

Socialist Worker

inside

Stop Bush's war pages 3

Eamonn McCann on the Secret History of the IRA page 8

Occupations can win page 5

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

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

€1.00 / £0.70p

Solidarity price €2.00

- The richest 25 people in Ireland 'earned' 795 million last year
- 620 workers lose their jobs at IFI

MAKE THE BOSSSES PAY

THE IRISH rich are still making a fortune. Last year the top 25 earners got over €795 million.

Michael Smurfit's take own pay was €170 million! Ryanair's anti-union boss Michael O'Leary took home €41 million. This is just what they got paid last year and doesn't include the wealth they already have.

At the same time the government is calling for workers to take a "pay freeze"—which in reality is a pay cut.

The government claimed there wasn't any money to keep IFI fertilisers plants open. But FF and the PDs had no problem paying an incredible £188 million to the banks just in interest on a IFI's debt.

But big business and the banks always come before workers. The government says we all need to tighten

our belts as they implement vicious cuts in health education.

Yet they are pushing ahead with lowering tax on profits to 12.5 percent. But raising taxes on profits by just 1 percent from its current level would wipe out the government deficit.

We don't need another partnership agreement that ties workers to low wages, while the bosses make hay at our expense.

What we need is a fighting trade union movement. The union leaders need to stop seeing the bosses and government as "partners" and start leading a fight for workers' rights.

They should start by calling 24-hour strike not sitting down to negotiations that will force another five years of wage restraint.

RAISE CORPORATION TAX

Education cuts

McCreevey attacks colleges

SINCE THE return of the FF-PD government to office, students at third level have come under unrelenting attack.

In July the registration fee was increased by a massive 69% to E670, seriously undermining the concept of "free education" at third level.

Maintenance grants were raised by a mere 5%, leaving students in receipt of E14 per week at the lowest end of the scale and E70 at the top. The USI Cost of College Survey 2002 on the other hand indicated that the cost per student per year of attending higher education had risen by 7.5%.

According to Department of Education cuts announced in September, E5 million will be slashed from programmes aimed at attracting socio-economically disadvantaged school-leavers to third level. Minister Dempsey said on taking office that broadening access to education would be his priority!

E3million cost savings are being sought in the Dublin Institute of Technology, resulting in the cancellation of some part-time courses and elements of various full-time ones, and the closure of some facilities. Lecturers have been forced in some cases to suspend overcrowded classes on health and safety grounds.

The reintroduction of



third level fees is on the agenda. USI estimate that with fees the cost per student of higher education would come to E50,000.

These cuts come against the backdrop of the Higher Education Authority's Euro Student 2000 report which revealed that even before any of the above cuts are implemented Irish students fare very badly when compared to their European counterparts.

In Ireland the state provides assistance to just 40% of students, whereas in the Netherlands 90% get state support.

Not only does Ireland have the lowest level of student purpose accommodation - at 4% - but it is also the most expensive.

The only way to survive for many students is to work long hours through college with all the negative effects this has on academic achievement and participation in college life.

The reintroduction of fees will only make the situation worse. Today two parents on the minimum wage have a combined income that is above the threshold for a maintenance grant. This same family would be made carry the bill for fees. Prior to the removal of fees it was ordinary PAYE workers like this who bore the financial burden of educating their children.

The idea that the money saved will be ploughed back into education is nonsense. This government has targeted disadvantaged students throughout the education system in this first round of cutbacks.

Students are on the march across the country. USI are absolutely right when they say "The coming months will show that direct action, marches and demos were not just a fad of the 1960s and are still effective ways of forcing change".

Noel Hogan is the USI

officer responsible for campaigns. He is positive about the campaign after the successful demonstrations already held by Trinity College students and the protest against Noel Dempsey in UCD. "There are two Dublin marches - northside and southside colleges - coming up over the next three weeks, and a separate protest by students in IT Tallaght.

"Our demands are simply about winning a decent standard of living for students. The medical card was taken away from students in the 80's, so all we're asking for is the reintroduction of a benefit that we should be entitled to anyway.

"It would make a real difference to the quality of life of our members. A recent survey suggested that only 40% of students can afford ready access to medical care, which is totally unacceptable.

THE PARTICIPATION rate at third level for young people from working class backgrounds is scandalously low.

According to the most recent figures available just 0.49% of university students come from households headed by skilled or semi-skilled workers. 71% of those in fee paying schools go to college while only 38% of those who attend vocational schools and 50% in community schools do.

This situation could be

transformed in a very short time if the government had the will or concern to do it.

Increased and realistic maintenance grants, low cost student accommodation and medical cards combined with massive investment in education at primary and second level would greatly improve children's chances of succeeding within the state education system.

Smaller class sizes in schools, improved access to leaning support staff and better equipped classrooms would be evidence of a government committed to fairness and equality

in education. Instead at present Ireland is in the bottom seven spenders in the OECD when it comes to primary education and the bottom nine spenders at second level.

Cutbacks in state spending often serve to open a space for industry to gain a foothold on campuses while the reintroduction of fees establishes the principle of paying for education.

The fight against cutbacks and fees today needs to be part of a fight to defend public services from corporate hands in the longer term.



Protest against Israeli dance troupe at Queens Festival

PRESSURE continued to mount against Queens Festival decision to host a dance Troupe from Israel.

The Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign handed over 1,500 signatures of people "appalled at the decision" of the organisers "to accept and publicise a state that has to date ignored over 70 UN resolutions".

Local newspapers published a letter signed by some of Ireland's best known artists and playwrights condemning the inclusion of the act.

Rest

One of the organisers, Ismail Al-Hinti said "while the rest of the world is trying to isolate and pressurise Israel into accepting humane stan-

dards, Queens Festival is giving a platform for Israeli publicity".

Feilim O'Adhmaill the Spokesperson for the IPSC pointed out "The Israeli Government has been slated internationally for its illegal and brutal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"Since September 2000, Israeli forces in the

West Bank and Gaza have murdered 1,939 Palestinians, 400 of which have been children.

If the act goes ahead then protest organisers have called for an alternative cultural event to be staged outside the venue, with local musicians providing entertainment.

IRELAND OF THE WELCOMES?

No mercy from McDowell

THE MINISTER for Dawn raids Michael McDowell, has said he sees no reason to change his decision to deport to Kosovo a widow and her two daughters.

The Sylaj family are in hiding after one attempt to deport them.

The family are being supported by pupils and staff at the school attended by the two children. Young classmates of Eni (5) and Eda (4) from Castleknock Educate Together National School in Dublin staged a protest outside the Dail.

The girls' mother, Florinda Sylaj, says she would rather drown herself in the Liffey than return to her country. "I'm so afraid

and I'm just looking around to see if anyone will come and catch me. So many times in the night I wake up and look at the window to see if I can see a car with police and flashing lights."

Afraid

Ms Sylaj and her children have been in Ireland for almost three years.

In the first nine months of the year, 2,127 deportation orders were signed and 493 people have been deported. This compares with 365 for the same period last year.

Meanwhile over 50 people who were arrested in McDowell's racist dawn raids earlier in the year have had all charges against them dropped.



Exploited

Over €50,000 has been awarded to three Brazilian workers hired to work as cleaners.

They were promised £1,000 a month and an eight-hour working day, but found themselves without pay and working a 15-hour day in conditions "reminiscent of Charles Dickens's time", the High Court heard yesterday. A priest and neighbour regularly provided them with food.

Justice Kelly said the workers, who the court

heard were ferried to work in a van with black plastic sacks taped to the windows, were exploited by At Hand Cleaning Services Ltd in a "cruel fashion" and were the victims of a "trick".

He said the company had behaved in a "quite despicable fashion". The judge directed that €50,000 be paid to two sisters and their brother-in-law in their claim against the company, with registered office at St Patrick's Park, Clondalkin, Dublin.

It is unclear whether the three will actually receive the award as the company is liquidating.

RACIST ARREST

A NIGERIAN man charged with obstructing the Gardai says he was abused and assaulted with a baton by Gardai.

In the early hours of May 27 Vincent Robins-Oghbaro was parking his car outside his apartment in Ennis when he was

approached by Gardai. One Garda said, "we'll f*** you back to where you came from". Another hit him with a baton.

The Gardai demanded his documents when Mr Robins-Oghbaro attempted to get them from his apartment he was arrested.

John Devane, solicitor for Mr Robins-Oghbaro, said the arrest of Mr Robins-Oghbaro was racially motivated.

Firefighters battle for us all

Firefighters deserve justice over pay

Firefighters in Britain are being urged to trust a so-called independent review into their pay rather than take industrial action.

At the head of this review is George Bain, Vice Chancellor of Queens University in Belfast.

I would not expect much sympathy from a Lord Bain.

In 1998 George Bain ordered security Guards to viciously smash a student occupation against tuition fees in the university. He stood in the building as the guards beat and dragged people out before smashing up their belongings.

Committed to universities being run as businesses to suit the needs of the market, his first act after becoming Chancellor at the university was to sack almost 100

senior lecturers who he felt weren't providing enough revenue.

He has just announced the closure of the Classics Department saying "it is not financially viable to retain subjects that are not in demand".

Four years ago he headed the low pay commission, the body set up to decide the rate of the minimum wage. At the time he not only argued for a minimum wage of £3.60ph, he argued that under 21 year olds should be paid a miserly £3. This is under £100 take home pay for a 40 hour week or £6240 per year. (The firefighters are demanding £30,000)

George Bain is a ruthless free marketeer with little sympathy for students and workers. There is little doubt whose side he will take in the firefighters pay dispute.

(For more on the firefighters turn to page 11)



DUP secrecy hides a dirty deal

FOR A party that never tires of telling us of the secretive nature of Republicans the DUP certainly doesn't act like a party committed to openness.

Party members in Castlereagh Borough Council last month had a motion passed, banning councillors from speaking to the press.

The motion further demanded that the proceedings at council committee meetings should not be discussed outside the council until the minutes were agreed by all present, essentially allowing anyone the right to veto information for disclosure.

At the time suspicions were aroused that they were trying to keep a lid on something in par-

ticular. This month reports leaked out that one of their committees has racked up over £100,000 worth of debt and are planning to sell off playing fields to the supermarket giant Safeway in order to pay for it.

Secretary of a boy's football league that uses the field is trying to build opposition to the plans saying "we will fight this to the bitter end".

John Cassidy is disgusted because "it is a neutral venue" and says the plans are motivated by "material gain and commercial greed".

It fact it is the perfect deal for the DUP on Castlereagh Council - Keep Catholic and Protestants apart and make some money at the same time.

New Secretary of State same old privatisation

The latest reshuffle in Blair's cabinet has meant a new Secretary of State for the North.

Paul Murphy who had been Welsh Secretary has now taken over from John Reid.

There is however little to suggest that the introduction of the new secretary will see any shift in the neo-liberal agenda in the North now that direct rule has been re-imposed.

After New Labour

were defeated at their party conference last month over the question of using private finance to fund public services Paul Murphy stood by the Prime Minister saying "I have no ideological opposition to using PFI to build hospitals and schools in Wales".

Forced

In fact he was once described by a colleague in The Guardian Newspaper as "having been a Blairite before Blair".

Nor is there much chance that the two thousand women who are currently forced to travel to Britain to obtain abortions each year will see the 1967 Abortion Act extended to here.

A regular church-goer, he is regarded as one of the party's staunchest anti-choice MPs and an open critic of abortion rights for women.

In fact, as far as politics goes in the North, Paul Murphy should fit in just fine.

Dragged deeper in debt

NEW RESEARCH from Save the Children has revealed that the poorest people in Northern Ireland repaid over £34MILLION to the hated Social Fund in 2000/01.

The repayments - at an average of £11.80 per week are deducted at source from benefits, forcing families below the breadline.

In 1988, Social Fund loans replaced the old system of 'single payments' whereby those on benefits could receive a grant to cover 'exceptional items of

expenditure' such as buying a bed for a child grown too big for a cot, school uniforms etc. Instead of grants, the Social Fund has community care grants, budgeting loans and crisis loans.

Reserved

As anyone living on benefit will tell you, it is almost impossible to get a community care grant. They are reserved for people 'with special circumstances' such as those coming out of institutional or residential care or people intimidated out of their home.

So, there is no choice for most but to accept a Social Fund loan.

These loans are not for luxuries. The most common reasons for Social Fund loan applications are household goods such as cookers, fridges or washing machines, and clothing.

Two thirds of the money lent by the Fund is to families with children.



grants and loans from the Social Fund. £34.05 million of this was money repaid to the Fund by people living in poverty.

Social Fund guidelines make it clear that whether or not an applicant receives a loan is influenced by pressure on the local budget as much as by the person's needs.

One of the most common reasons why people are turned down for a Social Fund loan is that they already owe money from a previous loan. 75% of lone parents who were refused help were turned down because of 'outstanding debt'.

This means that someone whose cooker breaks down one year and washing machine the next has no hope of getting the washing machine replaced without going to a licensed money lender, catalogue or - worse - a loan shark.

Save the Children's research revealed a scary

level of interest being paid by people using LICENSED moneylenders or catalogues. Licensed moneylenders may charge APRs of between 100% and 500% depending on the size and length of the loan.

Condemned

According to the Financial Services Authority, in 2000, a washing machine costing £280 cash typically cost £470 if bought with a loan from a licensed moneylender, or £438 if bought from a mail order catalogue over 100 weeks.

In opposition, Labour condemned the obvious unfairness of the Social Fund.

In government, they turned down the recommendation of the Social Security Select Affairs Committee to abolish it and reintroduce grants for families in need - so much for their commitment to end child poverty!

Gordon Browne's war on unemployed

THIS MONTH, New Labour's Chancellor Gordon Brown launched a war against some of the most deprived people in Britain and the North.

In a statement he promised an end to what he termed the "no one round here works culture" in areas most hit by long term unemployment. Instead of promising decent jobs and wages in these areas he promised to withdraw benefits from anyone who didn't take up any offer of employment that was offered. He said the threat was

designed to "be an onslaught in favour of full employment and against the unacceptable culture of worklessness that ruined some of our communities in the 1980s and early 1990s, as we address the underlying causes of poverty in Britain".

Attacks

This is not only a disgusting slur against some of the most vulnerable people in Britain it is a downright lie. There was no culture of "worklessness" in Britain in the 1980s.

There was one of the most vicious attacks ever waged against working class people. Thatcher decimated working class communities

that had been built up around industries like coalmining and shipbuilding, slinging hundreds of thousands on to the dole.

The recession that followed the boom of the early eighties left thousands more homeless and out of work. The nineties saw many thousands of skilled workers in industries like steel and car manufacturing put out of work after privatisation allowed the new owners to up sticks and move production to where labour was cheaper.

Instead of putting the blame where it lies, Gordon Brown has shown that the victims will pay the price all over again.

For example, instead of offering decent jobs to the 20,000 skilled ship-workers

in East Belfast who lost their jobs because of privatisation, Gordon Brown would rather force them to flip burgers for the minimum wage.

Tackling

Instead of tackling the appalling rate of poverty in Britain, New Labour are planning further attacks that will allow employers to pay what they want, knowing that jobs will be filled.

Brown is a revisionist when it comes to Thatcher, precisely because New Labour wants to bully and beat workers in the same way that she did for 12 years. Let's hope the firefighters give them a nasty shock.

Limited

Just because your cooker or washing machine is broken beyond repair does not mean you will automatically get a Social Fund loan, however - no matter how many children you have.

This is because there is a limited amount of money available for loans.

In 1986, expenditure on 'single payments' in Northern Ireland was £38 million.

But, in 2000/01, only £41.5 million was available for both community care

MARXISM 2002

Conference of socialist ideas
Central Dublin 22-24 November

BUILDING RESISTANCE TO CAPITAL AND WAR



John Gormley TD (Green Party), **Eamonn McCann** (Journalist),
Mike Davis (author of *City of Quartz*), **Francois Duval** (Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, France),
Dr Juliet Bressan (Doctors for Choice), **Rifondazione Comunista Italy**,
Chris Bamberg (SWP Britain), **Prof Terry Eagleton**, **Kieran Allen**,
Richard Boyd Barrett (Chair of the Irish Anti War Movement), **Joe Carolan** (Globalise Resistance),
Mick O'Reilly, **Goretti Horgan**, **Luke Choto** (Zimbabwean socialist)

Organised by **Socialist Worker** www.swp.ie

Tickets: (01) 872 2682 (RoI) or 0790 1916 156 (NI)

Marxism 2002 The left event of the year

WE HAVE entered an era of global permanent warfare. George Bush wants 'full spectrum dominance' and next year the US will spend \$396 billion on arms to get it.

The World Bank insists on privatisation and charges for basic services, such as water, as a loan condition.

One year of US military spending could rescue millions from famine and disease.

The Irish government has become a poodle of the US. It has given the use of Shannon airport for transporting US soldiers to Iraq.

But there is now huge anger on the ground in Irish society. The Celtic Tiger brought huge gains only to the rich.

In the North there is a crying need for class politics that cut across the sectarian divisions. Marxism 2002 will pull together activists from across Ireland to discuss the ideas that will build resistance to capital and war. Don't miss it.

Booking Form

Tickets are E20 / £12 waged ; E10 / £6 unwaged in advance.
(E25 / £15 waged ; E12 / £7 unwaged on door). School students E5 / £3.
Make cheques/POs payable to **Socialist Worker** and return to Marxism 2002 Registration, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

(PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS)

Name:
Address:
.....
..... Tel:
E-mail:
SWP branch (if SWP member):

Creche booking

Do you require creche facilities?
Yes No
If yes, please state number of children and their ages:

Return this booking form together with payment in cheque or PO to:
Marxism 2002, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

Accommodation

Accommodation for the conference is provided free of charge with members of the SWP for those who need it.

Do you require accommodation for the conference? YES NO

editorial

Build the protests to stop Bush's war drive

WHATEVER THE ups and downs of media coverage, the planned war on Iraq remains top of the Bush administration's agenda. Once the United States went to the United Nations Security Council for authority to attack Iraq the immediate drama went out of the story. There have been weeks of negotiations over the text of a resolution. Which continued as *Socialist Worker* went to press.

Finally Washington proposed its resolution to the Security Council. It had been watered down somewhat to meet the objections of France and Russia, but still allowed an attack on Iraq. France, Russia—and China which, like them, has a veto over Security Council decisions—are caught in a dilemma. They don't want to give Bush a blank cheque to attack Iraq.

All have different interests from the US, and China in particular fears that it is becoming a target of a new strategy of encirclement. US military bases have sprung up near its western borders in central Asia and further east in the Philippines. But the rulers of the Great Powers also have common interests with their US counterparts.

Exposed

Russian president Vladimir Putin has just had his brutal war in Chechnya exposed before the world's media. The Russian and Chinese regimes have both used 11 September to have their own repression of Muslim separatists rebranded as part of the worldwide "war on terror".

Putin was quick to claim that the Chechen hostage-takers in Moscow were acting in cahoots with Al Qaida.

Neither Russia nor China can afford to go too far out of line with a US that is currently miles ahead of its rivals militarily, and that is currently pursuing an aggressive global strategy based on its claimed right of "pre-emptive defence".

Now the Bush administration has pressed for a vote on its resolution. "We can't just have a rolling debate

without end," Secretary of State Colin Powell said last weekend.

According to the *Financial Times*, "Pentagon staff are also reluctant to see the diplomatic process drift on, having said that the optimal time to start military action in the Gulf would come some time between late November and early February.

"Defence department officials say the preferences of military planners are not affecting the diplomatic process.

"The discussions so far have proceeded while the US military has been putting logistics for military action in place in the Gulf."

Abstain

In other words, although the diplomatic delays have not interfered with the military schedule up to now, they may start doing so soon. At the beginning of this week George Bush was expecting Russia to abstain on the US resolution and France not to veto it.

The smaller states that make up the majority of the membership of the Security Council are hardly likely to brave Washington's wrath when the bigger powers run for cover. Only Syria seemed certain to vote against the US resolution.

Ireland currently holds a seat on the Security Council. Brian Cowen and the Irish government is craven before George Bush, it is continuing to open Shannon to the US military. It is likely to vote for any shoddy resolution put up to justify this war.

Whatever the diplomatic moves we have to oppose the war whether it is fought with or without UN approval.

And, opposition to the war is growing around the world. In the US there has been the development of an impressive anti-war movement, across Europe there have been enormous protests.

Anti war activists are pressing the European Social Forum in Florence to call European wide action immediately war is started. That call needs to be answered here in Ireland as well.

And by building an enormous protest at the US embassy on December 7th we can send a message to George Bush and the Irish government that we don't want their war whatever way the thieves and beggars kitchen of



the UN decides.

No more wage restraint - make the bosses pay

IT IS unbelievable that: IBEC are calling for a pay freeze. With inflation double the European average that would mean a serious pay cut for all workers.

Michael Buckley, head of AIB who came out in support of the call has some cheek. The AIB, which was one of the main banks involved in the DIRT scandal, saw its profits rise by 61 percent a year in the last decade.

There is of course no

discussion at the partnership talks of freezing bank profits or of restricting property speculators. Wages are the only item that is controlled in Ireland's deregulated economy.

As was shown by IFI and IGB at a time of recession all talk of 'partners' disappears.

Bosses cut back drastically on production and let go workers rather than take a cut in their profits.

Even though they made mega bucks in the boom years, they expect workers to shoulder the sacrifices in a recession.

IBEC and the government nearly choked on their caviar at the suggestion from CORI that corporation tax should not be cut to 12.5 percent.

Deficit

We are told by McCreevey that there has to be cuts in health and education, yet simply increasing corporation tax by 1 percent would wipe out the government deficit.

Unfortunately this is not how the union leaders see it.

They are acting as policemen for the labour movement.

While they are making some radical soundings the Union leaders are so scared of the bosses that they are desperate to get another partnership deal.

But even in a time of boom partnership meant misery for workers—in a recession it will be disastrous.

We don't need another partnership deal we need to build a campaign to force the union leaders to call 24-hour stoppages against the government and the bosses.

Socialist Worker £3,000 printer appeal

Over the last year, *Socialist Worker* has made a significant contribution in the North.

We have helped organise resistance to the neo-liberal agenda, poverty and sectarian violence that pervades the North, and the war, racism, environmental destruction and misery that pervades the planet.

In the last twelve

months, we have printed tens of thousands of leaflets, petitions and posters to help support these struggles.

We want to buy a printer that will mean that activists can roll out thousands of leaflets at a moment's

notice for workers on strike, or the threatened closure of a hospital etc.

Your donations are crucial in helping us to build solidarity with those fighting back. We are appealing to all our supporters to help us reach our target of £3000.

You can make a donation by cheque or postal order to SWP, PO Box 143, Mallusk, Newtownabbey or phone 07901 916 156 (0044 7901 916 156)

Irish Anti War Movement

March to US Embassy

STOP BUSH'S

WAR

Saturday 7 December

Assemble 2pm @

Central Bank Plaza

Dame St, Dublin



US MILITARY OUT OF SHANNON

Web: inshantiwar.org Tel: 087 632 9511

ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

**DON'T
ATTACK
IRAQ**

Info 07900 353 816 nowar_belfast@hotmail.com

**DEMONSTRATE
7 DECEMBER 2pm
Art College Square**

European Social Forum

A festival of resistance

AS SOCIALIST Work went to press thousands of people from across Europe were heading for the European Social Forum in Florence in Italy.

They will be taking part in one of the biggest international gatherings of campaigners and activists Europe has seen. The forum culminates in a major Europe-wide anti-war demonstration next Saturday, 9 November.

The European Social Forum was launched at the World Social Forum, which took place in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre last January. Around 70,000 people gathered at the World Social Forum under the slogan "Another world is possible".

The European Social Forum is set to be packed with meetings, seminars and assemblies. They will cover an amazing variety of issues, from war to transport, food to Palestine, and just about everything in between.

Every morning conferences will be hosted by the European Social Forum, while afternoon seminars and workshops will be held by a wide range of organisations.

Every evening there will be cultural events, street theatre and music including a meeting on "Michaelangelo and revolution".

The culmination of the whole forum will be the massive anti-war demonstration on the Saturday evening.

A gathering of social movements from across Europe is also set for Sunday 10 November in Florence to plan for protests at the G8 summit of world leaders to be held in France next year.

The atmosphere in Italy in the run-up to the European Social Forum was buzzing. Sara Nocentini, a spokesperson for the forum organisers, told Socialist Worker, "The biggest trade union federation in Italy, the CGIL, is now officially backing the anti-war demo on Saturday. We have 800 beds in private houses that people have offered to delegates coming to the forum. There is a special four-day pass available for those who register, giving big reductions on transport and restaurants. The local council has organised creches, and the left wing shopkeepers' association is offering special deals to people. The union federation has also said it will steward the event."

Luciano Mühlbauer is on the organising committee of the Italian Social Forum. He described what has been happening in Italy: "The government has been trying to

whip up a campaign against the forum.

"They say violent anarchists will descend on Florence. The social forum is a political problem for the right wing prime minister Berlusconi, so he attacks it politically. But all the social movements are united.

"We have met with the local authorities in Florence. We have made definite arrangements for 20,000 people to come to the forum. We know that 700 are coming from Catalonia alone, a special ship is coming from Greece, and many delegations are coming from Eastern Europe. For the anti-war demonstration on Saturday 9 November special trains have been chartered from cities right across Italy."

The European Social Forum is not just causing a buzz in Italy. Christine from Germany told Socialist Worker, "We expect about 1,000 people from Germany to go. Some campaign against privatisation, others want to develop different kinds of living, and others want to fight for refugee rights. The most important reason overall is the question of war. People are very impressed by the plans for the big anti-war demo. And everyone wants to come back from Florence and build a stronger movement against war and neo-liberalism in Germany."

Over 130 people had registered as delegates from Ireland, a fortnight before the event

ESF sponsors include

Trade unions: The main militant unions are the CGIL and the metal workers' FIOM.

Autonomists: They organise spectacular stunts and actions but are suspicious of political parties and trade unions.

Attac: Largely based in France, with branches elsewhere, Attac campaigns for a Tobin Tax on financial speculation. Attac has failed to mobilise protests against the war.

Rifondazione: Left wing party containing different currents. Rifondazione was part of the Genoa protests last year and the recent general strikes. It mobilised 100,000 for an anti-war demonstration.

DS (Democratic Left): Party formed from part of the old Communist Party, but which now has politics similar to Tony Blair's. Some sections of the DS are supporting the forum.

Globalise Resistance: Broad-based anti-capitalist organisation that campaigns against privatisation and war.

Bankers shudder as Workers Party

Latin America swinging leftward

A POLITICAL earthquake has shaken Latin America's largest country in Brazil's presidential election. With 61.4 percent of the vote, the Workers Party candidate, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva - or Lula, as he is usually known - crushed the old government's candidate, José Serra.

This is the first time a party based on workers has won national elections in Latin America since the victory of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1970. It takes place against the background of economic crisis in Argentina and Uruguay on Brazil's southern border.

Overthrow

There is widespread social unrest on its western border in Paraguay, civil war on the north western border in Colombia, and there have been repeated attempts by the right wing to overthrow the Venezuelan government on the northern border.

The Workers Party was formed out of the workers' movement that played a decisive role in bringing to an end the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s.

Lula came to prominence as the leader of metal workers' strikes in the factory belt of Sao Paulo. The party represented a decisive break with the tradition in Brazil,

as elsewhere in Latin America, of workers voting for "populist" politicians - generals or rich careerists who promised them crumbs while seeking to build up local capitalism.

The Workers Party grew until it had hundreds of thousands of active worker members, many risking their lives in order to challenge the old order. Last Sunday's election was the fourth time Lula had stood for president.

Denouncing

On each occasion the whole of the ruling class did its utmost to stop him. The media would print lurid stories about his personal life. Those with wealth would move it abroad, creating scares about an economic crisis and saying it was all Lula's fault, for denouncing the gross injustices of one of the world's most unequal societies.

During the election four years ago, the now outgoing president Cardoso said that if Lula won the currency would be devalued. After Lula had been defeated Cardoso devalued the currency with the support of international financial institutions like the IMF. This time the wealthy and multinational firms in Brazil and the US tried the same trick.

Money flooded out of the country and the value of the currency sank. Instead of panicking people into voting against Lula, it increased bitterness against Cardoso and his government.

There is a feeling that Brazil's rich and the multinationals have had it their own way for too long,

and that the time for change has come. Unfortunately, it has also led to Lula and his advisers backing away from some of the far reaching measures they used to be committed to.

They have attempted to stop the flow of money abroad by making conciliatory gestures to those who speculate on financial markets.

Lula has chosen as his vice-president a rich businessman belonging to a neo-liberal party.

And he has said he accepts the programme which Cardoso agreed recently with the IMF.

The key figure in Lula's election campaign says that, "Lula has changed. Reality has brought this about. Doors have been opened to the Sao Paulo stock exchange because this project is for all of Brazil." Lula and his advisers claim that they can bridge the gap between the interests of the rich and the poor.

Subordinated

A big section of the rich want an independent Brazilian capitalism, not one subordinated to the US.

Lula's advisers point out that even Cardoso's government was not keen on the US-pushed Free Trade of the Americas trading bloc. They prefer the more independent economic bloc based on big business in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

This is to paper over the huge divide in Brazil between those who live in air-conditioned luxury flats and those in the sprawling shanty towns.

Lula's co

Lula's government will be subjected to pressure from the market and the poor. LULA'S TALK has dangerous similarities with that of Allende's 32 years ago.

Allende believed that if he promised not to touch the position of Chile's army generals, they would allow him to carry through reforms to benefit the mass of people.

Three years later those same generals drowned his government in blood. Lula seems to believe that if he makes concessions to Brazil's rich, somehow they will stop conspiring against his government.

The co Workers Party "social pact" unions, the tions and the

The head announced l trying to w government peaceful tra months bef becomes pr have a his behaviour to

They ga to the milit tortured left unionists.

Brazil: a cou



Join the SWP. Subscribe to Socialist Worker
6 month subscription €12.00

Name
 Address
 Phone
 E-mail

Join the SWP more info
 Make cheques or Postal Orders payable to Socialist Worker.
 Return to: SWP, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

Workers Party wins Brazilian election



Workers
Party
wins
Brazilian
election

Lula's concessions to the rich

Lula's government will be used to pressure the rich and the poor! LULA'S K has dangerous similarities that of Allende's 32 years

The centrepiece of the Workers Party policy is now a "social pact" drawing together the unions, the employers' organisations and the government. The head of the party's economic team, Antonio Palocci, announced last week that he was trying to work with Cardoso's government to bring about "a peaceful transition" in the two months before Lula officially becomes president. Brazil's rich have a history of murderous behaviour towards the poor. They gave unstinting backing to the military dictatorship as it tortured left wingers and trade unionists.

Today, they back underground groups of police who run death squads that murder "undesirables" in the country's cities. They may tolerate Lula's government for a period. But they will threaten to use their economic might to push the country into an economic crisis unless the government guarantees their profits by dropping talk of serious reforms in the interests of workers and the poor. The new government will be subject to another sort of pressure from that of the market. Many millions of Workers Party members and supporters want there to be a fundamental

change in society. Their actions can resist any backtracking by the new government. The Landless Workers Movement, for instance, has millions of supporters. It seeks to get a livelihood for people living in despair in the shanty towns by dividing up the great country estates. Its leaders are openly critical of any talk of compromise from the Workers Party. When right wing generals and the head of the employers' organisation attempted a coup in Venezuela in April, it was beaten by hundreds of thousands of poor people pouring into the streets of the capital, Caracas. A second

attempt last week fell apart even before it started as workers refused to take part in a work stoppage called by the employers' organisation and right wing union leaders. The would-be coup makers were left occupying one square in Caracas's richest district. A similar spirit can stop Brazil's rich and the multinationals using their economic power to wreck the mass desire for change. It means people organising to take action with the leaders of the Workers Party when they press forward for real change, and against them when they try to conciliate with the rich and the multinationals.

Brazil: a country divided between rich and poor



- Brazil borders every South American country apart from Chile and Ecuador.
- The population is 175 million-three quarters live in towns or cities. The national language is Portuguese.
- São Paulo is the world's third largest city, with 22 million inhabitants. Rio de Janeiro has ten million inhabitants.
- The Workers Party is known as the PT.
- Half the people of working age are workers. A third of these are in precarious jobs in the "informal" sector.
- The richest 10 percent of Brazil's population are 78 times better off than the poorest 10 percent.
- The richest 10 percent get 45 percent of the national income. The poorest 50 percent have only 11 percent.
- Some 70 million people live below the poverty line. Around 32 million people are in absolute poverty.
- The 20 biggest landowners own more land than 3.3 million small farmers.
- Brazil's foreign debt is over \$300 billion, and it doubled between 1994 and 1999. In those years \$126 billion was paid in interest.

BEHIND THE HORROR IN MOSCOW...

Russia's reign of terror in Chechnya

OVER 100 people were killed by the gas which Russian president Vladimir Putin ordered to be pumped into the Moscow theatre siege.

The horror of the siege's end gave a glimpse of the brutal methods used by the Russian state in Chechnya, methods which created the hostage crisis. Putin, along with Tony Blair and most of the British press, describe the Chechens as fanatical terrorists. In fact they are people who have witnessed the horrors of two bloody wars that Russia's leaders have fought against the tiny republic of Chechnya in the last eight years. Almost all industry has been destroyed in Chechnya, and two thirds of the population have lost their homes as a result of Russia's colonial war. The Chechen people have suffered waves of the most brutal violence as Russia's rulers have fought to deny them the right to run their own country. Vladimir Putin came to power in Russia by ruthlessly prosecuting a war against Chechnya. Russian troops have slaughtered tens of thousands of civilians since they invaded the republic, for the second time in the last decade, in

October 1999. The Russian military have used "fuel air" bombs which suck out people's lungs, nerve gas, and other bloody methods to terrorise the Chechen population. Russian bombs reduced Chechnya's capital, Grozny, to ruins. Hospitals, schools and homes have been flattened across Chechnya. Russian troops have razed whole villages to the ground. Thousands of people in Chechnya are still forced to live in primitive conditions without food, heat, light or medicines. And thousands of Chechens still exist in makeshift refugee camps. In 2000 president Putin claimed he had won the war in Chechnya. But 85,000 Russian troops still occupy the republic, and continue to bomb people's homes, destroy villages and round up civilians. Putin stepped up his offensive in Chechnya after 11 September 2001. George Bush and Tony Blair gave Putin the green light to pursue his bloody campaign in return for Russia's support for the "war on terror". The Human Rights Watch organisation says that Russia has increased its violence in Chechnya over the past year. "Civilians face a daily threat of being arbitrarily detained, tortured, or just 'disappearing'." says Elizabeth Anderson from the organisation.

200 years of colonial rule

CHECHNYA IS in the Caucasus mountain range, which runs between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. This has always been a strategically important area for Russia's rulers. It is near the vast oil and natural gas reserves of the Caspian Sea area. Putin's war is the latest horror that Russia has inflicted on Chechnya in over 200 years of repression. Chechnya was conquered by Tsarist Russia, which in the 18th and 19th centuries treated the country with the kind of brutality that the British ruling class inflicted on its colonies in India and Africa. That repression continued through the 20th century. The only brief period of freedom from repression came in the aftermath of the 1917 Russian Revolution. Chechnya and other states in the Caucasus gained some degree of independence. That was crushed when Stalin came to power and reversed the gains of the revolution. Stalin used brutal methods to subjugate people in order to consolidate his rule and build up Russia as a world power. In 1944 Stalin deported the entire Chechen population of 500,000. They were forcibly removed thousands of miles to the frozen steppes of Kazakhstan. Over a third of these people perished on the journey. Stalin launched a campaign to eliminate Chechen culture, burning books, ripping up gravestones and

using them to pave roads. Stalin's successor, Khrushchev, allowed the Chechens to return home in 1957. But public discussion of the deportations was forbidden until 1989. When the Soviet Union broke apart in the early 1990s, Chechnya separated from Russia and declared independence. At the end of 1994 Russia invaded Chechnya. Some 80,000 people-the vast majority civilians-were slaughtered in that war. People in Chechnya fought back using guerrilla war tactics and forced Russia to withdraw in 1997. But in 1999 Putin launched another brutal invasion. Chechens continue to fight back today. Islamic ideas have won wider support in response to Russian aggression and to the resulting breakdown in society. Putin's war against the Chechen people creates violence, poverty and chaos which drives people to fight back, and will create more situations like the Moscow hostage crisis. But Putin refuses to withdraw from Chechnya, or allow the Chechen people to run and control their own homeland. Putin was even prepared to suffocate and poison Russian civilians rather than make any concession at all to the Chechens' demand for self determination.

Eamonn McCann reviews Ed Moloney's *Secret History of the IRA*

A respectable road?

THIS IS the best book yet written about the Provos. It traces their rise of the Provos from the angry ashes of Catholic working-class streets incinerated by mobs of loyalists and cops in August 1969 to the enclosure of the movement's leadership within conventional bourgeois politics through the Good Friday Agreement.

It explains why the current hiatus in the peace process will, sooner or later, probably sooner, be healed, for the same reason that made agreement possible in the first place: There is no fundamental contradiction between the politics of the Provo leadership and of the British ruling class.

This is one of the key truths of the Northern Ireland conflict, obscured by the smoke and sulphur of the past three decades but now shimmering into focus again as the fog of war fades.

It's a truth that the Provos would rather not face. Or at any rate, not yet. For the moment, they prefer to present the recent period as the penultimate episode of Ireland's ancient struggle for freedom, in which the IRA, against all odds and in honorable fashion, fought the might of the British Empire to a stalemate.

Moloney casts a colder eye, he has reported on the Provos for more than twenty years. Sinn Fein supporters began rubbing his book months before he delivered the final draft.

However, it's evident from the text that he has received unprecedented co-operation from members and ex-members of the IRA.

Shadow

The shadow of Gerry Adams falls across almost every page. Moloney recounts his IRA career, in detail. Adams remains a member of the Army Council today.

Adams insists that he was never in the IRA, that his time in republicanism has been spent exclusively in Sinn Fein.

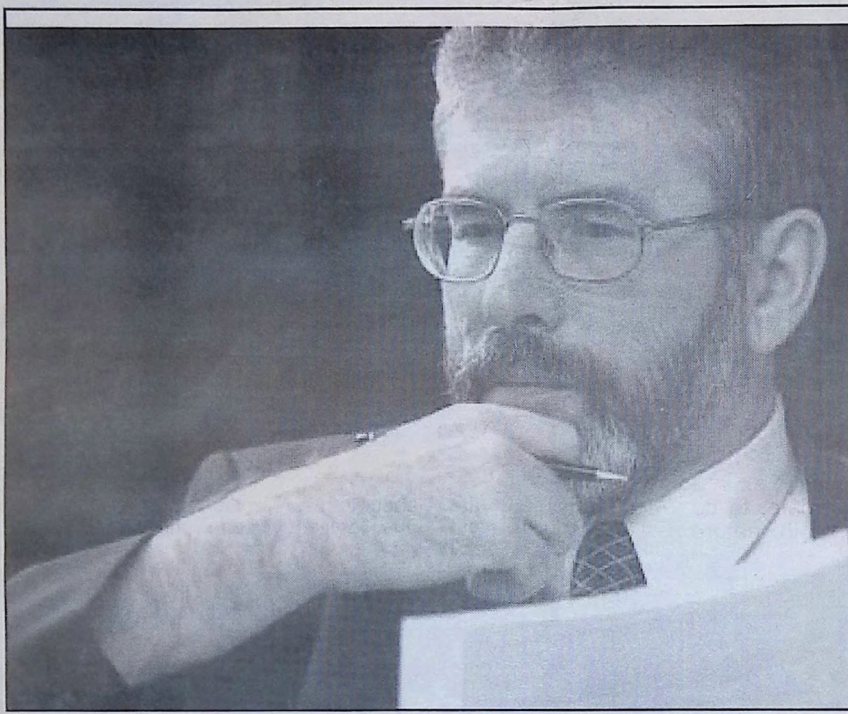
He isn't fazed by the fact that he was flown to London by the Royal Air Force in 1972 as part of an IRA delegation meeting British officials for truce talks. That's irrelevant, he'll insist.

He doesn't know why both the British and the IRA chief of staff at the time, Sean MacStiofain, had it in their minds that he was an IRA delegate.

In part, of course, it's just that Adams, like many another who has come through a guerrilla phase en route to political respectability, doesn't want the grisly details of the operations he took part in dragged out for public inspection.

The section of the book that sparked most intense republican rage when it was released concerned Adams's involvement in the affair of the Unknowns and the Disappeared in the early 1970s.

According to Moloney, Adams, as Belfast Brigade commander, established a number of self-sustaining secret cells, the



The unsettling question the portrait poses for republicans is whether the Good Friday Agreement represents an adequate return on the IRA's investment of pain, inflicted and endured.

Perhaps.

Moloney's narrative makes no room for romance. There is no sense here that to die by gunshot might be the finest play under the sun. Nobody is presented lightheartedly carrying his or her cross for Ireland.

The dominant tone is of anger and pity at cruelty and loss. The unsettling question the portrait poses for republicans is whether the Good Friday Agreement represents an adequate return on the IRA's investment of pain, inflicted and endured.

What the IRA has killed and died for is the Republic. To most outsiders, including outsiders in Ireland, the Good Friday Agreement seems a major step toward this objective. This, in essence, is the Adams analysis of what was achievable, which Moloney suggests he had arrived at and resolved to settle for much earlier than anyone, including his fellow republican leaders, realized.

The agreement doesn't represent freedom, then, but freedom to achieve freedom.

Not the promised land, but a stepping stone toward it. The problem is that the IRA has differed from movements that republicans have sometimes, depending on who's within earshot, been content to compare themselves with—the Basque ETA, the African National Congress, the Palestine Liberation Organisation—in that it has seen the Republic not as an aspiration but as an actually existing entity.

The ideological basis for this has to do with the proclamation of the Republic on the steps of the General Post Office in Dublin at Easter 1916 and its endorsement in the 1918 general election. The seventy-three Sinn Fein MPs elected then, out of 105 Irish seats, constituted the first and only legitimate parliament—the

This is how the small bands of republican irreconcilables in the Real IRA and the Continuity IRA see things. Why, then, has Adams settled for just such a deal, and yet retained huge popularity among the republican rank and file, especially in the working-class Catholic communities of Belfast?

Moloney rightly identifies Adams's 1983 election to Westminster from West Belfast as one of the most significant plot points in his narrative.

He might with advantage have directly quoted the new MP's first words to cheering crowds on the Falls Road: "Even De Valera couldn't win the Falls." De Valera had been hammered in West Belfast in the seminal election of 1918.

It was one of only two seats in all of Ireland where constitutional nationalism defeated Sinn Fein. This fact might usefully be kept in mind by commentators who lazily identify the Falls, or the Bogside in Derry, as "traditional republican" areas. They are not.

The Catholic working-class anger that gave rise to the emergence of the Provos as a major player in the early 1970s did not represent a new flowering of long-repressed republican ideas. It's truer to say, as Moloney does, that the tiny republican movement of the time, embodied in Belfast in a few families, provided an organisational framework, a channel for expression and a readiness to fight that matched the sudden mood of the Catholic masses.

One of the most revered rural leaders of the IRA in the 1980s observed a few years ago that "those fellows from Belfast were never really republicans."

They were only fighting for their streets." Most who joined or came to support the IRA did so not out of a sacred duty to "free Ireland" but because they wanted the bigot's boot off their necks and the British Army off their backs. If these grievances could be remedied short of the achievement of the Republic, then there was the basis of a settlement within existing constitutional structures.

Moloney's central thesis is that Adams and a small group around him were on to this sooner than anybody has previously suggested.

His most controversial claim is that Adams, behind the back of the Army Council and with IRA volunteers kept in the dark, opened lines of communication with the British as early as 1986 with a view to eventual negotiation of an "internal" settlement.

What is certainly true is that Adams and his close confidants embarked on a project to hollow out the ideology that the movement they inherited had been built around.

It was no longer to be republican at its core in any sense in which Pearse would have understood the word. Instead, it was to become, or to accept that it already was, a militant nationalist mass movement, reflecting not what some may have believed Belfast Catholics ought to think but what they actually, "naturally," thought.

Moloney accurately identifies the difference as that between the United Irishmen of the 1790s, inspired by the American and French revolutions and out to overthrow the existing order, and the Defenders, a peasant militia established to protect Catholic land rights.

The reason the Adams leadership has been able to retain the support of the republican base while ditching core republican ideas is, on this analysis, that the base was never republican in the first place, that they were only fighting for their streets.

This is an unwelcome conclusion to those who have held hard to the legacy of Pearse, and who rage against Adams as the latest in a litany of shame stretching back to Michael Collins and partition. But it's the obvious conclusion to emerge from Moloney's book.

The unsentimental pragmatism underlying Adams's approach is to be seen, too, in the fact that when he veered off the path of armed struggle he veered to the right and not to the left.

Having ditched the ideas that underpinned armed struggle, discarding any notion of wanting to turn the world, or even the constitutional status quo, upside down, Adams set out to recruit the most powerful allies potentially available—the Catholic hierarchy, the Dublin government, corporate Irish-America, the White House.

This has meant recoiling from positions that might alienate persuadable interests. Thus, although still generally presenting itself as an anti-imperialist party, Sinn Fein has been careful in recent times not to mobilise against the planned oil war on Iraq.

The party's campaign for the release of three men recently arrested in Colombia has been built on a soft-liberal basis, concentrating on the unlikelihood of the three receiving a fair trial, eschewing any defence of association with the left-wing guerrilla organisation.

Most telling of all, the inter-party fractiousness that led to the suspension of the Assembly in early October concealed a remarkable convergence around centre-right economics.

All the executive parties committed themselves to maintaining, if not increasing, direct grants to multinationals and to a reduction in corporate and other taxes on business. All advocate fiscal rectitude. All have enthusiastically pursued policies of privatisation, flogging off public services to fat-cat entrepreneurs.

The general aim has been to refashion still-partitioned Northern Ireland as a viable fragment of the global market by insuring that it is competitively attractive in capitalist terms. It hardly justifies 3,500 dead. It's hardly worth Jean McConville.

Small wonder that Bush's point man, Richard Haass, has no ideological complaint against Sinn Fein. He just wishes it would move more speedily toward completion of what he calls its "necessary transition." As a matter of fact, it's almost there. Ed Moloney's book is the best and necessary account of the long trek across dangerous terrain that brought Sinn Fein to this point.

The literature of big ideas



CHINA MIEVILLE was awarded the prestigious Arthur C. Clarke prize for Science Fiction in 2001. His latest book is *The Scar*. He ran as a candidate for the Socialist Alliance in London during the 2001 elections. He recently visited Dublin where he spoke to Dave Lordan.

SW Why do you write fantasy?

I grew up reading mostly science fiction and horror and it was always my first love. From the age of ten I knew I wanted to be a published writer, that I wanted others to read what I wrote. I never lost my childhood pleasure in weird stuff.

SW: Many Sci-Fi and Fantasy books are informed by radical political perspectives of the left and right. Would you say these genres were inherently more political than others?

Not all sci-fi writers are political but there is certainly a large minority of politically informed writers. Sci-Fi and Fantasy are literatures of big ideas promoting a sense of awe and strangeness and an interest in critical ideas. What sci-fi doesn't do is take society for granted, in fact sci-fi has a very low opinion of what we call reality. This is why even right wing writers can write good books.

SW: Your first book *King Rat* is Fantasy but is set in contemporary London. In your second and third books you invent a completely new world. How and why did you make that imaginative leap?

I think that a writer's first book is always anomalous in that you are writing in a vacuum. It's also a much longer process as usually you are trying to do other things, work, finish university etc. I had much more time writing the next books and I think these novels are informed by the enormous pleasure I took in trying to invent a secondary world in the knowledge that my work was being taken seriously.

SW: You stood as a candidate for the socialist alliance in London. How difficult is it to balance activism and writing and what would you say to artists who are interested in the movement but feel they don't have time?

With art and politics both sides talk to each other. It's true that when you are working on something artistic you become almost autistic and for activists that can sound very self-indulgent. But artists can't kid themselves that there is a substitute for grounded political activity.

You should try to do both. As an artist your work often involves isolation and means you are not part of a collectivity like most workers are. Some artists fetishise this and have an ambivalent attitude towards political organisations but I think this is a tragedy. It's very important for artists to remain connected to the movement organisationally.

SW: Even though your books are fantastical a reader can recognise many elements of today's society in them, class warfare, racism, imperialism, revolutionary movements and strikes. Did you set out to write specifically political books?

I didn't come at this as a socialist writing a sci-fi novel. I came at it as a lover of sci-fi, but of course my writing is informed by my ideas. As soon as you start preaching you lose the reader. What I like is good stories, exotic creatures, but also political texture as it makes the invented world more concrete.

Ireland's gulags

IF YOU want to see the best film of the year, go to the Magdalene Sisters. If you want to see a really good film about Irish society, go to the Magdalene Sisters. In fact, just go. It is a must for anyone who has had any dealings with the Catholic Church.

Peter Mullan, the writer and director, was inspired by a documentary on Channel 4, *Sex in a Cold Climate*, to do a full-length feature film on how women were imprisoned in the Magdalene Laundries.

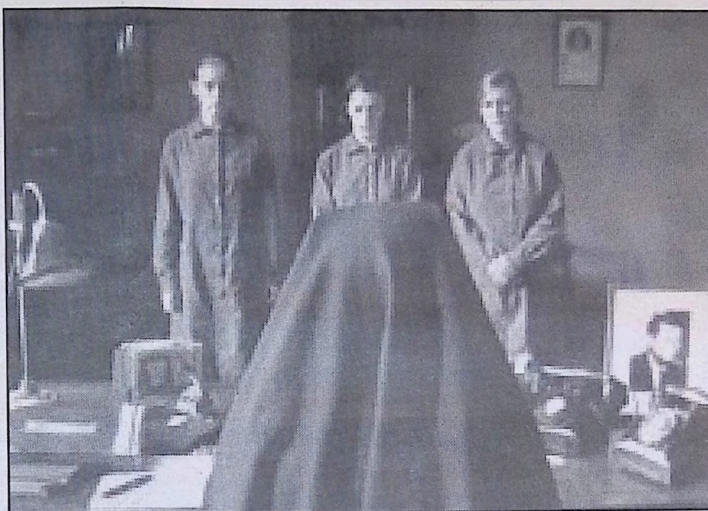
He has set the film in the 1960s and at the end of the film reminds us that last of these institutions only closed in 1996.

Result

The result is absolute excellence. It works on all levels, not least entertainment.

The plot is tight, the characters believable and sympathetic but there is no sentimentality. It is also an education in itself and an indictment of Ireland's past.

It is very rare to find a film where women are the main characters — ordinary women in the best sense of the word, who are not glamorised in a Hollywood style. They fight each



IRELAND'S Taliban brutalised a generation

other, rebel and are beaten down, but some still band together to take on the loathsome nuns.

There is no romantic ending but a sense of sheer shock in the cinemas as people silently contemplate the terrible truth about the Irish gulags.

Some 30,000 women were locked up in the Magdalene laundries. They were the 'fallen women' who had children outside marriage, who had sex outside marriage or who 'graduated' from orphanages to these workhouses because they were too flirtatious. The women toiled old washing boards to clean the clothing of the clergy and the rich.

The Magdalene Sisters were mainly poor.

As one of the film characters put it "they could not touch you if you were respectable." Like the industrial schools, the church used the slave

labour to make profits. One brilliant scene has the Reverend Mother counting £5 notes in a dirty Jacobs biscuit tin beside a picture of John F Kennedy, the US President.

Almost every household at the time had a picture of Kerenedy on their mantle piece - usually beside Pope John 23rd.

Hypocrite

The modern eye knows what the characters didn't - that he was a philandering hypocrite.

Suitable then that he was an icon to the Irish Catholic Church.

Irish Catholicism always linked sexual repression to respectability. Pregnancy outside marriage let your family down in the eyes of the neighbours. That was really why it was a sin.

Mullan's film shows

the utter bleakness of how Catholicism hollowed out the emotional life of many parents and turned them into cold monsters. In one scene, a daughter implores her mother to look at her new grandchild and to forget he was born in sin.

In another, a father drags his daughter back to the laundry, beating her with his belt.

The link between respectability and sexual repression was forged after the Famine.

Hundreds of thousands of labourers and cottiers were cleared from the land.

The 'small farmer' made his appearance, desperate to consolidate his land ownership by using the cheap labour of their children.

The worst thing that could happen was for an illegitimate child to arrive who might lay claim to the miserable pieces of land.

The Catholic clergy were recruited from this grasping new middle class.

Their harsh morality had to destroy joy and spontaneity in the interests of land ownership.

Subsequently, the morality took on a life of its own and was fed back to the population as compensation for the many failures of an independent Irish capitalist republic.

The Magdalene Sisters is a shocking film.

But it is even more shocking to think that despite all the revelations, priests are still running our schools, hospitals and some university departments.

Cardinal Connell who has covered up for child abusers is still able to dictate to the Ethics Committees of hospitals; his minions who are parish priest are automatically put in charge of primary schools, secret networks of his supporters in Opus Dei still dominate the hierarchy of universities.

Dictatorship

When the Catholic dictatorship fell in Portugal in 1974, there was a process of sanieamento to clear out all those who were implicated in the cruelty of the regime.

We are still in great need of a sanieamento in Ireland.

This film will cheer you up simply because we have a clear, powerful intelligence at work here, fighting our fight.

'You'll never get £3' — but they did!

RECENTLY RELEASED pamphlet, *You'll Never Get £3* is the story of the Home Help workers in the Cork area, who successfully campaigned to have their wages raised from poverty level to 50% above the minimum wage!

Care

Home Helps provide enormous care and attention to the elderly, the disabled and those suffering from terminal illnesses like cancer.

Often, because of underfunding in the health service, they are

the only health workers a disabled person gets to see. This has meant sometimes being on call 24 hours a day.

Argue

Like nurses, teachers and social workers they were branded as doing 'vocational work'.

This idea has allowed employers and right-wingers to argue that they should not be treated like other workers, and not be entitled to decent wages for their work.

As it had traditionally been women who occupied these jobs, it was a

natural extension of the sexism of capitalism that denied recognition to the work done by women in the home.

In any sane society, these workers would be massively rewarded, but capitalism — Irish style, up to 1997, was paying them £1.70.

After months of campaigning, including disrupting meetings of the Southern Health Board, they were insulted with a 30p rise.

Not only did Home Help workers have to fight the layers of bureaucracy in the Southern Health Board, the HSEA

and the Department of Health and Children, they were also faced with the madness of one union blocking another from negotiating.

Intimidation

At every stage they were faced with refusals, arrogance and intimidation, but through a classic grass roots campaign, solidarity and real, militant trade union activism on the part of the ATGWU, by 2001, the Home Helps had won the right to £6.50 an hour, over £2 more than the minimum wage!



where
we
stand

The present system has led to huge inequalities of wealth. The greed for profit is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet. A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

REVOLUTION

That cannot be done on a gradual piecemeal basis. Socialists can use parliament to expose this system but fundamental social change will not come through parliament. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy. They all ensure there is one law for the rich and another for the rest. To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based much greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth. Bush's "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance. We oppose this war and see imperialism as the greatest enemy of peace.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression. This divides and weakens 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.

FOR AN END TO RACISM

We fight to end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry. We oppose immigration controls which are always racist. Asylum seekers and refugees should have full rights of citizenship, including the right to work. We oppose deportations.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

The Good Friday Agreement brought an end to armed struggle but it also institutionalised sectarianism by setting Catholic and Protestant communities in competition with each other for under-resourced services. The communal politicians from Sinn Fein to the DUP push policies of privatisation — while building a political base from the competition between 'both communities'. We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Blair government. Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction.' We want to see an Irish workers republic where all workers gain. Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

OUR WORLD IS NOT FOR SALE

We oppose the sell-offs of public services to private interests. We fight for direct labour. We want properly-funded, publicly run services democratically controlled from below. We participate in the wider anti-capitalist movement.

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

Trade unions exist to defend

news & reports/politics/industry/the unions (01) 8722682 /fax (01) 872 3838 e-mail swp@clubi.ie

PHONE REPORTS ABOUT STRIKES/LOCAL CAMPAIGNS/PROTESTS

IFI closure

Occupations can win

OVER 600 IFI workers are being let go with miserly redundancy payments despite Mary Harney's promises to the contrary.

Workers however have refused to take it lying down.

At the end of October they demonstrated outside the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, booed and jeered Bertie Ahern and Michael Martin at a FF fundraising dinner in Cork.

The government were happy to give over £180 million to the banks just to pay interest on IFI's predecessor's debt but refuse to spend any money to save the company.

Package
The E24.4 million redundancy package will mean that most workers will come out with just two weeks per year of service.

IFI workers in all three areas should occupy the plants immediately, as not only is the deal unacceptably low, but there is already uncertainty about when the package will be paid.

The machinery and raw materials are worth a lot of money and are an important bargaining chip that work-

ers should be in control of.

The Cork Council of Trade Unions have called on the ICTU to break off negotiations on a new social partnership agreement.

This should be done

immediately but more importantly a nationwide strike by all union members should be called. IFI workers should call on other workers to join their fight for decent redundancy for all.

'We won't get anywhere by being polite.'

SOCIALIST WORKER spoke to a shop steward from the Cork IFI plant.

"The mood among the workers is amazing. I've never seen anything like in all my years working here. Even the most conservative of people who never seemed to care about anything or anybody are becoming the most militant. That's because the way they are being treated by the Government. The pensions issue is the big thing with workers here.

Can you imagine after all your life in a place like this, producing and working with chemicals, you expect at least a decent pension. It's the pits what's after happening to people. We are told that our pen-

sion is worth 40% of its original value.

Bertie Ahern or Mary Harney wouldn't put up with this why should we as workers take it.

After the march in Dublin we had a general meeting in the canteen. We decided to report for work each day until the receiver comes in - that way we can keep in touch with other instead of drifting off.

He was attending a big Fianna Fail fundraiser. Three hundred workers and their families turned up. It was a really angry militant protest. I was right up near the door and got right into Bertie's face. He was shaking. So too was Michael Martin the Education Minister. They were verbally abused and jostled and heckled by the IFI workers. They were rattled and terrified.

Protest



We will get between 1.8 and 2.5 weeks of pay per year of service. That is an insult to any worker. And that will be capped at a

ceiling of 25 years service. So a tiny number if any of the workforce will get anything like 50,000.

I think an occupation is

what we need to win this - we won't get anywhere by being polite with this show-off that are in power."

Solidarity is key

SOCIALIST WORKER spoke to a union rep from the Belfast IFI plant:

"When we left the protest at Harney's office the union officials told us we would be going to London to protest at ICI.

"But now we have to pay for ourselves to go. We are still reporting for work and not getting paid. We can't have our P45's until

after 18 November. So we are completely in a limbo.

"I think we need to make links with Arklow and Cork. We can't leave Belfast out on a limb. Up here three weeks pay per year of service is the norm for redundancy but workers expect 6 weeks in the South. So we have to stick together on this.

It's already rumoured that our plant has been sold to a company involved in the north sea oil fields. Why

are we being treated like this?

Any money from the sale of this plant should be used to fix up the workers. I think the union officials like to feed their ego by sitting around Government offices talking. But talking is going to get us our rights. We need action but are getting no direction from the union. That means links with workers in the South are even more important."

Issues for the Labour movement

We don't need another partnership deal

AS NEGOTIATIONS on a successor to the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness begin, talk of pay pauses and wage restraint is in the air. Government and IBEC are putting the boot in from the very start.

IBEC want a six month pay pause while the government is telling public sector workers that they will get benchmarking and nothing else.

The fact that trade union leaders are prepared to stay around the negotiating table says a lot about their commitment to social partnership. It is a commitment that many workers don't share.

The reality of "partnership" is

shown in Peerless Rugs, Irish Glass Bottles and IFI. Labour Court recommendations are ignored and workers are treated with contempt. There never was any real partnership.

Restraint

Social partnership agreements were just vehicles for imposing wage restraint while big business rolled in the profits.

In the ten years from 1987- the year of the Programme for National Recovery- the share of the national economy going to wages, pensions and social security declined by 10% while the share going to profits, interests, dividends and rent increased by 10%.

McCreevy's agenda is very clear. He wants Ireland to be a low wage economy. He explained before talks began in early November "We need to take account of pay levels in competitor countries and consequently set our level of pay increases below the level of increases applying in our partner countries in the euro area".

Ireland is currently the third cheapest place to hire workers. Net pay for the average male worker is just €26500 per year with only Spain and Italy on lower rates. McCreevy won't be happy until he sees us right at the bottom of the table.

These wage rates, taken in the context of Eurostat figures that revealed Ireland is the second most expensive country in the

Euro-zone after Finland, mean that Irish workers are the worst off in Europe.

After years of sacrifice followed by years of economic boom workers remain at the bottom of the pile. Now the same old arguments that Charlie Haughey used in his appeal to the nation in the 1980s are being revisited.

They ring as hollow now as they proved to be then. Ireland is the fourth richest country in the world according to the UN Development Programme. The problem is not lack of money but who controls it and who benefits. Workers need to take action now to reap the rewards of economic growth.

Our trade union leaders have demonstrated over the years that they are closer to government

ministers than they are to ordinary workers. On their hiked up salaries and expense accounts they have colluded in selling workers out.

We need a strategy that can challenge the priorities McCreevy and his friends in government want to set. This means fighting to reverse the cuts in health, housing and education, making the corrupt pay for their crimes, raising statutory redundancy payments and demanding immediate wage increases.

In Italy and Spain the trade unions have organised general strikes and made themselves a force to be reckoned with. We need a 24-hour general strike here.

That is a real and practical alternative to social partnership.

Firefighters

Keep up the fight

"It took the death of a firefighter to force our employers to admit that firefighting is a hazardous job.

"It is a disgrace that another one of our colleagues had to die to highlight the dangers faced by us everyday or to justify our pay claim", Jim Quinn, FBU Northern Ireland Region Chairperson, told Socialist Worker.

The death of firefighter Bob Miller, the 28th firefighter to die on duty since 1990 came as their employers tried to undermine FBU demands for fair pay by claiming their job is less hazardous than in the past.

Negotiations have been described as "constructive" but as yet no firm offer is on the table, the government is still aiming at channelling all talk about pay into the Bain review that has already ruled out any possibility of giving firefighters a 40% pay rise.

As Socialist Worker goes to press it is unclear whether or not the planned 8 day strike will go ahead on the 6th November, however what is abundantly clear is that the possibility of a firefighter strike and solidarity action by train drivers and other workers forced the government to get round the negotiating table with FBU officials.

Protested

The mood amongst rank and file firefighters is certainly not one of backing down. In the last few days hundreds have protested outside the negotiations calling for nothing less than 30k a year with no ties.

Jim Quinn told Socialist Worker, "at the moment we are still planning to strike on the 6th, our members are determined to get the pay they deserve, they will not wait indefinitely, they have been patient so far".

There is a clear feeling that they won't get 30k without a fight, and that means strike action.

The overwhelming vote for strike action is however a warning to Blair that the firefighters mean business, this vote has given FBU Secretary, Andy Gilchrist, an emphatic mandate for talking to the employers, but he will also be aware that there is huge gulf between the expectations of those he represents and the government's willingness to be seen to give into pressure.

The government is acutely aware that even if the firefighters don't strike there is a serious revolt simmering on the horizon against poverty pay.

In the next few weeks there is action planned by teachers, public sector workers and train workers, each over low pay.

The firefighters pay campaign can be at the forefront of this looming confrontation, but it is essential that the mood of the rank and file members for action is not thrown away by con-

ceding ground or getting bogged down in long running talks.

The government is desperate to avoid confrontation with 55,000 firefighters, that is why they went from calling them "Scargalites" one day to sending John Prescott to talk to union officials the next.

Evidence

Also there is clear evidence that the government, despite the media's claims, is worried by the level of solidarity firefighters can get. John Prescott hinted at it, according to FBU union insiders. Health and safety reps and shop stewards across the UK report an unprecedented feeling that,

because of safety fears, people were not prepared to work normally on fire brigade strike days.

Calls from the union leaders from the rail unions through Amicus to the GMB-for reps to press bosses over safety have encouraged that mood. London Underground bosses had to soften their hardline stance over workers' safety fears last week for fear of triggering walkouts if they victimised staff for not working normally. Senior managers in the civil service adopted a similar approach. And the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which is represented on the government's strike-breaking Cobra committee, has been inundated with queries about safety in the

event of a fire brigade strike.

Solidarity is essential. It puts more pressure on the government but secondly it raises the confidence of the rank and file inside the FBU. This in turn keeps the pressure on the union officials. There is a coordinated campaign from above to influence the FBU leaders, from both the TUC and the government. It is important to ensure that the greatest pressure felt by the officials is that from the rank and file. The involvement of various union reps in strike support groups and collecting for the firefighters in their own workplaces will be a crucial part of gaining a victory for the firefighters and control room staff.

Dun Laoghaire

Save the Seafront

DUN LAOGHAIRE / Rathdown Co. Council are pushing ahead with plans to sell-off the sea front in Dun Laoghaire.

Following public protest the council backed down and promised to reopen Dun Laoghaire Baths. However, they want to hand it over to private developers instead of developing it as a fully public amenity.

Now they are also pushing to re-zone the Carlisle Pier in the Dun Laoghaire Harbour to allow for luxury apartments and a hotel to be built.

As one resident said "soon you will need a swipe card to get down to the sea."

The baths and the harbour area are the property of the people. They need to be developed to provide badly needed public amenities not as a playground for the wealthy.

The Carlisle Pier should be used as the site for the

National Maritime Museum and other harbour related amenities.

According to campaign organiser, Richard Boyd Barrett "A refurbished baths must be accessible to all not just those who can afford it. We also badly need a skate park for young people in the area and some sort of centre for local cultural and artistic activities."

"There is no reason why the council and government could not do this kind of public re-development of the seafront. This is how we could bring back some real life and community spirit to the Dun Laoghaire area."

"The problem is that the council seems more interested in ways to make money for developers and business interests than in the needs of local people."

Join the demonstration to Save Our Seafront outside the next council meeting on Monday November 11th. Assemble at 6pm in

front of the council offices on Marine Road Dun Laoghaire.

Contact Richard Boyd Barrett Tel: 087 632 9511

DEMONSTRATE

Monday 11 Nov
6pm County Hall

Irish Rail

Irish Rail faces the loss of up to 600 jobs. The extent of the proposed cuts was revealed at a crisis meeting between unions and management on October 31st. Irish Rail are proposing the withdrawal of all freight services as well as the closure of lines between Rosslare and Wexford, Waterford and Limerick Junction and Limerick and Ballybrophy. NBRU members on the railways are already balloting for industrial action.

Pfizer

WORKERS IN Pfizer, the pharmaceutical giant, on Pottery road in Dun Laoghaire have recently lodged a 29% pay claim with management.

The 150 workers are seeking parity with Pfizers in Cork where workers were recently given a 27.1% pay rise with two days extra holidays and a VHI B+ Plan. The plant on Pottery Road was formally owned by Warner Lambert and was only taken over by Pfizers two years ago.

When the company was approached about the parity claim, management told union reps that Dun Laoghaire was a "cost company" and they didn't make profits so therefore they could not afford a pay rise.

According to a SIPTU shop steward in the plant "this is nonsense. Pfizers is the ninth biggest corporation in the world, it's bigger than Boeing and recently

Health service

We need a days strike for all cleaners

STRIKING workers at St. Mary's and the Meath Hospitals in Dublin took further action last week when they placed pickets on their former employers now trading as Direct Cleaning Services.

After three days picketing their offices in Dolohins Barn, the former directors of BCS offered the women four jobs, one thousand euro and a TV to raffle at their fundraising social.

Needless to say where they were told where to stuff it.

But it showed that pressure on the culprits could yield some results and draw attention to the injustices done to these women.

Alice who spoke to Socialist Worker said, "What we need is a day's strike by all cleaners across Dublin. What has happened to us could happen and probably is happening to hundreds more cleaners. Contractors are abusing us and getting away with it. Foreign national labour is being used against us."

"This is completely wrong. But it's the system that is to blame. They are brought in on one year's contract and are available to work all the hours God sent."

"But we are trying to earn a few bob by working around our domestic circumstances. And we have done this for years."

Many of the cleaners have up to 18 years service in the same place of employment. They were not originally employed by BCS but are being dumped by them and the especially by the Eastern Health Board.

As Alice says, "The Eastern Health Board may not have any legal obligation to us but they certainly have a moral one. They can't get away with treating us like nobodies after years and years of cleaning their hospitals. We want our jobs and our hours back."

Ann who works in the



Meath agrees. "We are a gang that has worked together for years. More like a family. And we have worked hours that let us mind our kids, our husbands, look after the home. We can't be treated like dirt just because we clean up the dirt. Mary Harney and the rest of them want to see us lose our welfare benefits, the lousy few bob we get from the state. And that is why they are using foreign workers who will work long hours for less pay to undermine us. It's a disgrace."

It's time the union acted to put a stop to these divisions. If contractors are allowed to treat their workers like this, women with years and years of service working together as teams, it will feed into racist ideas on the ground.

The women want to see SIPTU organise a one-days strike across Dublin to defend the rights of Contract Cleaners. A stoppage and march through Dublin of the thousands of low-paid and hard worked cleaners could send a message to the employers and the state to take their greedy hands off the pay and conditions of cleaners. They deserve respect.

At a social function in Ballyfermot over 800 euro was raised to kick start a solidarity fund for the cleaners. Thanks to the many workers who bought tickets. The money will be ever more important coming into the Christmas period. Most of these women have young families and very little other income. But they are determined to stay out until they win.

Solidarity messages and financial support for the cleaners should can be sent via Brid Smith on 087-9090166.

Bin Tax

DUN LAOGHAIRE / Rathdown Co. Council has sent threatening letters to thousands of people demanding payment of the bin tax.

The letters are just an attempt to scare people into paying. The letter says they will pursue arrears on the bin tax through the courts "if necessary". That means at this stage they are not planning to go to the courts.

Tens of thousands of households have refused to pay this unjust double tax. It would take them decades to bring that many people to court.

According to Richard Boyd Barrett, "The council and government should stop

threatening ordinary workers and pensioners and abolish this unjust double tax now.

"We have already paid for refuse collection and other services through our taxes. If the government needs extra money they should tax their rich friends in big business who have been involved in massive tax scams for years. Not a single corrupt businessman has been sent to jail for tax evasion." "The Campaign Against Service charges is distributing thousands of leaflets to reassure people and build the campaign to defeat the double tax." Tel: 087 632 9511

ASTI

ASTI members will be balloting between November 12th and November 19th on the issue of supervision and substitution and the lifting of the ban on the implementation of new syllabi.

The supervision and substitution package is a bad deal. The INTO is currently in talks to try and rectify some of the worst elements. ASTI members would be mad to accept the deal as it stands.

At present there is a lot of scaremongering going on within the ASTI. As usual union bureaucrats turn to the law when they want to frighten their members into submission. ASTI members should vote to maintain the ban and against accepting the S&S deal.

INTO

The INTO is meeting with the public services committee of the ICTU to voice its concerns over the conduct of negotiations on the implementation of the benchmarking report.

They are concerned about the lack of progress on implementation of the benchmarking awards. The INTO is bound by an Annual Congress decision to have the benchmarking award fully paid by June 2003 but the ICTU appears to have a much more flexible timeframe in mind. On implementation of the "moderni-

sation" agenda of the Report the signs are ominous: At a meeting on October 16th issues that were raised included the continuation of school planning, flexibility around communication with parents and in-career development. When confronted from the floor on this at the Dublin city south meeting, the CEC rep said that the INTO leadership would be prepared to offer both parent teacher meetings and in service outside school hours in return for proper remuneration (i.e. the 13% in the Benchmarking report!)

Health Service

TWO CATEGORIES of nurses have balloted for industrial action as a consequence of the failure of the benchmarking report to address issues specific to their positions.

Mental handicap nurses (RMHN) have returned a 95% vote in favour of industrial action to restore their relative pay and reporting position vis-à-vis house parents and assistant house parents who they work alongside. The latter were awarded increases of up to 27% which means they are now paid E2000 more than the nurses they report to.

1,550 public health nurs-

es voted for industrial action up to and including strike action.

The finding by the Commission on Nursing that public health nurses work at the level of a clinical nurse specialist was ignored by the benchmarking body. This means in practical terms that their relative position has been eroded by 3%.

Meanwhile INO nurses in the radiology department of St. Vincent's University Hospital have voted unanimously in favour of industrial action over management's failure to implement an agreement that would have given them parity of

pay and conditions with nurses on the National Liver Programme.

★ THIRTY FIVE workers on strike at Spring Valley Nursing Home in Enniscorthy since August 28th got a welcome boost at the start of November.

Ambulance crews notified the South Eastern Health Board that they would no longer service the nursing home unless responding to genuine emergencies. Management at the nursing home have refused to discuss wages and conditions and have brought in an untrained scab workforce thus seriously compromising levels of care for patients.

Socialist Worker

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

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

€1.00 / £0.70p

inside

Stop Bush's war pages 3

Eammon McCann on the

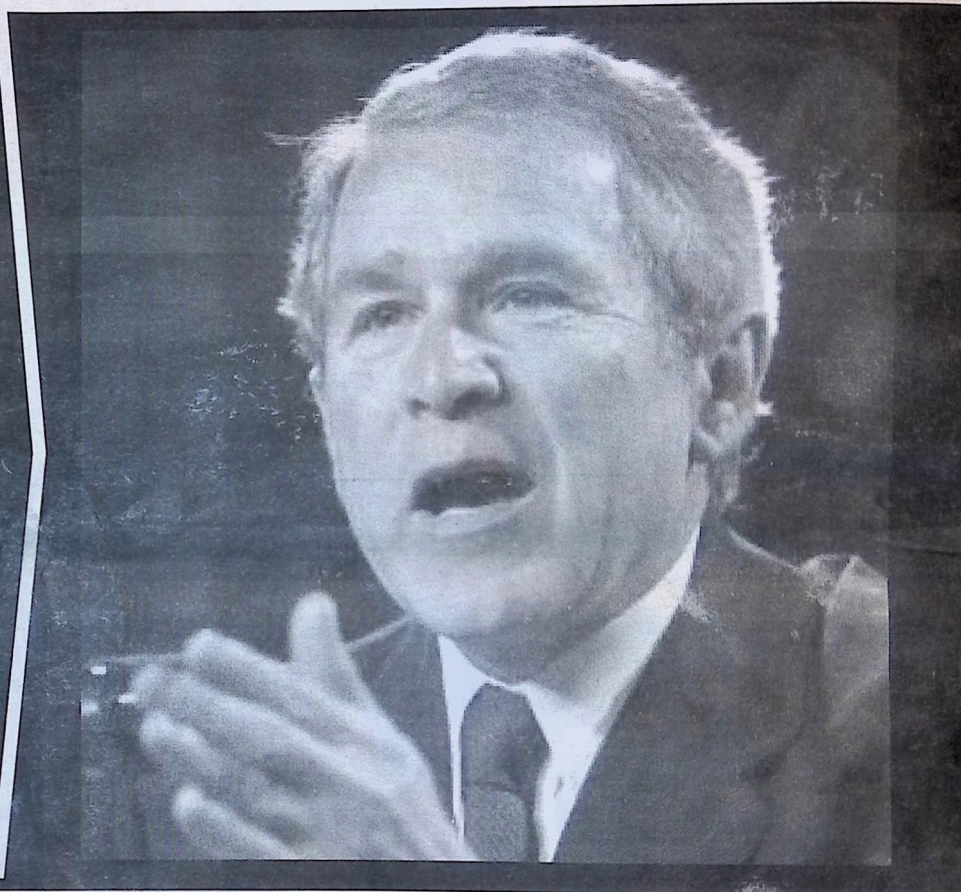
Secret History of the IRA page

Occupations can win page 5

Solidarity price €2.00

NO TO WAR ON IRAQ WITH OR WITHOUT UN SUPPORT

**BUSH
WANTS
BLOOD**



But opposition is growing

