax. He is also under investigation in the US for malpractice after shareholders asked where their profits have disappeared to.

In 1995 and 1997, the company im-

posed a 3-day week on Fruit of the Loom workers in the North West claiming they were making 'losses' of \$715 million. Yet in those same years, Farley received more than \$20 million in cash bonuses and stock worth more than \$12 million.

Across the world, Farley has devastated the lives of many workers. In 1995, he laid off 6,000 workers in nine Fruit of the Loom factories and moved to Latin America and the Caribbean. In 1997 he sacked another 7,000 in seven factories.

Meanwhile, according to Forbes magazine, he received a 200 per cent pay rise last year, earning a salary of \$950,000 dollars together with a \$1.9 million bonus.

to cut thousands of jobs...



job, I hate that bloody machine; it's the same movement over and over for eight hours each day. It's not just boring, it's mind-numbing. If there's a decent redundancy package, I'll be delighted to take it and go', says Martin.

Tom, who also works as a machinist in Derry's Springtown plant disagrees. 'I've got a wife and three kids to support. I want a job, and there aren't many about. Sure, it's really monotonous work and it's not very well paid, but it's worth fighting to keep.'

The three-day week announced at the start of September hit workers in Derry's Springtown plant hardest. Their take-home pay was never brilliant—around £150 a week. Now it's down to £90. Those with kids can bring it up with Family Credit, but everyone else has to make do. In Donegal, the dole brings everyone's wages up to the 5-day level.

One plant which hasn't been affected by the 3-day week is the spinning mill at Campsie in Derry. 'We're in better form because even if all the machinist jobs are moved, we'll still be needed to spin the cloth to supply Morocco', says Sean.

Workers in the dyeing plant in Buncrana also think their jobs are safe because the volume of water needed for the process would not be available in Morocco.

Low-wage

However, if there's no fight to save the machinists' jobs, management might then decide to move dyeing and spinning to another very low wage country like Poland.

There's little doubt that the real strength of the Fruit of the Loom workers is the spinning section at Campsie and the dyeing section at Buncrana's shorefront. These will be difficult and expensive to relocate.

If workers in these plants come out in

support of their threatened fellow-workers, it could force the company to rethink their strategy.

Management have been careful not to cause discontent among these workers. The Campsie plant has not been put on a three-day week and there has been no loss of earnings, although production is well down on normal.

Unfortunately, SIPTU officials are not

providing any leadership for a fight. At a joint meeting between Derry and Donegal shop stewards, just after the 3-day week was announced, there was no discussion on fighting to save the jobs.

'We were only down to show support for the Donegal ones, though', one Derry shop steward told *Socialist Worker*, 'the union officials were only talking about redundancy packages and how much they might get'.

WHAT WE THINK

THE TRADE UNION officials in SIPTU are keeping up their sweetheart relationship with the company to the very last. They tell workers that there is nothing that can be done.

This is not true. Hartmann workers in Wexford recently mounted a 24 hour vigil at their plant when the bosses announced a sudden closure. They forced the company to re-open, although with a much reduced workforce of 29 workers.

An occupation by Fruit of the Loom workers would change the situation dramatically.

Strike action by the spinning and dyeing workers, combined with sit-ins by workers in the other sections in Derry and Donegal would give Farley the fight he's not expecting

and stop him in his tracks.

It would stop Farley removing expensive equipment from the plant. It would become a rallying point to expose the corruption and greed that lies behind the company. It would generate huge support and solidarity from workers all over the country.

Companies which impose massive redundancies should be nationalised. The Irish state gave them millions in grants and tax breaks. It should not let them walk away now, but instead take the company into public ownership so that jobs can be preserved.

As the global recession grows, we need a dramatic change of direction. The days of calling people like Bill Farley our 'social partners' should be brought to a close.

What do socialists say?

Learning for the future

THE SOCIALIST revolution will awaken in the working class an enormous thirst for knowledge and education. We know this from past experience, from the Russian Revolution where workers crowded into great stadiums to hear lectures on Greek drama.

Millions of people, over generations, have become convinced that sophisticated knowledge about the world is pointless because 'there is nothing you can do' and 'things will never change'.

But suddenly, in a revolution, they find themselves in the saddle. Workers are called upon to control and direct everything in society. Everything seems possible and they want to know everything.

The task of the workers' state will be to create an education system that will foster and develop this desire to learn.

What really devastates and distorts education at present is not just the lack of funding, serious though that is, but the state of war that exists between teachers and pupils.

This in turn derives from the role of schools under capitalism which is to reproduce the class structure of society. Schools progressively sift out those destined for middle class and ruling class positions (this is the real function of examinations) and prepare the rest for exploitation and alienated labour.

Condemns

A system whose structure inevitably condemns the majority to failure cannot possibly retain the enthusiasm and co-operation of its victims, no matter how well meaning individual teachers may be. The only way it can operate is by authoritarian imposition.

In contrast socialist education will be equipping everyone, not just the select few, to take an active, planning and administrative role. Its goal will be the all round development of the human personality.

Schools will be collaborative, not competitive. It will no longer be 'cheating' for one student to help another. And they will be democratic and not autocratic. The dictatorial rule of the principal will give way to the elected school council made up of representatives of the students, staff and the workers' councils.

As the working week is steadily reduced and the more arduous jobs are increasingly automated, so education will become something that does not cease at 16, 18 or 21.

It will continue as a lifelong process, ever more closely linked to the solution of practical tasks and problems thrown up by the new society.

What is true of education will also be true of culture generally. Post-revolutionary society will produce a great flowering of the arts by providing artists with a multitude of new and inspiring themes. It will also throw up a

by **JOHN MOLYNEUX**

new audience for art as a part of the overall awakening of personality that will occur when the working class moves from the wings of society to the centre of the stage.

Undoubtedly music, painting, poetry, drama, cinema and the rest will all have a role to play both in the revolutionary struggle itself and in the building of socialism.

But neither the workers' state nor the revolutionary party will attempt to dictate to or control the creative arts. There will be no repetition of the disastrous Stalinist policy of proscribing particular artistic forms or claiming that only one style of art, either so called 'socialist realism' or any other, has validity.

Apart from reserving the right to prohibit direct counter-revolutionary propaganda, the revolutionary government will promote the maximum freedom in this area. Without vigorous criticism, debate, experiment and the rivalry of different schools, artistic development is impossible.

Capitalist society, with its division of mental and manual labour, its fragmentation and alienation, gives rise to a separation of art and the artist from the mass of people, on the one hand, and from productive work on the other. Moreover, both these separations reinforce each other. Art becomes a privileged arena in which the minority express themselves creatively while the majority are condemned to mechanical, non-expressive, non-creative labour. Art, reflecting society's division into classes, divides into 'high art' and 'low art'. The 'high' artist becomes a member of an elite, administering to an elite.

Socialism will overcome these separations, not by forcing artists to be 'popular', or even simply by raising the cultural level of the majority—though this will happen of course. Rather socialism will make all work a creative activity, so that every producer becomes in a sense an artist. Likewise the skills of painting, design, architecture, writing of all the art forms—will become integral elements in the collective work of shaping the human environment.

Just as the producer becomes an artist, so the artist will become a producer. *Series concluded.*

US War of Independence

From conservative to revolutionary

HAPPY ARE we now under the best of kings." So wrote Benjamin Franklin on a visit to London in the 1760s. "All men's hopes aspire to no more than this throne," wrote his friend Benjamin Rush when he called at King George III's palace.

In the spring of 1775, Tom Paine, a new immigrant to North America, found that "attachment to Britain was obstinate and it was at that time treason to speak against it."

Yet only a few years later a revolution was to break out. Both Franklin and Rush would call for a republic to be established by force in the Declaration of Independence in July 1776.

We are accustomed to believe that people's ideas change slowly, that revolutions are only possible where the mass of people have long harboured revolutionary feelings against existing rulers.

That lies behind much of the talk you hear in Ireland, that "it can never happen here".

Yet, as the recent Channel 4 series, *Liberty*, showed, it did happen in North America in 1776, without there being a revolutionary tradition.

THE BRITISH government possessed 13 colonies in North America in the 1770s. The population of the colonies had always seen themselves as "British".

British governments had supported the colonisation of North America because they saw it as a benefit to British trade and industry.

The American colonists, by contrast, established farms, trade and industries of their own—and material interests developed which clashed with those of Britain's rulers.

These issues came to the fore in the 1760s when successive British governments grappled with the problem of how to pay the cost of a very expensive war being fought against France over control of a great chunk of the world's trade.

The rulers of Britain believed that if the colonies were to fulfil their economic purpose, they should pay part of the cost of the war, and so tried to impose taxes accordingly.

The colonists felt increasingly that, if they were to pay taxes imposed from outside, they were accepting that Britain's rulers would be able to cramp future economic development in North America.

This led even the most wealthy and respectable figures to protest at the taxes. They feared their trade would be hurt. Among small farmers, tradesmen and craftspeople the feeling was even stronger, since their meagre living standards would be hit. Initial opposition to tax was united. But soon deep divergences developed about how to fight.

Hutchinson, the chief justice of Massachusetts, for instance, opposed the tax in private but "loyalty" to the King—and his own career—led him in public to insist the law must be obeyed.

"The great merchants of the sea ports believed the answer to the taxes was a passive boycott of trade in goods bearing the taxes.

By contrast, as the first episode of the television series showed brilliantly, the reaction of the lower classes of the cities was to take direct action.

by **CHRIS HARMAN**

Crowds burnt down chief justice Hutchinson's house, tarred and feathered supporters of the taxes and hung effigies of the British ministers responsible for imposing them.

Such agitation forced British governments to abandon one tax after another. But it also made them ever more determined to impose their will.

A final tax they tried to enforce was on tea. The famous "Boston tea party"—when activists dressed up as Mohican Indians and threw tea into Boston harbour—was the result.

The activists, it has to be remembered, were still supporters of monarchy and thought themselves "British". They boasted of their moderation.

But the reaction of Britain's rulers was far from moderate.

A British fleet occupied Boston and imposed military rule on Massachusetts. Anyone arrested for challenging their power could be dragged off to Britain.

IT WAS still another year before the great mass of people regarded themselves as revolutionary. The leaders of the different colonies who met together as a "Continental Congress" were mostly very moderate indeed.

Initially, they hoped to force Britain to back down by simply declaring a boycott of British goods.

But even that meant giving some encouragement to the "committees below"—committees which could not restrict themselves to peaceful means in the face of British threats.

In Worcester county, Massachusetts, for instance, armed farmers prevented the courts functioning even though it meant confronting local judges.

In New York and Philadelphia mass meetings of "mechanics"—tradesmen of one sort or another—initiated the committees to push the boycott.

The tone of their meetings frightened "respectable" opponents of the British taxes.

One local notable, Governor Morris, complained that "the mob" was beginning to "think and reason".

But then British troops in the town of Lexington fired on farmers who had formed a militia to protect themselves. What began as a peaceful boycott had turned into an armed confrontation.

After the first defeat for British troops the Continental Congress itself issued a call to take up arms.

It appointed a wealthy Virginian planter and former British army officer, George Washington, head of a volun-



A supporter of British rule is tarred and feathered by the new revolutionaries

teer army.

THE BRITISH army won many of the early battles of the war, and George Washington's army was forced to retreat, often in miserable conditions.

What led to eventual American victory was the determination of the mass of the population not to give in.

But that determination in turn depended on continual agitation and propaganda from the committees.

This was especially true in the two key "middle" colonies of New York and Pennsylvania.

If the British could gain these colonies, then they could physically separate and defeat the others.

And in both these colonies many of the old ruling class were strongly opposed to the movement for independence.

One historian says of New York city, "Carrying through the decisions that led to independence meant getting rid of the old authorities as much as it did breaking with parliament and the king."

The energy to do so came from ordinary people and the revolutionary committees.

"Between 1774 and 1776 those com-

mittees did in New York what similar bodies would do in Paris between 1789 and 1792, and in Russia in 1917. They created a counter-government radically different to the old one."

The Pennsylvania capital, Philadelphia, was the meeting place of the Continental Congress.

But there too the official leadership of the colony was dominated by merchant and land-owning families who backed continued British rule.

It was only continual agitation and argument from below which swung the colony to support independence.

Winning these arguments required theory. It was supplied by a pamphlet by that recent English immigrant Tom Paine.

His pamphlet *Common Sense* showed that society did not need kings and aristocrats of any sort.

The pamphlet sold over 150,000 copies, to a population of only three million in all the colonies, and swung a huge swathe of opinion behind the call for a republic.

But the deference to the old monarchist elite was still strong enough for them to narrowly win three out of four decisive by-elections on 1 May 1776 and to keep control of the Assembly.

This forbade Pennsylvania's delegates to the Constitutional Congress to back independence.

There was only one way to keep the key colony of Pennsylvania committed to the struggle.

Its committees had to organise a mass movement from below to overthrow its constitutional elected Assembly.

An enormous mass meeting called for a popular convention to establish a new government, and then committees elected by privates in the militia declared their allegiance to this convention, so depriving the old Assembly of any power.

Again there were enormous similarities to what happened in the Russian Revolution of 1917, when workers' councils replaced a parliament that no longer expressed people's will.

There were of course limits to the American Revolution. It took place when capitalism was a relatively new system.

As far as most of its leaders were concerned, the aim was to remove obstacles to the growth of the market system, not to fight against it.

And it required another immense struggle, nearly 90 years later, to get rid of slavery in the southern states.

Nevertheless the fight for independence could not have succeeded without the growth of a revolutionary movement that challenged many of the ideas held sacred in the past.

Free Viagra

CASUALTY QUEUES are twelve hours long, waiting lists go on for years, waiting rooms are crammed to bursting point, Dublin's drug problem is mushrooming, but what the Irish Medical Organisation and the Department of Health are really worried about is the cost of Viagra.

A group of the most powerful doctors are having a series of closed-door meetings with the Minister of Health. They are afraid that having to prescribe this small pill to a few men who have had problems with sexual dysfunction will be a waste of their "drug budget".

The Department of Health has introduced "drug budgeting", a Thatcherite method of saving on health costs. It works by cutting the costs of prescribing to public patients by punishing the GP's for prescribing more than their budget allows, leading to an underfunding of their practice.

Viagra has got an official licence to be sold as a medicine, yet the Department of Health and the top GP's are still agonising over whether or not medical card patients should be allowed to treat their sexual problems.

The alternative is that patients on an income of less than £88 per week (the cut-off for medical card) have to pay nearly ten pounds for one Viagra tablet, if they want to be able to cope with sexual dysfunction in the way in which the wonders of modern medical science have provided for us.

Agonising

In the UK the decision has been made, after much similar agonising, to allow the prescribing of Viagra on the NHS, despite "family campaigners" such as Dr Adrian Rogers of the Conservative Family Institute. Dr Rogers believes that Viagra should only be available for married couples and that a GP should therefore make sure that a patient is not gay before prescribing: "I don't see why people should be paying for people to have homosexual activity. It really should be available only for married couples."

This sounds to me exactly like the arguments which came up around the Pill for women in the sixties — and still do in fact.

In the sixties the medical profession reacted in the same moralistic fashion as they are now reacting to Viagra.

The pill gave women in the developed world a safe, reliable method of contraception which allowed many to enjoy sex for the first time.

This represented a breakthrough in sexual freedom and liberation.

Moral fabric

Doctors and government officials predicted total hedonistic promiscuity and the collapse of the moral fabric of society. Obviously these attitudes have not been completely laid to rest. One Doctor who practices in Corduff, a huge outer suburb of Dublin with the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the country, still won't prescribe the contraceptive pill because she thinks it's immoral.

Today, top doctors and urologists are panicking at the thought of prescribing a drug which could be "abused". This apparently means being used by men who are not married and not totally impotent. It might even lead to wild orgies of sex-craved promiscuity, over which the unhappy doctors will have no control.

The need to control every aspect of our lives is intrinsic to the class inequality of the doctor-patient relationship.

The doctors who are worrying about a few pence in their drug budget are on an average salary of £100,000 from the same General Medical Service. This is not to mention the private fees, social welfare payments, court report fees and so on.

The UK government has estimated that prescribing Viagra on the NHS will cost £250 million a year — about 96p per head of population per year. In Ireland, only one third of the population has a medical card, and most of these are children under the age of five and elderly women so Viagra will cost even less.

If the drug companies which artificially inflate their prices were nationalised, the drug would cost a few pence.

The real issue is the right of a small minority of patients to be able to enjoy fulfilling relationships again.

—JULIET BRESSAN

ENEMY OF BIGOTRY, DICTATORS, AND GOD

IN FEBRUARY 1989, the Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa, or religious edict against the writer and critic Salman Rushdie. Rushdie was accused of insulting Islam in his novel *The Satanic Verses*.

by **SINEAD KENNEDY**

After living for almost ten years with a \$2 million bounty on his head, the Iranian government has recently issued a statement distancing itself from the fatwa.

Rushdie is one of the most important writers of our time.

It was Rushdie who made the Booker Prize famous by winning it with his wonderful and powerful novel about Indian Independence, *Midnight's Children* in 1981.

The publication of his novel *The Satanic Verses* blew Rushdie into a sea of controversy throughout the Muslim world.

Yet even before this Rushdie had made powerful enemies.

He had outraged the Gandhi dynasty, with his novel *Midnight's Children*, which suggested they had been implicated in the ethnic cleansing of Muslims during the birth of Indian independence and had the backing of big business.

Regime

Rushdie had also fallen foul of the military regime of President Zia in neighbouring Pakistan with his book *Shame*.

The Satanic Verses, according to its critics is a blasphemous depiction of the prophet Mohammed, his wives and the Koran. In reality the novel is more complicated. *The Satanic Verses* is an attempt to offer a secular account of the birth of Islam, how "a certain historical state of affairs lead to the development of a certain idea".

Writing about *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie argues that the novel "celebrates the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, culture, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelisation and fears the absolutism of the pure".

Rushdie was never the enemy of Islam that he was portrayed to be by the mullahs. In fact his work is enormously sympathetic to ordinary Muslims. It was Rushdie's attempt to create a secularised version of Islam that horrified the Khomeini's government in Iran.

Racists in the West

however used Khomeini's attack on Rushdie to attack ordinary Muslims, accusing Islam of being a particularly intolerant religion. This is gross hypocrisy when you consider the history of censorship in the West.

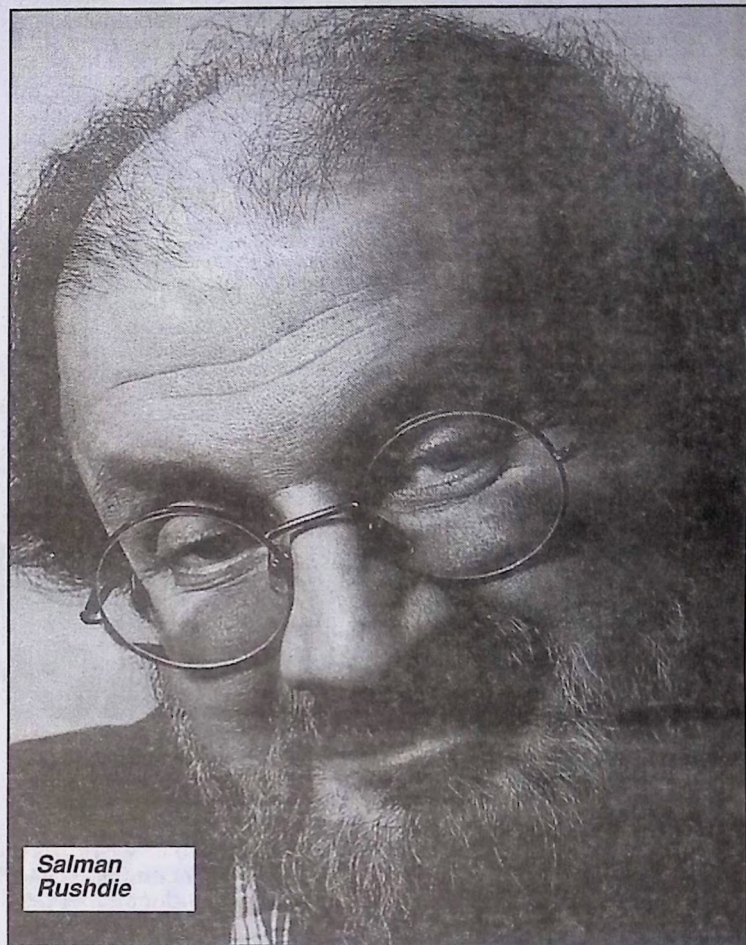
Persecution

You only have to look at the history of persecution within Christianity — Galileo was accused of blasphemy when he said that the earth was round.

In Ireland, the old couple whose story is told in Eric Cross's book *The Tailor and the Ansty*, were forced to burn their own copy by the local parish priest in the 1950s.

The ruling classes throughout the world used the row over *The Satanic Verses* to serve their own purposes.

In South Africa the apartheid regime tried to drive a wedge between the Muslim and non-Muslim opponents. In Pakistan the fundam-



Salman Rushdie

antists organised protests to regain the political initiative after they lost the general election

Socialists defend the right of any individual to be critical of religion. Rushdie's attempt to

present a secular version of Islam can only be welcome as progressive and important.

review

Telling it like it is

'THIS IS My Truth Tell Me Yours' was a favourite ending to speeches by Aneurin Bevan, former leader of the left wing of the British Labour party who introduced the NHS in 1948.

It is also the title of the latest album from the Manic Street Preachers.

Shoot

Their recent single 'If You Tolerate This Your Children Will Be Next' infused the No. 1 spot in the British charts with the refrain "If I can shoot rabbits / Then I can shoot fascists". This song which is also on the album, is inspired by George Orwell's great book 'Homage to Catalonia'.

The band are from the former mining village of Blackwood, South Wales, which was devastated by pit closures in the mid-

eighties. They hate being patronised for their class origins. Working class clichés start here / Either cloth caps or smack victims" (Gold Against The Soul, 1993).

One of the tracks on the record, 'S.Y.M.M.' deals with the Hillsborough disaster but replaces that description with a more accurate interpretation of the event; "South Yorkshire Mass Murderer".

The fundamental theme running through the songs is honest accountability.

'Black Dog On My Shoulder' illustrates the normality of modern depression, something inevitable for many in everyday life but rarely discussed openly.

'Black Dog' refers to the code Winston Churchill used when writing in his diary about his personal torment.

Before an Anti-Nazi

League Rally in 1994 Richey Edwards said "The idea that rock bands can change anything has been defunct for about two decades now". Now Nicky Wire admits "I don't want to become the bard

of the working classes". However as a reluctant soundtrack to growing militancy this record comes highly recommended.

—AIDAN DALY

ROCK THE DOCK

A NEW seventeen-track album has been released to support the Liverpool Dockers.

On September 28th 1995 500 dockers were sacked for refusing to cross a picket line. Their two and half year long strike was an inspiration to trade unionists around the world.

While the dispute ended at the beginning of the year the dockers still meet to organise various projects and to organise support for other struggles.

The CD, as well as giving backing to a brave group of workers, includes some great music. Tracks by Oasis, Paul Weller, Billy Bragg, Ocean Colour Scene The Chemical Brothers and many others.

The songs are all political, especially Chumbawamba's defence of the dockers and attack on the disgraceful sell out of the dispute by the union leaders, *One by One*, and Billy Bragg's *Don't cross a picket line*. Buy it and get your friends to but it.

Rock the Dock, £10.99 on Creation records.

—SIMON BASKETTER



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.

Free market grinds Dublin to a halt

THE AVERAGE speed of traffic in Dublin during rush hours is six miles an hour. A person walks at four miles an hour, the speed of a slow horse and cart is 8 miles an hour.

Car ownership is dramatically rising. In 1994, the Dublin Transport Initiative drew up a report on the expected growth in traffic in Dublin.

However a fortnight ago it had to issue 'a fundamental reappraisal' of its earlier figures. It now estimates that there are an extra 49,000 car trips than its original forecasts..

Polution

The cost of the huge increase in cars is more pollution, increases in asthma, lead poisoning and road accidents. Last year there were 470 fatal accidents on Irish roads.

Every couple of weeks the government announces a new initiative to deal with the traffic crisis. Yet the reality is that the government has made the problem worse at every turn. Fianna Fail Ministers have given huge tax breaks for multi-story car parks in the city. These are like magnets which draw in ever more cars..

Millions have been put into building roads. In 1992, 78 per cent of a £230 million budget for transport was spent on roads. This compares to the pittance spent on public transport.

The tonnage of freight going through Dublin Port is almost double that which was predicted for 2001. Yet there is no attempt to upgrade the rail system to take container traffic off the roads.

Congestion

Other European capitals do not experience the same levels of congestion because they have good public transport systems which are reliable and convenient. In Brussels the state pays 66 per cent of the running costs of the buses. In Rome it is 90 per cent. But in Dublin the

forced to drive.

Car ownership rates have increased from 248 per 1,000 population in 1991, to 300 in 1996, and are projected to rise to 350 next year.

Yet most people do not want to spend hours in traffic jams.

Work is already long and stressful without having the working day increased by traffic delays.

A decent well funded bus service would cut back the numbers using cars on a daily basis.

But to get that, we will have to end the policy of reducing taxes on wealth. The costs of those policies has been a worsening of almost every social service in Ireland.

by **SIMON BASKETTER**

public subsidy to the buses is a mere 4 per cent.

Last year the government tried to remove the subsidy altogether and it was only the threat of industrial action by busworkers that stopped them.

Because there is not a decent level of public transport, people are



BUS WORKERS FIGHT BACK AGAINST GRIDLOCK

DUBLIN BUS workers recently voted down a Viability plan which would have worsened their conditions and introduced low pay grades for new workers. In a magnificent two to one vote, they faced down blackmail from the government, bad advice from union leaders and a bullying management.

But now the company is coming after them again and has gotten the union leaders to co-operate in having a new vote.

Socialist Worker spoke to a Dublin Bus Driver about how the attacks on workers in CIE is linked to the Traffic chaos.

"The Viability plan is all about increased flexibility, which means more work and fewer buses on the

streets. Even when Dublin Bus say they are trying to improve the service it is often a back door way of cutting back services.

"Quality bus corridors sounds a good idea but the reality is that it has meant the merger of routes.

"In Ballymun previously there were three routes. Dublin Bus managers said they were introducing a CitySwift service which would run every 8 minutes.

"But there was only one bus which travels round Ballymun. By the time it gets to the end of the estate the bus is full. The company didn't even provide new buses — they just repainted old ones. So now people have to wait up to two hours for a bus into town. So much for City Swift.

"In Clondalkin the No.51 route was the same. There was a bus every six minutes. But it was always full after the first few stops. From, the bosses point of view it makes absolute sense to

amalgamate the routes and save money while pretending to have a plan about transport. They have abandoned parts of Dublin and people are getting Hackney cabs and private mini bus companies.

"Yet they lecture us about competitiveness. It isn't about a public service — it is about profit. It now takes longer for a bus to get into town than it did 5 years ago because of the cutting back on routes.

"The plan is clearly for some sort of de-regulation or privatisation. In Britain this has meant a disaster for bus services and jobs. But they are using the threat of privatisation to try and get people to accept attacks. The Viability Plan has to be opposed, not just because it is an attack on bus workers but because it is an attack on a vital social service.

"If we want a decent transport system, we should back trade union action

which can defend the service. We can't get decent wages or conditions unless the subsidies for public transport are increased. The gridlock on our streets shows there is no point bowing down to the free market.

Socialist Worker Public Meetings

The North 30 years on... From Civil Rights to Socialist Politics

Speaker: Eamonn McCann

Belfast: Tuesday 20th Oct. 8.00pm Garrick Bar Chichester St
Derry: Mon 19th See posters for details
Dublin: Tuesday 27th Oct, 7.30, ATGWU Hall Middle Abbey St

Socialist Worker Public Meetings

WILL CAPITALISM CRASH? THE CASE FOR REVOLUTION

Cork: 29th October, 8.00pm Moores Hotel, Speaker KIERAN ALLEN
Galway: Thurs 29th Oct, 8.00pm Currans Hotel Eyre Sq
Waterford: Thurs 29th Oct, 8.00, ATGWU Hall Keizer St

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

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SWP branch meetings—all welcome

ATHLONE
Contact (01) 872 2682 for details

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

BELFAST SOUTH
Meets every Weds at 8pm, Queens University Students Union Club Room.

CORK
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Dennehy's Pub, Cornmarket

DERRY
Meets every Tues in Badgers Bar at 8.00pm.

DUN LAOGHAIRE
Meets every Tues at 8.30pm in Christian Institute.

ENNISKILLEN
Meets every fortnight. Contact (01) 872 2682 for details

GALWAY
Meets every Thursday at

8.00pm in University College Galway, see posters for details

LIMERICK
Meets every fortnight. Contact (01) 872 2682 for details

SLIGO
Meets every fortnight. Contact (01) 872 2682 for details

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

DUBLIN NORTH-WEST
Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in The Snug, Dorset

There are Socialist Worker members in:
BRAY; CLARE; DONEGAL; DUNDALK; DROGHEDA; KILKENNY; LURGAN; OMAGH; ROSCOMMON; SLIGO; TRALEE
Contact our national office at (01) 872 2682, PO Box 1648, D.8

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
Meets every Weds at 8pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond St.

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL
Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in the Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

DUBLIN TALLAGHT
Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Jobstown Community Centre

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Pressure mounts for catch up pay rises

Now it's time to get your claim in

Pressure is mounting in the unions for emergency pay claims to catch up with the rate of inflation.

Union leaders among busworkers promised they would put in a claim but so far they have done little.

In November, the CPSU the union which organises low paid civil servants is holding a special conference to discuss pulling out of Partnership 2000.

The case for a new pay claim is overwhelming.

Official Irish inflation is now more than 3% — the highest in Europe.

The real inflation figure is far higher because the Central Statistics Office which compiles the figures excludes accommodation costs.

In many other European countries, accommodation

Turn on the pressure and demand a 15 percent rise!

costs are included in the Consumer Price Index.

Rents in Dublin have risen by an average of 25% in the last twelve months.

Key groups of workers have already won high in-

creases.

In August, the average Garda got a £1,500 back pay cheque.

Unlike other workers they got a special down payment on 'future productivity'.

All of these factors mean that union militants should turn on the pressure to demand a 15% pay rise to compensate workers for the rising inflation.

HOW TO PUT IN A CLAIM

The union leaders will try to do everything to prevent workers putting in wage claims.

They are hooked into the partnership programme which give them a cosy relationship with the bosses.

The best way to push for a higher claim is to:

Get up a petition to call a special union meeting to discuss pay.

Get the agreement of the meeting to submit a claim for 15% or more to management and INSTRUCT your union official to process it.

If they are not willing get shop stewards to process the claim.

If management do not respond, call a further meeting to discuss what action workers want to take.

Construction

Brickies fight subcontracting

'This could be another Crampton's' said one BATU activist as a new fight against subcontracting has flared up on Dublin's building sites.

Two bricklayers, members of BATU, had been working alongside sub-contractors at the O'Connor's site in Ballsbridge for over a month.

Sub-contracting is a device used by employers to avoid paying workers their full entitlements. It means the bosses get out of paying holidays, wet time or pension rights.

It also weakens union organisation by ensuring that workers approach all issues as individual employees.

Some months ago, Bricklayers against the Black Economy — a militant rank and file group — inflicted a major defeat on Crampton's, a major building employer.

Crampton's had reduced its number of direct employees dramatically and had built up a huge sub-contracting operation.

But militant pickets which openly defied a High Court injunction defeated Crampton's. Since then many employers have retreated from trying to use sub-contract labour.

However a relatively small builder O'Connor's is trying to reverse the pattern.

After workers at the Ballsbridge site took action on Wednesday 23 September, the company tried to take out an injunction against the strikers and

a union official. They also tried to sue the union but this was rejected by the court.

Despite two attempts to negotiate, involving the voluntary withdrawal of the pickets, O'Connor's made no attempt to resolve the dispute.

Workers then switched gear and are escalating the dispute. Pickets have been put up again in defiance of the injunction.

Pickets have also been spread to another site owned by

O'Connor's, the Capel site on Conyngham Rd. Lorry drivers, including drivers from Cement Roadstone, are refusing to pass.

The dispute at O'Connor's looks like escalating into a major confrontation in the industry.

Bad news

"Sub-contracting is bad news for all building workers' one striker said.

It's not just about issues like health and safety and cash. These sub-contractors run a reign of terror over their workers.

"When one young lad on the site was won over to our side, the sub-contractor told him his apprenticeship was over".

The Rank and File Solidarity Network, which was established a month ago, has called on its supporters to join the bricklayers pickets in defiance of the law.

Zoe Developers

Ringsend housing crisis protest

Three hundred people in Ringsend crowded into a meeting to protest at the housing crisis in the area.

Zoe Developers have bought up a lot of property and are transforming the area by building expensive apartments which are beyond the reach of working people.

As many people watch how their sons and daughters cannot get affordable housing, anger has risen against Zoe.

The meeting heard that per-

mission had been granted to Zoe to build on the old gasometer site.

Response

It has also become clear that another developer has got the neighbouring Boland's Mills site.

A number of politicians attended the meeting including Eoin Ryan (FF) Dermot Lacey (Labour) and John Gormley (Green).

But they openly stated that there was nothing they would do.

Money, it seems, is far more important than people's democratic rights.

ESB

Workers resist bosses' blackmail

The media, management and the government have all been attempting to demonise a small group of workers in the Ferbane power station who are fighting to protect their jobs and conditions.

The dispute goes back to the CCR (Cost and Competitiveness Review) agreement reached between the ESB and the Unions last year. It was presented by the ESB management and the government as a plan to safeguard the future of the ESB.

However the reality is very different. One Union official described it as "a preparation for privatisation".

The idea is to make the ESB more competitive when deregulation comes into effect. European electricity companies will be allowed to come into Ireland and operate in competition with the ESB.

This CCR agreement involves the loss of 2,000 ESB jobs. In order to compensate for these job losses different jobs are being merged together.

Merging

The dispute in Ferbane centres around the merging of the jobs of electricians and instrumentation technicians, both highly skilled. Workers in Ferbane are being forced to comply with the management's plans interpretation of the agreement.

Yet the agreement clearly states that there must be a period of discussion and negotiation before the restructuring is implemented.

Management refused this and are threatening not to invest the £16 million needed to renovate the station.

This is naked blackmail of workers which is co-ordinated by both management and the Minister Mary O'Rourke.

Ferbane is a peat power station and the cost of the peat is subsidised by the government. The government are obviously looking for scapegoats in an attempt to cut back spending on peat.

The MSF branch secretary, who is also involved in the dispute, is being particularly scapegoated.

The *Irish Mirror* published a scathing attack on him, blaming him for the threatened closure of the plant and he faces continuous intimidation by management.

International Truck Drivers Plan Action

Employers' organisations across Europe are becoming alarmed at the growing militancy among truck drivers.

A month ago French truckers led a series of one day protests across Europe disrupting traffic at borders and Channel ports.

The main concern of the workers is that many are forced to do working weeks which exceeds 60 hours.

Transport was excluded from the EU directive limiting the working week to 48 hours because there was supposed to be negotiations on the issues between the employers and the

unions.

However the employers are making no moves to limit the working week because it would mean having to employ more workers.

Now the FST confederation which represents truckers unions across Europe are discussing action to enforce a lower working week.

There are 3 million transport workers in Europe and they have already demonstrated their power during major strikes in France.

In Britain, the Freight Transport Association, the bosses organisation, has already warned about a new winter of discontent.

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and international Socialism 50p Solidarity price £1

inside

FRUIT OF LOOM JOBS MASSACRE

PAGES 6-7

PAISLEY & ADAMS WANT TO CUT TAXES—WE SAY:

TAX THE FAT CATS

WHAT IS the one thing all the parties in the Assembly agree on? They all want to cut taxes on the rich.

Recently the *Belfast Telegraph* business correspondent Rosie Cowan asked the five main parties about their policies for economic growth. All of them favour cutting corporation tax to 10 percent to attract multinationals.

Gerry Adams and Ian Paisley may be mortal enemies but there is one thing they agree on — letting companies pay a lower proportion of tax than workers in low-paid jobs.

Selling

Already local politicians and NIO ministers have been selling Northern Ireland at business conferences in the US as a place where you can pay your workers peanuts and don't have to recognise unions.

People voted overwhelmingly for the Belfast Agreement hoping that it would lead to a new era of peace and prosperity. Instead the future looks like being dominated by union-busting sweatshop employers like Seagate in Derry. The "peace dividend" we were promised has turned out to be a dividend for the rich.

THEY ARE ROLLING IN IT

THERE IS plenty of cash in the system to pay for public services. In Britain, multinational corporations owe £43 billion in unpaid taxes.

At least a further £18 billion a year would be available if the top rate of income tax was restored to the level it was at under Thatcher.

Even more could be raised by closing the loopholes that allow Rupert Murdoch's multi-billion pound News

Corporation to pay tax at only 7 percent.

While the government promises to crack down on social security, it is giving handouts to the richest people in society.

Services

If Labour are serious about providing a decent society for all the people, they should tax the rich to fund our public services. In Northern Ireland, parties like

Sinn Fein and the PUP claim they represent working class people.

Not a united working class, mind you — but the Catholic and Protestant sections respectively.

But you cannot fight for working class people while you appease the greed of the fat cats.

This is why we need a genuine socialist party that presses for workers unity to take on the rich and privileged.

WHERE IS THE MONEY TO FUND THE NHS?

Cutting taxes on big business is even more of a scandal when the public services are being starved of cash.

The government has just announced the closure of two more hospitals—the White-abbey hospital in the North Belfast suburbs and the Mid-Ulster Hospital in Magherafelt.

Both are large hospitals which provide vital services to the people of their areas. As Fionnuala from South Derry told *Socialist Worker*, "This is

a mostly rural area with a bad transport system. If you live in one of the outlying villages it can be hard even to get to Magherafelt, which is the central town in South Derry. Now we will be expected to go to Antrim or Coleraine for hospital treatment, and that's just not an easy option for a lot of people around here."

Neither of the threatened hospitals could be described as "unviable" — the closures are purely and simply a cost-cutting exercise.