

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

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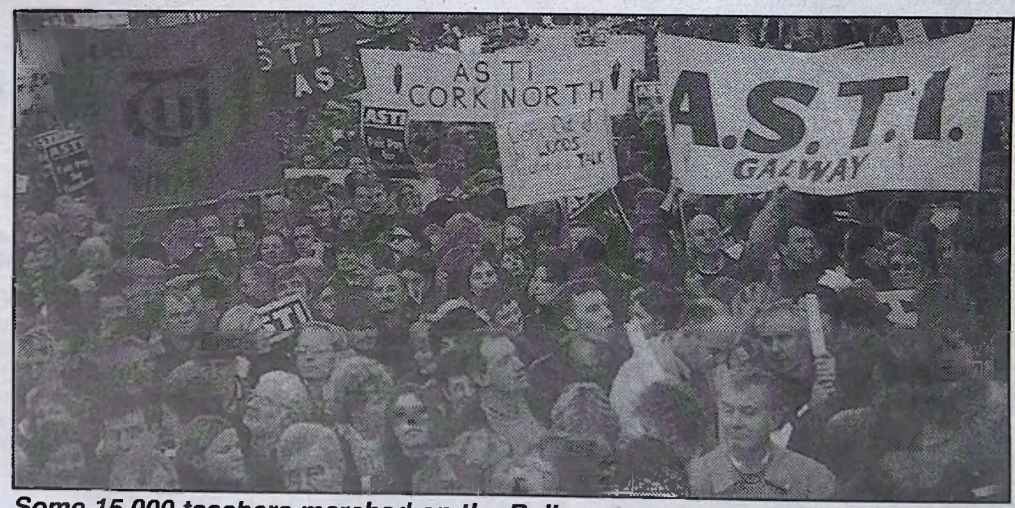
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Some 15,000 teachers marched on the Dail

TEACHERS

Italy resists Haider

Mass protests came to Vatican recently after Austrian Nazi Jorg Haider visited the Pope.

Despite being urged by leftwing politicians, Jewish groups and former resistance fighters not to meet with Haider. But the Pope insisted that the visit go ahead.

Haider, who calls himself an admirer of Hitler,

told reporters that he had come to Rome "not on a political mission but rather as an angel of peace". He then handed over an 80 foot Christmas tree to the Vatican, which stood in St. Peters Square over Christmas under 24 hour police guard.

Protests

Haider's visit was met by mass protests from anti-fascists, who carried

a huge banner bearing a photograph of the Auschwitz concentration camp, together with the slogan "Never Again". During a ceremony to mark the switching on of the lights on the Christmas trees protestors tried to force their way into St. Peters Square but were stopped by riot police. More than 50 protestors were injured after being attacked by the police.

ICTU supports TD's pay rise

AS REVEALED in the last issue of Socialist Worker, politicians are in the process of awarding themselves huge pay rises.

It now seems that they will receive a £4,700 basic rise and a £3,000 long service bonus. Bertie Ahern is set to have his salary increase to £120,000 a year.

The salary levels were recommended in a report by Michael Buckley the Chief Executive of Allied Irish Bank.

Scandalously, the ICTU supports the pay rises. During the December negotiations over Partnership the ICTU agreed to the implementation the Buckley recommendations saying it is "important the report by an independent body like this should be implemented without delay."

CJD in vaccine

OVER 60,000 children in Ireland were given a polio vaccine that contained serum from a donor who had CJD the human form of BSE.

While the Department of Health say there is no risk there is no test to screen for vCJD, the newest form of the disease, implicated in the polio scare.

A diagnosis of this disease can only be made after a person gets the disease.

Even knowing of the existence of viruses and being able to screen for them doesn't make them safe. HIV and Hepatitis C were given to haemophiliacs in blood transfusions despite there being screening services available.

In Britain, the use of human serum in medicine was outlawed. But Irish authorities took no action.

There was an alternative polio vaccine that didn't include human serum available but the Irish Medical Board chose the cheaper version.

★ The Jefferson Smurfit Group owns a company in Austria that has been sued by Holocaust victims. Nettingersdorfer Papierfabrik is fighting in the courts to prevent compensation payments to victims of the Nazi regime in Austria. The company is accused of using slave labour.

Public sector fat cats

WHILE PUBLIC sector workers are tied to partnership, the government is set to raise the salaries of chief executives in the State sector.

Most chief executives in An Post, CIE, ESB, RTE and VHI will have pay deals running well in excess of six figures. Existing scales range from £40,000 to £70,000 will now go over £100,000.

★ The US election may be a lottery, but in South Africa, candidates from the ruling African National Congress and the Democratic Alliance actually decided to toss a two and coin to pick the election winner after the two candidates received the same number of votes.

EU gravy train

DELEGATES TO the recent European Union summit in Nice had a great nosh up.

In the interests of Europe the 2,000 delegates gorged themselves on 10,000 bottles of the finest champagne and over 500 pounds of smoked salmon along with more than 500 pounds of foie gras.

Limousines

The delegates were chauffeured around in over 350 limousines placed at their disposal. Even the dead couldn't be buried in Nice churches near the summit, which had been closed to prevent any disruption for delegates.

Jail the Corrupt politicians

Ahern's link to Lawlor's loot

SOCIALIST Worker can reveal Bertie Ahern's links with the Mr Big of corruption, Liam Lawlor. Several friends of the Taoiseach are shareholders in the Czech Company, Ambrose Kelly (Eastern Europe) that provided Lawlor with huge payments.

★ TIM COLLINS, whom Ahern describes "a friend", was with him in October 1988 when he, as

Minister for Labour, met the property developer Tom Gilmartin in an office above Fagan's, the pub opposite his constituency office.

Gilmartin has admitted paying a number of politicians including Lawlor in order to get help with planning.

Collins is much more than a friend to the Taoiseach; he has been a close political associate for many years and is a trustee of St Luke's, Ahern's Drumcondra constituency office and former home. Collins works for the Ambrose Kelly Group, architects to the Cork property developer Owen O'Callaghan.

★ FRANK DUNLOP, former FF Press Secretary and bag man for developer Owen O'Callaghan. Dunlop has admitted to paying off more than 40 councillors.

★ BERNARD MCNAMARA, the former FF Councillor from Co Clare. His company McNamara's used the courts to stop their workers from joining a union. McNamara's won the contract to complete the new extension to the Dail.

Docklands

★ CHRISTOPHER BENNETT. His company built the £100m Guild House office development in the International Financial Services Centre in Dublin's Docklands which was opened by Ahern.

★ AMBROSE KELLY had 50,001 shares in the company which bore his name. His firm designed the Quarryvale (Liffey Valley) centre. Kelly is a prominent supporter of Fianna Fail.

All these friends of Ahern seem to be linked to Owen O'Callaghan.

As Socialist Worker first revealed, Bertie Ahern signed a statutory order to give a 50 percent tax break to Owen O'Callaghan for a shopping centre in Athlone.

O'Callaghan gave over £50,000 as a political donation to Fianna Fail after a party fund-raising dinner and went on to build the Liffey Valley Centre.

Owen O'Callaghan paid over £40,000 to Liam Lawlor through Frank Dunlop.

What does Liam Lawlor have on Ahern that is keeping him out of jail?

LIAM LAWLOR is obstructing the tribunal investigating his finances. Here is why:

★ Lawlor has been unable to explain over £2million in his bank accounts and where it came from.

★ As well as £40,000 from Frank Dunlop Lawlor also got £3,500 a month from property speculator Tom Gilmartin.

Lawlor claimed these were 'consultancy fees' but Gilmartin denied this saying 'I would not have that man consulting on a shithouse'.

★ Lawlor was also on the board of Larry Goodman's meat company. At the same time he was chairman of the

Oireachtas Joint Committee on State sponsored bodies when Irish Sugar was being privatised — and the main prospective buyer was Larry Goodman.

★ Lawlor also had close links with George Redmond and Jim Kennedy, a prominent FF businessman, who ran the Laurels pub in Clonsilla (where Lawlor cashed his cheques).

★ Lawlor owned twenty-three acres of land on Newcastle Road Lucan, which he sold off in 1995. It was part of a large tract of agricultural land, which was re-zoned for housing by the South Dublin County Council.

Knighthood for tax avoidance

PRESS BARON Tony O'Reilly has been awarded a knighthood.

The richest man in Ireland (when he is here since he lives in the Bahamas to avoid paying tax) has been rewarded for services to peace apparently.

Even his predecessor at the Independent Group William Martin Murphy, who tried to break trade unions in 1913, had the good sense to turn down a knighthood.

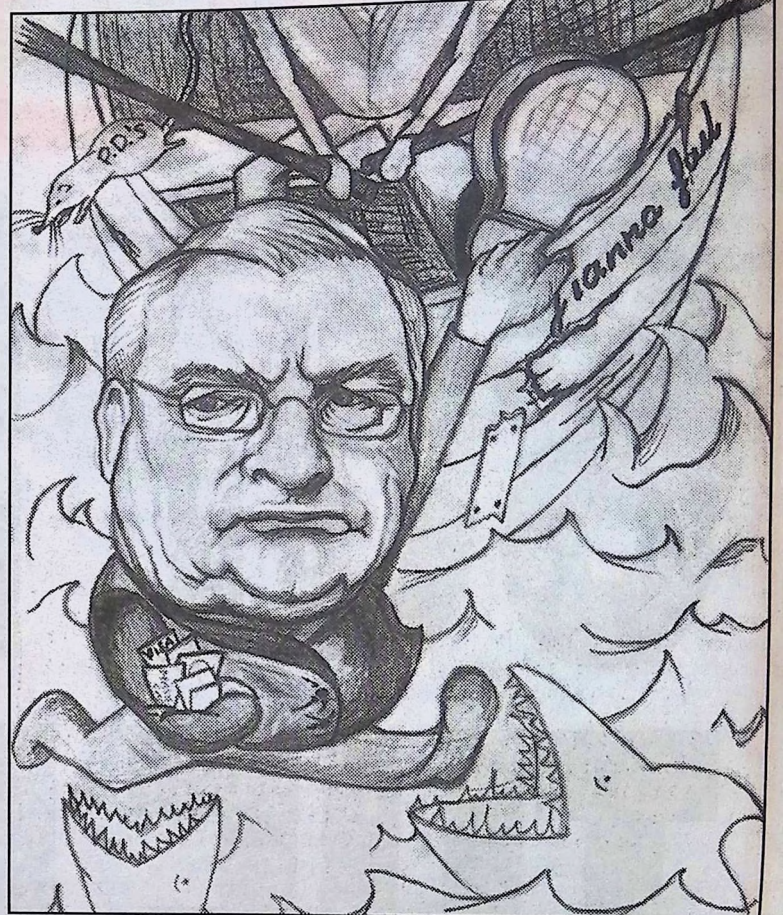
But no reward is high enough for Sir O'Reilly of the offshore accounts.

Crooked cops caught out

A major corruption scandal is developing in the Gardai.

A Garda who is stationed in Dublin has been arrested on suspicion of bribery and corruption. He was arrested for seeking money to quash proceedings in a drunk-driving case.

A builder who was arrested on suspicion of drunken driving told the Gardai that he was being



Feeding Mr. Insatiable

OVER 200 supporters turned up at the Citywest hotel to support ex FF Councillor Colm McGrath, known in the tribunal as Mr. Insatiable.

McGrath pocketed over \$50,000 after the evening entertainment was completed. The fundraiser consisted of a "casino fun night with the option of golf in the morning" according to the invitation.

A table of four for the casino is £500 with the same

entry fee for the round of golf. But just in case the friends of the councillor would have to dig deeper than necessary, they could enjoy a special room rate of £35 per person sharing, down from £62.50 at Citywest.

McGrath's invitation concluded with the words "thanking you in advance for any support you may give, and assuring you of my continued dedication to improving the quality of life of my constituents through the democratic process".

McGrath received sever-

al donations from property developer Owen O'Callaghan in the early 1990's when he was seeking to have land rezoned to allow for the development of Quarryvale.

Then by pure coincidence of course, McGrath's security firm was employed on the site during construction.

PR profits

GOVERNMENT departments have paid out in excess of £5.6 million to PR companies on top of the cost of running their departments over the last three years.

The biggest PR payout was made by the Department of Foreign Affairs, which engaged Drury Communications for over £2 million.

The Department of Environment came next spending almost £1.5 million the bulk of which also went to Drury Communications, a company with 'close links to the cabinet.

scandals in the Gardai have shown it will take a lot for the truth to come out.

The only people who investigate Garda corruption are the Gardai themselves. And the last cop convicted of taking bribes from the murderers of Veronica Gueron had has sentenced suspended on appeal.

what we think

New partnership deal offers nothing as...

Unions leaders sell out on pay

THE LEADERS of the ICTU have accepted a revised offer on pay but they are refusing to ballot their members on the proposals. The new offer was made because wage increases which been negotiated under the Programme for Fairness and Prosperity had fallen below the level of inflation.

The employers got a vote on the offer.

A special general council of 260 employers in IBEC debated the issue and then decided to pressurise the government to scrap the small increase in social security costs.

But the ICTU are afraid to give workers a vote on the new deal because they know they might lose.

The new pay deal:

★ Only offers an extra 2 percent rise from April 2001. But inflation has been rising since the summer of 2000 and that still means real pay has been cut. Deferring the rise until April means in effect that it is the equivalent to a 1 percent increase.

★ After 2002 there is to be a once off percent lump sum on basic pay. This is not a permanent increase and is only on basic pay. It will mean nothing for pensioners

and discriminate against workers with a low basic.

Even these rises are not guaranteed. According to the new agreement there have to be negotiations, which 'take full account of ... the need for flexibility and change'. That means that the bosses will present us with demands for even more productivity to pay for this miserable increase.

★ No matter how just their demands, workers cannot take industrial action 'of any kind'. There can be no work to rule, overtime bans - anything. In fact the unions might as well roll over and accept a judgment from the Labour Court, which often takes a pro-employer position.

★ The bosses can also refuse to pay the extra increases if their profits decline and they claim 'inability to pay'. They can also refuse where 'pay costs have increased significantly'. This gives them huge let-outs.

The union's leaders are on big salaries. They never have to work the extra productivity.

They want a cosy life with the employers. Many of them even hope to follow the former ICTU President Phil Flynn and get on Boards of Directors after they retire.

We should demand ballot and reject the terms of this miserable deal.

The real Celtic Tiger



AS NEWSPAPERS continue to fill their pages with stories of the wondrous Celtic Tiger economy, the number of people sleeping on the streets in Dublin has risen by over 60 percent in three years, from 125 in 1997 to 202 this year according to a street count by the Simon Community.

Meanwhile 1,207 Traveller families saw in the New Year by the side of the road in conditions which the Citizen Travellers organisation says "could be compared to those in the Third World, with no running water, electricity, toilet facilities, heat or refuse collection".

PASS THIS RESOLUTION

This union branch believes that the revised Programme for Fairness and Prosperity does not compensate workers adequately. We demand an immediate ballot on its terms and a special conference to consider it.

Big tax cuts for the rich

CHARLIE MCCREEVY had a budget surplus that meant he could distribute £2,000 to every PAYE worker. Instead he gave most of the handouts to the rich.

Workers got a 2 percent cut in the lower rate and higher rate of PAYE tax. But the rich:

★ Got a 4 percent cut in tax on profits. The bankers were never asked to show the slightest restraint - but now they pay a lower proportion of tax than

the cleaning women who tidy their offices at 6 am.

★ Abolition of Probate Tax (a tiny tax on inheritance).

Each year that brought in £50 million.

The money could have been used to pay the teachers.

There was nothing in the budget to deal with the huge child care problems many people now face.

There is no money to establish publicly owned crèches. Instead Irish parents will contin-

ue to pay the highest child care costs in Europe.

It also adds to the huge inequalities in the Celtic Tiger.

A single person on £12,000 a year gains £42 a month but someone on £100,000 a year gets £211 extra.

The budget is so bad for social welfare recipients that many of their organisations are now considering pulling out of the partnership structure.

Instead of being grateful to McCreevy, we should demand our fair share of the Celtic Tiger — while it lasts.

Rank and File Trade Union Conference
SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP:
CLAIMING
BACK OUR
UNIONS

Saturday, February 10th 2001,
 Teachers Club, Parnell Square,
 Dublin 1

Further details from:
Campaign against Partnership
 c/o 105 O'Hogan Road Dublin 10, Tel
 (01) 8788170



news of the world

ISRAELI TERROR KILLS PEACE

Message from Said

OVER 300 Palestinians have been killed since the beginning of the new Palestinian uprising, or intifada, last September. **Mohamad Daoud**, aged 17, was shot dead after throwing stones at Israeli cars from the West Bank village of **Harras**.

Israeli troops and settlers recently uprooted the villagers' olive groves and sealed the hamlet of 2,600 people.

The intifada has created turmoil within Israeli politics. Barak resigned as prime minister and forced new elections.

This has raised the prospect of him facing either the current leader of the right wing Likud party, **Ariel Sharon**, or the former prime minister, **Benjamin Netanyahu**, in the forthcoming elections.

Supporter

Many in the media have seen this as a run off between Barak-a supporter of the Israel-Palestine peace process-and a candidate who opposes it.

Sharon is despised by Arabs throughout the Middle East for leading the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, in which 2,000 Palestinians were slaughtered in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila.

Netanyahu is seen as the man who devastated the peace process with his continuous demands on the Palestinians when he was Israeli prime minister between 1996 and 1999.

Netanyahu and Sharon are demanding that Israeli troops are let off the leash to crush the Palestinians.

Because of this, supporters of the peace process are lining up

behind Barak, claiming he is the only hope for peace in the region.

But it is Barak's government which has ordered Israeli forces to bomb Palestinian towns and shoot dead young children in the street protesting against Israeli occupation.

Policy

Barak has continued the same policy as Netanyahu of taking more and more from the Palestinians.

He had the nerve to launch his election campaign in an Israeli-Arab restaurant at Tayyiba. Israeli security forces cleared the restaurant of all the Arab customers so he could eat in peace.

The coming election will be a contest between people who want to keep Palestinians in poverty and displacement.



Palestinians burying a victim of the Israeli Army

"NOT ONLY is the intifada an anti-colonial rebellion of the kind that has been seen periodically in Setif, Sharpeville, Soweto and elsewhere, it is another example of the general discontent with the post Cold War order (economic and political) displayed in the events of Seattle and Prague. Most of the world's Muslims see the uprising as part of a broader picture that includes Sarajevo, Mogadishu, Baghdad under US-led sanctions, and Chechnya. What must be clear to every ruler, including Clinton and Barak, is that the period of stability guaranteed by the tripartite dominance of Israel, the US and local Arab regimes is now threatened by popular forces of uncertain magnitude, unknown direction, unclear vision. Whatever shape they eventually take, theirs will be an official culture of the dispossessed, the silenced and the scorned."

EDWARD SAID, Palestinian writer and activist

Process to fuel conflict

THE PEACE process is a sham. Jewish settlers drove out 750,000 Arabs from the historic land of Palestine in 1948. These refugees then mainly lived in refugee camps in the West Bank of Jordan and Gaza.

Israel then invaded these areas in 1967 and has occupied them since. The US has supported Israel with massive funds and arms as its client state in the oil-rich Middle East.

Palestinians have had to live in poverty and under the fist of the Israeli authorities in the areas now known as the Occupied Territories. This led them to fight back, launching an uprising in 1987 which forced Israel to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Israel and the PLO signed the Oslo accords in 1993, which began the peace process.

This agreement was to give a new Palestinian Authority (PA) autonomy in around 17 percent of the West Bank and 60 percent of Gaza. Israel would retain control of the rest of the Occupied Territories. During the intifada Israel

has closed roads, and stopped the movement of goods and people. This has had a disastrous effect on the Palestinian economy and revealed what little power the PA has.

Yasser Arafat, the chairman of the PA, has collaborated with the Israeli authorities in the repression of critics of the peace process. There are 13 different Palestinian security forces that spy on and kill dissidents throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

Arafat has cut a deal

with the criminals of the US and Israel in exchange for being allowed to become the head of an extremely weak statelet. One in four Palestinians are unemployed and there are still almost four million refugees scattered throughout the Middle East.

Illegally

Since the peace process began the number of Israelis illegally settling in the Occupied Territories has

almost doubled. There are now almost 200,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza, and around 150,000 in East Jerusalem, the predominantly Arab side of the capital. These settlers carry out daily attacks on Palestinians. The intifada is against Arafat's betrayal as much as Israeli persecution.

The last days of Bill Clinton's presidency were spent attempting to pull together another deal. But the talks collapsed when the Clinton plan was revealed as offering nothing new to

the Palestinians. Robert Fisk described what was supposed to be the "last chance for peace":

"While Arafat's men collected garbage, supplied the traffic cops and kept their own people in order, the Israelis would continue to hold sovereign power over all Jerusalem.

"Palestinian" control of Palestinian "neighbourhoods" of Jerusalem would recreate the insanity of West Bank. One Jerusalem street would have Palestinian policemen, the next Israelis.

And the Israelis, of course, could besiege a street just as they can currently besiege a town on the West Bank.

"Then there was the "swap" of Palestinian land on the West Bank that Israel would keep in return for "some land outside the Gaza Strip in the south of our country" as one Israeli journalist put it on Wednesday night. The only small detail about this piece of generosity that was not mentioned was that the land Israelis would hand over happens to be desert."

Turkey massacres leftwing prisoners

TWENTY-SIX Turkish prisoners were left dead and over 130 injured after police and army stormed prisons across Turkey.

The attacks came after two months of hunger strikes by prisoners over plans to restructure prisons.

Turkish authorities had planned to dismantle the large ward structure of the prisons and replace them with smaller units.

The prisoners, most of whom have been impris-

oned for political activity, said that they would be subject to torture and abuse if they were separated from each other.

The prisoners had vowed to continue their hunger strikes until they died of the government backed down.

The authorities refused to negotiate with the prisoners and instead stormed some 20 prisons across Turkey.

Prisoners who had been on hunger strike were taken to hospital, after refusing medical treatment

many were subject to brutal force-feeding.

Human rights groups around the world have long condemned the Turkish judicial system, which frequently use torture to convict political activists. "If you want to measure the value of human life in a society look at the prisons", said Yilmaz Ensarogulu, president of the human rights groups Mazlun Der.

Amnesty International's 1999 Report states that systematic violence against inmates by corrupt

wardens is widespread in Turkish prisons. Demonstrator, including human rights defenders, students, left-wingers and Islamists are frequently taken into custody from peaceful meetings or their organisation's offices, and held for hours or days in police detention solely because of their non-violent political activities.

Prison sentences are widely imposed on many people who had non-violently criticised the government's policies towards the Kurdish minority.

Eamonn**McCann**

Stormont's secret school sell-off

A GATHERING at the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown, Co. Tyrone, on December 8th is likely to have as much influence on the future of the North's education system as anything concerning the 11-plus examinations or the issue of third-level tuition fees and grants.

There was no advance publicity, and no statement issued afterwards. The teachers' and other unions involved were not invited. Neither were students' or parents' groups.

The gathering was hosted by the Stormont Department of Education. The attendance included representatives of a number of private firms, as well as executives of area education authorities and school managements. The purpose was to discuss the extension of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes in schools across the North.

Invited speakers travelled from England, Scotland and around the North. All were in favour of PFIs. This wasn't a debate but a planning session for the future.

The audience heard that progress towards making PFIs the norm in the North has been considerable. Six "pathfinder projects" were well under way - two Institutes of Further and Higher Education, North West and Belfast, and four schools, Drumglass High, Wellington College, Balmoral High and St. Genevieve's High.

In each case, the design, building, financing and operation of the colleges/schools has been handed over to private companies which - in the words of an Irish National Teachers' Organisation memorandum to Education Minister Martin McGuinness last month - "will inevitably be driven by profit for shareholders and directors".

Profits

Some indication of the level of profits available came at Stormont in November when the SDLP's Patricia Lawsley asked Minister McGuinness how much had been paid in consultancy fees prior to the announcement of the St. Genevieve's, west Belfast, PFI scheme. The answer was stg.£623,963.

That's without a brick being laid or a single bunsen burner bought. It's just the fee charged by "consultants" hired to tell the Department how to go about flogging off schools.

In other words, the Department of Education is paying the private sector to advise it how to sell off schools to the private sector.

This approach also characterises the system once it's up and running. The basic idea is that the State hires educational facilities built and owned by capitalist companies. The companies, naturally, set their charges at a level to deliver at least as good a profit as investors might achieve elsewhere.

The private sector takes direct control of maintenance, caretaking, catering, utilities, security and cleaning. Workers in these areas are no longer employed by the school system but by profit-driven companies.

The Cookstown meeting heard that most single projects in the North are too small to interest big-money investors.

The Department confronted this difficulty in a memorandum to the conference, suggesting the "bundling" of projects, so that the schools of the future could be sold off in job lots. The memorandum muses on the advantages of strategic partnerships between God and Mammon: "It might be possible to bundle Voluntary Maintained schools which are located within a single Catholic Church Diocese... (so as to) provide the basis for a single project".

Defending the extension of PFIs, the Department used language which accurately conveys the ambience, the tone and the purpose of the education system it envisages for the next generation: "Just as much as private sector investors will be competing with each other for contracts, there is competition among public sector procurers to attract the best private sector companies to bid for their projects in what is fast becoming an aggressive and growing PFI market".

An aggressive, growing market, that's the future as seen and sought by the Stormont authorities in control of our schools.

Anyone serious about defending the public service basis of the educational system, and pushing forward towards a system geared to the interests of the mass of children and students, will have to join urgently in the fight against the fat-cat entrepreneurs and their Stormont friends.

As bigots target Bill of Rights...

Fight for the right to choose

IN THE Assembly debate in June, politicians on all sides repeated that women pregnant as a result of rape have a right to abortion in the North.

But NIO Minister Ingrams said in Westminster last year that the law in the North did not allow for abortion in the case of rape.

The law in the North is so unclear that the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights said it wouldn't stand up in any court of human rights.

Pregnancy

We are told abortion is legal if a woman is likely to be left a 'physical or mental wreck' if the pregnancy is not ended.

Yet, women who would certainly be left mental and physical wrecks are refused abortions on the NHS and have to go to England.

Many of those most likely to be left wrecks cannot get the money together and are forced to continue intolerable pregnancies.

Legal abortion should be available in the North on the NHS and could be if Health Minister deBrun was to act.

The law is already there, all deBrun has to do is to issue guidelines on when it is legal, based on advice from the medical and legal professions.

This would end the present crazy situation where some hospitals



Pro choice protest in Dublin

carry out some abortions, while others operate like southern hospitals providing abortions only if there is an immediate risk to the life of woman.

This kind of clarification would only allow for limited abortion and would not help the majority of women going to England.

But it would at least help the most ill and desperate women.

The North has its first woman Health Minister, she should be put under pressure to make at least some abortions available on the NHS.

Anti-choice groups want more X-cases

PRECIOUS LIFE and other anti-abortion groups are campaigning to include the right to life of "the unborn child" in the North's Bill of Rights.

The Bill of Rights is part of the Good Friday Agreement and will contain rights similar to those in the South's Constitution.

Anti-abortion groups say they want such a clause to stop abortion ever being introduced.

This is hypocrisy. Abortion is already part of life in the North, as in the South.

Tens of thousands of women have had abortions in Britain over the last 20 years.

Raise

Some 40 women a week from Northern Ireland have to raise £400-£500 to pay for an operation that is available free on the health service in

every other part of the "UK". Anti-abortion groups want to stop any debate about that and brush abortion under the carpet.

Pro-choice campaigners will be on the streets of the North over the coming weeks pointing out the truth about the anti-abortionist agenda - which includes banning the morning after pill.

Anti-choice groups ignore the fact that women from Ireland are three times more likely to have an abortion after 20 weeks than women in Britain.

In the South, they want a referendum that will mean that women like Ms. X, the 14 year old rape victim, will not have a right to end a pregnancy resulting from rape.

Morning after pill confusion

NORTH AND South, there's good and bad news about the morning after pill. In the North, the good news is that a new pill, Levonelle, will be available over the counter in chemists without a prescription.

The bad news is it will cost £20, which is exactly HALF of what someone under 25 gets on the dole.

In the South, the bad news is the Irish Medicines Board have banned doctors from prescribing Levonelle, saying it is "abor-

tifacient" and "unconstitutional".

The good news is the ban is so crazy, it should be easy to overturn.

The Oireachtas Committee on abortion recommended making the morning after pill easier to get, in order to reduce abortions.

Levonelle is legal in every EU country, except Greece.

The World Health Organisation says women found it doesn't make them sick and is more effective than other emergency contraception.

Philippines

People power v corruption

THE IMPEACHMENT trial of Philippine President Joseph Estrada started in December.

Estrada is accused of having taken over US \$8.6 million from an illegal gambling racket known as "jueteng" as well as a cut of \$2.8 million from provincial tobacco taxes.

The allegations were made by one of the president's own cronies, provincial governor Luis Singson, known for his "jueteng" connections. He claimed to have paid the money to Estrada in return for political protection.

by SIMON BASKETTER

By Estrada's own admission, 20 percent of all government funds for projects end up as kick-backs for individuals and companies.

The day before the trial, about 20,000 people including office workers, farmers, labourers and students took part in protests in the capital of Manila. Demonstrations and strikes broke out across the Philippines.

Some 2,000 protesters held an overnight vigil outside the presidential palace in preparation for further demonstrations on Thursday — Philippines' National Heroes Day — which swelled to over 75,000.

Estrada, a former B-movie star, had used his film persona as a tough fighter for the underdog to appeal to the most impoverished layers of Filipino society with the slogan: "Erap [buddy] for the poor."

Populist

Big business, calculated that his populist image as a "champion of the poor" could be exploited to push through the IMF's program of economic deregulation. Estrada's financial backers and chief advisers are anything but poor and downtrodden.

They include some of the richest businessmen and bankers in the Philippines, who, as the *Far Eastern Economic Review* commented, "would probably laugh uproariously if asked whether, like Estrada, their hearts were for the poor."

Estrada's finance secretary, Westmont Bank chairman Edgardo Espiritu, recently told the press that whatever happens at the trial: "We need to continue with the present reform agenda. Globalisation and liberalisation of markets is an irreversible world trend."

In 1986, a "People Power" revolution overthrew the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Cory Aquino, with the backing of the US, General Ramos and key sections of the military, was able to manipulate the aspirations of the Filipino people for democratic rights and better living standards to install a regime more suited to the requirements of international financiers and companies.

Political and economic power is wielded by the same few wealthy family groupings at the expense of the working class and rural poor.

Even those closest to the brutal Marcos dictatorship have retained their wealth and influence, as witnessed by the ability of Marcos' wife Imelda (her of the shoe collection) to stand in elections.

One of Estrada's first acts as president was to reject outright union demands for an increase to the minimum wage. The working class has been hit by rising prices and huge job cuts.

Demanded

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank demanded that the government raise the cost of electricity in order to service its debts. The country's foreign debt now stands at more than US\$45 billion.

Estrada continued to pursue the market reforms demanded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank.

These attacks were met by a wave of protests by workers and the poor, and Estrada was forced to back down.

Estrada attempted to shore up his falling popularity by launching a military offensive against an armed Islamic separatist group in southern Mindanao. But this has only increased opposition as the costs of the campaign have escalated.

There has been a flight of politicians from the ruling Party of the Filipino Masses (LAMP).

There are signs that the armed forces are themselves divided.

A group of retired generals last month issued a manifesto urging the army to "assist" the president "to realise the noble and heroic act of voluntary resignation".

While the global bosses around the IMF are manoeuvring for new allies, the workers and poor of the Philippines have repeatedly shown a willingness to tackle corrupt politicians and the effects of the IMF.

But the next people power revolution will need to be led by the demands of workers rather than the bosses if another crony is not to replace Estrada.

Health Service in crisis

The Celtic had bad for you

THE IRISH health system is in a crisis. There are not enough beds to deal with old people who need treatment for the flu. Many are forced to stay on trolleys in corridors. Yet during the summer these same hospitals often have to close wards just to save costs.

Nearly 40,000 people are on waiting lists — many for serious operations like cardiac surgery.

The reason for the chaos is that the health service is underfunded.

The Celtic Tiger has cut taxes on the wealthy. The rest of us pay for this 'corporate welfare' by putting up with rundown public services.

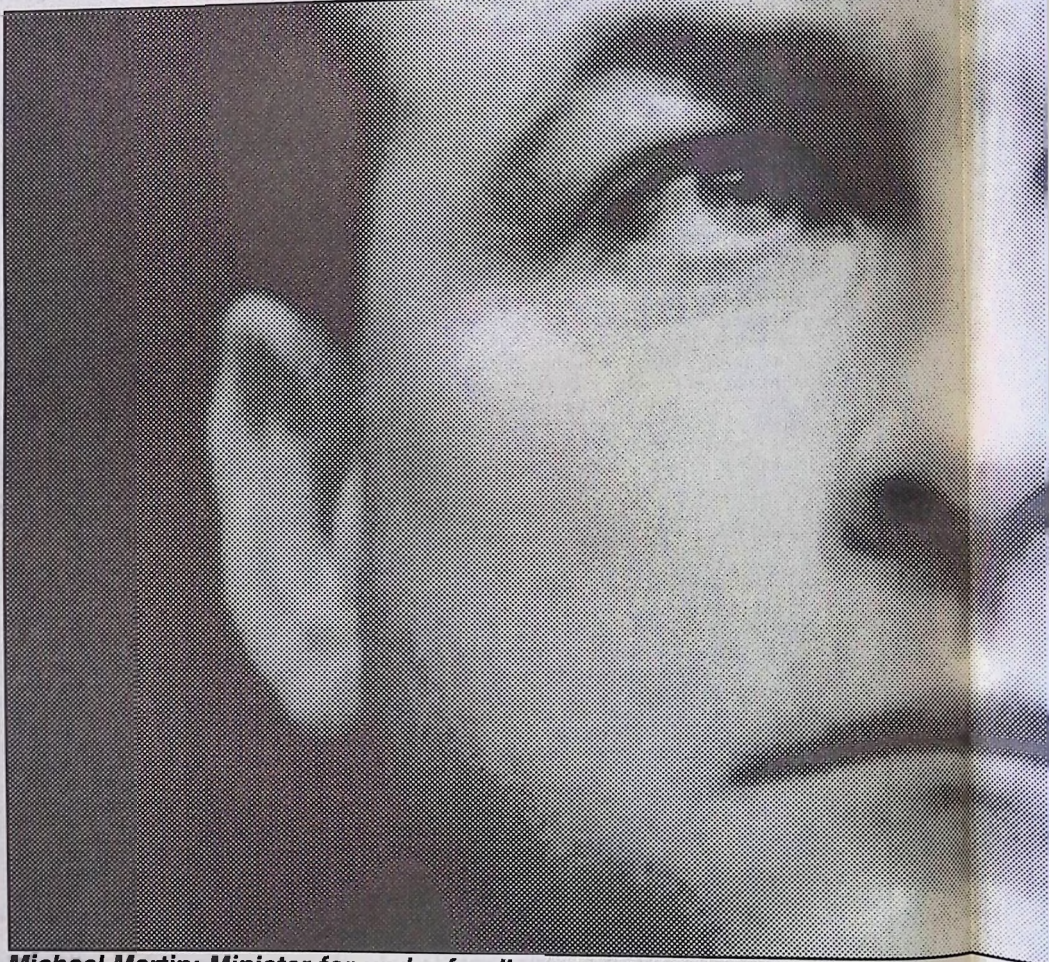
Calamity hit the health service when Charles Haughey became Taoiseach in 1987. Haughey lived the life of a lord but he told the population to tighten their belts. He also pushed through a terrible hospital closure programme.

Resistance

It met with huge resistance. 20,000 people marched against the closure of Barrington's Hospital in Limerick but Haughey had pulled the union leaders on side and no industrial action was taken. As a result the closure programme was successful. By 1989, spending on hospitals was 15 percent lower in real terms than it was in 1980.

Successive governments have continued with this pattern for reduced health spending to help subsidise tax cuts for the rich.

Of 29 countries in the OECD, Ireland ranks eighth from the bottom in spending on health.



Michael Martin: Minister for under funding

In 1998, only 5.34 percent of the Gross Domestic Product was spent on health compared to a EU norm of 8 percent of GDP.

Ireland now holds the record for closing more acute hospital beds per head of the population than

any other country in the EU.

The result is a health service that is not tackling people's desperate needs. Nurses and hospital staff often dedicate themselves to their jobs with a passion.

But because they do not get

the resources, Irish health figures are quite poor.

The Celtic Tiger has the highest death rate from heart disease in Europe, almost twice the EU average.

The mortality rate for cancer is in the top three in

Europe.

The country has the eighth lowest life expectancy of a the 29 OECD countries.

These scandalous figures are the price that working people pay for the policies of subsidising health care with tax cuts.

CHEQUE BOOK MEDICINE

The problems of the health service are made worse by a blatant class bias.

There are three main categories of hospital patient. 45 percent of the population on private medical insurance, principally VHI.

But the level of service here varies with the amount of insurance that is paid. Those who pay the top rate get access to private hospitals like the Blackrock Clinic but they also benefit from greater tax relief.

Some 31 percent of the population

have a medical card.

This is the poorest section of the Irish population and they face huge discrimination because wealthier patients can jump the queue on the waiting list.

The vast majority of these patients will be seen by Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors rather than the more experienced consultants. The majority of these NCHDs are young, recently qualified doctors in their first three years of training after medical school.

Even though the poor suffer more ill health, access to consultants is over-

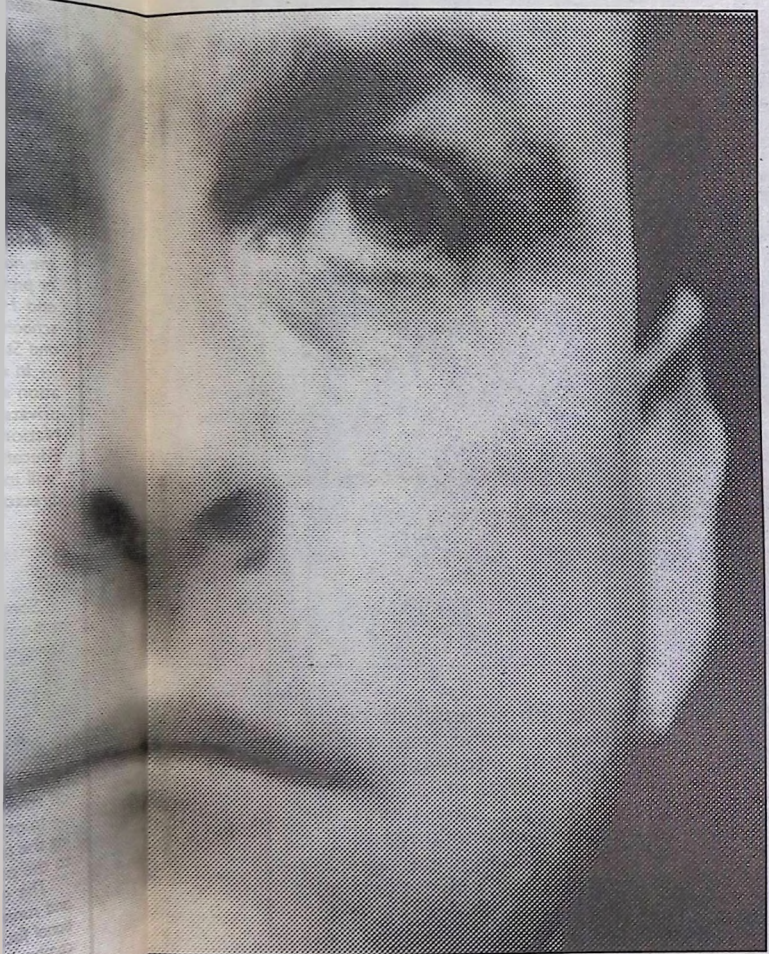
whelmingly reserved for those who have the money to pay.

The final category of 25 percent of patients has a general hospital card but have to pay for GP visits and a 'bed and breakfast' charge of £20 a night in hospitals. A couple who earn over £9000 a year and have two children will not qualify for a medical card and fall into this category.

Charges for GP visits are now running at around £20 and so these groups often have to suffer pain and discomfort because they cannot afford to visit their local doctor.

by KIERAN ALLEN

The Celtic Tiger is your health



BREAK THE GRIP OF THE CONSULTANTS

The problems of the health service are exacerbated by a privileged elite of consultants.

Only 9 percent of all health spending comes from private health insurance.

But the consultants distort the system so that they can make huge salaries serving this sector.

A consultant earns a basic salary of between £69,000 and £86,000 a year.

But this is only for treating public patients for 33 unmonitored hours.

On top of that, consultants can treat VHI patients for an extra fee.

Last year consultants earned an average of £87,000 a year from these patients.

So the consultants have a vested interest in ensuring that private beds are made available for private patients.

Fee-paying

Many of them also slive off from the 33 hours they are supposed to be spending with public patients to treat their fee-paying patients.

Consultants got their skills from public education.

But instead of treating people equally according to human need, money is distorting medical practice

what do socialists say?

How long can the boom last?

IT'S LIKE a car chase in a movie. You know the front car is going to go over the cliff eventually. But the director is intent on spinning it out as long as possible.

So one miraculous escape follows another, until you wonder if someone told you the wrong ending. Then...well, what does happen?

A couple of the dashboard indicators are behaving crazily. Stock exchange prices are soaring way up in the red zone then dropping down, house prices just go up, as do prices. 'Don't worry,' the driver tells us. 'New technologies mean that an overheated engine improves rather than damages the long term performance of the vehicle.' Then the oil light goes on.

At that point there is hardly anyone who dares deny the driving is crazy.

It's just that no one seems able to stop the car, and the only thing they can do is secure themselves ever more firmly on board.

So in last month or so there was a wave of stories in the press warning that the boom was coming to an end. Last year Davy Stockbrokers claims the boom could continue "for 20 or 30 years time".

index (with all the overhyped dot com companies) rose by 86 percent in the year 2000 it fell by 90 percent.

The amazing United States economy no longer looks so amazing.

Economic growth has plummeted, from 5.6 percent in the second quarter to 2.7 percent in the third, and companies from Microsoft to U.P.S. have warned that the slowdown is happening.

"The slowdown has arrived," concluded Jerry Jasinski, president of the American equivalent of IBEC, the National Association of Manufacturers. "The remaining question is how hard the landing will be."

But whether the American economy slows down or crashes matters little in a way to the Celtic Tiger.

The scale of the multinational investment means that if the US economy gets a cold then Ireland gets pneumonia.

For example, Lucent Technologies, Intel, and Apple all issued repeated profit warnings at the end of last year, all are cutting back on investment. All have major plants in Ireland. So it will be the jobs of workers that are hurt by the recession.

Even in its best years, Irish capitalism has left a pool of misery behind. It has the second highest level of low pay in the industrial economies. Homelessness and evictions are rising.

If capitalism does not work for the majority when there is a boom, you can count on big business calling on the rest of us to "share the sacrifice", when a recession hits.

For instance, the Central Bank is one of the institutions that have started issuing grim warnings about the state of the economy. But there is one interesting part of the Central Bank's projections is a worst case scenario.

They suggest that even in a case of a 60 percent drop in house prices and huge rise in interest rates and rising unemployment the banks would still make a profit.

Fortunately, the boom has helped restore confidence to workers and many are now beginning to show their strength. But it is time to get our share before time runs out.

Predictions

Now they're talking about when the boom will end. No one should always mistrust those who make money from the system making predictions but they have a point.

Every capitalist boom runs into shortages and bottlenecks because there are no plans made beforehand to allocate extra resources for expansion.

The result is that prices rise, and at some point topple individual firms into bankruptcy.

These bankruptcies affect other firms that seem healthy and so a ripple effect spreads through the economy.

Inflation is the highest in Europe. Personal debt is also soaring — people have borrowed 30 percent more this year than last and this level of credit could lead to a house price collapse.

But the main cause is external. The boom was driven by US investment and the long boom in America is coming to an end.

In 1999 the Nasdaq share

We need universal free health care

It was designed to give free medical service to mothers and children up to the age of 18.

Browne was defeated by a combined alliance of the Bishops and the Irish Medical Organisation.

They claimed that free medicine would create a 'slave plantation' ideology where people would be dependent on the state.

They saw it as a form of 'creeping socialism'.

Unfortunately, the labour movement refused to back Noel Browne because the church heavily dominated it.

Several union branches came out in support of Browne but many union officials had come from the Jesuit trained College of Industrial Relations and did what they were told by the bishops.

Ever since then labour movement has never fought seriously to bring about free universal health care.

Despite the social partnership agreements where the union leaders claim to have a big role in shaping government policy, they have achieved nothing to bring an end to the inequality in Irish health care.

Free universal health care means that fees to local doctors should be abolished.

health boards rather than treated as a small business.

The hospitals should also be free and treat people only on the basis of need.

Resources that are currently squandered on private medicine should be abolished.

There should be no beds reserved for private patients and consultants who are paid by the state should only be allowed work for public medicine.

None of this demands a massive transfer of resources.

But where extra cash is required it should come from taxing the rich.

They have gained enough from the Celtic Tiger years.

Now it is time they were forced to pay up for basic public services.

Resources

Far greater resources should be put into preventative medicine and health promotion to cut down on visits to doctors.

Doctors should be employed directly by the

by SIMON BASKETTER

The Celtic Tiger and the myth of Social Partnership

£13.60 plus £1 p+p
Available from Sw Books, PoBox1648, Dublin 8.

the eight...
lowest life expectancy of all...
the 29 OECD countries...
These statistics...
are the result of...
the policies of...
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because they cannot...
their local doctor...

New book by Noam Chomsky shows:

AMERICA: THE ROGUE STATE

When Bill Clinton came to Ireland in December of last year he was heralded as a peacemaker. Yet this man was the leader of what is arguably the most corrupt and barbaric nation in the world.

Noam Chomsky's latest book *Rogue States: The Rule of Force in World Affairs* openly exposes this. He argues that US dominance has become so overwhelming that it has dropped all pretence of being anything else.

The US establishment often applies the term to countries that dare to challenge its dominance, but Chomsky argues that the US is the world's real 'Rogue State'.

It blatantly defies international human right norms.

For instance, the 1975 invasion of East Timor by Indonesia illustrates how the US will openly defy the UN if it operates contrary to their interests. Indonesia was ordered to withdraw at once by the UN Security Council but it was to no avail. US Ambassador to the UN Daniel Patrick Moynihan later explained why:

"The [US] Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook. This task was given to me and I carried it forward with no inconsiderable success."

Moynihan goes on to write how within two months some 60,000 people had been killed and that numbers had reached near genocidal proportions within two years thanks to the increasing military support from the US and Britain.

Kopassus commandoes, armed and trained by the US, organised 'Operation Clean Sweep' killing 5,000 people in less than 8 months and later expelling 750,000 people — 85 percent of the population.

US support continued right through till 1999, during which time the Clinton administration kept to its stand that "it is the responsibility of the government of Indonesia, and we don't want to take it away from them."

When the people of Indonesia rose up and overthrew Suharto the US finally indicated to the Indonesian generals that the game was up and the Indonesian government quickly changed course and announced their withdrawal.

According to the Clinton administration the brutal General Suharto was always "our kind of guy".

When he came to power in 1965 by orchestrating a Rwanda-style massacre the CIA had backed him enthusiastically, even supplying the Indonesian military with the names of communist and



Victims of US Humanitarian intervention in Kosovo

trade-union activists.

Suharto retained his 'hero' status in the US and only lost his most favoured status in 1997 when he started dragging his feet on the implementation of harsh IMF austerity programmes.

This is a familiar pattern if you consider America's other infamous friend-turned-foe, Saddam Hussein.

He was supported through his worst atrocities, falling from grace only when he disobeyed (or misinterpreted) orders. The list goes on — Mobutu, Marcos, Duvalier and Noriega.

"Crimes are not of great consequence", Chomsky rightly concludes, "disobedience is".

With the end of the cold war, US assaults around the world have continued and Chomsky's argues they have become considerably harsher.

When the Democrats returned to the White House in 1992, Clinton informed the UN that the US would act "multilaterally when possible, but unilaterally when necessary," a position reiterated time and again by Madeline Albright and in 1999 by Secretary General William Cohen.

Cohen declared that the US is committed to "unilateral use of military power" to defend vital interests, which include "ensuring uninhibited access to key markets, energy supplies, and

strategic resources", and indeed anything that Washington might determine to be within its "domestic jurisdiction".

In order to ensure effectiveness of this unilateral approach, Chomsky argues it is necessary to employ a "dual strategy of irrationality and credibility."

A 1995 study of "Post-Cold War Deterrence" by the US Strategic Command (STRATCOM) argues that Washington's "deterrence statements" must be "convincing" and "immediately discernible" by leaders of "rogue states".

The US should also have available "the full range of responses," most importantly nuclear weapons, because "unlike chemical or biological weapons, the extreme destruction from a nuclear explosion is immediate, with few palliatives to reduce its effect."

"But", they advise, "planners should not be too rational about determining ... what the opponent values most."

"It hurts to portray ourselves as too fully rational and cool-headed."

"That the US may become irrational and vindictive if its vital interests are attacked should be part of the national persona we project."

It is "beneficial" for our strategic purposes posture if "some elements may appear to be potentially out of control."

Despite the collapse of the USSR the argument remains the same; The US has the responsibility of protecting the world — but from what?

From the early 1980's, Chomsky argues, it became clear that the conventional techniques for rallying support — the appeal to JFK's "monolithic and ruthless conspiracy," Regan's "evil empire" — were losing their effectiveness. New enemies were needed.

Domestically, fear of crime — particularly drugs — was stimulated.

According to the National Criminal Justice Commission this was achieved by "a variety of factors that have little or nothing to do with crime itself...in particular the media"

The most effective tool for prompting this climate of hysteria was the cultivation of racial tensions, which devastated black inner city communities.

The results have been described by US sociologists as "the American Gulag", or "the new American Apartheid" as over one million black men are now incarcerated in US prisons.

As a black male living in the US today you are three times more likely to go to prison than go to college and seven times more likely to be imprisoned than whites.

Abroad the threats were to be "international terrorism" and most serious of all "rogue states" or those classified as enemies of the US.

In the 1980's it was Libya's Colonel Gaddafi, in the 1990's it was Saddam Hussein and more recently Serbia's Milosevic

Such an analysis could leave the reader with the impression that US imperialism is all-powerful and can never be effectively challenged.

But Chomsky concludes his study with an analysis of the anti-WTO protests in Seattle in November 1999.

He rightly sees these protests as an important challenge to the highly centralised global power of multinationals and financial institutions, with its major centre in the US government.

Chomsky concludes with a rallying cry for people to fight this imperialist world order that is slowly destroying humanity.

"It is quite natural that dismantling of the post-war economic order should be accompanied by a significant attack on substantive democracy — freedom, popular sovereignty, and human rights — under the slogan TINA (There Is No Alternative). . . The slogan needless to say, is a self-serving fraud."

"The particular socio-economic order that's being imposed is the result of human decisions in human institutions. The decisions can be modified; the institutions can be challenged. If necessary they can be dismantled and replaced, just as honest and courageous people have been doing throughout the course of history."

■ Noam Chomsky; *Rogue States: The Role of Force in World Affairs*. Pluto Press

in my view

Are there two Bill Clintons?

"THERE'S ONLY one Bill Clinton! One Bill Clinton!", sang the biggest gathering of daft people seen in Co. Louth since John Paul dropped in on Drogheda in 1979.

The place was Dundalk, the time was the 12th of last month, and among the throng was Robbie MacGabhann, *An Phoblacht* reporter. Robbie was evidently so elevated with joy that we cannot be entirely certain he has come back down to earth.

What had Clinton meant for Ireland? "We had come into the light..."

The brightness brought by Clinton was of such an intensity as to dazzle Robbie into dizziness. How did the US president look?

"He basked in the moonlight..." Like Grace Kelly in the loveboat scene in "High Society", no doubt. After a cloying succession of such syrupy paragraphs, Robbie concluded through glistening eyes. "So long Bill, it was a truly excellent adventure".

The existence of "unacceptable aspects" of US policy was acknowledged, in a brief, awkward aside.

Robbie must feel miffed that his piece went unmentioned in the many "best of" lists for 2000. It should have been a shoo-in for the "Year's most ox-tongued piece of journalistic boot-licking".

Certainly, not since the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, has any British or Irish newspaper published the like of it. As sucking up pieces go, it was superb. Perhaps Robbie will be offered the Monica Lewinsky part in Bill's upcoming bio-pic.

Sinn Fein supporters who continue to regard themselves as socialists were, naturally, mortified by the *Phoblacht* piece. Deep embarrassment came through in two letters from Belfast in the following issue of the paper ("appalled by the fawning and uncritical nature of (the) coverage"... "an article that wouldn't have looked out of place in an English tabloid", etc).

Obvious

But neither writer dared draw the blindingly obvious conclusion. Both suggested that the MacGabhann piece had been an aberration, and hoped that, in the words of one, "normal service can now be resumed". What they were averting their eyes from was the fact that the Clinton coverage is normal service now in and from Sinn Fein.

A number of Clinton's Irish devotees (union boss Inez McCormack, for example) have tried recently to argue that, contrary to the chanting of the Dundalk demented, there are, in fact, two Bill Clintons. There's the big-power bully who uses the global reach of US military might to smash Palestinian aspirations, inflict misery and death on the children of Iraq, starve Cuba into submission etc. etc., all in the interests of big business.

And then there's the benign benefactor who wants nothing but peace for the people of Ireland.

If this were true it would make absolute nonsense of the notion — still inscribed in fading print on walls in Republican areas — of "One World, One Struggle". It would mean that it made sense for the people of the West Bank of the Jordan to take up arms against the US and its allies, and, simultaneously, for the people of the west bank of the Foyle uncritically to embrace US intervention and influence.

The idea of the identity of interest of the oppressed of the world has to be discarded like a used kleenex if we are to welcome Clinton to Ireland while opposing the US role in the Middle East.

Consider in this context Sinn Fein's analysis of the attempts by threat and massacre to force the Palestinian people to accept the "Bantustan" solution devised at Oslo under the supervision of Clinton's officials.

Here's *An Phoblacht*, November 30th: "The Palestinian leadership should be commended for its courage in agreeing the historic compromise it made when it signed the Oslo Accords..."

Obviously, clearly, Sinn Fein is for the Oslo deal and, therefore, against the continued resistance of those Palestinians who still aspire to national self-determination and the right of the refugees to return home.

Socialists, North and South, who still see Sinn Fein as the best option should think on these matters.

by EAMONN McCANN

film

Making mincemeat out of Shakespeare

Titus Andronicus is the latest Shakespeare play to undergo the Hollywood treatment. Directed by Julie Taynor, *Titus* is one of Shakespeare's least performed and most gruesome melodramatic plays.

Tot up all the atrocities of his other plays — like *Gloucester's eyes being plucked out* — and you still won't even come close to the grotesqueness here.

Horror

Titus is a horror story about the succession of power and bloodlust for revenge in ancient Rome.

Roman commander Titus returns home with his victorious army. Along with the spoils of war he brings Tamora, Queen of the Goths, and her three sons.

Since Roman custom requires that a sacrifice be made, Titus puts Tamora's eldest son to death and presents her with his entrails. Thus begins the great cycle of revenge that involves, murder, torture, incest, rape and a human mincemeat pie.

Titus is a striking visual achievement that mixes 1930's fascist and modern motifs with those of ancient Rome.

There is also a wonderful wedding scene between Tamora and the wonderfully shifty Saturninus that is staged as a Jazz Age drunken orgy.

Rage

The play is filled with rage at the corruption of power and the inability to separate private obligation

from public duty.

In this, it is truly a play of the Renaissance.

Renaissance drama was part of the political crisis of the seventeenth century which saw the change from an essentially medieval world — ruled by God — to a modern one in which the individual subject feels able to challenge the authority of the king, and take action on his/her own behalf and also on that of the law.

Revenge becomes not just as moral problem, as most critics treat it, but essentially a political one of the utmost significant to a century that in 1649, was to see the execution of king Charles I.

Titus succeeds as a wonderfully dark tale that offers some interesting modern parallels.

But be warned, it is not for the faint hearted.

— SINEAD KENNEDY



NOT for the faint hearted

Journal

Revolt from Serbia to the Zapatistas

THE LATEST issue of *International Socialism* opens with an article on the Serbian Revolution. Lindsey German draws on eyewitness accounts, including from striking miners, of the uprising which toppled Slobodan Milosevic in October.

The article destroys the claims by Western leaders and their apologists that NATO's action helped bring the revolution about.

It shows how the bombing last year weakened opposition to Milosevic.

It also demonstrates the central role of workers in the revolution, and charts how their demands for driving out managers associated with the old regime point the way for deeper change than that wanted by the new president, Vojislav Kostunica.

Struggles

Struggles in the factories and workplaces are continuing in Serbia.

That makes this article, which looks forward from the events of October, all

the more urgent.

So too is Mike Gonzalez's article on the Zapatistas, also in this issue.

The Mexican Zapatista movement led a rising of indigenous peoples in the southern province of Chiapas in 1994.

Their struggle for land rights, and against repression and globalisation, continues to inspire people around the world.

Mike Gonzalez tells how the guerrilla movement was able to shake the Mexican state.

He also describes how that state has fought back, pouring 50,000 troops into the area to besiege the

Zapatistas.

The movement now faces a dilemma about how to break out of that noose.

There is much more in this journal from Russian intellectual Boris Kagarlitsky's assessment of the anti-capitalist protests in Prague to an analysis of the breakdown of the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. A must for every *Socialist Worker* reader.

★ *International Socialism* is available from your *Socialist Worker* seller for £3, or for £3.50 from SW Books, Po Box 1648, Dublin 8



where we stand

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 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 here.

Make a New Year resolution to...

Join the anti-capitalists

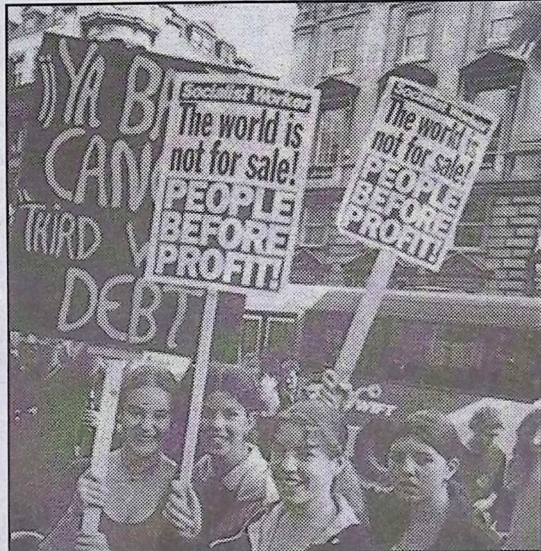


Fighting bin charges

THE LAST year has seen a growing movement of opposition to "neo-liberal" free-market economics and global capitalism around the world.

A 60,000 strong demonstration at the World Trade Organisation summit in Seattle was followed by a whole series of protests around the world against the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and EU. Some 1,500 marched in Dublin against global injustice.

And the movement is not just confined to protests. In Argentina, Central America and Southern Africa, workers have taken huge strike actions against the effects of global capitalism and the demands of institutions like the International Monetary Fund.



Protesting against the IMF

tion, for example, saw Fianna Fail with the lowest share of the vote since 1928 after a chain of corruption scandals.

The Labour Party's willingness to join coalition governments with these people means it has little credibility with working class people.

Bitterness and anger at the inequalities of the Celtic Tiger has fuelled a mood of militancy among rank and file trade unionists and a willingness to take action.

The left can really grow in this situation, but there are dangers. One is the rise of racism and racist organisations seeking to cash in on demoralisation and despair.

This is why we are appealing to all our readers to join the Socialist Workers Party.

Our plans for the New Year include organising to bring rank and file trade

unionists together to fight "partnership" between union leaders, employers and the government.

We expect a general election and we will stand candidates to offer a genuine alternative, hopefully in co-operation with other socialists in a Socialist Alliance.

We are organising with others a major Conference Against Capitalism and we want to help build the fight back in the colleges, workplaces and communities.

Join with us in fighting capitalism. Fill in and return the form below.

Scandals

At home, the two major pillars of capitalism in Ireland — the Church and Fianna Fail — have been severely weakened following the scandals of the past few years.

The exposure of the bishops' cover-up of the physical and sexual abuse of those in the care of Catholic Church-run institutions has undermined its claim to rule over the rest of us.

Last year's Tipperary South bye-election

SWP branch meetings

- o **ATHLONE:** Contact 01-872 2682 for details
- o **BRAV:** Meets every Wednesday at the Mayfair Hotel at 8.30pm
- o **BELFAST CENTRAL:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Kitchen Bar, 16 Victoria Square, near Cornmarket
- o **BELFAST SOUTH:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Queens Students Union
- o **BELFAST WEST:** West Belfast Branch meets Divis Flats Community Centre Falls Road, Monday 7.30pm.
- o **CORK:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in O'Donoghue's Pub, Drawbridge St.
- o **DERRY:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Badgers Bar Upperlands, Orchard St.
- o **DROGHEDA:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in McHugh's Bar (Back room) St Lawrence's Gate
- o **DUNDALK:** Contact 01-872 2682 for details
- o **DUN LAOGHAIRE:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in the Christian Institute
- o **DUBLIN ARTANE / COOLOCK:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane / Beaumont Recreational Centre (opp. Artane Castle)
- o **DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Corways Pub, Parrell St
- o **DUBLIN KILLBARRACK:** Phone 087 6235071
- o **DUBLIN CABRA:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Aughrim St Parish Hall, Prussia St
- o **DUBLIN BALLYMUN:** Phone Kevin at 8622209
- o **DUBLIN DUNDRUM:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Dundrum Family Recreation Centre
- o **DUBLIN RIALTO:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR
- o **DUBLIN RATHMINES:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Tom Kelly flats community centre, Charlemont Street.
- o **DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL:** Phone Simon 087 6561455
- o **DUBLIN TALLAGHT:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Jobstown Community Centre
- o **ENNISKILLEN:** Phone 01-872 2682 for details
- o **GALWAY:** Meets every Wednesday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square (beside Cuba) 8.30pm
- o **LIMERICK:** Phone 01-872 2682 for details
- o **SLIGO:** Meets fortnightly on Saturdays, phone 087 6329511 for details
- o **TRALEE:** Phone 087 6329511 for details
- o **WATERFORD:** Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

WHY I JOINED THE SWP

Kevin from the Drogheda branch of the SWP told Socialist Worker:

"I returned from working abroad last year. I got involved in the campaign to stop the planned incinerator just outside the town.

"I have two children and just at a personal level I don't want deadly dioxins contaminating the air they breath. I'm on the action committee against the incinerator and helped organise the recent demonstration at Newgrange.

"The campaign is a very broad coalition of people and that is good, but I have always been on the left. I could see how all the local issues — hospital closures, the bin charges and the incinerator are part of a much bigger agenda involving privatisation.

"It's profits for the capitalist interests and they are prepared to endanger the health of our children to get their way.

"I came to the Anti Capitalist Conference 'Marxism 2000' organised by the SWP in November.

"There was a real buzz of ideas there. I spoke at a few of the meetings too. Those ideas really gave me encouragement and a little while later I joined the SWP. I think the Drogheda branch is making an impact in the town and of course we need more of that in everywhere.

"That's why I would say to all the trade union militants, community activists and campaigners: Link it up! All the issues we are fighting are linked by capitalism and the fight against it needs to be linked to a socialist agenda.

"Joining the SWP helps you do just that!"

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Teachers

Keep up the pressure

THE ASTI pulled out of negotiations over their pay deal after the government docked teachers pay cheques in the run up to Christmas.

In all £6 million was wiped off the overall pay bill. A teacher on a salary of £17,000 a year faces a deduction of £320 a month.

Most of the deduction is for days when teachers refused to supervise. Yet this duty is supposed to be voluntary.

The Department of Education have not even collected proper forms to check who exactly was at school on those days and who was not.

But they have still docked teachers pay.

Blackmail

The cynicism of the move was shown by the suggestion that the pay would be restored if teachers gave up their strike action due this month.

This is nothing short of blackmail.

It also casts a cold light on the most recent moves to bring a settlement.

A Labour Relations Commission Officer, Tom Pomphrett was appointed to

look at mechanisms for establishing negotiating forum.

This was hailed as a breakthrough by the media. In reality, it is a scheme that is being pushed by the more conservative full time apparatus in the ASTI.

Since the start of this campaign, they have tried to limit the fight.

Even though the union decided democratically to boycott benchmarking, signals were sent out that the

strike could be settled if a teachers' commission as established that had some vague link to benchmarking.

The reason why the government is moving now is because the ASTI is beginning to really bite.

Pressure

Oral exams are due to start and parents are already starting to turn pressure on the government.

Crucially, a special conference of the other union

the TUI is scheduled for 27th January.

There is considerable rank and file opposition in this union to the failure of the leadership to support the ASTI dispute.

The government is terrified that if the ASTI strike is not scuppered soon; it could spread to the other unions.

All of this shows why the grassroots of the ASTI should keep up the pressure and ensure that the regional strikes go ahead.

Ulster Bank

95% vote for action

OVER 95 percent of workers at Ulster Bank, North and South, have voted for strike action over management attempts to introduce a new 'Horizon' restructuring programme.

Workers who are represented the Irish Bank Officials Association (IBOA) are currently taking their case to internal banking tribunal but are insisting they will go on strike immediately if any attempt to initiate the Horizon plan is made by management.

Under the proposed plan there will be a 20 percent reduction in staff numbers at branch level, which will

inevitably mean compulsory redundancies.

Workers will be forced to reapply for their own jobs at significantly lower pay scales. The plan also involves forcing workers to transfer to new Ulster Bank business centres.

Workers in Ulster Bank are already severely underpaid compared to workers in Bank of Ireland and AIB. For example a Bank of Ireland worker at the lowest entry grade is paid £12,800 compared to £11,500 in Ulster Bank.

Scandal

Well over half of these workers are female, which appears to suit the bank's chief executive Martin Wil-

son who scandalously said in a recent interview with the *Irish Independent* that "I would like these advisors and managers to be predominantly aged between 20 and 35. . . Women are better in this kind of structure and better at this kind of 'soft' skill." His comments have enraged workers and the bank is currently under investigation by the Equality Authority.

Last year Ulster Bank made £168 million in profit. Since Social Partnership began in 1987, its profits have grown by 365 percent. But these profits are not enough for the banks greedy new owners, The Royal Bank of Scotland, now want even high profits at the expense of their staff

Red Star

SOME FIFTY workers at Red Star Frozen Foods Co. Louth, have been on strike since last November for decent pay.

They recently overwhelmingly rejected pay offer from management. Management offered a miserly £4.55 to trainees but have refused to even backdate this to the beginning of the dispute.

The Workers are demanding a standard wage increase from £6.92 to £8.52 an hour.

The workers who are all members of SIPTU have been on strike for almost two months, they are also demanding that the company give a goodwill payment of £250 per person.

Incinerators

FIFTY anti incinerator activists organised a protest at Newgrange in Bru na Boyne to coincide with the Winter Solstice on December 21.

The action was in protest at plans by Indivar to build an incinerator at Duleek in County Louth.

One of the protestors told *Socialist Worker*, "This incinerator threatens the health of people throughout the area. Incinerators produce deadly Dioxins, one of the most poisonous chemicals known."

"Microscopic amounts can cause death and illness. Dioxins accumulate in the body threatening health over a long period. This incinerator is not the answer. If the government had a proper waste management policy organised, if waste was separated and if industry was told to clean up its act we would not have a waste problem."

Details of the campaign — "No Incinerator", PO Box 2001, Drogheda Co Louth.

Refuse Charges

Corpo charges chaos

Dublin Corporation descended into chaos over Christmas as they attempted to introduce bin charges.

Included in the estimates was the introduction of bin charges. Dublin Corporation's new wheelle bin system is to be followed by the introduction of refuse charges for every household. It is clear the charge will amount to a cost of about £150 per year.

Over a series of meetings the Corporation could not come to agreement over the charges. This opened up the prospect of the Minister for the Environment Noel Dempsey disbanding the Corporation and appointing a Commissioner to run the City.

This highlights the complete lack of democracy in the refuse charges

issue.

Not one councillor stood in the local elections saying they would implement charges. Now there there is the prospect of government forcing through the charges regardless of what people voted for.

Disgracefully, during one of the series of meetings to discuss the charges, Fianna Fail Lord Mayor Maurice Ahern made a series of deeply offensive and racist remarks.

Resign

He referred to those opposing the charges as "n****ers in the wood pile". He should be forced to resign immediately.

Unfortunately while opposing the standing charge both Sinn Fein and Labour Party councillors are ready to accept a

once off £45 charge for the introduction of wheelie bins.

But there should be no charge what so ever for public services. Ordinary people already pay the vast majority of taxation and should not be forced to pay again.

The key to defeating this unjust tax is mass non-payment and huge protests. This was how water charges were defeated in the past.

Major campaigns against bin charges are already underway in Dun Laoghaire, Drogheda, Limerick and Cork.

The Campaign Against Service Charges has organised a series of meetings and protests against the Dublin charges.

For information on the campaign in your area ring 087 6329511

CIE

DART drivers stand up to abuse

DART drivers in Dublin faced a barrage of abuse by the media in the week leading up to Christmas.

The drivers recently accepted a pay deal, which was secured after prolonged industrial action in the company. Crucial to that deal being accepted by the workers was the introduction of a five-day week where workers would be guaranteed their two rest days off.

Traditionally DART drivers worked rest day overtime to bring up their earnings. According to a spokesperson for the drivers, "The Company forced this deal through and our union reps came to us on the basis that if we voted for this we would be on a five day week. But now they are telling us that we have to work our rest days."

The vast majority of DART drivers refused to

work rest days and the service had to be cut back. According to one driver, "We are fed up with all these lies coming across about us."

"The company have created this mess, not us. In the past when we worked our Sunday rest day, for example, we got £130 but now they say we have to work it and for a flat rate of £80 before tax. This is just not on. We would never have voted for the deal if this was demanded of us."

"The company have threatened disciplinary action over this but if one of

our number are touched for this we will walk off the job" said one DART driver.

"This is the first Christmas Eve I had off in twenty years and I'm sick to the teeth of having to work my Sundays rest day. There's no going back. The vast majority of us are together on this one. We've been lied to by the company and the unions and now the media are lying about us", another driver told *Socialist Worker*.

More action is expected as DART drivers continue to demand their right to a full five-day week.

'MINISTER for Privatisation' Mary O'Rourke, recently announced the details of her plan to privatise CIE. Cutbacks in safety are already a huge issue, as highlighted by the last year strike by ILDA train drivers. Despite being vilified by the media many of the ILDA drivers safety concern have been supported a recent Labour Court/LRC report which reluctantly admitted that the increased working hours and the absence of proper breaks demanded of drivers by management at Iarnrod Eireann required 'further safety evaluation'.

Mandate

MANDATE members in Arnotts and Argos won significant pay rises in the weeks leading up to Christmas.

This followed ballots for industrial action in both companies when workers voted overwhelmingly to go out on strike to secure decent pay increases.

Shop workers are among the lowest paid group of workers in the country and many retailers have had to raise their starting pay well over and above the minimum wage in order to recruit new workers.

In the case of Dunnes Stores, they raised their starting rate to £7 per hour.

Shop workers are also more aware than most of the extent of the Celtic Tiger economy and the size of profits being raked in by the major retailers.

They take in the cash and swipe the credit cards. Christmas was a prime

opportunity to push for pay increases in the retail trade and the widespread support for strike action among the workers resulted in pay increases well over and above the partnership 5.5 percent

Arnotts workers won up to an 18 percent increase in pay, with most of the increases being achieved at the lower end of the pay scales.

Argos workers secured a 19 percent increase and the company made no bones about the fact that they broke with the social partnership deal in order to keep and recruit workers in a booming economy.

This shows what can be achieved in fighting against the low pay that partnership offers and what can be done to recruit layers of new workers into the unions.

Airport

SIPTU official call Gardai to remove shop steward from Dublin Airport

"IN 1913, the bosses called the police to break the unions. Now the union officials are calling the police to deal with their shop stewards." This is how one union activist described recent disgrace incidents at Dublin Airport.

On December 8, SIPTU official Tony Walshe verbally attacked a shop steward for the airport operatives and ordered him to leave SIPTU's office in Dublin Airport. When he refused to leave, Walshe called the Gardai and the Airport police.

The following week the shop steward came to the SIPTU office again because he was an elected scrutineer to oversee a ballot on pay and conditions. Once against he was told to leave - and once again the police were called.

Even though Walshe had involved the police in internal union affairs, the shop steward who was suspended and is now subject to an investigation by SIPTU.

The dispute is a reflection of the huge discontent that now exists among SIPTU members. Over a thousand cabin crew have left to join

IMPACT. The members are tired of the constant pressure that is being put on them in the run up to privatisation.

"We want to union to get back to basics. We are tired of all the P's - PFP, PESP, PCW. The union is giving no support to its shop stewards. Every time there is a strike, the line is 'Run away, Don't support it'. We came out for the Ryanair workers - but we are told we should not come out for ourselves.", one worker told *Socialist Worker*

Airport operatives have been stuck on low pay for some time and when they looked for an increase, they were loaded with extra productivity measures.

The union officials narrowly pushed through a general agreement, which means extra work for particular grades.

Loaders are being asked to come in an hour earlier; cleaning crews are being reduced; workers are being told they will have to fit in with the airlines schedules no matter what cost to their personal lives.

SIPTU activists should protest about the actions of Tony Walshe. Officials like him need to be reminded that they are the servants and not the masters of their members.

NI Social workers

SOCIAL workers in the Foyle Trust, have won a 'partial victory' in their bid to win improvements in services for children and families.

The Trust was forced to offer an extra 17 jobs by strike action and work-to-rule. This falls short of the numbers needed to properly maintain children's services in the North West. But the NIPSA members say the fight is not over. They've

suspended further strike action but will maintain a ban on overtime, pending a working party 'review'.

Some social workers have run up over 400 hours of overtime which they are unable to take due to staff shortages.

Part of the deal involves payment for overtime. But the workers are still pressing for more social workers in the area.

Socialist Worker

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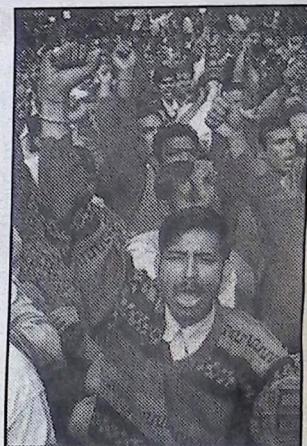
ONE



10,000 bank workers in Korea strike



Workers occupy Paris McDonalds



600,000 Indian postal workers strike for pay

WORLD



Polish nurses protesting at health cuts

ONE



100,000 Trade Unionists march in Nice

THE NEW year began as the last one ended with a growing movement of resistance to capitalism.

From South Korea to Poland workers are taking action to resist the madness of a society that puts profits before people's needs.

The anti-capitalist move-

ment which started in Seattle has spread internationally and deepened to involve numbers of people across the world.

This movement needs to be channeled into a struggle that can challenge the system itself.

To do we need to be organised.

Now turn to page 10

STRUGGLE!