

Socialist Worker

inside

Northern Ireland:
**CAN THE
PEACE DEAL
WORK?** PAGE 3



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

Refugees are welcome here

**DON'T LET
FIANNA
FAIL WHIP
UP RACISM**

FIANNA FAIL politicians are going out of their way to whip up racism.

Ivor Callely, who backed Charlie Haughey to the hilt, has called for refugees to be 'thrown out'.

Meanwhile John O'Donoghue is trying to claim that Ireland faces a major 'problem' because of the immigrants who are coming here.

He is rushing through a special trafficking bill, which as some lawyers point out, would have seen Oskar Schindler landed

in Mountjoy jail.

He also wants to deprive all refugees of social security so that they have to live off food vouchers.

The reason for the new campaign is that Fianna Fail are terrified that they are losing their electoral base because of the corruption scandals.

Tens of thousands now know that the reason we have a terrible public transport system and overcrowded hospital is that Haughey vandalised these services in order to cut the tax bills of the rich.

And while he was telling workers to

tighten their belts, Bertie Ahern was writing cheques for his leader so that he could dine out in the best restaurants.

Fianna Fail politicians want to scapegoat refugees in order to stop people tackling the crooks at the top.

But they can be beaten back.

There is a growing anti-racist movement that does not want a return to the narrow minded Ireland of the fifties.

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**STOP THE
WORLD TYRANNY
ORGANISATION**

pages 6&12



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HISTORY OF
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**Fight Club
& MTV reviewed**

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STOP THE DEPORTATIONS

Vatican secretly armed Croatia

THE VATICAN secretly sent the Croatian government £25 million in bonds to buy weapons during the Bosnian war in 1992.

This was revealed in the recent trial of Dr Walter Basson, South Africa's former chemical warfare chief.

Basson was supposed to have stolen some of the bonds which became entangled with a complex deal designed to purchase chemical weapons from South Africa.

Silent

During the second World War the Vatican was virtually silent on the crimes of the Catholic fascist regime which ran Croatia even though they carried out massacres on Muslims.

Not it appears that they were involved in arming Croatia when it was carrying out a policy of ethnic cleansing against Serbs.

The Vatican has declined to comment on the latest allegations.

★ **THE "three strikes and you're out" law in California, which automatically jails people for life after a third criminal conviction, has had no effect on crime levels.**

The 1994 law was imposed amid claims that it would slash crime levels by acting as a deterrent. One man was jailed for life under the law for stealing a slice of pizza.

Now a study by the law department of the University of California has found that the law has had no effect on crime levels.

Profit before people

A FEW weeks ago in France, a woman was handed her redundancy notice.

When she went home she rang her friend and said, "How shall I manage with three children now that I have been made redundant. Life was already difficult before, it is going to get even worse."

Her fourteen year old daughter overheard her conversation and told her, "I shall kill myself so that you will have one less mouth to feed."

The next day, when the mother returned, she found her daughter hanged.

The tragedy has created huge anger across France. It has shown many why we need to end a system that puts profits before people

National Plan promotes car madness

THE NATIONAL Development Plan is supposed to tackle Ireland's appalling public services.

But even the promises look flimsy.

★ £4.7 billion is due to be spent on roads, even

though the experience elsewhere is that this leads to more traffic chaos.

Yet only £500 million is being spent on upgrading the railway network despite the fact that CIE has publicly warned they are concerned with safety because the track is so old.

★ Only £250 million is being devoted to childcare provision. The government do not want to provide publicly funded crèches and the money is being used instead to train childcare workers.

★ Only 5,000 local authority houses are

due to be built each year. This is still lower than the amount built in the seventies before the Celtic Tiger.

Even these promises are based on assessment that the economy will boom for the next five years. If it doesn't, these promises will once again turn to dust.

Liars, cheats and thieves at the top

Another dodgy tax scam revealed

AS WELL as the Ansbacher fraud, the rich are using Liechtenstein to hide their money.

It has emerged that the partners in J & E Davy, Dublin's leading stockbroking firm, considered using the offshore scheme to avoid paying tax on the proceeds from the multi-million-pound sale of a 30 percent stake in the company, to an American bank, Citicorp.

The shareholders at the time of the sale included Brian Davy, Kyrán McLaughlin and David Shubotham.

Owned

All three are still directors of the firm, which is now owned by Bank of Ireland, and all are extremely wealthy.

Davy acted as an adviser to the government on several occasions, including the sale of shares in Greencore, the former Irish Sugar company.

Nobody knows how much Citicorp paid for

their stake in Davy's but the company claim to have paid all the tax.

The Revenue Commissioners are now investigating the scheme.

McLoughlin has been questioned by the Moriarty Tribunal about his role in the Ansbacher scandal.

He is alleged to have written a "Note to John Furze" which sets out the details of the scheme under which Irish residents could keep their money offshore in the Cayman Islands tax haven but still have access to it in Ireland.

Furze was the Cayman Island-based banker who ran the Ansbacher scam along with Des Traynor.

In the Liechtenstein scam, the tax evader places his money with the accountants in Zurich.

They in turn transfer it to a Liechtenstein-based trustee but instructions are still taken from the Irish depositor even though this is against the law.

The secret memo written for the bosses of Davy stockbroker's stresses to the Irish depositor: "There should never be any correspon-

dence" and they were only to "operate on straightforward telephone instructions."

It goes on that: "No documents concerning the arrangements, whether as regards setting up or operating, should ever come into Ireland nor should any meetings be held in Ireland."

Danger

The memo also points to: "... the possible danger that a descendant might well blow the gaffe on the whole thing in years to come by failing to have a true understanding of the nature of the set-up."

Every day scores of social welfare recipients about possible fraud.

But the scam artists who devise these schemes for the rich are put on a pedestal.

It is time to pull them off it.

Crook of the year

TONY O'REILLY has won the award for Irish Person of the year.

Unfortunately O'Reilly was unable to attend the award ceremony in person and instead popped up on a video screen.

The reason is that he has to be out of the country for 6 months and 1 day every year in order to qualify as a non-resident.

O'Reilly does this so he can avoid paying a penny of income tax on his enormous fortune. And his Independent group of newspapers talk about scroungers.

They should know because they are owned by one.



RUARI QUINN seems to be less keen on tackling corruption than opposition politicians should be. The reasons are starting to emerge.

As well as taking £10,000 from Treasury Holdings who are building the Spenser dock development in Dublin, Quinn also met Ben Dunne in a pub to get £15,000.

In 1984 the Labour Party borrowed £24,000 from Woodchester Bank. The bank decided to write off the debt and interest so giving the Labour Party £28,000.

Ruari Quinn described

the transaction as an "off balance sheet transaction". Which means that the Labour Party forgot to mention the donation in their accounts.

In 1984 the TSB bank was due to be merged with the other state banks, ACC and ICC.

But in May 1994, Quinn, who was Minister

for Enterprise and Employment, said the fate of the TSB "should not be settled without competitive bidding from other sources, particularly Woodchester Bank, who have indicated an interest".

There was of course, no connection between the loan write off and Quinn's statement.

Beefy Byrne's bonus

WHILE the British and French governments battle it out over whether mad British beef fed on diseased sheep's brains, is safer than French cows living off human excrement, Fianna Fail have come to the rescue.

The EU Commissioner responsible for working out the tiff is the Fianna Fail hack David Byrne. Byrne is a friend of Bertie Ahern and Charlie Haughey.

And he should know all about beef scandals because he was the barrister at the beef tribunal where his legal fees were three thousand pounds a day.

Fianna Fail looks after the builders

THE GOVERNMENT got some good publicity when they announced that 20 percent of all developments would have to be left aside for 'social housing'.

The building bosses were up in arms and claimed that it was a threat to private property. Now Fianna Fail has agreed and has backed down from their original scheme.

Environment Minister Noel Dempsey has announced that the builders can sell houses to the local authorities and add an extra 'construction profit' onto the figures.

One planning official in South Dublin Council has estimated that builders are already making a 100 percent profit on every house they build. Fianna Fail has made sure that they will continue doing this.

what we think

Adams and Trimble: together at last?

There was little euphoria in Northern Ireland last week when the Mitchell review was completed. It looks as though the deal will go through. Trimble and Adams have reached agreement on the timing of setting up the executive and decommissioning.

Both have repeatedly used the excuse of convincing 'hard-liners' in their respective camps as the reason for the difficulty in reaching agreement.

But David Trimble first has to get the deal through a full meeting of the Ulster Unionist Party council. Already the backwoods men of unionism are organising against the agreement.

Jeffrey Donaldson, who has consistently opposed the Good Friday Agreement, has employed a firm of spin doctors to find out the best way of opposing the peace deal.

The political message that lies behind it is a refusal to share power with Catholic parties.

Stormont

Ian Paisley's DUP and the no camp in the Unionists Party make no bones about the fact that they want a return to the 'good old days' of Stormont.

One of the anti-agreement Unionist MPs, Willie Thompson, reacted to the Mitchell deal by saying he did not believe in the concept of power-sharing. "I don't believe in power-sharing."

"I believe in British democracy and Irish democracy, for that matter. I believe in proper democracy."

That is the logic that sustained 50 years of one-party rule by the Unionist Party in Northern Ireland.

It depended on the continual stoking of sectarian division and the treatment of Catholics as second-class citizens.

That same thinking today means that large sections of the Unionist Party are most concerned with keeping their sectarian vote together.

The deputy chip whip of the party resigned, complaining that many Unionist councillors are in danger of losing their seats to the rejectionist DUP if they go along with the deal.

Even if the new government is set up, these politicians will have every interest in maintaining sectarian division by portraying every new policy as either a benefit or loss to 'the Protestant community'.



Trimble considers the prospect of workers fighting back

TRIMBLE BACKS BIG BUSINESS

Trimble is also a product of the Unionist Party. He still sees the prize of the peace process as being the surrender of IRA weapons and an acknowledgement from the Provos that the war is over. He makes no secret of his belief that the Agreement has 'secured the union' by cementing the Unionist veto over any change in Ireland.

But he represents that section which understands that in order to get power they will

have to share government with Catholic parties.

He sees himself as a representative of big business. In a telling remark recently, Owen Lamont, the president of the NI Chamber of Commerce and Industry called on business leaders to back Trimble, saying that peace would lead to an expansion of investment. "We'll make the Celtic Tiger look like a pussycat in comparison."

The economic agenda of all the major parties in the Assembly is based on attracting multinational investment with the promise of low wages and low corporate

taxes. The logic of this is to squeeze public spending on health, housing and welfare.

The Celtic Tiger was built on wage restraint by workers and massive shift in wealth from the poor to the rich. Big business and the British and Irish governments, see political stability as the main goal of the peace process. That is why their starting point has always been to get Unionist and Nationalist politicians to agree to co-exist.

Far from undermining sectarian division, this has meant that the division is now locked into the framework of the new political structures.

WHAT WAS ALL THE ARMED STRUGGLE FOR?

The agreement also shows that the republican movement now openly accepts that the sectarian division in Northern Ireland is permanent.

Sinn Fein are positioning themselves to replace the SDLP as the main party of Northern nationalism and to build their influence in the South. They assume that all Protestants will naturally be unionist and all Catholics nationalist.

It is now clear that the IRA are prepared to give up arms as the price of entry into the executive. This must beg the question of what the 25 years of armed struggle were for, in the first place. After all, for the Provos, the armed struggle was not an added extra.

Throughout the years of their campaign they claimed that the armed struggle was the 'cutting edge' of their strategy to get rid of the British. But the armed struggle clearly failed, as socialists long argued. It brought enormous suffering but very few gains.

It had become counter-productive and only led to increased repression by the British Army and RUC in Catholic areas.

The republican movement was always negotiating from a position of weakness, not a position of strength.

That's why even though it claimed to be fighting for socialism, has accepted the legitimacy of both rotten states in Ireland and the artificial division between Protestants and Catholics in the North.

Gerry Adams now says that Sinn Fein has spent the last year preparing "radical republican labour policies" which they are impatient to see implemented by the new Assembly.

That will go down well with the large numbers of people who hope that the new Assembly will mean that issues of poverty and unemployment are addressed.

But you cannot promote radical policies if you are also for cutting tax on big business so they equal the very low levels in the South. And labour policies means talking about the united interests of Catholic and Protestant workers - not the claims of one community over the other.

Yet only two weeks ago Sinn Fein Chairman Mitchell McLaughlin complained that run-down Protestant areas of Derry were getting too many grants compared to Catholic areas.

Does the settlement open a new era of politics?

There is no euphoria but there is widespread relief that at last the impasse may have been broken. Many are already asking if we are on the threshold of a new era in politics in Northern Ireland.

But what sort of future will that be?

Big business and their local representatives want a society on their terms. That means more insecurity, more temporary jobs, and few union

rights. The SDLP said that there were too many public sector jobs in Northern Ireland and want more privatisation.

They all want to see a Northern Ireland where sectarianism is institutionalised so that the working class is kept weak.

There is another possibility. The deep rejection of sectarianism and the desire to see real improvements in the lives of working class people could be translated into the rebirth

of class politics in Northern Ireland.

A movement of Protestant and Catholic working class people to demand action on benefits, poverty wages and unemployment, would offer an alternative to the endless competition for scarce resources on which sectarianism feeds.

The need for such politics is urgent. The potential for it is enormous. In November alone, there has been a mass walkout to save jobs at Harland and Wolff, a march

of 2,000 students in Belfast against fees and strike action at BT call centres.

Communal politicians have no interest in encouraging the linking together of these movements. They are frightened it might be directed against the system which breeds inequality and poverty.

That's why socialist politics, which rejects that communal division is a crucial ingredient in making that potential a reality.

France

Strike wave shakes French Socialist Party

A RASH of strikes swept France last week, hitting national TV and radio stations, as well as, public transport in the country's three biggest cities. Car workers and postal workers also took action.

The strikes come against the background of a continuing political radicalisation in France.

For example, a major demonstration against capitalism and the World Trade Organisation backed by a wide range of organisations is due Saturday 27th of November.

The strikes though modest in scale, are a sign of a new workers offen-

sive in the wake of the 35 hour working week law which passed through parliament last month.

The Socialist Party led coalition government pledged to enact the hours cut when it swept the previous Tory government out of office two years ago.

Pressure from below meant the government had to fulfil its pledge. But it also bowed to pressure from France's bosses and massively watered down the law.

Cut

So the hours cut has been linked to a move to greater flexibility through annualised hours schemes.

These can mean workers actual working week changes little, as the 35 hours is averaged over the whole year.

Workers are far from happy and have launched a series of strikes over the implementation of the law.

Programmes on the France 2 and France 3 national TV station as well as several national radio stations were badly disrupted by strikes last week. Radio stations cut news bulletins and played music, while TV channels showed repeats.

Workers are demanding extra jobs are created.

There has been a rash of other disputes on the question of pay and the working week at the start of this week.

A strike by bus, metro and tram workers brought Marseilles to a standstill. In Lyons public transport was paralysed.

In the north of France railworkers shut down much of the train network.

In Paris last week rubbish piled up at metro stations as a strike by workers who clean the network entered its second week.

The workers, employed by a private subcontractor, are demanding a £40 a month rise, more jobs and other concessions as part of the 35 hour week deal.

Postal workers have also been taking action. Workers at the international sorting office at Bourget were out last week over the demand that temporary workers be made permanent as part of the 35 hour week deal.

In Bordeaux postal workers won a demand for better shifts and more jobs after striking, occupying and briefly "kidnapping" their boss.

The prestigious Daimler Chrysler plant, building the new Micro Compact Car at Hambach in eastern France was paralysed by strikes last week.

The plant was a model "just in time" operation set up with a series of sub-contractors in separate factories surrounding the main plant.

The mainly young workers at several subcontractors walked out on strike last week demanding higher pay.

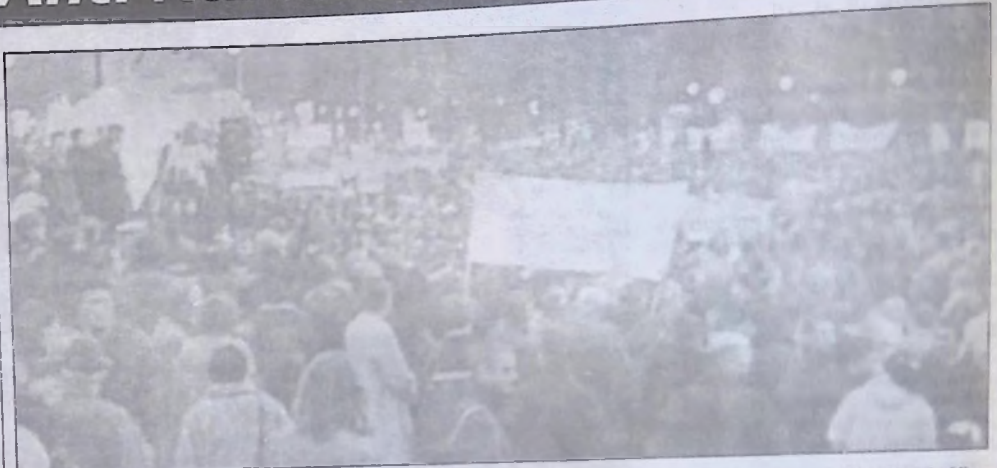
They blocked the entrance to the whole site and quickly closed down the whole operation.

Management quickly sued for peace and workers look to have won wage rises of up to £50 a month.

This follows strikes at Renault car factories earlier this month, when five days of action at the company's Flins plant won a £100 bonus. Workers at Renault's Douai and Cleon plants also won extra money.

The strikes and political protests show that workers are capable of winning much more than the limited change on offer from the government.

Anti-Nazis march in Austria



SOME 50,000 people marched in Vienna in Austria on recently in protest at the Nazi Jörg Haider. It was one of the country's biggest political demonstrations since the Second World War.

For many people it was the first political demonstration they had been on. One member of the youth wing of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (equivalent to the Labour Party) told Socialist Worker, "The anti-Nazi protest in London against Haider last month has helped to inspire resistance to him here."

Kosovo

Nato's lies exposed

NATO HAS admitted that the murder rate in Kosovo now is exactly the same as it was in the run up to it launching war earlier this year. NATO leaders justified their war by pointing to the murder of ethnic Albanians in the months before air strikes began in March.

It now admits that the same number are still being killed each week in Kosovo, many of them ethnic Serbs and Roma Gypsies.

Missing

During the war NATO claimed 100,000 ethnic Albanian men were missing, "presumed dead". The claim was taken up and repeated by pro-war newspapers and commentators.

A widely quoted US information agency fact-sheet at the time claimed: "the number of unaccounted for ethnic Albanian men ranges from a low 225,000 to over 400,000.

Despite the fact that no

place on earth has been as scrutinised by forensic investigators, not to mention 2,700 media personnel, no evidence of mass murder has been collected.

The head of the Spanish forensic team attached to the International War Crimes Tribunal, Emilio Perez Pujol, says that as few as 2,500 were killed.

In an interview with *El Pais*, he complained angrily that he and his colleagues had become part of "a semantic pirouette by the war propaganda machines, because we did not find one-not one mass grave".

In the village of Ljubenic where there was supposed to be a mass grave, seven bodies were found. Perhaps the most significant disclosure confirmed by the International War Crimes Tribunal on 11 October, was that the Trepeca lead and Zinc mines where the corpses of 700 murdered Albanians were presumed hidden, contained no bodies.

The official UN crimes investigator also reported recently that 2,108 bodies have been found in 195 of the 529 sites investigated so far. That is a gruesome total but far short of the lies used to urge on the bombing by NATO.

Greece

Workers send Clinton packing

POLICE DRENCHED the centre of the Greek capital Athens with tear gas to disperse mass demonstrations against US president Bill Clinton.

Over 30,000 people battled to get near government buildings and the US embassy. They chanted anti-NATO slogans and denounced Clinton as the "Butcher of the Balkans" for ordering the bombing of Yugoslavia earlier this year. Clinton had been forced to scrap plans for a more elaborate visit earlier in the week. He stopped over in Athens following a conference of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe in the Turkish city of Istanbul.

Shortly after his arrival he said, "I have come here as a friend of Greece and I look forward to experiencing that wonderful quality of Greek hospitality known to all the world."

As he spoke, police launched the first volleys of tear gas and protesters responded by setting fire to a couple of dozen banks and shops.

The Greek government is led by Greece's Tony Blair, Costas Simitis. He ordered the biggest police crack-

down since 1991 when his Tory predecessor broke up protests by students and teachers during the Gulf War.

Simitis sipped champagne with Clinton as riot police ran amok for two hours. Clinton praised the Greek government for building "the powerhouse economy of the Balkans". He even apologised for the US's role in bringing the colonels' military dictatorship to power in Greece in 1967. None of that was enough to placate ordinary people in Athens.

Guard

The US government drafted over 3,000 FBI and security service personnel into Athens to guard Clinton's trip.

But he was able to attend only one event outside official buildings. He visited the ancient site of the Acropolis.

Even mainstream papers speculated that he had chosen to visit there because ordinary people had too much respect for the site to risk damaging it through protests.

Clinton was unable to defuse the opposition through appealing to the symbols of Greek nationalism

because the protests against him were internationalist in tone.

There is not only deep hatred in Greece to US military power. There is also great sympathy for the victims of the recent earthquakes in neighbouring Turkey, which is Greece's main military rival in the region.

A demonstration two days before Clinton's visit to mark the anniversary of the 1973 uprising against the US backed military dictatorship showed the mood of international solidarity.

About 30,000 people marched, including a delegation of Japanese railworkers. They carried a banner in Greek and Japanese. It read, "Solidarity for Peace". They had decided to send a delegation after they saw pictures of Greek railworkers stopping NATO tanks from crossing into Macedonia in April for use in the war in Kosovo.

They told Greek protestors that the Japanese state was rearming and contributing to deepening military tensions in East Asia.

They called for international solidarity by working people against the threat of war. The protests against Clinton show just how powerful that international solidarity can be.

Eamonn McCann

A blind eye to the shipyard

THE CRISIS at the Belfast shipyard came in the same week as the final stage of the Mitchell Talks. The coincidence provided a glimpse of what Republicans mean when they talk of "reaching out" and "healing divisions".

It seems that it's Unionists they want to reach out to, not trade unionists.

Republicans have generally gone along with the search for good relations with Unionist Party bosses. They were able to swallow the fact that Gerry Adams sat down to dinner with David Trimble at the US ambassador's residence in London.

That could be put down to the necessary niceties of negotiation.

There could even be satisfaction that the Unionists were more likely than the Republicans to have choked on the idea. After all, it's only a couple of years since they were projecting Adams as the devil incarnate.

But they can't put the same spin on Adams' recent expressions of warmth towards Trimble. On BBC2's "Newsnight", the Sinn Fein president, smiling, discussed at what point he and Trimble had begun trusting one another, and volunteered that each of them would have to be mindful of the other's problems when making pronouncements in future.

Discrimination

Republicans were looking forward to working with Unionists in the Executive, said Adams. Referring directly and specifically to the Ulster Unionist Party, he went on: "We see these people as our brothers and sisters".

Socialists campaigning to save the jobs at Harland and Wolff encountered few Republicans taking this fraternal attitude to shipyard workers. The most common response has been one of couldn't-care-less. Some individuals have been positively gleeful at the thought of the yard closing down.

The reason is obvious, although that doesn't make it right. For generations, Catholics suffered harsh discrimination with regard to jobs at the yard. And the small number of Catholics who did manage to get work there were vulnerable to harassment and worse.

The basic socialist reaction has always been to campaign against the discrimination, fight for workers' solidarity and strive to isolate the bigots. The main Republican reaction is to tar every Protestant shipyard worker with the same brush.

Republicans recall that the Catholic worker Maurice Kane was murdered in the shipyard just five years ago. Socialists recall it, too, but also recall the fact that the entire, overwhelmingly Protestant, workforce walked out in protest against the killing. As always, different political perspectives illuminate different aspects of the same experience.

Fight

The underlying difference is that Republicans see the shipyard workers as part of the other community, whereas socialists see the same workers as part of our class.

David Trimble's party had nothing to offer the shipyard workers in the fight to save their jobs. The UUs are right-wing on economic matters as on everything else and are instinctively opposed to State "interference" in industry. When the workers marched from the yard into Belfast city centre to demand action, the UUs didn't have a single practical thing to say to them.

But it simply wouldn't have occurred to Sinn Fein to see this situation as an opportunity to expose Trimble as a right-wing anti-working class politician that the shipyard workers should have no trust in. It certainly wouldn't occur to them to put forward ideas of their own about how to fight to keep the jobs.

Sinn Fein sees the shipyard workers as Trimble's people, not their people. Indeed, they'd prefer the shipyard workers to follow Trimble rather than any alternative Unionist leader, so as to help secure the Mitchell deal.

The loss of the shipyard jobs would be a hammer-blow for workers generally. The next group of workers facing redundancy would be far less confident about putting up a fight if the shipyard went down to defeat. But that would scarcely enter into Republican calculations.

Between working-class action and David Trimble, Sinn Fein chooses Trimble. Those who continue to think of themselves as socialists might usefully ponder that fact.

Workers action helps to save the shipyard

THE 3,000 workers at Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast have received a temporary reprieve from the threat of closure.

The yard was on the brink of going into receivership as US-based multinational, Global Marine, refused to pay for cost over-runs on two ships being built in the yard.

On Tuesday 9 November, over 2,000 workers staged a walkout and marched to the Hilton Hotel in Belfast where negotiations were being held between the company and local politicians.

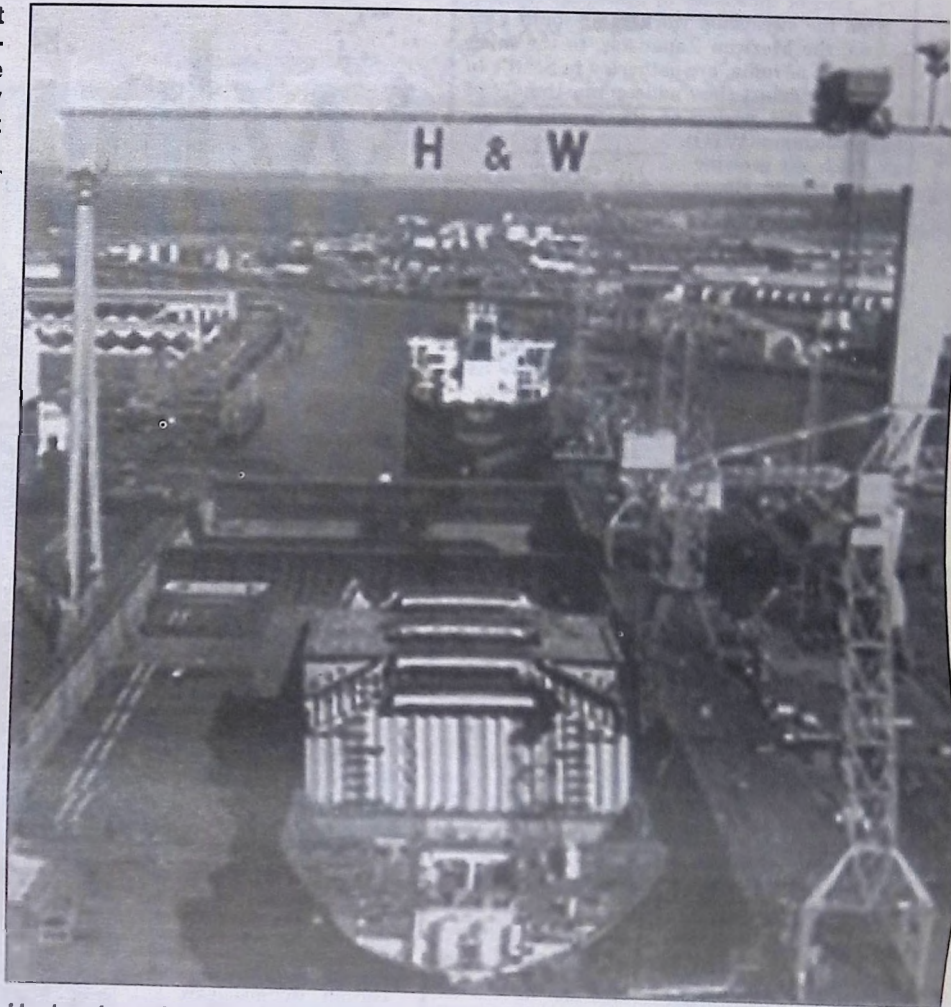
Billy McCracken, an ATGWU shop steward at the shipyards, spoke to *Socialist Worker* about the background to the walkout and the future for the shipyard.

"We called a mass meeting. We wanted to highlight the situation for the workers. It was a fortnight before we were told that there was no money and that our wages were only guaranteed for another week or so," said Billy.

"At the mass meeting we decided on a protest up to the Hilton. The Assembly members had been meeting with Global Marine. But the unions had been kept in the dark. We were only hearing the Harland and Wolff side of the story."

The walkout resulted in union leaders being a party to the talks to resolve the crisis. But it was still another week before Global Marine agreed to release the extra money. As talks between Fred Olsen, the Norwegian billionaire who owns the yard and the Global Marine continued, the trade unions in the shipyard told Global that the ships would not be moved.

"We left Global marine in no doubt that we wouldn't let the ships leave the yard. We knew they had checked internationally to see if they could



Harland and Wolff

get the work finished elsewhere," said Billy. "We were prepared to take action to keep the ships there and that was an important part of getting the agreement."

The immediate crisis is over, but the future is by no means secure. The order book is empty and already

workers are being laid off in the yard.

"It is important that we got the deal. It's a weight off people's minds."

"But it is only the beginning of the fight. It means that there is money freed up for the yard to look for more work," said Billy.

"But we should have had a new order to start three weeks ago."

"As it is, a lot of the shops are closing for lack of work and most of the remaining men are in the dock area now. We could be facing redundancies soon."

Why won't Labour save the jobs?

DURING THE dispute, the Labour government said that it could not put any more money into the yard. "The government said that their hands were tied, that under the European legislation they could only guarantee a percentage of the initial price for the contract. But it should be for the full price," said Billy.

"In any case, it is all based on this cliché of the 'level playing field' and the free market."

"In Korea they say they can build a ship for half the price but they are backed by the government."

Higher

"We're looking for new orders with the oil industry now and we're saying that even if the price is £20 or £30 million higher than Korea, the government should be prepared to wear that because of the benefits it brings to the local community and the economy here."

"There's no doubt the government could be doing more," said Billy.

"Since the yards were privatised, they have just let the whole industry sink or swim. It's just following on from the Thatcher era where the yards all over Britain were run down."

"It means that shipyard workers are just

expected to travel the world following the work. Most of us grew up here.

"We don't want to be packing our bags and living away from home for nine months at a time."

What we think

SINCE Harland and Wolff was privatised in 1989, thousands of jobs have been lost and workers are on a constant treadmill of cost-cutting and underbidding for contracts.

Taking the yards back into public ownership would mean that contracts could be guaranteed.

The money is there. Two weeks ago, the government handed over £40 million of public money to BT and Halifax to build low-wage call centres in Northern Ireland.

In August, they handed £70 million in government contracts and millions more in IDB grants to US arms

multinational Raytheon to set up here.

New Labour are continuing the same rotten Tory policies that destroyed hundreds of mining communities and devastated the steel industry.

But millions of working class people are fed up with the logic of the free market. After the Paddington rail crash, a newspaper poll found that 78 percent of people in Britain were in favour of nationalising the railways. If Harland and Wolff faces another crisis, a fight to demand they be taken back into public ownership would be equally popular.

World Tyranny Organisation

IT IS the worst nightmare of politicians and corporate tycoons.

Tens of thousands of protesters ranging from the sweatshop workers of South East Asia, the Mexican Zapatistas, to the small farmers of India, are gathering in Seattle to protest against the "millennium round" of trade talks under of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Fears are growing in the White House that the Seattle protest will turn into a millennium version of Chicago 1968, when the Democratic National Convention became the site of enormous clashes between anti-war protesters and police.

A \$6 million budget for the Seattle police has been sanctioned to cover the additional officers, overtime and a stockpile of tear gas and 'crowd control' equipment.

The spin doctors have gone into overkill in a desperate attempt to stress the virtues of free trade, level playing fields and the role of the WTO as an impartial trade "policeman".

But the reality is somewhat different. In the 4 years since its establishment, the WTO has emerged as the muscle of the transnational corporations.

Repeal

The multi-nationals use it as a weapon to repeal any restrictions imposed upon them by nation states and enforce "global free trade" at any cost.

In its short history it has overturned environmental regulations and policies that took up to 30 years to achieve. For example in 1998, the WTO ruled that the 'precautionary principle is not a valid basis for restricting markets because it is "non-scientific". This meant that when the EU banned the sale of hormone-treated meat within EU countries, the US lodged a formal complaint to the WTO.

Despite a lengthy report by independent scientists that some of the hormones added to US beef were capable of causing cancer by themselves, the WTO ruled that the EU did not have a valid scientific case for refusing to allow the import of US beef.

The WTO has also strengthened and internationalised the US patent protection system, massively increasing payments to multi-nationals.

Ninety five percent

by SINEAD KENNEDY

of the world's HIV population live in the Third World and they see almost all of the deaths from AIDS. These countries are unable to afford expensive HIV and AIDS treatments. In order to get around this Third World countries sometimes import the raw materials and then make cheaper brands of their own medicines.

But the US is trying to use the WTO to stop this. Instead they want the WTO to impose compulsory licensing, so that governments will pay fees to pharmaceutical companies for the right to manufacture their drugs. This will mean that access to drugs will be priced out of the league of millions of people in the Third World.

The WTO has even overturned American regulations to protect the environment. The US had banned lead from gasoline and DDT from farming because they concluded in the 1970s that there is no safe way to "manage" such substances after they were created. But the WTO has declared such product bans illegal.

WTO rules forbid banning toxic substances and therefore has become a very effective hammer for breaking apart the structure of environmental protection. Toxins can now only be regulated using 'risk assessment', so it is very easy for multi-nationals with their experts and lawyers to argue that the risk is negligible and make the system work for them.

The whole agenda of the WTO is to boast the profits of big business, even if it means destroying the lives of millions across the globe.

Campaigning author Susan George says, "In my view, the World Trade Organisation is the greatest threat to democracy we now face, and should be the prime target for militants."

JOIN THE PROTEST ON SATURDAY 27TH NOV, 1PM CENTRAL BANK, DUBLIN.

No deportations...No vouchers

Don't let Fianna Fail whip up racism

FIANNA FAIL politicians are playing the racist card. They are worried that their vote will decline after the recent spate of scandals.

They hope to forge a new right wing identity for the party through the championing of traditional family values and opposition to immigration.

One of the figures behind the new campaign is Noel Ahern, the Taoiseach's brother who opposed the decision to give limited rights to refugees to work.

He belongs to the fundamentalist wing of the party that also opposed the judgement on the 'X' case which gave women the right to abortion under certain circumstances.

He has been joined by Ivor Callely who once claimed that refugees "carry on in a culture that is not akin to Irish culture".

When asked what he meant, he claimed that refugees were "bleeding lambs in the back garden".

Claims

Callely is also the chairperson of the Eastern Health Board. He claims that refugees are causing a housing crisis.

But Callely was one of Charlie Haughey's lieutenants and never once criticised the way he ran down local authority housing to help cut the taxes of his rich friends.

The new racist campaign is due to culminate in the deportation of up to 500 refugees which could begin just before Christmas.

Justice Minister John O'Donoghue has tried to create an atmosphere of crisis by putting ads in papers appealing for accommodation for refugees.

He wants to deprive immigrants of all social security benefits and put them on a voucher system where they will only be given food parcels. The aim is to isolate refugees so that there is no mixing with Irish people and no moves to a



Refugees from Russia's war in Chechnya

multi-cultural society.

But Fianna Fail is weak and faces huge opposition from a growing anti-racist movement.

The key thing now is to challenge their lies on every count.

LIE NUMBER 1:

THERE ARE TOO MANY REFUGEES COMING INTO IRELAND

JUST 5,500 people have applied for asylum in Ireland this year.

This seems a big increase on previous years but that is only because Ireland took hardly any refugees before 1992.

The numbers coming in are still tiny compared to the 30,000 Irish people who left

the country in 1990.

The media talk a lot about 'the flood' of refugees. But they never mention that refugees are a minority of those who immigrate to Ireland.

In 1997, for example, 20,000 people came to Ireland from Britain.

There was no panic or crisis about these number because they were mainly returned Irish migrants.

The issue has nothing to do with numbers - it is a racist fear of people with a

different culture or skin colour.

There are also far more people leaving Ireland today - even in the middle of the boom - than there are refugees coming here.

In 1997, for example, 29,000 Irish people emigrated abroad.

LIE NUMBER 2:

REFUGEES ARE COSTING THE STATE TOO MUCH

Refugees only get basic social welfare and receive no more than Irish people.

Most refugees would prefer to work but they are effectively not allowed to.

The government made a great play over their humane gesture in giving a limited number of refugees who arrived here before July 1999, the right to work. But it is a sham.

Only 31 work permits have been given out. The main reason is that the law makes refugees dependent on employers to process the applications. They have to show that no Irish person could do the job and pay an application fee. Even if the application is successful, the refugees are dependent on the particular employer who processed their application and so are beholden to them.

Each month, O'Donoghue produces figures to show the costs of

SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE

The status of the refugee should strike a cord with every man, woman and child here who has any grasp of Irish history, our history books being littered with the names and details of those driven from our country out of fear of persecution.

— JOHN O'DONOGHUE in the *Dail* 19/10/1995

ouchers...

Fianna Fail Racism



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social welfare for refugees. But the government never gives out monthly figures for the tax breaks and hand-outs to businessmen. In 1996, for example £2,565 million was given to business men under these schemes - that works out at a staggering £213 million a month.

LIE NUMBER 3: IRELAND SHOULD NOT PICK UP THE BURDEN CAUSED BY COLONIAL COUNTRIES.

IMMIGRANTS from Third World countries are not a burden.

Immigration, in fact, is a form of wealth transfer from poorer countries to richer countries. The poor countries take

on the cost of educating, feeding and looking after the health of young people only to see them leave when they are at their most productive.

This happened in Ireland in the past and was often called a 'brain drain'.

Every recent official report has claimed that Ireland needs more immigrants.

The ESRI has argued that Ireland needs a major influx of immigrants to overcome labour shortages.

They know that immigrants are highly productive and a financial asset to the country.

Some employers are also calling for more immigration but they want it on their terms to get cheap labour.

Trade unionists should present their own policy of allowing immigrants free access to work, and the right to get jobs when they

HYPOCRISY OVER IMMIGRATION

TODAY FIANNA Fail pretends that immigration is a bad thing. But in the past, they encouraged emigration.

Between 1926 and 1986, 790,000 people left Ireland. Freedom from the British empire did not bring an end to poverty and misery as the founders of the state promised, so they encouraged people to leave.

In the 1950s, so many left that one newspaper ran the headline 'Would the last person leaving, turn out the light'.

Thinking

A senior Fine Gael politician summed up the thinking of the establishment when he said, "High emigration releases social tensions which would otherwise explode and makes possible a stability of manners and customs which would otherwise be the subject of radical change".

In the 1990s, Fianna Fail went to even greater lengths to encourage young people to leave Ireland so they could build a conservative little state.

The FF politician Brian Lenihan claimed that emigra-

tion to Germany would help "develop a work ethic". He added that "After all we can't all live on a small island".

FF worked closely with right wing American politicians in the Friends of Ireland group to get special visas for Irish illegals.

When 40,000 Donnelly visa were granted Irish applicants got 41 percent of them. The government even ensured that exam result were sent over to the US in time for the applications.

Fianna Fail campaigned openly for an amnesty for the Irish illegals who went to the US.

These policies suited the white establishment in the US.

They were concerned with the growing numbers of Afro-Caribbean and Hispanic migrants coming to the US and wanted to increase migration form the 'old countries' instead.

So at the time, neither they nor Fianna Fail had any problem with immigration — as long as the immigrants were white.

want.

LIE NUMBER 4:

IRELAND IS WILLING TO TAKE 'GENUINE' REFUGEES NOT ILLEGALS

IT'S NOT true. Only 7 asylum seekers were granted refugee status last year in

Ireland.

O'Donoghue has deliberately appointed ex-Gardai as immigration officers to ensure that numbers granted permission to stay is kept low.

This has always been Fianna Fail's history.

During WW2 they only allowed in 40 Jews who were fleeing the Holocaust - and these were Jews who had converted to Catholicism!

what do socialists say?

Who makes the profits?

BUSINESSMEN like Tony O'Reilly amass huge amounts of wealth every day. They claim they are entitled to it because they 'took risks', or simply because they 'worked hard to earn it'.

The conventional view of economics is also that profits are the reward for investment just as wages are a reward for investment.

But this seemingly fair exchange of wealth hides what is really going on - that profits are the result of exploitation of workers.

In previous societies exploitation was easy to see. Slave owners owned workers and 'created wealth' by forcing slaves to work in return for their basic upkeep.

Under feudalism, serfs worked on their own land for a few days a week to sustain themselves but for part of the week they were forced to work for nothing on the lord's land to keep him in luxury.

Capitalists don't own workers but they exploit them in the same way - by keeping part of the wealth workers produce for themselves.

To understand this we have to look at Marx's labour theory of value.

Marx argued that the value of every commodity is measured by the amount of labour time involved in producing it.

For example, a pair of shoes that takes 1

hour of labour time to produce may cost £10, and if a loaf of bread involves 15 minutes of labour time to produce, you would be able to buy 4 loaves of bread for the same price as one pair of shoes.

Of course this doesn't mean that workers who take longer to do a job are creating more wealth.

The value depends on the amount of labour time needed to produce something given the level of technology or expertise available at any one time. This is the socially necessary labour time.

Produced

Computers, for example, can be produced with far less labour time today than ten years ago because of the advances in technology. So the value of computers is much less.

Changes in supply and demand may distort the value of any commodity for a short time. If there was a bad harvest and wheat was in short supply the price of bread would rise.

But in general the price tends to fluctuate around the value of the labour involved in producing it.

In our society, labour is treated as a commodity like any other. As a result it is also exchanged for the value of the labour time that is needed to sustain it.

Workers are generally paid enough money to feed, house, and clothe themselves - that is the cost of making sure

they are able to come to work every day.

But the difference is that the labour power, unlike any other commodity, has the ability to create surplus value.

If workers are employed for an eight hour day, the chances are that they have created the equivalent value to their wages in three or four hours.

The rest is used by their employer to create surplus value or profit.

But aren't employers entitled to some return on their investment?

Capitalists may own all the factories, land and offices - the means of production - but where did it come from to begin with? Again all wealth comes from labour.

Machines do not produce anything on their own.

Workers need machines and tools to produce wealth but even machines had to be made by workers to begin with.

Even the raw materials used to make the machines had to be located and mined or harvested using human labour.

The capital that bosses invest is just 'dead labour' - the wealth produced by previous generations of workers that has been appropriated over the years.

Under capitalism there is no such thing as a 'fair days work for a fair day's pay'.

Workers will never get the full amount of wealth they really produce until we do away with profits.

by GRACE LALLY

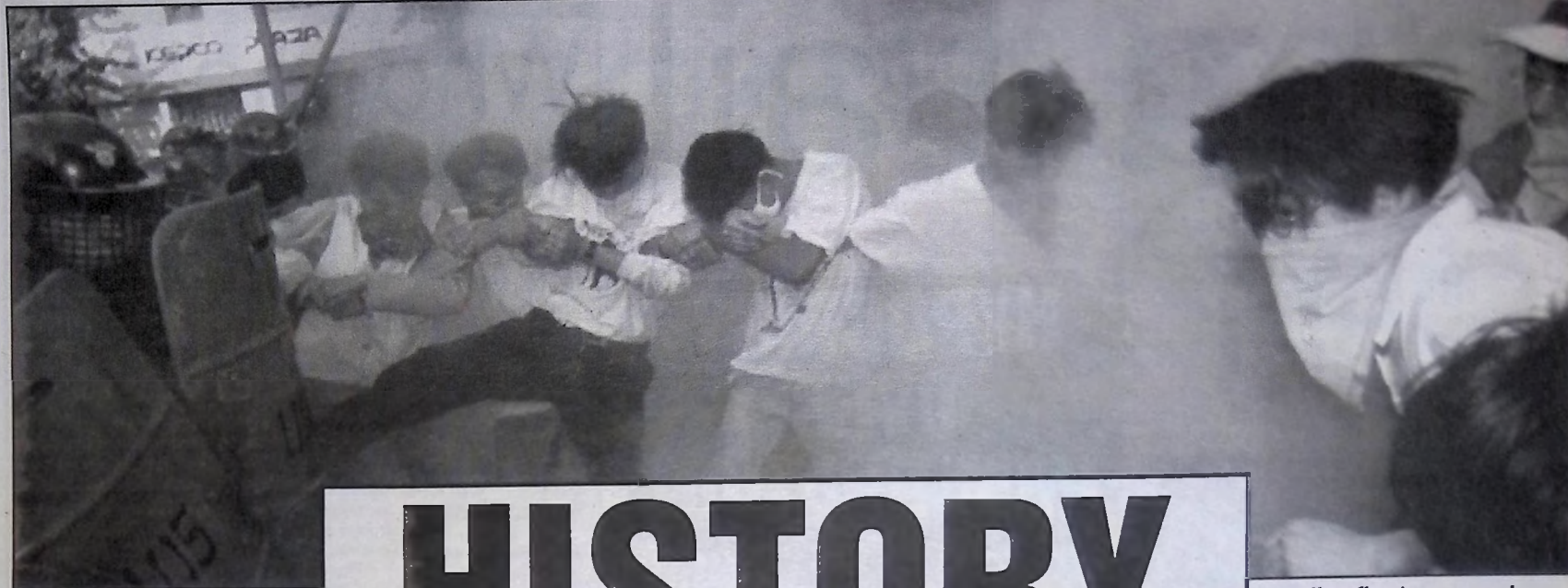
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MARK STEEL REVIEWS 'A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE WORLD'



Police fire tear gas at pro-democracy demonstrators in South Korea.

THERE IS something slightly satisfying about reading a history of the whole world. You find yourself thinking, "While I'm waiting for the kettle to boil, I can do the 11th century."

A five stop train journey can get you through the decline of the Roman Empire and a bit of the Crusades (with a bit of concentration).

Reading Chris Harman's epic account also induces a frequent "so nothing's changed" snigger, as thousands of years of ruling class trickery unfold.

For example, the ruling families in the early Roman Senate imposed a system in which 98 of the 193 votes went to the highest class, while the propertyless had one vote between them. And I'm sure the Senators were adamant that this electoral college was the fairest system and nothing to do with ensuring the toady Frank Dobsonius got the job.

This book is more than a series of fascinating but disconnected facts. Each section conveys how the facts of history are anything but disconnected, and can only be fully explained by a Marxist approach.

Marx's starting point was that before human beings could indulge in politics, religion or culture, their first priority was to keep themselves fed, clothed and alive.

He showed how the organisation and ideas of society stem from the methods employed to keep that production rolling. This is the premise that makes Harman's book possible. If the more conventional approaches to history were to take on such a task, they would struggle to get off the ground.

The "Save Our Pound" view explains society in terms of nations. Yet for the bulk of human existence no such thing as a nation existed. Clearly there were not settlements in the Iron Age in which people felt a strange allegiance to the lump of land which 2,000 years later would become Italy.

THE VIEW that sees history as being driven by a handful of great men and the occasional woman fails to answer the questions in the poem by German socialist Bertolt Brecht with which Harman introduces the book:

"Who built Thebes of the seven gates? In the books you will find the names of kings. Did the kings haul up the lumps of rock?" The values and habits of contemporary society - inequality, war, small family units, sport and road rage - are most commonly put down to human nature.

This is the Flintstones method, which assumes that prehistoric society

HISTORY TO MAKE A FUTURE

was organised just like ours, except in stone. Yet the opening chapters of *A People's History* illustrate how hunting and gathering societies depended on cooperation for their survival.

And with no surplus above what was essential for immediate consumption, class society was not just undesirable, but impossible. It follows, as people lived in foraging bands continually moving on to other sources of plant food, that "there could not have been the obsession with private property that we take for granted today".

So from the opening pages the book declares itself a participant in the most modern debates, even when it's discussing foraging bands of neolithic tribes.

For all socialists find themselves face to face with the argument that aiming for a socialist society is futile, as violence and greed are endemic traits of the human condition. Harman leaves you in no doubt: hunter-gatherers did not need share options.

The recognition that ideas are related to the way society is organised allows Harman to examine every corner of each period. Religion, for example, is portrayed as a product of its environment. Christianity and Islam are explained as forces which spread because they offered an alternative to the oppressive empires that surrounded them.

This theory holds together more firmly than those involving wise men or voices on mountains do. And it provides countless fascinating insights. For example, the reason why Hinduism insisted that the cow was sacred was that the cow was more valuable as a ploughing tool than as an instant meal as Indian agriculture developed.

There is even an explanation for the behaviour of the remarkable

Flagellants, 14th century Christians who would march to a town in a group of 500, form a circle and beat their own backs with iron spikes. Though on this occasion I'd be prepared to accept they were just bonkers.

HARMAN ACCEPTS the wide brief he has given himself with such a title and does not skimp on including artistic and cultural aspects of society.

The artists of the Renaissance, the plays of Shakespeare, and the trend of radical films by Welles and Chaplin are examined as deriving from the social movements that influenced them and as forces which then influenced those social movements.

There is another aspect of Marx's approach, which Harman uses to great effect. Each period is analysed, not just for its social structure, but for the shifts and changes moving beneath the surface.

By viewing the bottom of society as well as the top, he sees the conflicts brewing which lead to the clashes that eventually erupt, apparently out of nowhere, and transform the world. The French journalist who wrote a few months before the French Revolution that disturbances in Paris were impossible must have wished he had adopted this approach.

The method allows Harman to counter a variety of modern assumptions, such as the view that European society has always been in advance of the rest of the planet. A traveller in Tanzania in 1331 is quoted as describing the town of Kilwa as "one of the

most beautiful and well constructed cities in the world".

China is depicted as in advance of Europe throughout the Dark Ages. As late as the 15th century the Aztecs inhabited a civilisation comparable to any in Europe. Harman is able to portray many current views of society as untenable by placing each event in a world historic context.

The idea, for example, that the growth of Islam threatens a specific brand of brutality is dealt with in a sentence: "Khomeini's repression was not qualitatively different from that endorsed by French Catholicism at the crushing of the Paris Commune or that backed by Prussian Lutheranism in 1919-20."

Above all, the book portrays how the history of class society is not just a fearsome account of repression and brutality, but of continuous resistance to that repression. From the earliest ruling classes, the exploiters have had to keep one eye firmly on the unpalatable fact that "ye are many, they are few." Ancient Greek rulers were persuaded to ensure food supplies to the peasants, not by the debates of philosophers, but by a series of rural revolts.

Similarly in each period ruling class policy has been shaped either by revolt or by the threat of revolt.

AS THE book arrives at the modern world, however, the implications of those revolts take on a new meaning.

Capitalism has created a new class, the working class, forced to act collectively and as such capable not just of revolt, but of establishing a new phase of society in which the majority rule in the interests of the majority.

A certain dizziness results from travelling three million years in a single book.

I can imagine bizarre conversations between those who own a copy: "I'm up to the English Civil War." "Oh, I've only got as far as the pharaohs." But there are other inescapable thoughts as you reach its conclusion.

As you gaze across the panorama of thousands of years of rebellion, revolution and persecution, how facile it seems for someone to claim that now, at this precise moment, "the class struggle is over".

We have been here so many times before. No doubt there were jumped up creeps in the Bronze Age who declared at the coppersmiths' conference, "At last the class struggle is over."

But the finest of this book's achievements is to compile a splendidly readable account of the entirety of human history and not leave the reader feeling at all insignificant.

Instead you sense that your humble role in the class struggle connects you to the slaves who rattled Rome, the poor who toppled the king of France, the workers who stormed the Winter Palace, and anyone at Thebes who refused to haul up any more rocks.

While such people are still celebrated, no one now recalls the slaveholders who crucified Spartacus, or the officials who got an extra goat for betraying the Peasants' Revolt.

Just as, when the history of the next millennium is written, those who continued the battle for a better world will take their place with pride, while no one will recall the private school twerp with the millionaire friends and the manic grin.

A People's History of the World is available from SW books P.O. Box 1648 priced £15.99

PUBLIC MEETING
CHRIS HARMAN SPEAKS ON:
A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE
WORLD
 Clifton Court Hotel, Eden Quay, Dublin
 Wednesday, Dec. 8th at 8pm

in my view

Profits of pop music

A FEW years ago pop stars got publicity by tearing up pictures of the pope, but now Sinéad is a priest and Bono got an award for 'freeing our mind' and giving his sunglasses to the bigot of Rome. I blame MTV.

The head of MTV Europe is honest about what the corporation does. He talks about "helping to migrate acts across territories", and says that "new artists add value to our brand" and importantly "it's a business more than anything else."

At the recent MTV Awards in Dublin, while a thousand poor unfortunate youngsters shelled out their parents' hard-earned cash for tickets; the remainder of the audience consisted of the music industry's movers, shakers, schmoozers and anyone else who could get their hands on a freebie.

If anything typifies the awards as being the preserve of the music industry - and not of pop music fans - this was it. Oh yes, they let in thirty kids from the area for nothing, just to show that MTV cares — after the threat of protests from local residents.

MTV is less an entertainment network than a promotional machine in perpetual motion. Look at the way the network relentlessly hyped the awards.

The event was treated by the network and much of the Irish media like the coming of the messiah. The nominees were played over and over, and listed repeatedly in promotional spots, along with heavy mentions of the corporate sponsors.

Yet it's more than mere hype that fuels the Planet Pop ethos of MTV. The argument of many critics is that the organisation is killing real music. It's doing that for sure, and more. MTV has bred a business ethic wherein success is dependent on how you look and how soulless your music is. It employs a philosophy that has very little to do with creativity and everything to do with plugging a market gap.

Choice

MTV of course offers a choice. Choose your best video between KoRn's "Freak on a Leash" and "I Want It That Way" by BackstreetBoys. The only question is which group's record company is better at manufacturing an image for MTV? KoRn and BackstreetBoys may be very different groups, but I don't see much difference in their videos.

Yes, KoRn's a body-slaming hard-rock act known for inciting the kind of mosh-pit riots that annoy tabloids. And Backstreet Boys are clean-cut harmonisers known for inciting riotous feelings among music lovers.

But their superficial differences can't hide the fact that their videos come out of the same corporate mold. They're superslick, and paid for by huge record companies, directed, filmed and edited like commercials.

We have commercials masquerading as videos and even worse movie trailers masquerading as, well, nothing more than movie trailers - "Wild, Wild Waste of Time". Somewhere out there, I'm sure that original work is being done in music videos. Just don't expect to find any examples on the MTV.

It is compulsory for a video to contain scantily clad women dancing, sometimes with bands like The Offspring or with Robbie Williams. There may be a facade of irony but the reality is the same old nonsense - naked women to keep a section of the audience watching despite the song.

The ultimate MTV star is Britney Spears. Britney's contribution to music is mainly to bring the commodification of teen sexploitation to new heights.

A teenage girl in a porn movie director's idea of a school uniform, singing "baby hit me just one more time", may be what record company executives fantasies are about but for rest of us it is just offensive.

The ability to remarket and commodify sex to sell, even got as far as the TLC song "Unpretty", where the band, which is marketed mostly on the singers bodies, sat scantily clad between images of "Unpretty" girls been forced to plastic surgery or bulimia. The hypocrisy has no bounds.

Recently it was announced that the men in the kiddie pop band Steps get paid three times as much as the women. This is the reality behind the hype, a music industry whose purpose isn't entertainment but profit.

by SIMON BASKETTER

film

Battling against the system

by DAVE McDONAGH

DON'T BE put off by the hype surrounding the violence in the new movie *Fight Club*. This is one of the most important American film of recent years.

True, there are countless scenes of brutality that will make you flinch but it is also a wonderful portrait of society at the end of twentieth with its stark, cynical portrayal of the underbelly of the American dream.

This is the real reason it has come under fire.

Fight Club tells the story of Jack, played by Edward Norton, who has embraced the consumer ideology yet finds himself lonely and alienated.

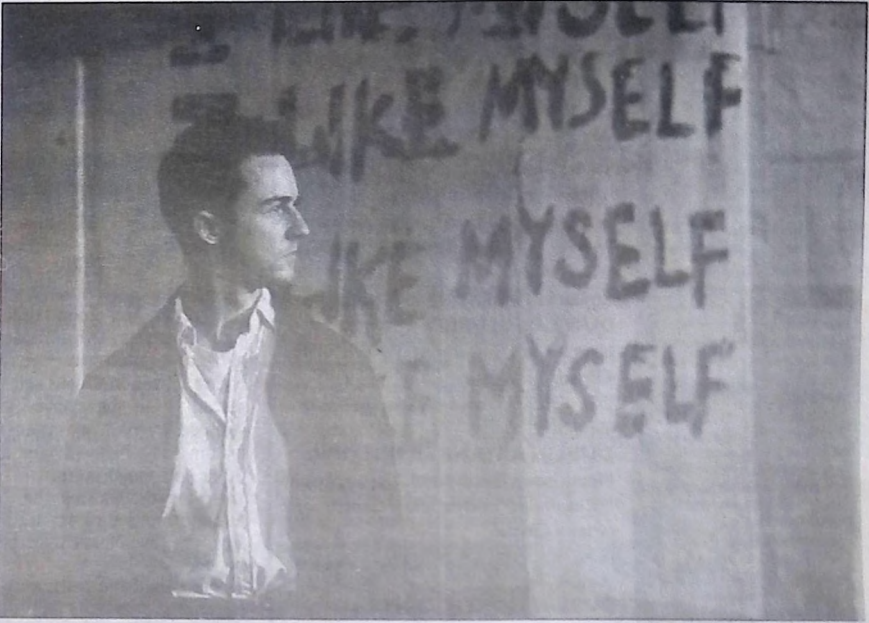
Post-modern

Jack symbolises the "post-modern" man who argue that the working class has vanished, giving way to a new white collar middle class, obsessed with consumer lifestyles.

Fight Club pokes savage fun at this image, showing how little has really changed.

By day, Jack is an office worker with a major car company.

He is sickened by the way his bosses put lives at risk when they discover faults in their cars: if the likely compensation payout for fatalities is less than the cost of recalling the model, they ignore the fault.



Asserting a radical consciousness

By night we see Jack sitting on the toilet with a mobile phone in one hand and an Ikea catalogue in the other, ordering designer furniture for his high rise apartment.

To give his life meaning Jack begins to attend group therapy for men with testicular cancer, even though there is nothing wrong with him.

Soon he is attending self-help classes for a whole range of diseases seven nights a week!

Then Jack meets Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt), a soap salesman turned bomb maker.

Together they set up *Fight Club* where working class men beat each other senseless to release their "male aggression".

But *Fight Club* is about more than gender politics. What makes it such an important film is that it begins to challenge the way in which we are all manipulated, seduced and frightened by politicians, advertisers, employers, as capitalism creates for itself an image of a self-sustaining system of consumerism.

The problem with *Fight Club* is a political one. It cre-

ates an brilliant portrait of our society but it offers no way forward.

It ignores the fact that there is a radical alternative emerging in American society.

We can see this in the revival of the labour movement, the huge protest that will take place in Seattle to challenge the power and influence of the WTO.

Things are changing in the US and *Fight Club* itself is a small sign that a radical critical consciousness is reasserting itself.

book

A to Z but no why

"WE ALL know the current state of the nation. The challenge is great but so is the potential. I have every confidence in your ability to recognise what needs to be done and to get on with it. I enclose my personal cheque, which I hope will be of some assistance..."



Goodman and friend

So beef baron Larry Goodman wrote to Des O'Malley of the Progressive Democrats. The passage is quotes in a new book by Gene Kerrigan and Pat Brennan, *This Great Little Nation - The a-z of Irish Controversies and Scandals*.

The title comes from the fawning let-

ter the AIB wrote to Charlie Haughey as they wrote off some of his debts. When the bank cancelled Haughey's debt they

wrote off the amount against their taxes - and so we ended up footing the bill.

This and a wealth of other information is

included in the book. As a reminder of what each of the scandals were about it is a valuable book and it is also at times funny.

But there are a

number of problems. First the format of the book in alphabetical order means that church sex scandals are thrown next to financial corruption, which gives the whole book a confused feel. Also the space devoted to some scandals seems to have more to do with the authors' preference than their importance.

For instance the rumours that Ahern beat up his partner takes up twice the space of Ahern's dodgy financial deals.

But the real problem is that book has the A-Z of scandals but is missing the why?

There is no explanation of why corruption is central to our "democracy". And without any explanation there is no possibility of challenging it.

by 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-traveler 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 socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWP aims to build such a party in Ireland.

SWP Branch meetings

ATHLONE:

Contact 01- 872 2682 for details

BRAY:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in the Mayfair Hotel

Dec. 1st: Drugs: What is the solution?

BELFAST CENTRAL:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Garrick Bar, Chichester St.

Nov. 30th: The Fight Against racism today

BELFAST SOUTH:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Queens Students Union

CORK:

Meets every Monday at 8.00pm in Mulligan's Pub, Parnell Place

Nov 29th: The Politics of James Connolly

DERRY:

Meets every Thursday at 8.15pm in Badgers Bar upstairs, Orchard St.

Dec 2nd: World Trade or World Tyranny?

Dec 9th: The Origins of the Family

DUNDALK:

Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details

DUN LAOGHAIRE:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Christian Institute

Dec 30th: World Trade or World Tyranny?

DUBLIN ARTANE / COOLOCK:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane / Beaumont Recreational Centre opp. Artane Castle

Nov. 30th: Why are refugees being scapegoated?

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways, Parnell St.

Dec 1st: Marx's View of History

DUBLIN NORTH WEST:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in the O'Mahony's Pub Phibsboro (near Crossguns Pub).

Dec 1st: Marx's View of History

DUBLIN RATHMINES:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond St.

Dec. 1st: Poverty and Class in Northern Ireland

DUBLIN RIALTO:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR, Rialto.

Nov. 30th: Education and Class in Ireland Today

Dec 7th: The Origins of the Family

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL:

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

Dec 2nd: World Trade or World Tyranny?

DUBLIN TALLAGHT:

Meets every Monday at 8.30pm in Jobstown Community Centre

Nov. 29th: Why are refugees being scapegoated?

Dec. 6th: Marxism and the State

ENNISKILLEN:

Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details

GALWAY:

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square (beside Cuba)

LIMERICK:

Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details.

TRALEE

Meets every fortnight on Mondays at 5.50pm Harty's Bar, Tralee

WATERFORD:

Meets every Thursday in at 8.00pm ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

Dec 2nd: Why are refugees being scapegoated?

Dec 9th: The Origins of the Family

MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY

Meets every Wednesday at 6.30pm, Classhall B (Arts Block)

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Meets every Thursday at 7pm in Room 3051

David Irving tries to speak in Cork...

Protest stops Nazi from holding hate meeting

ON MONDAY the 15th of November a six hundred strong demonstration prevented Nazi historian and organiser David Irving from addressing a meeting in UCC.

Irving was invited by the Philosoph, a notoriously right wing debating society.

Attempt

This was the second time in six years that the Philosoph had attempted to provide Irving with a platform and the second time they have been stopped by protests organised by the Anti-Nazi League and other anti-racist groups.

Irving denies that the systematic murder of six million Jews by the Nazis ever happened.

He called the testimony of Holocaust survivors "an interesting problem for psychiatrists".

He has admitted his admiration for Hitler while describing himself as a 'mild fascist'. Irving has addressed rallies organised by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, the British National Party and the French Front Nationale, all of whom have members convicted of racial murders.

He has been banned from Germany because of his promotion of Nazi views.

Two weeks of petitioning and a number of public meetings organised by the Anti-Nazi league lay behind the size of the turnout for the biggest and most militant demonstration seen in Cork for at least a decade.



Protestors stop the Nazi from speaking

One protestor said she and her friends had come on the demo because "I am disgusted that the Philosoph are willing to provide a proven fascist like Irving with a platform from which he is bound to try and organise fascist groups in this country".

Around fifty Gardai formed a cordon around the front and back entrances of the hall where Irving was due to

speak. Scuffles broke out when demonstrators attempted to break through the cordon. The police then baton charged the crowd.

At one stage around one hundred demonstrators charged through a side entrance into the corridor outside the meeting hall. Shortly after this the Philosoph announced the cancellation of the meeting and there was a

euphoric roar from the crowd outside who began chanting "Freedom 1: Nazis 0".

Richard Boyd Barrett of the Anti Nazi League said that "The demonstration was a major success. We have shown that it is possible to defeat nazis through mass mobilisation of anti fascists. We will do the same again and again every time that fascists try to organise in this country."

what we think

JOURNALISTS such as Kevin Myers have jumped to the defence of Irving. But not a word has appeared in the main stream press about the banning of the left.

It shows the hypocrisy that lies behind those who objected to the Irving protests, claiming they were champions of free speech.

Socialists have always championed the

maximum freedom of expression against restrictions imposed by the church or big business. It was socialists who championed the right of Irish women to get information on abortion when it was banned.

Socialists also insist that workers in US multi-nationals have the right to speak out in the canteen against their bosses — but few of the media commentators who defend Irving have ever supported this right.

person to walk their streets is far more important than the 'right' of a Nazi like Irving to organise fascist squads.

For over a decade many accepted the argument that the French fascist leader Le Pen should be given free speech and he was regularly interviewed on television as a normal politician. It meant that his votes kept on increasing.

Yet it was only when the left began to mobilise to break up his meetings, that his movement was thrown into crisis.

The supermen who thought they controlled the streets became demoralised and split after mass protests closed down their meetings.

Today the fascist vote in France has slumped.

Ireland does not have a fascist party because socialists have been able to mobilise hundreds of people whenever they tried to organise.

No other way of dealing with Nazis can claim such a success rate.

College want fascists to speak but ban socialists

A SMALL unelected group, known as the Societies Guild, in University College Cork have banned all left wing groups from operating in college for two years as a result of the Irving protests.

Hypocritically they talked about the right to free speech for a Nazi, but they stopped all left wing parties in the college from even holding meetings.

The banned parties include the Socialist Worker Student Society,

the Socialist Party Society and Sinn Fein Society. The left wing groups are not be given a room for a meeting until 2002.

Invited

It seems that the whole Irving affair was part of a wider provocation. Irving was invited to UCC precisely in order to cause trouble so that an excuse could be used to ban the left from the college.

The right wing in UCC have taken over the student union and have

broken away from all national student protests. They are trying to eliminate opposition in the college by getting rid of the left.

Socialists have no intention of taking this lying down.

A united campaign has been formed amongst all the parties and a genuine free speech movement is now underway.

SWSS also intend to hold its regular meeting each week outdoors.

Tel: (01)8722682; fax (01) 8723838; email: swp@clubi.ie web: www.clubi.ie/swp

BT

Strike against flexpolititation

BT CALL centre workers in Belfast and Limavaddy have taken strike action. It is part of the first national action in BT for 13 years.

It comes after BT announced record profits, up by 9 percent in the last three months, to a staggering £137 a second.

The strike involved some 4,000 workers in 37 separate call centres across Britain.

The workers involved are those in the BT sections dealing with bills, faults and repairs.

The strike followed a huge 81 percent yes vote in a ballot organised by the CWU union.

The workers are angry at the way they are treated, with bullying managers constantly harassing and pressuring workers.

One BT worker

WATERFORD Corporation are once again trying to introduce service charges despite huge opposition in the town.

City manager Eddie Breen has proposed that a refuse charge be introduced to fund the local authority.

He wants every household to get a wheelie bin and to pay a £2 sticker for every lift.

Charge

This would amount to a service charge of over £100 a year. But this would only be the start. Experience shows that the corporation would try to raise the charge, once it is settled in.

PAYE workers are already paying very high rates of tax and many oppose this new form of double taxation.

Protests are planned for the estimates meeting of the local council.

explained, "People have their calls monitored and are not allowed to take longer than four minutes and 40 seconds on any one call.

"The pressure is immense."

Permanent

The union is also demanding more permanent BT staff, as the company relies heavily on agency staff.

The great danger is that CWU union leaders see the strike as merely a bargaining counter.

BT operates a vast number of other call centres.

These are not involved in the planned action and are much less unionised.

One striker told Socialist Worker, "This strike is supported by 95 percent of the customer services staff in this centre.

Tesco

Workers to take strike action

AS SOCIALIST Worker went to press 600 workers at six Tesco stores in the midlands are to go on strike on in a dispute over pay scales.

All of the employees, members of the SIPTU trade union, have rejected a labour court recommendation which offered a pay rise but with increased flexibility.

At the moment, Tesco staff in rural areas are paid less than their colleagues in major urban centres.

Tesco stores in Athlone, Mullingar, Edenderry, Portlaoise, Mullingar and Cavan are affected.

Students

PROTEST IN BELFAST

AROUND 1,500 students took part in the annual "Feet on the Street" student demonstration in Belfast.

The demo was organised by NUS/USI with live music and a variety of speakers, mostly student union representatives.

Around 400 students marched from Queens, joined by another 100 from Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education (BIFHE).

By far the largest and most vocal contingent on the march

were students of Jordanstown, University of Ulster. The atmosphere was lively and militant. Slogans demanded free education and placards proclaimed government policy as the "Blair Rich Project".

The speeches of union leaders were designed to reflect the militant feeling among students. Students were urged to keep up the pressure on the government when they returned to their respective colleges.

The union representatives instructed students to take part in a mass postal campaign, arguing that Assembly members

"The reason we are out is not about money but about the intolerable conditions we are forced to work under and the lack of resources.

"The regime here is unbelievably stressful. We have to keep stats of all the calls we take.

"If we don't reach our target of at least 15 calls an hour we would be pulled in.

"On top of that we find it almost impossible to get leave.

"With women making up 70 percent of the workforce here this is particularly difficult.

"That's why the customer services staff have the highest sick leave record in the whole of BT.

"We will be out again next month and in January.

"We hope that this will force management to make some much needed changes".

Another said: "This strike is supported by 95% of the customer services staff in this centre.

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Irish Rail

IRISH RAIL management is attempting to smash the recently formed Irish Loco Drivers Association.

Rail bosses are suing the 11 person National Executive Council of the ILDA for damages after stoppages in the summer.

These spontaneous stoppages followed management's refusal to allow ILDA officers represent drivers on disciplinary hearings.

The High Court heard senior managers admit they met to plan how to "crush" the ILDA.

They stopped ILDA officers representing rail workers at disciplinary hearings, provoking spontaneous stoppages in Athlone and Cork.

Then they tried to behead the new union by attempting to victimise ILDA officers Brendan Ogle and

Millennium Pay

Holiday claims

DOCTORS, nurses, fire-fighters and air traffic controllers are among thousands of public service workers who are claiming £100 an hour for providing emergency cover over the millennium weekend.

The claim has been put forward by the Public Sector Group of Trade Unions, which is a loose alliance set up to negotiate staffing and pay level for the for New Years Eve.

They are demanding that this be paid to everyone required to work between 8am on Friday December the 31st and 8am on Sunday January 2nd 2000.

Many workers in Britain have already succeeded in extracting pay deals from the employers to cover the New Year period.

For example workers in the telecommunications company Cable & Wireless will receive four times their basic salary for each hour worked over the period. In

additional, they will get a lump sum of £250 for each day worked or on-call. Another telecommunications company Nortel has agreed to pay workers designated as 'mission critical' a bonus worth five days salary for each day worked including overtime premiums.

Required

The BBC have agreed to pay workers who are required to work, three times the normal hourly rates plus travelling time.

If any of this work falls within the twelve hour period either side of midnight, a further lump sum of £300 will be paid. Workers required to be on standby over the millennium holiday period will receive a payment of £100.

The best packages negotiated so far have been in the banking sector by the Irish Bank Officials Association. Selected staff on call at Ulster Bank will

receive £2,000 and could earn up to £135 a hour if required to work.

Bank of Ireland staff will receive £500-£950 and trouble the weekend attendance rate if actually required to work. Workers at Allied Irish Banks rejected an offer of £1,000 and are currently balloting on a better deal.

One of the main unions involved in the negotiations, IMPACT, has already decided to begin a strike ballot of 16,000 its members in the health service, who include paramedics, nurses, social workers, clerical and administrative staff, because of the failure of health service managers to respond to the claim.

Many workers have been left hanging in mid air about whether they are working the millennium weekend or how much they will be paid.

All workers who work over the millennium should be paid a at least £100 a hour in order to start getting something back out of the Celtic Tiger.

Death on the Sites

A nineteen year old student lost his life in yet another tragedy in the building industry on 17th November. The young man from Co. Westmeath was working part-time on Hegarty's site on Grand Canal Plaza in Dublin when he fell to his death down a ducting shaft. He was killed instantly. His death is sixteenth in this year alone in the building industry. And it follows a

litany of broken promises by the Minister Tom Kitt who has failed to improve the health and safety standards on the sites. Most the lives lost are of young men who get no health and safety training. In this case £50 would have saved the young man's life - that is approximately the cost of a safety harness. In July there was a magnificent response from building

workers who brought the industry to a close and marched on the head offices of the Construction Industry Federation. Undoubtedly the workers will respond to this tragic loss of life in the coming weeks. While human lives are still being lost to the Celtic Tiger, there is only one answer the bosses understand - that is when their profits are hurt.

Christopher Hellbrooke.

And now they are trying to break the union by seeking damages from the officers of the union as individuals.

Irish Rail tried to get the court to rule that ILDA was not a union, opening the way to landing the defendants, working train drivers, with damages and costs of many thousands of pounds for which they would be individually liable.

The outcome of the case will be decided in December. Scandalously neither the leaderships nor worker-directors of the NRBU or SIPTU have raised their voice in protest against this attack on trade union rights.

Members of all unions in Irish Rail should insist their unions demand that these victimisations and anti-union proceedings be immediately dropped.

Raytheon

De-Commission Raytheon

Trade unionists, community activists and peace campaigners are set to lobby the December meeting of Derry City Council in protest against the £70 million grant being given to Raytheon.

Raytheon, the fourth largest arms manufacturer in the world, is to set up a

software development unit in Derry in the next few months. Eventually, the £70 million grant is expected to produce no more than 120 jobs in the city.

But while New Labour is throwing taxpayers' money at Raytheon, the Western Health and Social Services Board has been told that it has to make any cuts necessary to cover a £2 million overspend. As a result, temporary workers have not had their contracts renewed. Children's services and services for pensioners and people with disabilities in Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh have been hit hard by the cutbacks.

About 120 jobs are set to go in Milanda

Bakery, in the Glen area of Derry around the time that Raytheon arrives. Just one million of the £70 million going to the arms manufacturer would save those jobs.

"Bread not bombs" will be one of the slogans at the lobby of the city council.

It's ironic that at a time when the North is dominated by the issue of decommissioning arms, the manufacturer of Patriot missiles and Hawk fighter jets is about to set up here. Compared to these weapons, the IRA has only pea-shooters.

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Northern Ireland:
**CAN THE
PEACE DEAL
WORK?** PAGE 3



PROTESTS AGAINST CORPORATE GREED:

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT



MARKET MADNESS

Neo-liberalism has produced a crazy world where a few multinationals dominate our lives.

Today the ten largest corporations in each sector control 86 percent of the telecommunications, 70 percent of the computer industry and 85 percent of pesticides.

The combined assets of the three wealthiest billionaires are worth more than the combined wealth of the forty eight of the least developed countries.

The costs of this greed are immense. 200 million people on the planet who live on less than £1 a day.

Third world countries are spending more on servicing debt to the Western banks than they are investing in health and education.

And even in the industrialised world, life has gotten worse for working people. In the US, for example, the average employee works a month longer than they did in the 1960s.

If this is where the market leads, then it is time to look for an alternative.

"I'LL HAVE more demonstrations against me than I've had in the whole seven years of my presidency".

This is how US President Bill Clinton described the growing protest movement against the World Trade Organisation convention in Seattle.

Front

The WTO is the front organisation that is used to promote the interests of the multinationals across the world.

For the past decade the economic doctrine of neo-liberalism has advocated that everything be left to the market.

There is supposed to be no restriction put on the activities of multinationals who claim the right to scour the world in search of even greater profits.

The WTO convention is set to discuss new ways of 'liberalising' the global economy.

The multinationals want an end to environmental controls, they want all restriction on selling health care removed.

But now a global movement is developing against neo-liberalism and the Seattle protest is the first expression of this.

The protest will be stewarded by 1,000 shop stewards from the machinists union in America. Steelworkers, teachers, women's organisations, human rights organisations

are all joining the protest.

The director general of WTO, Michael Moore, claim that only 'grumpy geriatric communists' will be protesting - but millions across the world are sick of the corporate greed that puts profit before people.

THE LEFT IS BACK

The anti-capitalist mood is stronger now than at any time since the sixties.

Across most of Europe, Labour Parties are back in office, as many seek an alternative to the savagery of market forces. Yet the leadership of these parties are wedded to running the system and conflict is breaking out amongst the

membership.

Tens of thousands have marched to stop the arms trade or to demand that debt to poorer countries be cancelled.

The philosophy that 'greed is good' makes no sense as the planet faces serious climate change.

But this mood needs to be turned into a movement for

a better society. Only socialist politics offer that alternative because they show how we can run the world without sacrificing people to profit.

The challenge now is to build powerful socialist parties in every country to end the madness that springs from corporate greed.