

Socialist Worker

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For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

€1.00 / £0.70 STG

Chinese student Zhao Liu Tao murdered



The murder of Zhao Liu Tao (above) by racists prompted protests in Dublin



中国人和
爱尔兰人
联合在一起
抗议
停止种族
谋杀!!!

UNITE AND FIGHT RACISM

RACISTS murdered Chinese student, Zhao Liu Tao. After screaming insults at him and a friend, thugs repeatedly beat Zhao in the head with an iron bar.

The blame for this vicious attack lies in two places — with the thugs who carried out the attack and also with their accomplices in the Irish government, which has been scapegoating immigrants..

Ireland has a trickle of refugees, but a corrupt and desperate government, along with the right wing media, have whipped-up hysteria over the issue. This has created a climate where physical attacks on immigrants are rising at an appalling rate.

Tony O'Reilly, the richest man in Ireland, uses his newspapers to argue that refugees are scroungers, yet he lives in the Bahamas in order to avoid paying tax.

While the racist hysteria led to its logical conclusion — a man murdered on the street, the response of ordinary people to the attack was brilliant.

Members of the Chinese community and Globalise Resistance took to the streets in protest. People queued to sign a book of condolences and a petition against the government's racist policies.

By mobilising anti racists on the streets we can make those street safe for people of every colour and culture, and we can take on the racism of the Government.

GREEN PRIVATISATION?

"TODAY heralds the dawning of a new age of clean, green energy, harvested from two plentiful renewable sources, the sea and the wind."

So said Marine and Natural Resources Minister Frank Fahey announcing a 640 million euro plan to build the world's largest offshore wind farm, capable of generating 520 megawatts of electricity. But the main drive for

the facility is profit for a private Irish company called Eirtricity, supplying about 10 percent of the country's energy needs.

The minister revealed the real reason behind the plan: "I am particularly pleased that this project, dynamic private Irish company."

While the plant will have an effect Ireland's emissions of harmful carbon dioxide gas the shortfall will more than be made up for by the governments planned incin-

erators.

Eirtricity is headed by Eddie O'Connor, former boss of the state-sponsored Bord Na Mona peat-producing company.

The company is 51 percent owned by the environmentally friendly and Fianna Fail funding National Toll Roads.

The wind farm has more to do with the privatisation of the electricity supply and new profits for the Fat Cat friends of the government than a concern for the environment.

Courts pursue homeless man over one Euro!

THE State is spending thousands of euro taking a young homeless man to court for stealing a bottle of orange worth €1.

The 21-year-old has been homeless since the age of 16 and has spent the

last five years sleeping rough or in emergency accommodation.

Homeless campaigner Fr Peter McVerry pointed out that the money spent bringing the case to court would be enough to accommodate the young man in bed and breakfasts for three

months.

"The State seems to be more interested in protecting the property rights of a shopkeeper than the right to accommodation of a homeless person."

Government agencies never provided proper accommodation for the young man, Fr McVerry

added.

The 21-year old man is alleged to have taken the bottle of orange from a city-centre shop in Dublin. The case is currently before the Dublin District Court and is due for hearing in February.

Chaotic

"He is a very amiable, pleasant young man with a very tragic family background," Fr McVerry said. "Things could have been very different for him if he got accommodation."

"His life wouldn't be as chaotic, he wouldn't need to go stealing a bottle of orange or anything else."

Homeless groups say the situation for young homeless has worsened in recent years despite a host of initiatives.

"It's never been as bad in the last 25 years as it is now," commented Fr McVerry. "Rented accommodation is too expensive and the hostels are full up."

There are huge housing waiting lists, so there is in effect a major traffic jam clogging everything up.

According to the Simon Community a third of local authorities have no plans to tackle homelessness. In the Dublin area just seven new accommodation places for the young homeless have come on-stream in the last two years.

Refugees revolt in racist camps

"WE WANT freedom or die, we request the Australian people help us, we don't want any visa, we want freedom from the barbed wire fences".

These are the words on a note passed to a reporter outside the Woomera detention centre in South Australia.

The note was signed "All Afghan refugees".

Driven by desperation, 300 detainees in Woomera have gone on a hunger strike with about 70 sewing or stapling their lips together to prevent guards from force-feeding them.



Protesting inside and outside the Woomera internment camp

hunger strike and sew our lips until we achieve our basic human rights."

The majority of the protesters are Afghan asylum

seekers.

The Australian government has frozen the processing of all asylum claims by Afghans, claiming the con-

ditions in Afghanistan are suitable for them to return.

The refugees at Woomera are fighting for basic freedoms and human rights.

Suicide

As Socialist Worker went to press, 40 detainees had been hospitalised after passing out from dehydration. Sixteen detainees drank detergent in a suicide attempt.

But the actions of the detainees are the actions of people who have escaped persecution only to be treated like criminals and dehumanised by the Australian government.

A statement from the refugees said, "We are going to continue our

FF attack immigrants again

NEWSPAPERS are still supposed to ask Minister for Racism John O'Donoghue's permission to use the name of asylum seekers.

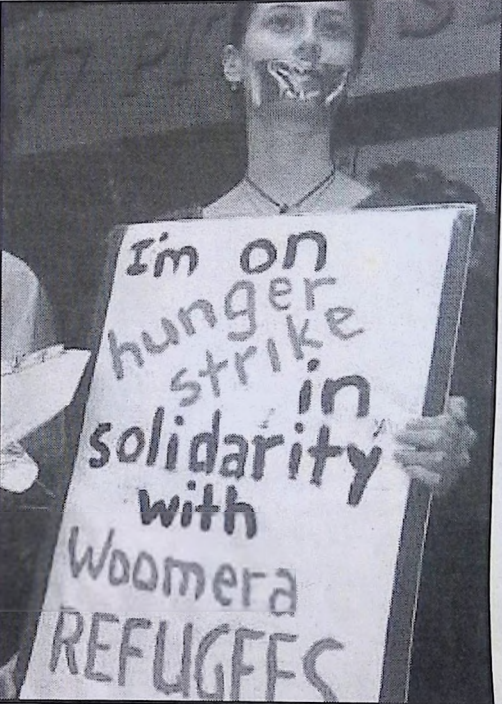
Socialist Worker has refused to abide by this

law and will continue to ignore O'Donoghue's racist censorship.

A year after promising repeal the law O'Donoghue now is including an altered version as amendment to The Immigration

(Carriers' Liability) Bill proposes on the spot fines for airline companies and road hauliers found to be transporting people without proper travel documents.

Amnesty Intern-



ational and the Irish Refugee Council have pointed out that by turning airline and haulier staff into immigration officers these measures will drive refugees into the hands of "ruthless traffickers

and smugglers".

It will more tragedies like the death of 8 immigrants in Wexford before Xmas.

O'Donoghue has refused to meet any refugee group to discuss the legislation.

Another beef scam

LIVESTOCK dealer John Walsh who imported foot and mouth infected animals was recently jailed for three months.

Evidence in Court sheds light on the dodgy practices of the Irish meat industry.

Walsh delivered 248 sheep to the Kopek factory and signed in the name of another entirely innocent farmer.

He was issued with four cheques in this farmer's

name. Arrangements were made with the AIB in Roscommon to exchange the cheques for a sterling draft.

Fussy

This involved Walsh going to a specific counter and using a number given to him by the factory.

The evidence was that the factory "was not fussy when checking names".

More fussy about protecting its profits it would soon.

★ THE RISK of birth defects such as Down's syndrome is 40 per cent higher for pregnant women living within three kilometres of hazardous waste land-fill sites, according to new research. The report follows a number of studies linking birth defects to living adjacent to hazardous waste dumps.

Did bribes build the IFSC?

THE International Financial Services Centre may hold as much as €500 billion. The centre is an international tax scam — the companies inside only pay 10 percent tax on their transactions.

It now appears that centre for tax avoidance was built with the help of bribes.

The award of the €200 million contract to a consortium made up of British Land, Hardwicke Ltd and McNerney Properties was made by the Custom House Docks Development Authority, which included among its members key supporters of Charles Haughey, including the late hote-

lier, PV Doyle and accountant Noel Fox.

Two key players in the process leading to the award of the contract were disgraced former environment minister Pdraig Flynn and public relations consultant and Fianna Fail spin-doctor Frank Dunlop.

Consultant

Dunlop who has admitted bribing politicians acted as the PR consultant to the CHDDA from early 1987. Dunlop also acted as a consultant for British Land.Flynn, who has yet to fully explain why €50,000 from developer Tom Gilmartin in June 1989 ended up in his private bank account, was Environment Minister when the IFSC development contract was award-

ed.

The decision to recommend the British Land/Hardwicke/McNerney consortium was made known to the government in late 1987, just months after Flynn introduced legislation to allow the CHDDA to accommodate the project in the tax designated docks area.

The proposal for a financial services centre was first put to Haughey by Dermot Desmond, who subsequently purchased one of the main blocks in the development.

Haughey appointed former civil servant Pdraig Ó hUiginn, Fox and Michael Buckley, then a senior executive in Dermot Desmond's NCB stockbrokers, and currently chairman of AIB, to the board of the CHDDA in August 1987.

★ One man who was centrally involved in the setting up of the IFSC was Paddy Teahon, the former head of the Taoiseach's Department.

Teahon left the civil service in May 2000 and was immediately appointed chairman of Campus Stadium Ireland Development—the Bertie Bowl—and Digital Media Development in Smithfield.

Teahon has just joined the board of Treasury Holdings, the huge property developers.

Treasury Holdings is expected to sign and exchange contracts with the Haughey family next week to complete the €38 million acquisition of Abbeville and the recently rezoned 270-acre Kinsealy estate in north Co Dublin.

Flame grilled morale boost

HAS YOUR boss ever tried to get you and your workmates to go on a "bonding" course?

Management may present such outings as a "fluffy" exercise designed to improve staff relations.

A dozen workers from Burger King's marketing department were sent on such a course in Florida

recently.

The workers were forced to walk over white hot coals as part of the bonding session.

One woman had to be taken to hospital with her injuries, and Burger King had to call a doctor to treat the other workers whose feet were blistered.

what we think

Enron: rotten symbol of a rotten system

THE FORMER vice president of the collapsed Enron corporation committed suicide at the end of last month but he is far from the first victim of the corporation.

Despite all the claims that the "free market" promotes "efficiency" and "the greatest good for the greatest number", it is really about promoting corporate power.

Enron shows how the system is marked by massive corruption and violence.

As soon as George W Bush was in the White House, Enron chair Kenneth Lay was appointed "adviser to the Energy Department".

Bush, the boss of corporate America, and a number of his key lieutenants—Vice President Dick Cheney, Attorney General John Ashcroft, US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, top presidential economic adviser Larry Lindsey, to name just the most prominent—all took cash from Enron.

Enron also shows the links between big business and imperialism.

George Bush Sr and his Secretary of State James Baker personally helped Enron win a deal to build a new power plant in Kuwait after the 1991 Gulf War.

Threatened

The Enron deal supplied electricity at 22 times the price offered by rival bidders. But Bush and Baker leaned on the Kuwaiti government to get the deal signed.

Enron remains the only company—as opposed to a country—to be investigated by Amnesty International. In Mozambique Enron wanted to get its hands on the country's Pande natural gas field.

The Mozambique government opposed the plan. Then the US government threatened to cut off future aid to the impoverished country, and Enron got its way.

Enron lied, cheated, bullied and bribed its way across the globe, encouraged by politicians.

Enron used the deregulation of global energy markets to expand from a gas pipeline company in Texas to become the world's biggest energy trader.

Provoked

The company was at the heart of the biggest corruption scandal in Indian history, and used brutal methods to trample on anyone who got in its way.

Its \$2.8 billion power plant project in Maharashtra state provoked opposition from a wide range of campaigners. Enron and its Indian subsidiary Dubhol Power Corporation hired thugs and police to beat and terrorise the opposition into silence.

One victim was 24 year old Sagandha Vasudev Bhalekar, who was pregnant when police—paid by Enron—burst into her home and beat her.

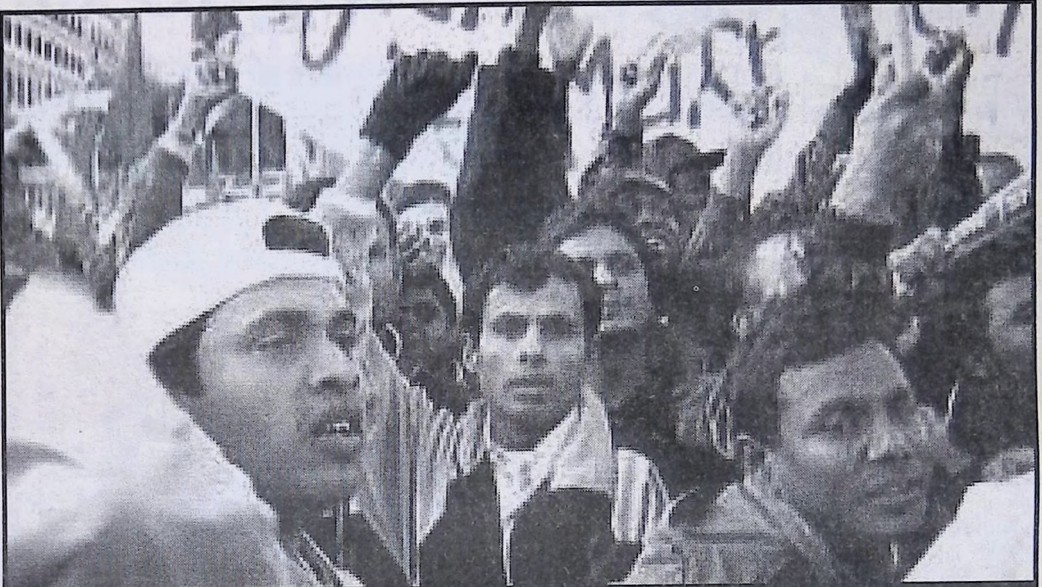
The US based Human Rights Watch organisation found that Enron was "complicit in human rights violations".

It went on, "Enron's local entity, the Dubhol Power Corp, benefited directly from an official policy of suppressing dissent through the misuse of the law, harassment of anti-Enron protestor leaders, and police practices ranging from arbitrary to brutal."

Indian writer and campaigner Arundhati Roy describes how Enron also "paid out millions of dollars to 'educate' politicians and bureaucrats" in India to allow its plans to go ahead.

She details how, when Enron's plans were threatened with cancellation, "the US government began to pressure the Maharashtra government."

US ambassador to India Frank Wis-



AROUND 200,000 people marched through Rome last month against the right wing government's plans to introduce draconian policies against refugees

ner went on to become an Enron director. The Enron plant now supplies electricity at up to seven times the cost of other local suppliers in Maharashtra.

The US pressure and the "education" of local politicians means the government was committed to paying \$210 million a year to Enron for the next 40 years.

Enron even managed to get a clause in the contract giving it the right to auction off government property if it did not get the money it was promised.

A similar fate awaits public services at home if the privatisers get their way. Enron's fortunes soared as it pio-

neered the privatisation of water and electricity supplies around the world. Accountants Arthur Anderson—who shredded the evidence of Enron's dodgy deals—are consultants on a whole number of Public Private Partnership ventures in Ireland.

Enron has gone but others are trying to take over services in Ireland.

Workers are told that ESOP schemes will mean they have a share in new privatised utilities.

But while Enron executives grabbed \$1.1 billion by selling company shares between mid-1999 and mid-2001, the workers were prevented from selling

share options they had taken out as a way of saving. These are now worthless.

Enron wasn't a rotten apple in the barrel. It is typical of how corruption, violence and exploitation in the relentless pursuit of profit are inescapable features of capitalism.

We need to fight the privatisation agenda and the corporate attack on our jobs and services.

We need to link this to sustained opposition to global capitalism and its military face—imperialism. And we need socialist politics to give this resistance purpose, direction and to fight for a better world.

Socialist Worker Appeal Help us raise €20,000!

Readers made a great start to the Socialist Worker €20,000 Appeal in January. The money is needed to turn Socialist Worker into a weekly newspaper by the summer.

And our readers are very enthusiastic about this with €4,000 raised so far. Members and supporters have donated all of this money.

Deirdre who is active in the Anti War Movement in Dundrum says she is delighted to hear that Socialist Worker will become a weekly.

"I am proud to donate to this appeal. Socialist Worker is the only paper where you get decent and truthful information about what is happening in the world. I look forward to getting it every

week because it is essential reading for putting arguments against the war, especially in my workplace."

Joe, a shop steward in Dublin Bus says "Socialist Worker is a must for militants in the unions today. It's the only paper that takes on arguments on privatisation, partnership and the rotten system of profit that dominates our lives today. Everyone who wants to fight that rotten system should buy it and read it."

Our thanks to our readers and supporters who have donated so far including Joe Moore, President of Cork Council of Trade Unions, Monica Axson, Shop Steward, NIPSA, Deirdre and Orla Smith, Bridie Murphy, members of Cam-

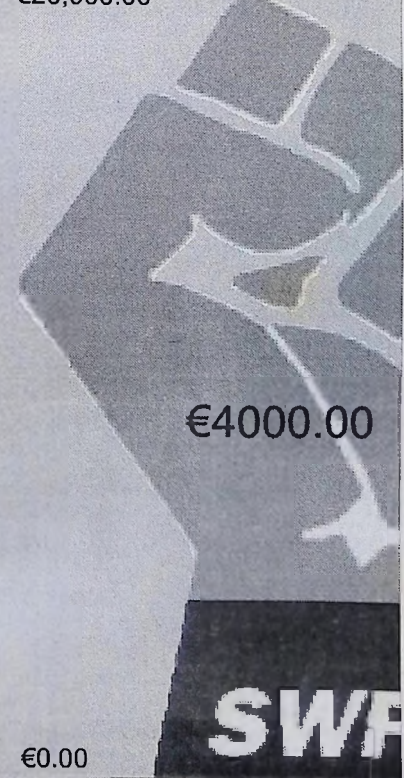
paign Against Bin Tax and many more.

In Dublin Socialist Workers Party members in Tallaght are organising a sponsored walk. In Rialto and Cork SWP branches are organising video showings of the Genoa and Seattle protests. And members in Belfast have organised a gig for next month.

We need the money to keep coming in - please support this appeal by sending donations (see form below).

Support our national raffle. Tickets cost one euro each and are available from your Socialist Worker seller in ones or books of five and ten tickets. And you could even win one of five good money prizes.

€20,000.00



I want to support the Socialist Worker Appeal and help keep Socialist Worker at the centre of the struggle for a better world. Please find enclosed the following donation: € _____ /£ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

I would like to receive _____ copies of Socialist Worker regularly

I would like to join the SWP

Donations in Republic of Ireland should be made payable to: Socialist Worker, AIB, 37 O'Connell Street, Dublin 1 Account Number: 85173030 Sort Code: 93 11 36

Return slip to: SW Appeal, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

Donations in Northern Ireland should be made payable to Socialist Worker, First Trust Bank, High Street, Belfast Account No: 00812073, Sort Code: 93 80 92

Return slip to: SW Appeal, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.

€0.00

SWP

Special report...

Horror and hope...

—America—

The biggest 'Rogue State'

PICTURES released by Bush's government boast of the barbaric treatment meted out to prisoners taken from Afghanistan to the US military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The prisoners are caged, masked, bound hand and foot, and forced to kneel before US soldiers.

The US military camp in Guantanamo Bay is built on injustice.

It occupies land seized from the people of Cuba, which the US government refuses to return.

Bombarded

The US "war on terrorism" claims to be about upholding civilised beliefs that could make the world a safer place.

In reality the world's biggest military power bombarded one of the poorest countries in the world, killing thousands of innocent civilians.

Prisoners held by the US will not get justice but face death at the hands of military tribunals.

The US wants to send a brutal warning to any "rogue state" that dares to challenge its power.

Now the US rogue state wants to spread terror beyond Afghanistan.

It has threatened



Afghan prisoners caged and forced to kneel in Guantanamo Bay

Somalia and Iraq.

The US is sending 650 troops to the Philippines to "fight terrorism".

Arrogantly, the US dismisses calls for it to

recognise human rights.

Bush and his defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld do not feel restrained by protests at their human rights abuses.

They jettison any notion that they have to account for their actions, whether it's on global warming, the Star Wars missile system or suck-

ing the Third World dry.

Defending "civilisation" means humiliating captives, imprisoning them in cages and denying them a fair trial.

Afghanistan

THE BOMBING campaign continues in Afghanistan. But we are told "democrats" are in government in Kabul.

Ahmed Rashid, a leading expert on Afghanistan, wrote recently in the *British Daily Telegraph* about the difficulties facing interim prime minister Hamid Karzai. Karzai has limited support among his own ethnic group, the Pathans (or Pashtuns).

His government is based on the largely non-Pathan Northern Alliance.

According to Rashid, "The eastern Pathans who dominate southern and eastern Afghanistan warned Mr Karzai that their loyalty to the government was being stretched to the limit if

the US bombing of Al Qaida, which has killed hundreds of civilians, continued."

Secondly, the war-lordism that ripped Afghanistan apart before the Taliban took power in 1996 has returned. Rashid writes, "The war-lords and tens of thousands of followers who were armed by the Americans to run down the Taliban have become a powerful destabilising factor."

"Unwilling to disarm or accept the writ of the central government, they are even defying the US."

Among those restored to power are Gul Agha Shirzai in Kandahar, Ismail Khan in Herat, and General Rashid Dostum in the north.

These centrifugal

pressures are being reinforced by the outside powers that backed and armed the Northern Alliance.

Russia and Turkey support Dostum, while Ismail Khan is close to neighbouring Iran.

American and British leaders claim the war has liberated Afghan women.

US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld defended hooding prisoners on the flight to Cuba on the grounds that they were "not permanent—unlike the burqas" that the Taliban made Afghan women wear.

This is hypocrisy twice over. In the first place, all reports from Kabul—more lawless than it was under the Taliban thanks to the rapes, robberies, and murders committed by Northern Alliance soldiers—indi-

cate that most women still wear the burqa.

Secondly, any visitor to Saudi Arabia, one of Washington's closest allies, would find many of the main features of Taliban rule there—for example, shrouded women and Islamic sharia law imposed by religious police.

This isn't very surprising, since the Taliban belonged to the same Muslim sect as the Saudi royal family, and therefore copied many of their institutions.

Liberated

The talk of liberated Afghanistan represents a shifting of the goalposts by Washington and Whitehall.

The US didn't go to war because the Taliban were a rotten govern-

ment, and indeed made some efforts to court them.

The *British Financial Times* carried a piece on "part two" of the war.

This will involve US military deployments to a number of countries—the first of 650 American soldiers have been dispatched to the Philippines.

There seem to be plans to establish a network of US bases in central Asia. This could provoke more opposition to the US.

First, the *Financial Times* warns of US "dependence on regimes or armed opposition groups with abominable human rights records"—witness what is happening now in Afghanistan. Secondly, somewhere around the world the Pentagon will find itself trapped in a war that isn't such a walkover.

From Porto Alegre to New York

Resisting global tyranny

THE EFFECTS of globalisation have created opposition across the globe.

Tens of thousands of people are attending a counter-conference in Porto Alegre in Brazil, one of the world's poorer countries.

This conference, from 31 January to 4 February, the World Social Forum, brings together leading figures who have spoken out against globalisation.

They will address meetings and workshops where activists can debate alternatives to globalisation and the power of the multinationals.

The World Social Forum has been organised in opposition to the meeting of the world's bosses at the World Economic Forum meeting in New York.

The 1,000 most powerful corporations in the world will meet to plan more free market chaos.

This private club includes Nike, General Motors, Microsoft and Monsanto, the multinational that peddles genetically modified food. The giant energy company Enron used to be a member before it went bust last December.

Dictate

The forum helps big business dictate the agendas of the most important governments in the world. Its members include political leaders like US Secretary of State Colin Powell and New York's new billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg. The New York Stock Exchange is hosting a dinner party on the trading floor for the delegates on the Saturday evening!

The WEF paved the way for the World Trade Organisation (WTO) whose neo-liberal policies have brought misery to ordinary people across the globe. This powerful body switched its conference to New York after protests last year at the forum's usual venue in Davos, Switzerland.

Filipino writer and activist Walden Bello said at the time, "We live on two different planets — Davos, the planet of the super-rich and Porto Alegre, the planet of the poor, the marginalised, the concerned. Here in Porto Alegre we are discussing how to save the

UNITED FOR JUSTICE

THE PROTESTS planned in New York against the World Economic Forum have won growing support. An organisation called **Another World is Possible** is coordinating those protests near to the luxury Waldorf-Astoria hotel where the forum is meeting.

Students for Global Justice is also organising two days of meetings and workshops before the forum starts.

Labour

The US trade union federation, the AFL-CIO, have also set up a "working families economic forum" on the Thursday. The AFL-CIO says that "working families will tell the world's business leaders how the global economy and the race to the bottom for cheap labour affects their lives and communities."

It will be followed by a march and rally against corporate-led globalisation and sweatshops.

The protestors are determined to show their opposition to the rally of the rich and powerful.

planet."

Some 20,000 people from all over the world attended last year's Porto Alegre conference.

This success encouraged the organisers to set up a permanent organisation and encourage the development of social forums around the world. Already over 19,000 people have asked to register for this year's conference, on top of 3,507 organisations.

Thousands of students, anti-capitalists and trade unionists will demonstrate against the World Economic Forum meeting in New York itself.

This shows the continuing resurgence of the anti-capitalist movement that business and political leaders hoped had been halted after the 11 September attacks in the same city.

resistance & revolt

— Argentina —

Protests erupt again

HUGE demonstrations swept Argentina again as people swarmed onto the streets of Buenos Aires.

This followed the new government of President Duhalde tightening the restrictions imposed by the previous president, De la Rúa, on withdrawals from bank accounts.

Many public sector workers have not been paid and depend on their savings for survival. So too do workers who received some redundancy pay when they were sacked or sold their homes in order to eat.

One eyewitness said, "Unemployed workers and the lower middle classes were chanting in unison, 'Get rid of the lot of them.' 'Duhalde and De la Rúa—the same rubbish.' 'Take back the privatised enterprises.' 'The whole supreme court must resign'."

Respectable

The police waited until 3.30am, when the more respectable members of the middle classes had left for home, and then attacked the protest, leaving many injured.

The bitterness at the base of society is continuing to grow.

The unemployed have no money for food, public sector workers are not getting paid, wide layers of the middle class are completely destitute, and chemists' shops and hospitals are running out of medicines.

The new government has no solution to the crisis. Ministers are making



Thousands took to the streets against the new government

speeches denouncing the owners of the privatised companies and banks for wrecking the economy.

But they then make enormous concessions to these companies.

The freeze on bank accounts does not stop the rich taking their money out of the country and across the River Plate into Uruguay.

The government's radical language has been enough to buy the silence of trade union leaders.

This means that, just as the mass of the population are bitter against all the old pro-capitalist politicians, there is no-one offering a

national political alternative to their policies.

One minister has claimed that if the government's approach fails there will be civil war.

In several important localities people have responded by beginning to create their own Popular Assemblies, which raise both local and national demands:

"The Assembly for San Cristobal and Boedo demands: punish the police murderers who killed demonstrators last month; the release of political prisoners; abolition of VAT on basic goods; taxation of the

rich; and a popular constituent assembly."

"It also demands: work for all, with sharing of work between the employed and the unemployed without any reduction in wages; dissolution of the supreme court; nationalisation of the banks and the privatised firms, under control by the workers; no payment of foreign

debt; and a popular constituent assembly."

Such demands do begin to pose a real alternative to the crisis, not just for workers but for the impoverished middle classes as well.

But to be effective there needs to be a revolutionary party with a national presence campaigning for them.

— Colombia —

WORKERS TOOK to the streets in Colombia at the end of last month in support of the 800 workers who have been occupying in the city of Cali to prevent the privatisation of the Emcali public utilities corporation, which supplies water, electricity and telephones to the city.

Workers inside celebrated the one month anniversary of the occupation with a competition to determine which of the teams on each of the 16 floors of the building can sing the *Internationale*—and the anthem of the Sintra Emcali union—the best.

According to Mario Povi reporting the occupation of the Colombia solidarity movement "The streets around the building are patrolled by groups of workers.

Family and friends continue to gather to shout messages to loved ones inside, and loudspeakers continue to blast out messages of support and protest music.

"After the road blocks, the strong show of support by local communities, and the continued preparations for further actions on Monday, there are signs that the government may be yielding to public pressure, and reconsidering its position

on the crucial issue of funding for the PTAR, water treatment plant.

The workers in the occupation have received the death threats from the state backed paramilitaries.

In the last ten years alone over one and a half thousand trade union activists have been assassinated.

Since 1994 workers from the Sintraemcali Union have successfully fought off sixteen attempts to privatise Emcali—and the heavy price they have paid has been murders, assassination attempts and the forced exile of many workers.

The leader of Sintraemcali, Alexander Lopez, is just 33 but has already survived three assassination attempts,

From inside the occupation Lopez said that the blockage of all transport in and out of Cali shows the popular support that the occupation has in the city. Lopez pledged that "Sintraemcali is in a position to maintain the resistance. We will keep the occupation going until we achieve what we came in here for, that Emcali is not privatised."

As *Socialist Worker* went to press a general strike had been called throughout the city.

Comment

Colossus with feet of clay

SO, AMERICA appears triumphant in its campaign in Afghanistan. The Taliban government is no more and the hawks around Bush are casting their eyes around for the next targets for the "war against terrorism" — probably Somalia and Iraq.

As Charles Krauthammer in the *Washington Post* put it: "Power is its own reward. Victory changes everything, psychology above all. The psychology in the region is now one of fear and deep respect for American power. Now is the time to use it to deter, defeat or destroy the other regimes in the areas that are host to radical Islamic terrorism."

Even on the left there is deep pessimism about the strength of the US. This is especially true for those who considered the former communist regimes as some kind of counter-balance to US imperialism. Now it is possible to paint a picture of the US as a new form of imperialist power, one with no major rivals.

But even the briefest of historical views shows that the colossus has feet of clay.

First, and most fundamentally, the US simply is not the dominant economic power that it once was. Rather it has witnessed a gradual decline in its relative economic advantage.

At its high point just after the Second World War, nearly half the world's industrial production took place in the US.

In 1962 52 percent of the world's car production took place in America. Today that figure has fallen to less than 20 percent. After the Second World War the US was the world's biggest creditor, able to create the World Bank and the IMF and determine the policy of major states through its loans to their governments.

Today the US is the world's biggest debtor. It funds a massive balance of payments deficit through a risky strategy of attracting overseas investment into financial institutions.

These are vulnerable to shocks like that caused by the Argentinean government's devaluation.

One of the many things the collapse of Enron reveals is the reality of America's economic weakness.

Power

Secondly, the US may be dominant militarily, but this has only been tested against countries far poorer than itself. Is it any wonder that a super power with wealth amounting to about \$35,000 per head defeated an Afghanistan government, in a country whose wealth is about \$200 per head?

From day one the US had unchallenged air supremacy. This is a strength that has proved sufficient to allow US success in a number of countries without serious air defences, but does it really intimidate Europe, Russia or China into "respect for US power"?

Even the success that Bush's administration has obtained is not the straightforward one that it would like to convey. As in Kosovo, the US has relied on local forces for the ground assaults, and these troops are not simply pawns of US policy but have agendas of their own.

The US planned that the Northern Alliance would, at most, capture Mazar-e-Sharif and perhaps Herat. The Northern Alliance promised Washington it would not enter Kabul. The US Secretary of State Colin Powell had assured General Musharraf of Pakistan that the Northern Alliance would not take Kabul, that it would not set up a government there and that instead the United Nations envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi, would piece together a coalition government.

Musharraf had signed up to the "war on terrorism" and had given the Americans use of Pakistani airbases on the basis of that promise. But once Kabul fell the warlords quickly entered, uncontrolled by their US backers and upsetting their diplomacy.

As Syed Saleem Shahzad reported in *Asia Times Online* (14 November), "The quick retreats of the Taliban from Mazar-e-Sharif and the dramatic withdrawals from the capital Kabul and Jalalabad have exploded like a bombshell among Pakistani military decision makers at general headquarters in Rawalpindi and at the Foreign Office in Islamabad."

There is a strong parallel with Kosovo, where America's "good guys", the KLA, pursued their own agenda after the war against Serbia to the point of destabilising Macedonia, quite against the plans of the American foreign policy experts.

Finally, the conservative, imperialist, core of politicians around Bush is very much removed from the bulk of the American population.

Pools of poverty exist in the US that could hardly have been imagined in the post-war boom years. A fact strikingly brought home by Oxfam's decision to distribute aid to parts of the US. 42.5m people are now without health insurance, infant mortality is so high that the richest country in the world in only 30th on the ladder.

The gap between rich and poor that prepared the way for the appearance of a huge anti-globalisation movement in the US still exists and creates a bitterness and cynicism that will make it hard for Bush's advisors to maintain momentum for further warmongering.

— CONOR KOSTICK

— Palestine —

HOW MUCH more can the Palestinian people suffer? Israel has launched its harshest incursion since the Intifada began 16 months ago.

Every day another Palestinian is killed by Israeli terrorism.

This comes after Israel used US-supplied F16 jets to destroy the Palestinian police headquarters in the town of Tulikarm on the West Bank.

Israeli tanks and troops seized Tulikarm, imposing curfews, checkpoints and house to house searches, forcing people from their homes.

Israeli soldiers have blown up the headquarters of the popular Voice of Palestine radio sta-

tion on Saturday.

Sharon's army intensified its blockade of the West Bank Palestinian cities of Nablus, Qalqilya, Jenin and Ramallah.

All this is on top of Israel holding Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as a virtual prisoner in his compound in Ramallah since early December.

Israel is free to kill, with the full support of the US which continues to blame Arafat for the violence.

Oppression

But it is 54 years of Israeli oppression of the Palestinians that have created the hundreds of young men who are so desperate that they will carry out suicide attacks to hit back at Israel.

Since the Intifada began in September

2000 Israel has killed over 1,000 Palestinians and assassinated over 50 leading figures.

■ Ariel Sharon was responsible for the massacre of 2,000 Palestinians in Berit in 1982, was elected Israeli prime minister during the Intifada.

The key witness for the prosecution in a war crimes indictment against Sharon, the former Lebanese Phalangist militia leader who carried out the massacre—was killed less than two days after he agreed to give evidence against Sharon in a Belgian court.

The second most hated man in the middle east has been murdered much to the relief of the most hated man in the middle east—Ariel Sharon.

Eamonn McCann

Omagh, Camp X-Ray and civil liberties

"BRENDAN O'Connor has heard enough about the infringement of terrorists' rights".

O'Connor is a staff journalist at the *Sunday Independent*, where his personal weariness was deemed worthy of headlines. "The Civil Liberties industry", he moaned on January 27th, had taken sides with the Real IRA over the Omagh bombing and with Al Qaida in the Afghanistan war. The dead of Omagh and on September 11th had been "glossed over".

His anger had been brought on by concerns expressed about the conviction of Colm Murphy and the treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo. Murphy, as "a collaborator in mass murder", hadn't been deprived of any rights. Brendan O'Connor believed he was entitled to. And Camp X-Ray provided "reasonable treatment for suicidal murderous maniacs".

For O'Connor, it's OK that two garda detectives in the Murphy case had falsified interview notes and perjured themselves. What did that matter when they were merely trying to ensure the conviction of a man they "knew" was guilty.

One of the things the gardai "knew" was that Murphy's sister-in-law was involved with a senior member of the Real IRA at the time of the bombing. So that went into his statement. They then discovered that the woman named wasn't his sister-in-law at all: so Murphy really couldn't have said that. When they realised this, the gardai retrieved the interview notes and changed them.

Murphy was convicted because the Special Criminal Court accepted admissions he was said to have made the following day to two other gardai in the same station. Their notes quoted Murphy saying—when asked whether he had known that a man he'd loaned a mobile phone to would be using it in a bomb attack—"Yes, I knew it would be used for moving bombs. I knew these fellas were involved in moving bombs to Northern Ireland to bomb targets".

Murphy denied saying any such thing. But the court decided he had said it, rejecting a defence argument that this unlikely piece of self-incrimination might have been generated in the same way as the "admission" of his sister-in-law's involvement.

To many, this will have seemed perverse. But in an atmosphere in which *somebody* had to be put away for Omagh, to voice concern was to risk being dubbed a supporter of terrorism by people like Brendan O'Connor.

The same argument is used about the Guantanamo Bay prisoners. The position of the Bush administration is that it is entitled to hold these men for an unlimited period and to have them tried by US army officers in secret for crimes which will not be specified in public and for which they may be secretly executed. Meanwhile, they are being tortured.

We do not know who these people are, in what circumstances they were detained, what crimes they are said to have committed or what evidence, if any, exists to suggest that they are guilty of these crimes. The relatives of one of the men held, from Tipton in England, give an account of his life which makes it highly unlikely, to say the least, that he's the dedicated Al Qaida fighter the US says he is.

But to Brendan O'Connor all those held at camp X-Ray are "suicidal murderous maniacs". Otherwise, why would they be there?

Everyone, including their families, should shut up about their treatment—or face being denounced themselves as supporters of suicidal murderous maniacs.

This is to say that there is active support for the Bush administration as it unilaterally and with no reference to any other State or global institution claims the authority to deprive individuals from anywhere in the world selected by itself of all human rights, and even of their mortal lives.

Anyone who ever wonders how it is that ordinary sort of people sometimes go along with horrendously repressive measures against particular sections of the population should look no further than observations like O'Connor's on issues like Omagh and Guantanamo.

WORKERS UNITE TO FIGHT

'We stood backwards'

"MAGNIFICENT!" That was how one postal worker reacted to the huge demonstrations across the North after the murder of Danny McColgan in January.

Immediately following the killing postal workers in Derry and Belfast stopped work and refused to sort, deliver or collect mail. The walk out was immediate and spontaneous.

This spurred the union leaders to back the action.

And when the ICTU called a half-day strike for the Friday, tens of thousands of workers enthusiastically responded.

More than 20,000 workers left their work for a rally at Belfast's City Hall. Other rallies included up to 7,000 in Derry and an impressive 5,000 in Omagh.

Niall, a member of the CWU and a postal worker in Belfast told *Socialist Worker*, "Over a thousand postal workers took action after Danny was murdered.

"However segregated Catholics and Protestants are in working class housing areas, in the sorting offices and post depots they are together facing the same conditions and having to stand together. A murder like this affects us all.

"Obviously there's the odd sectarian, but this action strengthened our hand at work and isolates the bigots.

"As far as most of the workforce is concerned they won't tolerate sectarianism at work—there's too much at stake.

"The feeling among most of the workers on the job is one of pride. We stood up to the bastards and it worked.

"The stoppages and the rallies gave a huge feeling of empowerment and common purpose. People are saying we should keep this going."

A shop steward from the postal workers' union in Derry agrees:

"We mustn't let the momentum of the week following the death of Danny McColgan go. If we can get the unions together now and not have to wait for another tragedy then that can only be a good thing.

"It should not always be a death that brings us out on the streets. We can keep the momentum going through the camaraderie of all the unions. We obviously had a lot of hearts there last week and it gives me great hope for the future.

"Last week we were faced with two issues. One was the murder of our colleague and the other issue was about pay.

"Our workforce has always been brilliant when it comes to supporting union ballots but I hope the support we had from the public during our strike over the death threats will feed into support over the pay issue.

"The support we received from right across the board was phenomenal and to walk into Guildhall Square on Friday and be applauded by the thousands of people there was deeply moving.

"The fact that Danny McColgan was a member of a union as strong and united as the CWU made the difference when it comes to getting the death threats lifted.

"When we saw that Royal Mail bag and coat lying on the footpath next to his blood, that was it—we had to walk out and say this must never happen again.

"27 postal workers have been killed over the last 30 years, but there hasn't been much fear in Derry in the past.

"But the death threats to all Catholic workers left us with men who have been delivering post in Protestant areas for more than 25 years saying 'Can I go back there if these threats aren't lifted?' and you had to see their point, even though we know 99.9 per-

cent of the people in those areas don't support the sectarian thugs."

John, a postal worker from the Mallusk depot said, "We struck for three days and resolved not to go back to work until the threat was lifted on us. Within three hours of that meeting the UDA lifted the threat to all postal workers and teachers."

"In our communities we can feel isolated. But united like we were we can get somewhere. ICTU called these protests because the postal workers wouldn't have it any other way.

"Now we have another battle on our hands. We have to fight for the wages that Royal Mail took off us during the strike."

Postal workers are being balloted for national strike action, "We now

He cites the example of "Public-Private Partnerships", "Private Finance Initiatives", PPPs and PFI are an attempt to put the profit motive into our service. This union, here in Northern Ireland and across the UK, is pledged to any introduction in the fire service.

"I hope the other trade union

the same."

At Christmas workers at Transco across Belfast struck against attacks. "The fact is that we have been on the frontline of the sectarianism from the beginning", one worker told *Socialist Worker*. "For the last few months management has tried to cut back our injury pay that get when we are assaulted. That's what we walked out over Christmas."

'We have to fight for that the Royal Mail to

have the confidence now to fight the privatisation that will affect our livelihoods", said John.

Jim Barbour, senior union official with the Fire Brigades Union in Northern Ireland commented: "I am very pleased it was a trade union led demonstration on Friday otherwise there was a danger it would be hijacked by the politicians.

"Our members are in the firing line. Last year over 100 suffered individual physical assaults. On the Friday FBU members took action and only answered emergencies.

"It's important that Friday's demonstrations and rallies are not just a one-off.

"Of course sectarianism and violence is linked to social deprivation. Here the trade union movement has a big responsibility to take the lead."

Kathy, a NIPSA member, told *Socialist Worker* that the work stoppages and trade union rally show an alternative to sectarianism. "The rally was a complete success and it shows the potential of workers to unite.

"I live in the Ardoyne, the scene of recent sectarian rioting. There has been no real falling off in sectarian tensions since the ceasefires or Good Friday Agreement.

"Instead, there are many young people involved in rioting. There would have been 10 years of rioting. The politicians have completely failed to combat sectarianism or the social deprivation in the area.

"As far as I am concerned there has been no peace dividend for the people of Ardoyne and North Belfast in general. More local shops are closing, people are relying on an underfunded and under threat public transport system to get them to the cheaper shops in the city.

"I think the unions should have more rallies and be pro-active on issues such as poverty, privatisation and sectarianism."

Steve is another NIPSA member who works in the Child Support Agency in Belfast: "In my personal opinion the rally sent a strong message to the bigots that workers can overcome sectarian divisions and unite.

"In the CSA the response to NIPSA's call for a stoppage was overwhelming, not one union member returned to work on my floor (four members returned to work out of it). This pattern was repeated through our branch of 1,300 members and was in the civil service as a whole.

"As with unofficial walkouts in the past, in Harland and Wolff, the Mill Hospital and the DHSS, the strike postal workers isolated the bigots w-

What we think

THE POLITICIANS, press and television in Britain, Ireland and across the North say the main division in Northern Ireland is between Catholics and Protestants.

Sectarian divisions are so deeply rooted, we are told, that the prospects for working class unity are remote.

But last month's protests show how quickly united working class action across "the sectarian divide" can emerge.

These events prove that working class politics are a realistic and practical way forward rather than

politics based on communalism.

Sectarianism has always been linked to capitalism. It has been a tool in the hands of the bosses to divide and weaken working class opposition.

Weaken

As a result wage levels, housing conditions, unemployment, ill health and poverty have long been among the worst in Europe.

The key to fighting sectarianism therefore is to link it to fight against capitalism and a fight for working gains.

That requires socialist politics of the sort that enabled Larkin to build

a united class fight-back in the Dock Strike of 1907.

Socialists in the Revolutionary Workers Groups were the backbone that helped build the united struggle of the unemployed across both communities in Belfast in the 1930s.

That tradition needs to be rebuilt today to provide the alternative.

We need an organisation of socialists in the workplaces, within the unions, as well as the communities to fight for class politics and to help give shape to the aspirations and action of the thousands of workers who demonstrated against sectarianism last month.

If you would like to contact us to discuss this phone 07944 245374

TO FIGHT SECTARIANISM:

Hold up to the UDA - and won'

He cites the example of the "Public-Private Partnerships" and "Private Finance Initiatives": "The PPPs and PFI are an attempt to instill the profit motive into our services. This union, here in Northern Ireland and across the UK, is pledged to fight any introduction in the fire services."

"I hope the other trade unions do the same."
At Christmas workers at Translink across Belfast struck against the attacks. "The fact is that we have been on the frontline of the sectarian violence from the beginning", one bus worker told *Socialist Worker*. "For the last few months management have tried to cut back our injury pay that we get when we are assaulted. That's why we walked out over Christmas."

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"As with unofficial walkouts in the past, in Harland and Wolff, the Mater Hospital and the DHSS, the strike by postal workers isolated the bigots who

made the threats and forced them to be withdrawn."

"The failure of the ceasefires, the Good Friday Agreement and de-commissioning to end sectarianism and combat social deprivation and poverty has shown that politicians have failed and that they are more interested in scoring cheap political points than ending the conditions that sectarianism breeds in."

"We know that sectarianism weakens our ability to address real social and economic issues and that is why we need a strong rank and file trade unionism to combat these issues."

Eamonn McCann of Derry Trades Council and the SWP told a *Socialist Worker* meeting in Derry following the rally. "We had Protestants and

Catholics together. These rallies were all cross community. The talk after this was how do you keep it going? There are a number of commentators saying this event will not have any effect."

"One of the reasons why people feel that is because that has been the outcome right back to the 70s. There were peace rallies and it was hard to see what impression they had on politics in Northern Ireland."

"What was different about these rallies is they might never have taken place if the postal workers from the Communication Workers' Union had not been so quick to act in the light of the murder of their colleague, Daniel McCollgan."

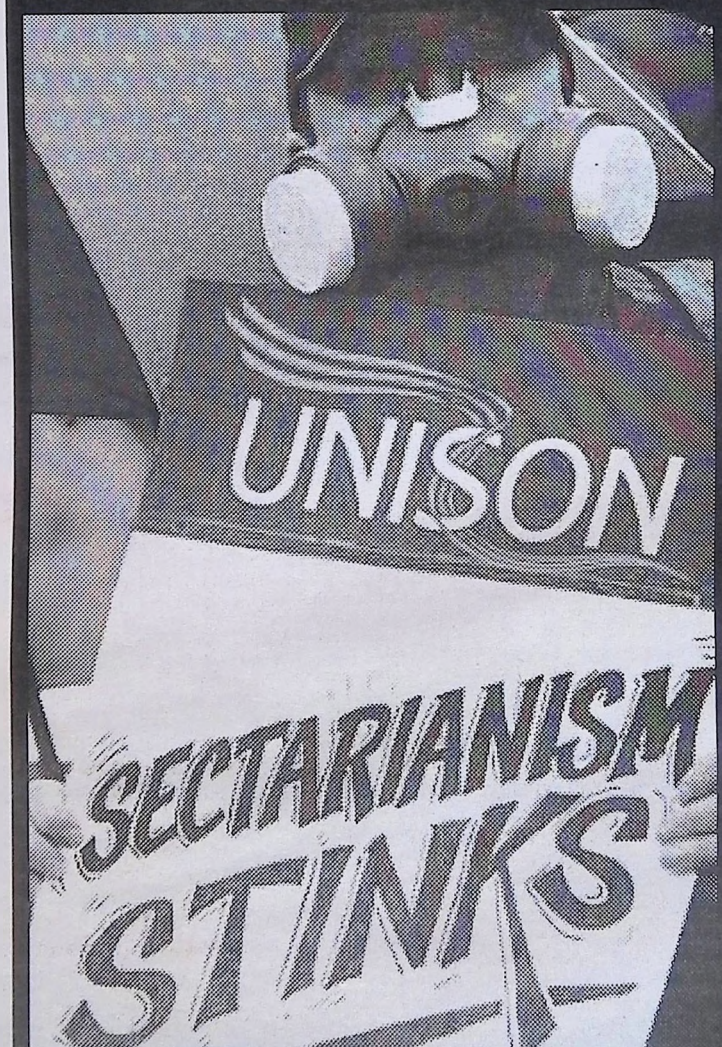
"The lines of communication were there. The basic organisation was there for a decision making function. That in turn energised the wider union movement. That is where rallies come from."

"Catholics and Protestants only ever came together when the issues affect them at working class level. When we are fighting on working class issues, we are no longer fighting for one community or the other community. We leave behind our community identities and instead embrace our identities as part of the working class."

"Republicans and others often accuse the trade union movement of being insufficiently militant in relation to sectarianism and to Northern politics."

"I say the problem is that the unions have been insufficiently militant in relation to the bread and butter issues, pay, conditions and the fight against privatisation."

"If the unions say with one voice, 'privatise one of our jobs and we are out of here', then the solidarity coming from that kind of militancy would flow over to the struggle against sectarianism."



Thousands of Workers across Northern Ireland took to the streets to oppose the sectarianism of the UDA. 30,000 marched in Belfast (Top and above), 6,000 in Derry, 5,000 in Omagh, 2,000 in Newry, 1,000 in Strabane and Enniskillen.

BLOODY SUNDAY

Right wing ignore facts

SUNDAY INDO commentators spent much of January complaining about the Bloody Sunday films and the cost of the Saville Tribunal of Inquiry into the events of 30th January 1972.

These ill-informed pundits point to the fact that other atrocities have seen as many, or more, innocent people cut down, and just as cruelly.

There was no justification for those killings either. So why isn't there a film, much less two films, about the IRA's Remembrance Day bomb in 1987, which left 11 dead?

And why are the Bloody Sunday soldiers being pursued when paramilitaries have an effective amnesty?

Of course, the paras don't need an amnesty. They've never been classified as having done wrong. Bloody Sunday was not the work of people labelled as terrorists. It happened in broad daylight in a built-up area crowded with people. Hundreds watched as men representing the British State went on a killing spree.

Then other representatives of the same state said the dead were all gunmen and bombers.

The long campaign for a new Inquiry to repudiate the finding of the Widgery Tribunal in 1972 did not arise from a need to know the truth, but from the fact that, knowing the truth, the families of the dead needed to have it acknowledged.

Saville's Inquiry has already achieved much: the setting up of the Inquiry is itself a triumph for the relatives of the dead and for the Bloody Sunday campaign.

In appointing Saville, the British government was accepting that the Widgery Tribunal could be repudiated. And documents obtained and released by the Inquiry tell us a lot about the political and military background to the massacre and the extent to which responsibility for it reaches to the very top.

In particular, these documents show the fury of Army

commanders and politicians right up to Downing Street about the "no-go area" area.

This was the area known as "Free Derry" which had fought the police and army on the barricades and established that it was a "no-go area" for state forces.

At Downing Street in December 1971, Tory Prime Minister Heath told his NI Cabinet Committee that "As to Londonderry, a military operation to re-impose law and order would...be a major operation necessarily involving numerous civilian casualties".

When Jimmy McGovern's superior film 'Sunday' put Heath on screen urging Lord Widgery to "Remember...we are fighting in Northern Ireland not just a military war but a propaganda war", he was quoting directly from one of the papers released by the Saville Inquiry.

Grovelling

They also tell us a lot about the concerns of the Irish ruling class and especially Fianna Fail in the immediate aftermath of the deaths. We have learnt about Jack Lynch's grovelling phone call with Heath on the night that Heath's henchmen had killed 13 innocent Derry men. Anyone reading the transcript of that call would think it was the Irish army that had done the shooting. Lynch apologised so often for disturbing Heath's evening.

The Channel 4 film showed the massive demonstrations that convulsed the South after Bloody Sunday, including the burning down of the British Embassy.

It mentioned the 'three days of national mourning'. Lynch announced these only after the Dublin and other Trades Councils had called for a three-day general strike.

The call for the general strike was so popular that the ITGWU (now SIPTU) and other trade unions had to back it.

Fianna Fail, fearing such a show of working class power, called for everything already closed by the strike to close as part of the 'days of national mourning'.

RESISTANCE
Ireland's socialist magazine

- Resistance in Palestine
- The Health strategy
- Abortion Referendum
- Iraq
- The Irish economy
- The anti war movement

RESISTANCE
STOP THIS

Ten years after the X-case...



by **SINEAD KENNEDY**

National Secretary, Abortion Reform

Let's fight for the right to choose

FEBRUARY 16 will be tenth anniversary of the X case where a 14-year-old pregnant girl, who had been raped and was suicidal, was dragged through the courts in an attempt to prevent her from travelling to Britain to obtain an abortion.

This provoked a huge outcry as day after day thousands of people took to the streets demanding that she should be allowed have an abortion.

The Supreme Court not only overturned the injunction preventing her from leaving Ireland, they also ruled that Ms X could have an abortion in Ireland because the continuance of her pregnancy posed a "real and substantial risk" to her life from suicide.

The X case proved to be a real turning point in Irish society and many people came to rethink their position on abortion.

That same year the government held a referendum which decided in favour of the right to travel abroad for an abortion and the right to information on abortion.

Most importantly Fianna Fail and the anti-abortion right's attempt to restrict suicide as grounds for availing of an abortion in Ireland was rejected.

In other words people voted for limited legal abortion in Ireland where the woman was suicidal.

The Fianna Fail government at the time promised to legislate in accordance with the Supreme Court ruling, but they did nothing.

Ten years on, and three successive governments later, including the Rainbow Coalition in which Labour held the balance of power, and nothing has happened because of sheer political cowardice.

It has been easier for politicians to continue playing politics with women's lives.

Despite the fact people have already voted on this issue, the Fianna Fail/PPD coalition government are holding another referendum to again attempt to overturn the X case and introduce even more draconian legislation on abortion.

Once again government parties have bowed to pressure from the Catholic right.

The PDs have even had to do a complete U-turn on the issue in order to support the referendum, as both Mary Harney and Liz O'Donnell said in 1992 that they supported abortion if continuing a pregnancy would result in the suicide of the woman.

The essence of the government's proposal is that women who need to terminate their pregnancy because they are suicidal will be denied the right to do so in Ireland, thereby overturning the X case.

The net effect of this legislation will be to dilute the right to life of the pregnant woman and make it less than equal with that of the foetus.

Subjected

A new criminal offence will be introduced, where women who attempt to abort themselves and/or anyone who helps or advises them will face up to twelve years imprisonment.

This means that Ireland could possibly see cases similar to Portugal where 19 women were recently subjugated to a show trial for the 'crime' of having abortions.

Nothing in this bill guarantees the legality of the Morning After Pill (MUP) or the IUD methods of contraception and it is possible that if this bill goes ahead anti-abortion groups could seek further legislation to ban the MUP.

Indeed the newly launched anti-abortion group 'Ireland for Life' have indicated that this is their next objective.

Most worryingly of all this bill will overturn the 1997 C case, where a young suicidal pregnant girl who wished to terminate her pregnancy was in the care of the health board.

The board needed the court's permission to take her out of the

country for an abortion.

The High Court applied the X case decision and ruled that because—and only because—she was suicidal, the health board was entitled to take her to Britain for an abortion.

Past experience shows that further C cases will arise. There have already been four similar cases in the North since 1993.

Women who are seeking asylum in Ireland need state permission to leave the country and women with disabilities cannot travel unaided, as was the A case in the North.

If this bill is passed these women could be forced to continue with their pregnancy against their will.

But abortion is a reality in Ireland and no matter how many referendums the government and the anti-abortionists hold, that fact will remain unchanged.

The Abortion debate in Ireland does tend to focus on extreme cases like X or C.

The truth is that women choose abortions for all sorts of different reasons.

Some have grown-up children and don't want to start all over again, some feel they are too old, some too young, and many because they don't want a child at this point in their lives.

The question is what is more important? A woman's right to make decisions about her own life, her own body, her future? Or should anti-abortion groups like the so called 'Pro-Life Campaign' or Mother and Child Campaign (aka 'Youth defence') be allowed to force women to sacrifice her future her hopes and even their lives so that a foetus, that is invisible to the naked eye, can be brought to full term.

Fianna Fail and the PPD's are content to allow 19 women to travel to Britain every day for an abortion and they are at pains to point out that this referendum will not restrict that right.

But for thousands of Irish women every year travelling to

Britain is simply not an option. Why? They cannot afford it.

They cannot get together in a relatively short period of time the €600 or €700 it takes to go to Britain. Thousands of others have to borrow from credit unions, friends and family the money needed.

Borrow

For some the only option is the callous money lender, while other are so desperate they resort to prostitution.

It's a different story for middle class women who know their way around airports and big cities, no one is surprised to hear that they are going to London for the weekend.

The money may be an inconvenience but it will have little material impact on their lives.

Since the 1983 amendment over 110,000 women have travelled to Britain for abortions. The rate is rising every year and last year over 7,000 women were forced to go to Britain.

The numbers are probably even

higher since some women do not give their Irish address, either for fear of being found out at home or because they are not sure of their legal situation.

These women come from every age group, from 12 to 55, and from every walk of life, workers, students and unemployed.

Almost half already have at least one child, and women in the 22-30 year age group are as likely to have an abortion as her English counterpart.

In fact more Irish women have abortions per head of population than Dutch or Danish women where abortion is almost available on demand.

Bertie Ahern's legislation denies women the chance to make an informed rational decision about their own lives.

Ahern saying that allowing suicidal women their right to medical treatment and care in their own country is opening the door to "social abortion" is saying that women are not to be trusted, that they will lie and collude with doctors and psychiatrists.

This presumption is offensive to women and all sufferers from mental illness which claims up to 500 lives every year.

An identical referendum was defeated in 1992 and limited abortion rights were won when women took to the streets and fought. Lets do it again.

What we think

SOCIALISTS support the right to choose because we want greater freedom for people to control their lives. The right to choose means a right to both have an abortion—and a genuine right to have a child.

In Ireland the right of a woman to choose to have a child is greatly restricted by the lack of affordable childcare facilities, adequate paid maternity leave, decent housing and social welfare.

State-funded childcare facilities are provided only for children who are known to be at risk of physical or sexual abuse. What little childcare is available is so expensive it is beyond the means of most low paid workers.

Richer women can sidestep all these issues. In the same way as money allows them the choice of having an abortion, so money allows them to have a child on their own terms.

It is in the fight for a better world, where no mother has to watch her child starving to death or dying of measles, that real concern for children is expressed.

In general, those who support the right of women to contraception and abortion are more likely than 'pro-lifers' to be involved in that fight. The reason is simple. We are concerned, not with theological arguments about potential human beings, but with the rights and dignity of actual living human beings.

In the X case, mass action, not quiet lobbying or polite petitioning, brought the first major defeat for the bishops and the bigots since the foundation of the Southern state.

And it is mass action that is needed now to advance women's rights.

A Socialist Workers Party pamphlet

ABORTION

Why Irish women must have the right to choose

by Goretta Horgan
€2.50
(£1.50 stg)
from SWP
PO Box 1648
Dublin 8

in my
view

Stagnant Waters run shallow

JOHN WATERS regularly devotes his *Irish Times* column to polemics against "the horrors of feminised education" and so forth.

He is particularly passionate about the mainstream media's 'unjust' presentation of the issue of domestic violence. Waters returns to this theme again and again. When he does, he usually quotes the British Home Office survey 191 (1999).

Of this, he claims the "core finding was that 4.2 percent of women and 4.2 percent of men had been assaulted by a current or former partner in the previous year" and argues that this shows that "domestic violence is roughly a 50-50 phenomenon".

The study he refers to did find that the same proportion of women and men (4.2%) reported a physical assault by a current or former partner in the previous year. However, the study also found that women were TWICE as likely as men to have been injured by a partner in the last year and THREE times as likely to have suffered frightening threats. They were also more likely to have been assaulted three or more times. Not only are women more likely to be injured in assaults, they are also far more likely to be "living in fear of their partners". These findings, Waters conveniently ignores.

Violent

The family can be a very violent place and it is inevitable that some men also suffer. Socialists have long argued that women and children are most at risk of domestic violence, because they are more likely to be economically dependent. The Home Office study confirmed this, finding women who worked outside the home at lower risk than those who did not.

For men, those working part-time and those with a long-standing illness or disability were at greatest risk. Those living in families with financial difficulties, whatever their age or sex, are most likely to suffer violence.

As for the courts' bias against men when it comes to custody cases—what else does he expect? The courts have always been anti-working class and judges are notorious for being out of touch with the way ordinary people live their lives. Most judges have wives, nannies and other female servants to look after their children—it is simply beyond their experience that fathers might actually be ABLE to share the parenting of a child. The prejudices of the courts is legendary—as Bob Dylan sang "steal a little and they throw you in jail, steal a lot and they make you king".

And what about the boys' underachievement in relation to education? Each year's Leaving Cert., GCSEs and A level results confirm that these days boys don't do as well as girls. For Waters, the reasons for this are clear: the feminists have taken over the education system and poisoned it for boys.

The "femi-nazis" run the world and want to put boys down. He ignores inconvenient facts like the most recent CSO figures showing that female industrial workers in the Republic earned £5.90 an hour in 1998, compared to male industrial workers who earned £8.09.

So why is the education system failing boys? Recent research from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) for the Northern Ireland Curriculum Council indicates that the problem is the continuing oppression of women, not that women have 'gone too far'. The NFER report identifies two main factors affecting boys' education: a lack of male role models and a curriculum that bores them. It's not that the curriculum has been 'feminised'—girls are as bored as the boys. However, the response of each to a crappy curriculum is different.

Boys are more likely to 'disengage' from the education system—to stop listening in class and stop studying at home. Girls are 'more compliant'. They continue to listen in class and keep studying, even though they, too, recognise that a lot of what they are learning is useless.

Why is this? Even today, girls are socialised to be 'dutiful' and passive—'more compliant'.

As for the lack of male role models, why has teaching become an overwhelmingly female profession when it used to be dominated by men?

It was mainly male when teaching was a high status, well-paid job. Now that it's low status and relatively low paid, it's hard to attract men to teaching.

So, if Waters really does want to see a society more equal for ALL, he must first face up to the truth: that the problem is NOT that women have gone 'too far', rather that women are still oppressed.

by GORETTI HORGAN

Film

Cover-up of US massacre

by PAUL
McCARTHY

JUST AS "the Vietnam Syndrome" following the defeat of the US in that war made it difficult for American presidents to be gung-ho about invading small countries, the reality of what the military had done there made it difficult to make films that glorified it.

Then came *Rambo*, which inspired Reagan to remark, "Next time we have a hostage situation, I know what to do".

Guilty

Rescuing downed pilots behind enemy lines was something you could make a movie about and not feel too guilty—especially as military command did actually leave some of their soldiers to die in jungles and deserts rather than risk defeat.

But *Rambo* was impossible to take seriously. The last few years have seen a spate of war movies by major directors. These movies have two things in common.

Firstly, they're all about rescuing downed fighter pilots, and secondly they're all awful.

In the past month, we have been offered two of the worst pieces of US propaganda, both of which blatantly ignore and twist history—*Behind Enemy Lines* (a rather unimaginative title) based on the story of an American plane shot down in Bosnia and *Black Hawk Down*, the story of the American invasion of Somalia in 1993.

Neither film gives any explanation of the reasons for the conflict being portrayed. The only viewpoint that matters is that of the US.

In *Behind Enemy Lines*, all Serbs are murderers with shaved heads and dark rat-like eyes; Europeans are treacherous (especially the French) and would sacrifice the downed pilot to keep their own strategy alive.

However reactionary *Behind Enemy Lines* might be, nothing could prepare you for the shameful, nauseating violence of *Black Hawk Down*.

When the focus of American intervention in Somalia turned from the warlords to making general war on the population, thousands of Somalis staged a revolt that was put down unceremoniously by helicopter gunships and heavily armed marines.

The Somali dead, numbered in the hundreds, are portrayed as less than human.

They have no dialogue, no character, no mission.

Their struggle is shown to be meaningless and savage.

The only time they are even allowed to do anything other than fight is when they pause for prayer, a blatant attempt to associate Islam with nihilistic political violence.

There is no attempt to understand the position of the Somalis who have suffered repeated brutality at the hands of colonial powers and Cold War rivals.

The US troops refer to them as "Skinnies"—because they're all starving!

Defenders of *Black Hawk Down* say that its visual onslaught gives an accurate reflection of warfare and would actually cause the viewer to reflect on the horror of battle. In fact it does neither.

Racist

This film echoes the racist propaganda of an earlier (British) imperialist movie, *Zulu Dawn*, in which Africans fighting the Empire were equally portrayed as mindless savages.

The racism, degrading violence and utter contempt for human life shown by *Black Hawk Down* completely undermine any comment it might make.

This is not a war movie, it's pornography.



Making imperialism safe for Hollywood

Why Somalis hit back

BLACK HAWK Down does not even attempt to explain why the vast majority of Somalis hated the US forces by October 1993.

When the troops arrived they were welcomed and greeted as friends come to help.

Within months their behaviour had alienated people who had cheered them.

Once the US forces began clashing with Somalis, the US helicopters began what they called "rotor washing"—hovering above houses and markets so that the downdraft blew walls apart and tore off roofs.

Very quickly the US was carrying out mass murder.

The most significant massacre was on 12 July 1993, known as Bloody Monday by the Somalis. On that day many Somali elders had gathered to talk peace.

They represented some of the most respected elements of Somali society.

As they began their discussions, US attack helicopters unleashed missiles at the building where they were meeting.

The 40-pound missiles were designed to destroy tanks or demolish military bunkers.

After firing missiles, the helicopters hovered above, pouring 20mm anti-vehicle cannon rounds at the building.

Injured

At least 54 people died, and hundreds were seriously injured.

Hussein Mohamed Abdi "Sanjeeh" was at the meeting. His arm was shredded off by cannon fire.

He recalled, "American troops stormed in and began finishing off the survivors."

They were using their pistols—they shot them in the head.

"The Americans always talk about human rights and democracy, so this really surprised me. They lied. They said they came to Somalia to bring relief."

"But they changed it to a war which had never been seen before. It was a war crime. I was very glad I was still alive, to witness. I wanted a chance to go to a war crimes tribunal or The Hague."

"But if there is no court

then I will take revenge some other way. I will pass on to my children that the Americans have done this."

Bloody Monday was a key moment. After that it was open war. Yet it is not even mentioned in the film.

Even the book the film is based on has several pages describing what happened.

It tells how "the air was thick with dark smoke and smelled of powder, blood and burned flesh".

On 9 September 1993 US and Pakistani troops were demolishing Somali barricades when they came under attack.

Crowds of women and children had gathered to watch and see what was happening around the barricades.

US Cobra helicopters were sent in to attack the crowds with their TOW guided missiles and devastating 20mm cannons.

The road was left strewn with over 100 mangled bodies—men, women and children.

US Major Dave Stockwell first said the loss of life was "regrettable".

Then he was ordered by superiors to change the story and said that the

women and children had all been "combatants" by virtue of "surrounding UN vehicles".

This horrendous massacre hardened the desire of people to hit back at the US.

The hatred of the US forces was not confined to a few "warlords" or their gunmen.

After the killings by the Rangers on 3 and 4 October 17,000 people volunteered to attack the US camp.

The film reflects the view of right wingers in the US that the Ranger and Delta forces did not have enough firepower to back them up.

The Defence Secretary, Les Aspin, had turned down a request for tanks to support the force and then a further demand for AC-130 aerial gunships. Aspin was made the scapegoat for the raid's failure.

The film does not include a famous quote from General Garrison, who led the Delta and Ranger Task Force. He told a Senate investigatory committee, "If we had put one more ounce of lead on south Mogadishu on the night of 3 and 4 October, I believe it would have sunk."



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.

ATGWU ELECTIONS:

'It's a fight for the soul of the union'

RANK AND file trade unionists are organising in the ATGWU to defeat the right wing offensive of Bill Morris.

Elections in the Ireland Region for two places on the General Executive Council are continuing.

The election is for lay members of the union and a number of officials are seeking to have Jimmy Kelly defeated.

Witch-hunt

One ATGWU activist told *Socialist Worker*, "Jimmy Kelly has made a point of standing against the witch-hunt against Mick O'Reilly and Eugene McLone who have been put on trial by Bill Morris."

"Kelly has been actively campaigning around the members and his leaflets arguing for fighting rank and file trade union principles have been getting a good response."

Billy Stoer is running against Jimmy and he is seen as a stooge for the right wing officials and Bill Morris's bureaucrats.

Union activist Ritchie Brown, who works in FLS Aerospace at Dublin airport is a member of his branch committee and Dublin District Committee.

He told *Socialist Worker*,



Jimmy Kelly and Mick O'Reilly

"Jimmy Kelly is explicitly campaigning for the reinstatement of Mick O'Reilly and Eugene McLone and for the lay members of the union to take democratic control.

"As Jimmy Kelly says, this is a fight for the heart and soul of the union."

A Belfast union activist in Citybus told *Socialist Worker*, "We're getting the message out that we need to get the union to step up the fight against creeping privatisation of our services. And that strikes as chord with members."

Jimmy Kelly is chief shop steward at Waterford Crystal and he is calling also for support also for Norman Kearns from Belfast.

Two days of meetings and forums on the politics of revolution

Students & REVOLUTION



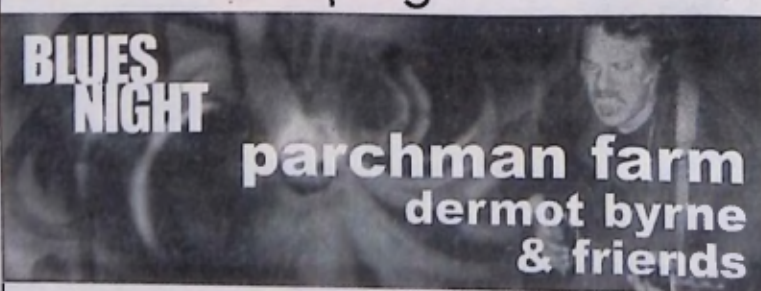
Chris Harman (Author of The Economics of the Madhouse), Lindsey German (Author of Sex, Class and Socialism), Kieran Allen (Sociology Lecturer UCD)

Goldsmith Hall, Trinity College Dublin, Pearse Street

Friday Feb 22nd & Saturday Feb 23rd

Seattle...Genoa...Mexico...South Korea... Argentina...

defense campaign fundraiser



parchman farm dermot byrne & friends

Sunday 3rd February, Mother Redcaps bar (off Thomas St) doors open 8pm 10euro / 5euro

NATIONAL ANTI WAR ACTIVIST MEETING

OVER 60 delegates from local anti war groups attended a national activists meeting of the Irish anti war movement in Dublin in January.

There were delegates from Dublin, Monaghan and Drogheda among other places.

The meeting decided to maintain the anti war network as a permanent movement to organise opposition to future wars in Bush's unending "war against terrorism".

The next anti war demonstration has been called for Saturday February 2nd at 3pm at the US Embassy, Ballsbridge, Dublin.

This protest is in solidarity with the anti war protest taking place against the World Economic Forum conference in New York on the same day.

The WEF conference will discuss how to expand the war on terrorism and how it can help to further the process of globalisation and domination by US multinationals.

Delegates also voted to launch a monthly anti war newsletter and organise a tour of public meetings in most cities on "Afghanistan: What victory?"

It was also agreed to have a national anti war teach-in in early March to more fully debate the issues raised by the war.

Abortion referendum



VOTE NO

8pm Wednesday 6th February

Wynns Hotel, Abbey Street

Alliance for a NO vote
For information phone 087 261 2634

SWP activist meetings

- ATHLONE: Contact 01-872 2682 for details
- BRAY: Meets every Thursday at the Mayfair Hotel at 8.00pm
- BELFAST CENTRAL: Meets Tuesdays at 8pm in White's Tavern
- BELFAST SOUTH: Meets 7pm Tuesdays in Peter Froggatt Centre, Queen's
- BELFAST WEST: Meets for details 07771
- BELFAST QUEENS UNIVERSITY: Wednesdays 4pm, Peter Froggatt Centre
- CLONAKILTY: Phone (01) 8722682 for details
- CORK: Meets Tuesdays at 8pm in Telecom Eireann Club, MacCurtain St
- DERRY: Wednesdays at 8pm in Foyle Friend Centre, 32 Great James St.
- DROGHEDA: Meets Wednesdays 8:00pm Contact Kevin at 041 [redacted] for details
- DUNDALK: Meets Wednesdays 8pm phone 01-8722682 for details
- DUN LAOGHAIRE: Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the Christian Institute
- DUBLIN ARTANE / FAIRVIEW: Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane / Beaumont Recreational Centre (opp. Artane Castle)
- DUBLIN BALLYFERMOT: Meets Tues 8:30pm in Ruby Finigans Pub
- DUBLIN CABRA: Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Aughrim St Parish Hall, 13 Prussia St
- DUBLIN CENTRAL: Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways Pub,

- LYMUN: Phone Kevin on 08 [redacted] or details
- DUBLIN RATHMINES: Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm downstairs J O'Connell's (Pub) Sth. Richmond Street Dublin 2.
- DUBLIN RIALTO: Meets every Wednesday at 8:30pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR
- DUBLIN SOUTH CITY: Meets at 8.30pm every Tuesday upstairs Bowes (pub) Fleet Street Dublin 2
- DUBLIN TALLAGHT: Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Jobstown Community Centre
- DUBLIN DCU: Meets 2 pm Thursdays in CGO2
- DUBLIN TCD: Meets Wednesdays at 1pm contact 087- [redacted] for details
- DUBLIN UCD: Meets Wednesdays 1pm contact 087 [redacted] for details
- ENNISKILLEN: Phone 01 - 872 2682 for details
- GALWAY: Meets every Wednesday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square (beside Cuba) 8.30pm
- LIMERICK: Phone 01 - 872 2682 for details
- LEIXLIP / MAYNOOTH: contact 086-4 [redacted] for details
- SLIGO: Phone 087 [redacted] for details
- TRALEE: Phone 087 [redacted] for details
- WATERFORD: Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

14 arrested at Burlington PPP conference



OVER 3,500 DEAD IN AFGHANISTAN ... **STOP WAR**

SPECIAL TO: Mary Van Dijkhout - US Citizens for Alternatives to War; Patrick McLennan MP - Green Party; Richard Boyd Barrett - Socialist Workers Party; Dany Fennegan - Goddess Resistance.

US EMBASSY 3pm SATURDAY FEB 2nd

Irish Anti-War Movement
087 268230 www.antiwar.org.uk
& Globalise Resistance

NI Postal workers

Vote on pay fight

SOME 12,000 postal workers in Northern Ireland were set to ballot for a UK-wide strike over pay at the end of January.

Across the UK some 150,000 postal workers are involved in the pay fight.

They are members of the Communication Workers Union fighting management's attempt to hold down pay and to squeeze even more work out of fewer people.

One Belfast union activist told *Socialist Worker*. "The union has a claim in for 5 percent for workers in Service Deliveries. At the

Jobs threat

THE Sunday Times reported last month that up to half of the UK's 17,500 post offices could close.

The paper says that the company has already submitted a plan to ministers recommending the immediate closure of 1,000 post offices and another 7,000 over the next five years.

The same plan also suggests that if Consignia (the Post Office) is to survive it must get rid of one in five of the group's 225,000 workers.

That would mean 45,000 jobs to go, a far higher figure than the threatened 30,000, which nearly sparked a strike before Christmas.

moment our pay is abysmal at £242 for a 40 hour week.

"Management has offered just 2 percent. That means just £5 a week.

"The CWU has declared its 'aspiration' for £300 per week by October 2003. But Consignia (the new name for the Post Office) is demanding pay increases be linked to productivity deals, bonus schemes and little or nothing on the basic pay.

"We will need a 20 percent increase to reach our goal but a good fight for 5 percent could be a start in this direction.

"And behind the scenes we are facing creeping privatisation as services are hived off. It's time we stopped the rot.

"Postal workers are incensed that management have docked them for two of the days when they stopped work over the UDA murder of Danny McColgan and ongoing death threats.

"I think there will be a resounding vote for action here in Northern Ireland," a postal worker told *Socialist Worker*. "I think the union leadership might begin by calling a rolling strike or only token action. Any action needs to be enthusiastically supported but for my money we need all out action from the word go.

"Shop stewards and union activists need to get the word out and mobilise the biggest vote for industrial action to show the union leaders we mean business."

The briefing from the CWU London Divisional Committee is called "66 Good Reasons To Vote Yes

For Industrial Action Over Pay". It points out that "Royal Mail's pay offer is an insult, which has more strings than a puppet show."

As well as boosting the yes vote, activists need to build their own networks and rank and file organisation to stop any sell-out by the union leaders.

★ ALLAN LEIGHTON, former chief executive of Asda supermarkets, has been named the interim chairman of Consignia.

Leighton is already a member of the Consignia board but will head the company until a permanent appointment is made. He will find time to "streamline" the company while also collecting his salary as chairman of Wilson Connolly, the house builders, and last minute.com, an internet retailer.

Leighton also chairs the BHS high street chain and has directorships or other positions with Scottish Power (recently involved in a bitter dispute with its workers), Sky, Dyson and Leeds United Football Club. His hobbies include morris dancing. Leighton's total package of salaries, shares and other benefits is worth well over £1 million a year. Just the man to explain why postal workers deserve only £250 a week!

Aer Lingus

Ballot for strike action

AER LINGUS pilots are balloting for strike action as part of their fight against compulsory redundancies.

The company wants to remove 80 pilots — 20 captains and 60 co-pilots.

Ten pilots have already been served with 30-day compulsory redundancy notices.

In a clear case of intimidation one pilot who has already received her redundancy notice, Jill McDonald, was taken off the roster after a letter she wrote was published in the *Irish Times*. She wrote "Are his col-

leagues owed more than 1,600 weeks of leave? Are they the lowest paid in their industry?"

"Did they forfeit a 21 percent pay increase on the condition that there were no involuntary redundancies?"

"Did they establish a binding agreement with their company which states that several conditions must be met before involuntary redundancies are sought, only to be broken by the company?"

She added that, "You can only give so much; then comes the time to take a stand."

Health Service

Careworkers fight for parity

PROFESSIONAL care workers with the intellectually disabled were still in dispute as Socialist Worker went to press.

The Health Service Employers Agency (HSEA) refused to pay these carers the same deal agreed with workers in the children's homes.

One care worker told *Socialist Worker*, "We went on strike for three days after we were excluded from a pay deal agreed although we are doing the exact same work.

"If the HSEA get away with this we will be up to €172 a week worse off than

other carers.

"The employers want us to take part in a public sector benchmarking process, but we are entitled to the same deal as the children's carers with no strings attached."

Outcome

"I am a member of IMPACT and a lot of us were unhappy about being told to return to work after three days a wait the outcome of the Labour Court.

"Union officials said that managers had admitted we had a 'historical link' with other carers, but the employers have not conceded our claim.

"The union should have called out day service staff

too! We are very keen to fight on if we don't get what we want from the Labour Court."

A member of SIPTU told *Socialist Worker*, "I get less than £300 a week for stressful work and unsocial hours.

"We have huge responsibilities and they keep putting more on us.

"As well as that we are constantly being asked to take on more duties like filling out reports, but they don't want to pay us.

"It's basically very unfair. We do the same work so we should get the same money. They just refuse to pay us right.

"I personally think we should have come out with the IMPACT workers."

Health crisis

OVER 1,500 protesters held a rally outside the Monaghan General Hospital to protest against an official visit from the as the Minister for Health, Micheal Martin.

They are fighting for the retention and upgrading of services at the hospital.

Last year maternity services at the hospital were suspended.

The hospital has ended post-mortem services and is

referring gynaecology patients to other hospitals in the region.

Local people and workers in the hospital are fearful the hospital may close.

★ Nurses at Mullingar hospital have begun a work-to-rule over working conditions and the failure of the Midland Regional Health Board to provide a firm date for opening the hospital's new wing.

While the new wing will accommodate almost 100 extra beds, it won't be opened for another three years.

Ballymun jobs protest

UNEMPLOYED building workers in Ballymun have organised a series of protests demanding work on the massive rebuilding work in the estate.

They protested outside the site for the new civic offices and later organised a march to the managers of the scheme.

The workers called a meeting in new Axis Centre which drew more than 70 people to question senior managers of the scheme.

Dublin Corporation set up Ballymun Regeneration Ltd (BRL) to organise the ten year rebuilding of the flats complex which is home to 20,000 people.

In the glossy material produced by BRL, local people were promised "quality jobs" and "quality training" and that local labour would be a priority in the unemployment black-spot.

Des O'Malley who works at the local Jobcentre told the meeting "My experience with the contractors is abysmal. I took down 200 local

CVs at one time but got no response."

A recent survey indicated only one local tradesman working on the sites which employ more than 800 workers.

As Barney Hartnett of the community paper the *Ballymun Echo* pointed out, the real problem is off the books sub-contractors. "There's big bucks involved here—there needs to be direct labour."

Contractors

Senior BRL managers Ciaran Murray and Mick McDonagh were forced to admit that only 233 of the more than 800 workers were directly employed by the contractors.

One building worker pointed out that most of those employed by sub-contractors would have no insurance, no holiday pay and no pension scheme: "One sub-contractor was offering €192 a week to labourers! If anyone goes to a site and looks for proper PAYE conditions he is refused a start."

It became apparent

that there was no effective monitoring of these sub-contractors. BRL have been covering up this scandal for months but local action has forced it into the open.

As local activist Kevin Wingfield pointed out, "BRL tried to get out of their responsibilities for safety on and around the sites.

"It took a tragic death and direct action by local people to get something done. This

forced the Health and Safety Authority to close down the sites for months to get proper safety conditions—an action that BRL tried to block in the courts.

"Grass-roots action by building workers has forced the scandal of local jobs into the open. We need to keep it up."

At the end of the meeting people signed up to help out in the continuing fight for decent local jobs.

★ SOME 3,000 clerical staff in the civil service stand to win back-payments worth up to €40 million as the result of an equal-pay case.

The award, made by the Labour Court, stems from a long-running equal-pay claim made by 26 former female clerical assistants in the CPSU. They stand to win back pay of up to €25,000, to compensate them for earning about €50 a week less than male paper keepers who performed similar work.

The payments are backdated to 1991, when they initially made their claim, but 3,000 colleagues can claim back pay to 1997, when the CPSU lodged claims on their behalf.

Tragically some elements of the leadership of the CPSU are claiming the victory as proof of the potential for benchmarking. It is of course nothing of the sort. The state has merely admitted that women should be paid the same as men. That it took twelve years to win the case is no great recommendation for the leadership's strategy.

Shorts Engineering

WORKERS at the Shorts aircraft plant in Belfast are to ballot on strikes against compulsory redundancies.

Shorts, owned by the Canadian Bombardier Aerospace group, wants to cut some 2,000 jobs out of the 7,500-strong workforce.

Around 1,000 jobs will have gone by

start of this month.

Many of them are temporary workers and subcontractors. Some 390 permanent workers are also going. Amicus, the workers' union, is to ballot hundreds of workers on action against some of the compulsory job losses.

Many workers are unhappy that any action under this plan would not begin for many weeks, by which time job losses will have already started.

Cork

Unofficial action forces concessions

OVER 100 workers at Cork Plastics in the Little Island industrial estate staged a 10 day unofficial strike recently.

The workers, all members of SIPTU took action to defend a colleague who had been fired for alleged absenteeism. This came on the back of a list of grievances and pent up anger at anti-union boss Gus O'Brien.

O'Brien who has a number of other factories in the area had refused to contribute to a pension and has ignored LRC recommendations on productivity.

There was magnificent solidarity throughout the strike despite a court injunction against the workers.

All truck drivers refused to pass the picket lines.

One shop steward told *Socialist Worker* "We are delighted at the solidarity among the workers, because this company has tried in the

past to give incentives to workers not to join the union."

SIPTU had refused to make the strike official until they went to the Labour court. In the end the company had to concede and have had to compensate the fired worker, who did not wish to return to the company.

The other issues are now to be dealt with through local bargaining.

Workers are feeling confident that they now have the upper hand in these negotiations.

As another shop steward put it "this boss will never be able to sack someone like this again."

South African Embassy

MANDATE members at the South African Embassy in Dublin are currently on strike for union recognition. The refusal of management to recognise Mandate is puzzling to the staff for two reasons.

Firstly, the South African workers there are represented by a union of their own, based in South Africa. Secondly, it was Mandate, or the IDATU as it was then known, that backed the Duncans Stores workers who refused to handle oranges from apartheid South Africa in the 1980's. Now the very administration they along with thousands of other workers around the globe helped to get recognition for is refusing to recognise them.

The Embassy has not paid them any increases since 1998.

Socialist Worker

(01) 8722682 <http://www.clubi.ie/swp> swp@clubi.ie

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

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BLOODY SUNDAY DERRY 1972

ONE WORLD

ONE STRUGGLE

AFGHANISTAN & PALESTINE 2002

BLOODY SUNDAY in Derry, was a massacre ordered by the British establishment to stop a mass movement that was challenging their rule.

Thirty years on, the British ruling class hasn't changed its spots. The Blair government was the most enthusiastic supporter of the US war in Afghanistan, a war that is aimed at crushing any opposition to US imperialism around the world.

Then, as now, they claim that they are 'rooting out terrorism'. Campaigning by the relatives of the dead finally forced the British government to order an inquiry into Bloody Sunday.

But it is obvious that the strategy of the Ministry of Defence in the Saville Inquiry is to create a myth of 'gunmen in the crowd' to justify the murder of innocent people. Similarly, Blair and Bush

claim that they are pursuing 'terrorism', to justify the horrific death toll of innocent civilians in Afghanistan.

Earlier this month it was revealed that over 3,700 innocent people have been killed by US and British bombing—more than the number killed in the World Trade Centre attacks.

These were innocent people who had nothing whatsoever to do with the September 11 attacks on the US.

And it is not just in Afghanistan.

For the last year, the US's closest ally in the Middle East, Israel, has unleashed the most horrific military assault on the Palestinian people, shooting teenage rioters and assassinating political activists in an effort to crush the mass revolt of the intifada.

The helicopter gunships and F16 military fighters which bombard the refugee camps and villages in Gaza are provided by the US and Britain.

Across the world the same pattern, the same priorities are at work.

The US and Britain, who style themselves as the defenders of democracy, provide the weapons for corrupt and brutal governments, from Colombia to Turkey, Indonesia to Saudi Arabia.

The military policies of the British and US governments go hand in hand with their domination of the international financial system—using Third World debt to promote the free market agenda of multinational capitalism.

Desperation

The horrendous results of their vision of global capitalism and privatisation are to be seen in the staggering poverty and desperation that afflicts millions in Bolivia, South Africa and across Asia.

It is also the drive behind the run down in public services in developed countries.

In 1972, the marchers on Bloody Sunday sang 'We Shall Overcome'—a song borrowed

from the civil rights movement in the United States.

The connection with people struggling against injustice in other countries was obvious and natural.

The brutality of the paratroopers that day showed the lengths that the British ruling class will go to in order to crush the resistance of ordinary people.

Today, similar connections are being made by people fighting the IMF-inspired policies of the Argentinian government and those who protested against the G8 summit of world leaders in Genoa last July.

The movement against global capitalism is drawing together the international struggles.

In Argentina, at least 27 people were murdered by the police and army during the uprising in December.

In Genoa, the Italian police murdered Carlo Giuliani and brutalised thousands of other peaceful protesters.

Since September 11, the US and Britain have used the 'war on ter-

rorism' to reintroduce laws like internment without trial of protesters and dissidents and have massively extended their military reach around the globe.

They want to crush any and all resistance to their rule.

Demonstrate

In New York, on the same weekend as the Bloody Sunday march, thousands of anti-capitalist protesters will gather to demonstrate against the World Economic Forum, a meeting of bankers and government ministers, being held in downtown Manhattan.

They want to use the September 11 attacks to outlaw opposition to their plans.

For those of us for justice for the Bloody Sunday dead, the protesters in New York, and not the British or US governments are our allies.

In 2002, as in 1972, there is still one world and one struggle.