

Socialist Worker

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Bush's Weapons of Mass Destruction
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GET THESE WARPLANES OUT OF SHANNON!

US WAR planes are using Shannon airport to transport troops to attack Iraq.

But the majority of the Irish people are against this war.

A recent opinion poll in the Irish Times found that 59 percent of people wanted Brian Cowan to vote against war at the UN Security Council.

Instead he has pledged full backing to Bush's war machine.

Inflict

This is why he has opened up Shannon for use by US warplanes.

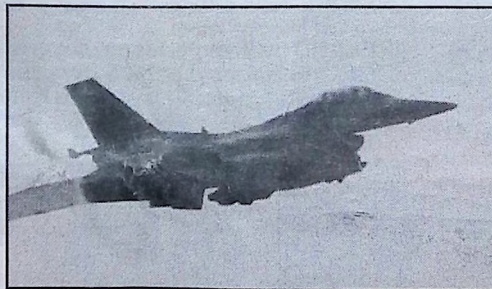
But why should facilities of a supposedly neutral country be used to inflict war on innocent Iraqis.

Grab

What right has the US to act as the world's policeman and to grab hold of Iraq's oil supplies?

We need to build a huge opposition movement to that war.

We need Irish Anti-War Groups in every area to mobilise against this bloodshed.



Now turn to page three

SLASHER MCCREEEY:

CHARLIE MCCREEEY boasts he isn't afraid to make "tough choices" when it comes to cutting spending. But the only people he's tough on are workers and the unemployed.

- He abolished the first time buyers grant

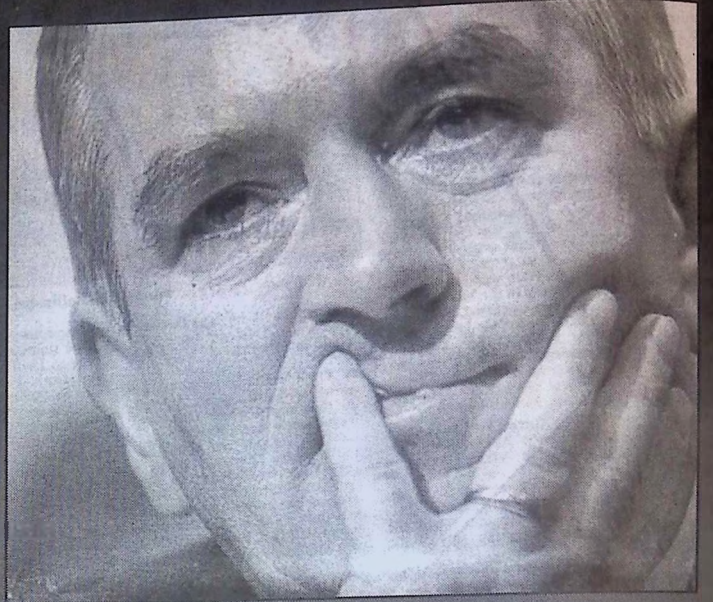
overnight.

- He cut Community Employment places by another 5000.
- He slashed spending on school buildings.
- He cut the money for local authority house building.
- He refused to give the medical card to 200,000 low-income families.
- He has frozen rent allowance for single people.

- He won't give cancer patients in the south-east a local radiotherapy unit.

There is only one reason for all these cuts. McCreevy wants to make sure that the rich enjoy the lowest rates of tax in the EU.

Next year, tax on profits will drop to a mere 12.5 percent. The reduction will cost the country a staggering 1 billion euro.



THE MINISTER FOR THE GOOD LIFE

YOU'RE A DISGRACE

For US

ACCORDING to the UN Ireland is one of the richest countries in the world but also one of the most unequal. McCreevy, Harney and their friends have created a country where

- 200,000 families live on less than €173 a week.
- 60% of local authority tenants in Dublin city live on incomes less than half the national average.

- Almost 50,000 families are on local authority housing waiting lists.
- 23% of the population have literacy problems.
- 125,000 primary school children are in classes of 30 or more.
- 25,000 people are on hospital waiting lists.
- 100,000 out patients are also waiting for treatment.
- 68% of children on waiting lists have to wait over six months for treatment.
- wages are the third lowest in Europe while prices are the second highest.

For THEM

MCCREEEY believes "we need to take account of pay levels in competitor countries and consequently set our pay levels below the level of increases applying in our partner countries in the euro area."

For politicians though he makes exceptions. They need to be paid as well as every other politician

in Europe, or better.

On top of the increases everyone got, the Taoiseach got a special 22% rise. His salary is now almost €150,000.

TDs were given an extra 18.7%. They now earn nearly €50,000 a year.

Heads of government departments, hospital consultants, heads of non commercial state-sponsored bodies and senior figures in the gardai and judiciary all received 33% pay rises.

CHARLIE MCCREEEY owns a six-bedroom house and stables on 12 acres in county Kildare. It is worth between €1.2 million and €1.5 million.

Fond of foreign holidays, McCreevy has no shortage of friends with villas to spare. He holidayed in multi-millionaire businessman, Dermot Desmond's villa in the south of France.

Along with Mary Harney, he also availed of Ulick McEvaddy's hospitality. McEvaddy is Ireland's best-

known arms dealer. His company Omega Air recently won a contract for air to air refuelling of US military aircraft.

McCreevy also likes the odd flutter. No surprise then that his friends in the horse industry got away with paying no tax for years.

He also must be well-loved down in Punchestown race course, in the heart of his Kildare constituency. His support surely played a big part in delivering over €20 million worth of state funding.

Not bad for an enterprise that had serious deficiencies in its financial records.

POLITICIANS GET SECOND HOME ALLOWANCE

WORKERS agonise about buying their first home but ministers are helped to get second ones.

The "dual abode allowance" means that ministers can get €50,000 to cover a mortgage on a second

home in the capital, or to cover hotel bills.

And remember Farnleigh house, the state mansion that we paid €52 million for? We now also pay €45,000 a day to allow government ministers to live it up with foreign dignitaries.

ROOF FALLS IN ON SCHOOL BUILDERS

A SCANDAL has broken out over the company involved in Ireland's first wave of Public Private Partnerships.

The British firm, Jarvis, was given a contract to build five schools and to run them for twenty years.

Hidden

The exact details of the contract are hidden due to 'commercial secrecy'. It is a form of privatization as all non-teaching staff will now be employed by Jarvis.

Now head teachers in 20 Yorkshire schools have presented the British education Ministers with a litany of

complaints against Jarvis. One head, Christine Spencer, said that the company's 'workmanship just isn't very good'.

Appreciate

They don't appreciate that these are buildings that are used by children and have to stand up to a lot of punishment.

In other words, Jarvis cuts corners to save costs.

Last January, the roof of a primary school it built in Glasgow collapsed.

Jarvis was also responsible for track maintenance at Potters Bar in London where seven people died in a derailment.

CUTS EXPECTED

IRELAND will experience severe electricity shortages by 2005 according to Eirgrid, the company which runs the national grid.

A new power plant is needed. But the state is prevented from building one because it would not fit in with plans to privatise the ESB.

Electricity has been de-regulated since 2000. But no private capitalist wants to build a generation station.

OUR JOBS MAKE US ILL

60 percent of workers say their jobs make them ill. That is the finding of Professor Tom Cox, Professor of Occupational Psychology at Nottingham University.

Musculo-skeletal disorders (such as back pains) and stress are the two biggest prob-

lems. Illness occurs as the workload gets out of control.

Professor Cox pointed out that there is a direct link between workloads getting out of control and the trend to globalisation of employees.

THE WHOLE THING IS WRONG

CAROL, a local authority tenant in Dublin, described her situation.

"You want to do your best for your kids but it's a nightmare. We're trying to make

the best of it but with Christmas coming up and all the pressure to buy all round you, it's hard not to get into debt.

I watch the politicians on *Prime Time* and I can't believe what they get away with. I want teach-

ers and nurses and fire-fighters to be paid well.

I want CE schemes for anyone who wants them. I want hospitals and schools that are well-built and comfortable. But they seem to want to do things completely different.

The whole thing is wrong."

★ DR. OWENS Wiwa, a brother of murdered Nigerian writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, recently visited Mayo to support protests against the building of a gas terminal by a subsidiary of the giant multi-national Shell.

Shell want to build a

processing terminal 8km inland in the village of Bellnaboy. This will mean that a high-pressure pipeline will travel through unstable peat bog. Experts say the risk of explosion is significant.

The proposed terminal will be just 300m from the nearest house.

Shell will pay no royalties, very little tax and the state will buy back its own oil at commercial rates.

According to Maura Harrington, a principal of a local school, "The way in which our natural resources are handed over to the multi-nationals is nothing short of scandalous."

Marathon Petroleum and Pierce Construction who are both also involved in the project have given political donations to Fianna Fail.

Frank Fahy, the local Fianna Fail minister, has championed Shell's case from the beginning.

No Blood for Oil!

Shannon is not a warport!

Shannon airport is being used as a major hub to transport US troops to a military base in Kuwait in preparation for an attack on Iraq.

Yet the Irish government has not even made any formal announcement to the Dail about this breach in Irish neutrality. It is instead running a covert operation to support the US war machine.

Evidence of US military use of Shannon has been growing.

On November 5th, a Lockheed Galaxy landed at Shannon. This huge troop carrier was involved in Bush's war in Afghanistan.

When Irish Times journalist, Vincent Browne visited Shannon airport he noticed a large white unmarked US aircraft with hundreds of US troops disembark-

ing. Two young US soldiers told him they were en route from the US military base in Georgia to Kuwait.

Kuwait is the major centre for US operations in the coming attack on Iraq.

The organisation ReFueling Peace has documented how scores of Hercules transporter planes have landed at Shannon.

DCU student Eoin Dubsky is now facing charges for dobbing graffiti on these planes.

Challenged

When the Irish government has been challenged on all these activities, it claims it is part of "normal activities".

But this sickening hypocrisy will not do. Flan Clune, the public relations officer of Aer Rianta, which runs the airport, has publicly conceded that government restrictions on B52 bombers using Shannon have been waived.

The majority of the Irish people are against the use of Irish airspace to wage a war to establish a US oil colony in Iraq.

The Iraqi people have already suffered enough through sanctions, with half a million children dying as a direct result.

But Foreign Minister Cowan wants to act as a poodle for George Bush. Late in November he appeared at the UN to pledge Irish support for war.

He justified this by saying the war has UN backing. But the Security Council of the UN is made of the big colonial powers and small countries like Ireland who are economically blackmailed by the US.

It is time to stand up to this blackmail. We do not want the innocent blood of Iraqis on our hands. There should be no collusion in US sponsored state terrorism.

And that means closing Shannon to US military use.

Action needed on war

Bush is using the UN arms inspectors as a pretext for war on Iraq. In the next few weeks the Pentagon will manufacture a story that Hussein has hidden weapons of mass destruction.

The US refuses to allow weapons inspectors to visit its own biological weapon manufacturing facilities - but it wants to pretend that weapons found in a country devastated by sanctions are a threat to humanity.

It is an excuse to grab hold of Iraq's huge oil reserves for US multinationals.

The only thing that can stop Bush is a huge anti-war movement. Over the next few weeks every activist needs to get word out about the following two protests.

★ On February 15th, the biggest ever simultaneous mass demonstrations against war will take part all over Europe.

The call for this action has come from the European Social Forum which

gathered together 60,000 anti-globalisation activists in Florence in November.

If war breaks out, there has to be an immediate response.

The Irish Anti War Move-

ment is calling on people to assemble outside the US embassy on the evening after any attack and demonstrate in every city the following weekend.

The unions must oppose war

The Irish trade union movement was founded by the anti-war socialist James Connolly, who claimed that "the bugle of war should be taken as the toxin for social rebellion".

Workers are the first victims of every war.

And the Irish trade union movement needs to come to the fore in

opposing it.

In Britain, most of the key unions have passed anti-war resolutions and are affiliated to the Stop the War Coalition.

In Italy, all the main unions joined the million strong anti-war march in Florence and many are now calling for a general strike against war.

Socialist Worker urges its supporters to campaign to win Irish union backing for the campaign against war.

PASS THIS RESOLUTION

This branch calls on our national unions to oppose Bush's plans to attack Iraq. We agree to affiliate to the Irish Anti-War Movement and to bring our union banner onto its mass protests against war.

A 24 Hour General Strike THIS IS HOW TO FIGHT CUTBACKS



On November 26th, public sector workers all over France went on strike. They were protesting against plans to privatise the post office and electricity and gas utilities.

The strike was joined by thousands of students who opposed the ban on appointing new teaching staff. In some towns the protests were joined by private sector workers.

This is the real way to fight government cuts. Instead of doing another cosy partnership deal with McCreevy, SIPTU and the ICTU should be calling its members out on a 24 hour general strike against privatisation and cuts.

Join the socialists

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

TU/College/School _____ Phone _____

Fill in this form and send to SWP, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8
Tel (01) 872 2682
Email swp@clubl.ie

Latest attack on civil liberties

Big Brother is watching you

Justice Minister McDowell has drawn up plans to monitor thousands of Irish citizens - and to share information on some of them with US intelligence agencies.

He has drafted a new Bill that will keep detailed data on e-mails, mobile phone calls and faxes for up to four years.

Every e-mail will now be open to inspection by Department of Justice officials. Monitoring of mobile phones means the state can find out exactly where anyone was at certain points and dates.

Visits

Internet server companies will also have to store information on every web page that a subscriber visits for four years.

It will mean huge databases on everyone who visits 'alternative' web sites such as Znet or Indymedia or even Michael Moore.com.


Malachy Murphy, from the Irish Council of Civil Liberties says 'The Bill treats everyone as a potential suspect in a crime'.

Crime

Co-incidentally it has emerged that McDowell has been arguing inside the EU to share data on EU citizens with the CIA and the FBI.

The German, French, Spanish and Dutch governments expressed concerns

AND HIS NAME IS McDOWELL!



IGNORANCE
IS
STRENGTH
SLAVERY
IS
FREEDOM
WAR
IS
PEACE

about this.

But McDowell had no problems. He said that security services in Britain and Ireland had been doing this for years.

'If people are worried

about it, they should have been worried for the last 30 to 50 years'.

McDowell's new plans for intelligence gathering are inspired by the crack down on civil liberties that

has come in the wake of Bush's 'war against terrorism'.

In Britain similar plans by the Blair government ran into massive opposition. The same is needed here.

Dame street police violence A vow of silence

Most of the police who rioted in Dame St against Reclaim the Street protesters have taken a Mafia style vow of silence.

Only 20 of the 150 police officers responded to an inquiry from the Garda Complaints Board.

Chairman of the Garda Complaints Board, Gordon Holmes, said that seven or eight police men who were caught on video wielding their batons cannot now be identified.

Accidental

He has also said that it was purely accidental that they were not wearing their numbers, as required!

But anti-capitalist protesters have noted that nearly all baton-wielding police remove their identification numbers.

While police kept silent, they put pressure on

demonstrators to come forward and identify people who took part in the street party.

One activist in Globalise Resistance said, 'I got several phone calls asking me to come in and make a statement. Their aim was to pick out the protestors from photos and identify them. It was an intelligence gathering operation'. The whole affair shows that the Irish

★ **Seventy** people have received **€60 million** from the Irish government for Garda assaults and wrongful arrests in the last five years.

The figures were revealed to Labour TD, Joe Costello, in the Dail recently.

But Garda headquarters have refused to say how many police officers have been disciplined for these offences.

Scandals just keep coming

★ **The Morris tribunal:** Allegations have been made of Gardai

planting drugs and explosives, framing witnesses and even of murder.

★ **Abbeylara:** Legal representatives of the Gardai have prevented an inquiry into shooting of John Carthy in April 2000. Carthy was shot three times in the legs before he was shot a fourth time in the back by marksmen. Gardai claim that they were unable to contact his solicitor but it took RTE's *Prime Time* 25 seconds to get his mobile number from Directory Enquiries.

★ **Bud Dwyer:** Garda commissioner Pat Byrne's 18-room home in Meath, was bought from the criminal Christy 'Bud' Dwyer.

★ **Dean Lyons:** The Dublin drug addict was wrongly charged with two murders. Lyons signed statements confessing but he could not have carried out the murders. Hounded out of Ireland by the cops. Dean Lyons died of an overdose in Manchester last year.

★ **Advance Pitstop:** The tyre company overcharged the Garda by €208,000. Trips were laid on for senior gardai to England, Spain, Italy and Portugal by Advance Pitstop. The trips cost at least €45,000.

Garda fleet manager Oliver Hanlon said they were upset to find there were no tyre facilities to visit on each of the trips.

Northern Ireland

Will the republicans back the PSNI?

THE republicans are once again engaged in a piece of complex choreography with the British and Irish governments - this time over backing the PSNI.

The new plan is to wind down the IRA completely in return for ex-paramilitaries getting a place on police boards.

Blair wants republican backing for a police force as the key to stability in the future.

Power

The first step came with new draft legislation on policing from the British government.

The new legislation would give more power to the Police Board and to police Ombudsman, Nuala O'Loan.



The future of community policing

Its key proposal was for District Partnership Boards onto which former paramilitaries would be permitted to serve. Unionist politician are already up in arms over this suggestion. The DUP MP, Peter Robinson, said that Unionists would resign from all police boards if the republicans were let on.

But the DUP have long engaged in this bluster - and then went and collected

their pay cheques for joining the Stormont Executive!

The aim of the British and Irish governments will be to override this opposition to reach the final chapter of the Belfast agreement - republican backing for the police. Significantly, Adams and the republican leadership have not ruled this out. They are simply demanding that the full Pat-

ton proposals on the police be implemented. They want extra minor reforms such as making the police commissioner more answerable - but they think they can win this in negotiations.

In the background, they are aware that their friends in the US establishment are pressing for the run down of all 'terrorist' organisations. The republican lead-

ership will fudge and manoeuvre to keep up a militant image. So they are running a tokenistic campaign to drop the name of 'London' from 'London-

derry' to cover their tracks. But their trajectory over the last few years shows they will bow to US pressure and eventually back the police.

WE THINK

SOCIALISTS differ from republicans and loyalists because we never endorse the police.

In a profit driven society, the police always support the powerful. They are used against strikes and protests - not against the crimes of the rich.

The police accept the worst prejudices of society. Sectarian and racist ideas grow amongst them. Most studies show higher support by police officers for right wing and far right parties.

Putting ex-paramilitaries on police boards won't change this. It will just give those paramilitaries more control over 'their communities'. In the South, De Valera recruited republicans into the Special Branch. They were known as Bray harriers' in the 1930s.

They became just as right wing and vicious as the Blueshirts they were supposed to replace. Ex IRA men from West Belfast will behave no differently.



Latin America swings leftwards

'I WANT my victory to symbolize that nobody is inferior to anybody else'. This is what Lula, winner of Brazil's presidential election, told crowds on October 27th. On January 1st 2003, he will assume office.

It was what millions wanted to hear. Brazil is one of the most unequal countries in the world. Hunger and unemployment affect many. The rich have even paid off duty cops to shoot down street kids who disturb their peace.

Warning

Lula had won despite the warnings from US banks. Merrill Lynch and Morgan Moody had issued 'warnings' to foreign investors. Since the results, the screams of the US rightwing have grown shriller.

A leading Republican Senator, Henry Hyde wrote to Bush warning

that Lula, Castro and Chavez in Venezuela had formed a new 'axis of evil' which now had control of 'a 30 thousand ton nuclear bomb' which could be fired from Brazil.

US Finance Minister Paul O Neill said that the markets were waiting for Lula 'to assure them he is not a crazy person'.

Victory

Lula's victory grew from the despair which neo-liberal policies have brought. After the violent defeat of guerrilla movements throughout the 1980s, Latin America became a showcase for free market policies.

Taxes on wealth were cut. Privatisation was promoted everywhere. People were told that they would be rewarded with jobs brought by foreign investment.

For a period it seemed to work. Latin America was labelled an 'emerging market' by speculators who wanted a fast buck. But in the late 1990s, they began to withdraw their money.

For Brazil, it meant economic calamity. The real was devalued by 30 percent. The IMF was called in to offer a 30 billion loan. But it came with huge strings.

There was to be no government deficit — so spending on health and education had to be cut. Interest rates had to be kept high to please speculators.

Lula won because he gave voice to the anger of the poor. He promised to create jobs and end hunger. 'Did we win democracy' he once asked 'only to have the right to cry out our hunger?'

But he has also made concessions to the black-mail of the rich. His running mate was Jose Alencar, a right wing textile factory owner from the Liberal Party. He has committed himself to sticking with the IMF programme and paying off Brazil's foreign debt.

The anti-globalisation movement held its major conference in Porte Allegre, a city dominated by Lula's party, the Workers Party (PT).

Now a major debate



IMF imposed poverty on Brazilian children

Who are the Brazilian Left?

Workers Party:

FOUNDED in 1980 by metal workers union in Sao Paulo. Began with 300 activists from Christian socialist and Marxist backgrounds. Made big electoral gains in late 1980s and faced pressures to move to the right.

In 1993, however, a new leadership was elected from left which promised 'to guarantee the revolutionary socialist character of the party'.

Despite this declaration, reformist pressure grew as the PT won control of more city councils. New policies were produced which claimed that 'socialism was not on the agenda, at this stage'.

The party is still composed of a number of 'platforms' - and some look to far left. These will now have to organise to stop Lula caving into pressure from IMF.

CUT:

THIS is the main Brazilian trade union federation. Originally, the Vargas dictatorship ran a system of state-controlled unions.

But in recent years the CUT have begun to align with the Workers Party.

MST:

THE Movement of the Landless Workers: Founded in 1984, it uses direct action to seize unused land and take back land from the big landowners.

Occupied the estates of the former President, FH Cardoso. It has managed to settle an extra quarter of a million peasants on land since its campaign began.

They will be watching Lula to make sure he keeps his promises to the rural poor.

Ecuador: Will Lucio resist IMF?

ECUADOR HAS elected Lucio Gutierrez as its President, in another sign of the swing to the left in Latin America.

Gutierrez was a leader of the mass uprising in 2000 which overthrew the US puppet, Mahuad. But instead of carrying through the revolt he allowed another champion of neo-liberal policies, Noboa, to assume office.

This time around he won the popular vote by a 54 percent majority. His party, the January 21 Patriotic Movement, promised to oppose 'neo-liberal globalisation and external intervention from international powers'.

His party won huge support from the indigenous peoples' movements and peasant organisations.

The economy of Ecuador was recently tied to the dollar. But this only meant the price of



Gutierrez's supporters celebrate victory

basic foodstuff soared. 2 million people fled the country and the unemployment rose to over 30 percent.

But there's already severe doubt that Gutierrez will carry through on his radical programme.

He recently toured the US and assured prominent busi-

ness people that he was 'not a populist but just popular'. He has also promised to work with the IMF to win a 240 million-aid package.

However let's hope he remembers that he's only popular as long as he does what he promises to do.

Zimbabwean Socialist MP expelled from MDC

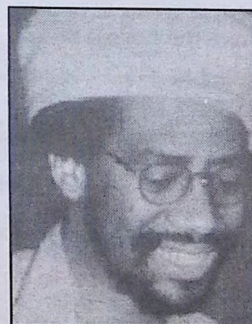
MUNYARADZI GWISAI, a socialist MP in Harare, has been expelled from Zimbabwe's main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change.

In 1990 the MDC was formed by a number of civic groups and unions in opposition to Robert Mugabe's repressive policies. At the time, Mugabe had embraced the policies of the IMF which wrecked the living conditions of workers.

Famine

Today Zimbabwe is on the verge of famine - and Mugabe's party the ZANU-PF is trying to gain control of the scarce food supplies to re-build its political base.

Instead of carrying through the fight against



Munyaradzi Gwisai

Mugabe after a rigged election, the MDC want to do a deal with him to implement neo-liberal policies.

This is why they have expelled, Gwisai - a supporter of the International Socialist Organisation, which has links with the SWP in Ireland.

Gwisai was accused of 'demanding that white farmers release some land to lodgers in his constituency of Highfield; for calling for

mass protest action against Mugabe; and for taking part in the Anti-Privatisation Forum and denouncing the IMF and the World Bank.

Support

He used his position in parliament to support a new Labour Act which brought benefits to working people and infuriated the employers organisation of Zimbabwe.

In a statement, the ISO said the expulsion shows that 'Many leaders of the MCD have become friends with local and international capitalists and bosses - they don't like people who oppose these exploiters or call for better conditions for workers'.

For international support to Zimbabwean socialists, please send cheques to SWP's Africa Solidarity Fund c/o P.O. Box 1648 Dublin 8.

The Columbia Three

Set them free Bring them home

THE TRIAL of three Irishmen, Niall Connolly, Jim Monaghan and Martin McCauley, known as the Columbia Three, is set to open this month.

The Irish establishment has done nothing to prevent a Birmingham Six-style miscarriage of justice. Right up to a week before the trial, the Irish government had not confirmed that it was sending a legal observer.

Sneared

Last February Justice Minister, Michael McDowell, smeared the Columbia 3 and endangered their lives by claiming they were linked to 'Marxist narco-terrorists'.

Huge pressure was applied to politicians like Joe Costello not to attend the trial as an observer. Only two TDs, Sean Crowe and Finian McGrath will now be in attendance.

Yet there is little chance that the Columbia Three will get a fair trial. They have been held in jail since 11th August 2001 on charges of using false documentation and training left wing FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) guerrillas.

The men have been moved between prisons because of threats to their lives. For seven days in June, they could not eat food from the prison kitchen for fear of poisoning. Earlier on, mysteriously, a gun was found in a cell next to them.

You have to be a brave person to be a defence lawyer in Columbia because they are targets for right wing death squads. 25 defence lawyers were murdered in 1998 alone.

Pawns

On top of this, the men have had difficulty getting access to their lawyers. They have not been allowed to meet collectively with them - even though their lawyers do not speak English and only one of the prisoners speaks Spanish.

The Columbia Three are being used as pawns in a deadly battle to win support for US intervention in Colombia's civil war.

Columbia is one of the largest recipients of US military aid. It is the seventh largest exporter of oil to the US and it is estimated that only 20 percent of Colombia's oil reserves are explored.

To justify this level of state violence, stories are concocted about

sinister links between international 'terrorist' organisations.

So in a blatant attempt to prejudice the trial, the outgoing Colombian President Andres Pastrana, told the *Washington Post* that 'Some months ago, IRA members were captured in Colombia after training FARC guerrillas in urban terrorism'. He was in Washington at the time to request an increase in military aid.

The main evidence against the men comes from US military officials who claimed that forensic tests for explosives and drugs proved positive. But the men had previously been detained at a Colombian military base without access to lawyers. And when the Colombian authorities carried out the forensic tests on their clothes, they proved negative.

Columbia has one of the worst human rights abuse records in the world. For every four trade unionists killed in the world, three of these die in Colombia. Right wing paramilitaries often camp around strike-bound plants and attack workers.

During a strike at a Coca Cola plant, for example, they simply murdered union leaders.

Repression

Bush's 'war on terrorism' has given new confidence to right wing politicians who are linked to the death squads. The new President Alvaro Uribe helped to bring about the end of the peace process with FARC guerrillas. One of his first decrees was to establish special zones, which are under direct military rule. To fund the renewed spending on military repression he ordered a 30 percent reduction in public sector wages.

The real aim of the new repression is to clear away indigenous communities and peasant families from potential oil and gas fields. Each day about 1,029 people are internally displaced.

One of the key zones under military rule are oil-rich areas where oil multi-nationals Chevron, Occidental and Harken, the former company of US vice-president Dick Cheney, operate.

But there has also been huge resistance to these policies. On September 16th, there was a 24 hour general strike. Peasant organisations have called for a big mobilisation.

The Birmingham Six did not receive justice at the hands of the British judiciary. There will be no justice for these Irishmen in the Colombian courts. Anything less than full and active support for calls for their release is indefensible.

Bush's regime refuses access to

Bush's Weapons mass destruction

THE US has more weapons of mass destruction than any other country in the world, and has used them more often.

It has the biggest military force the world has ever seen.

Next year George Bush's regime will spend \$396 billion on preparing for war.

Stockpile

The US budget is more than six times the military budget of Russia, the world's second biggest arms spender. It is 293 times that of Iraq. The United States has 10,600 nuclear warheads in its stockpile. Iraq has none.

Each of these warheads can bring horrible deaths. They create an intense heat which burns oxygen destroying all life in the immediate area.

Uncontrolled

This in turn leads to terrible fire storms and lethal winds. Nuclear weapons also murder through radiation sickness which causes internal bleeding and uncontrolled diarrhoea.

In the coming war against Iraq, the US will use the B-2s bombers to deliver their new "earth penetrating" nuclear bomb. In military jargon, these are labelled 'daisycutters'.

The US also gives full support to the one state in the Middle East which does have nuclear weapons - Israel. It has up to 200 nuclear

weapons and refuses to let in any weapons inspectors.

Each year the US gives Israel \$3 billion in military and economic "aid".

Arming

Between 1980 and 1995 Israel bought or "received" 260 F-16 fighter aircraft from the US which can drop nuclear bombs. Israel is arming three submarines with missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

The US's chief ally is Britain, which has around 200 warheads with four nuclear submarines which can carry 64 nuclear missiles.

Authorises

Both these countries are willing to use nuclear weapons. US defence policy now authorises the use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states.

The US is still the only state to have actually used nuclear weapons in war. The US exploded an untested uranium bomb above the Japanese city of Hiroshima in August 1945.

It killed 140,000 out of a population of 350,000.

The US then dropped a nuclear bomb on another Japanese city, Nagasaki, killing 70,000 out of 270,000 inhabitants.

The full record on Chemical Weapons

DURING THE Vietnam War the US dropped 17 million gallons of chemical defoliant.

Agent Orange caused massive deformities in children long after the US left Vietnam. The US also dropped napalm on Vietnamese villages. The US experimented with napalm to ensure it clung to human flesh and couldn't be washed off.

Refused

Just like Saddam Hussein the US has passed laws to ensure that inspectors can be refused admission to its chemical weapons facilities. No

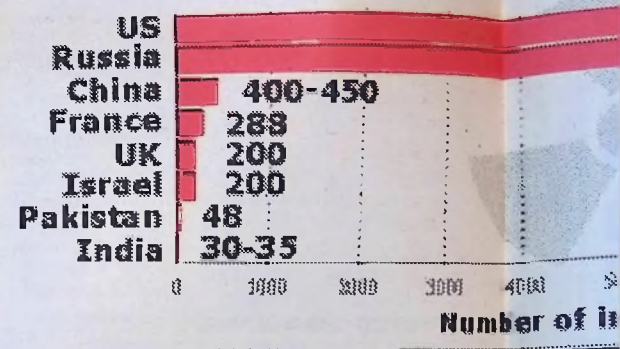
inspectorate is allowed to take samples of US chemical weapons out of the control - although its ally, Israel, used phosphorus bombs during its invasion of the Lebanon in 1982 in which 12,000 Lebanese civilians were killed.

Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein knew he could get away with using poison gas against Iranian troops and Kurdish civilians during his eight-year war with Iran that started in 1980 because he then had the backing of the US.

US military observers on the ground at the time knew exactly what was happening.

Major figures in the government at the time included Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld. They now lead the current US drive for war.

Who has got Weapons of Mass Destruction



The real makers of

THE US is the world's biggest investor in biological weapons. It made sure that the international Biological Weapons convention of 1972 did not allow for inspections on its research.

Times reported that they had 'built a germ factory that could wipe out entire cities'.

During Clinton's administration, the US secretly built and tested a model of an anthrax bomb. After

Micro-organisms

In 1998, the US Office of Naval Research applied for funds to develop micro-organisms which could target metal parts, lubricants and fuels.

At the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, the US military has a programme to develop electro-magnetic fields which 'cause short-term memory loss and lead to total loss of control over bodily functions'.

Recently, the Pentagon has embarked on a secret Joint Non-Lethal Defence Programme - code for bio-weapons.

In September, the *New York*

Why attack

A NOVEMBER report by the global health organization, Medact, estimates that at least 50,000 civilians are likely to be killed in an initial US attack on Iraq.

They think that the most likely overall casualty figure is going to be 300,000 deaths - that is twice that of the first Gulf War.

Many more civilians are

Inspectors a s

The UN weapons inspectors are part of the drive to war - not a way of preventing it.

Top US advisor, Richard Perle said that if no weapons of mass destruction were found, it was only because Saddam Hussein was hiding them and this would justify war.

The media repeats the lie that Iraq expelled United Nations weapons inspectors in December 1998.

In fact they were withdrawn in order to allow US President

Bill Clinton to unleash massive bombing. The UN inspectors provided the target list.

Former arms inspector Scott Ritter admits passing information from inspections to Israeli intelligence.

Admitted

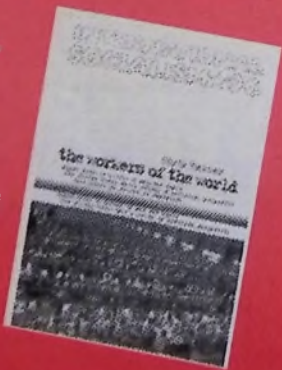
In 1999, Ritter admitted that "From a qualitative standpoint, Iraq has been disarmed. Iraq today possesses no meaningful weapons of mass destruction."

Even the CIA admits that "Iraq is unlikely to test before

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM JOURNAL

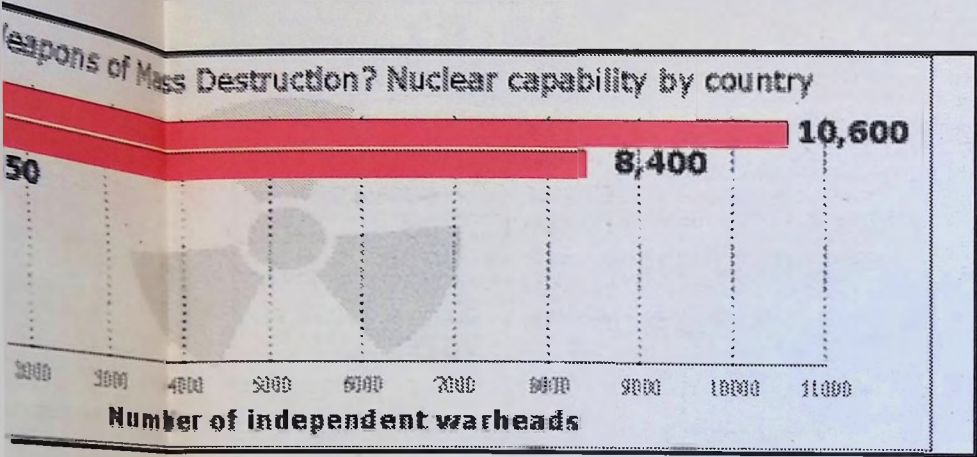
- August Nimitz on Harts and Negri's Empire
- Chris Harman on The working class in the era of globalisation

E5.00 from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8. Tel: (01) 872 2682



Access to weapons inspectors

Weapons of Destruction



Makers of biological bombs

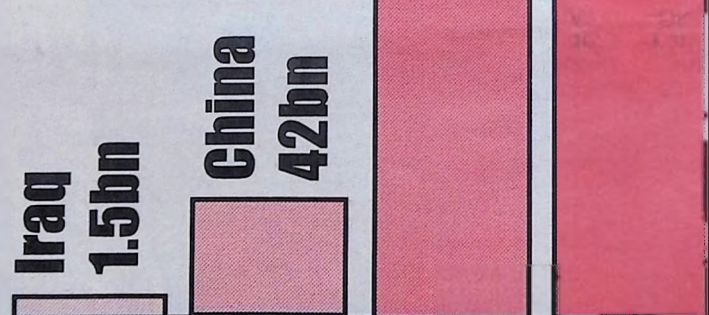
... reported that they had 'built a germ factory that could wipe out entire cities'. During Clinton's administration, the US secretly built and tested a model of an anthrax bomb. After September 11th there was a panic over letters contaminated with anthrax. But the anthrax spores are now suspected to have come from the US's own research facilities. The US is using genetically engineering fungus to spray parts of Colombia that are controlled by left wing guerrillas.

Why attack Iraq again?

A NOVEMBER report by the global health organization, Medact, estimates that at least 50,000 civilians are likely to be killed in an initial US attack on Iraq. They think that the most likely overall casualty figure is going to be 300,000 deaths - that is twice that of the first Gulf War. Many more civilians are likely to die from long-term effects of a bombing because the US is likely to use the war to experiment with new types of weapons such as Advanced Tactical Lasers. Iraq has already suffered the combined impact of the 1991 war and the 12 years of sanctions and bombing since then. According to UNICEF sanctions have killed over one million people. Nearly 60% of the dead are children under the age of seven. The number one killer of young children in Iraq is dehydration from diarrhoea caused by water-borne illnesses, on the rise since the US bombed the electricity grids that powered Iraq's water treatment plants. British and US forces have bombed Iraq more than 50 times this year alone and killed at least 500 people since 1999.

Inspectors a sham

Bill Clinton to announce massive bombing. The UN inspectors provided the target list. Former arms inspector Scott Ritter admits passing information from inspections to Israel. Admitted In 1999, Ritter admitted that Iraq has been disarmament. Iraq today possesses no meaningful weapons of mass destruction. Even the CIA admits that Iraq is unlikely to be able to build 2015 any [missiles] that would threaten the United States, even if United Nations (UN) prohibitions were eliminated or significantly reduced in the next few years. The International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) insists that Iraq does not have the capacity to produce enriched uranium for weapons. What is certain is that Iraq does not have the kind of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons that the US and its allies have. Israel, for example, has over 200 nuclear warheads aimed at Arab cities.



WORLD ARMS SPENDING (2001)
 Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, US Department of Defence. *Allies refers to the NATO countries plus Australia, Japan and South Korea



What socialists say about ...

How do we stop war?

TO PREVENT war we have to understand what causes it.

At the end of the World War 2 the US accounted for one half of world production. Today that figure has shrunk to about a quarter. But it is still the world's largest military power, spending as much on arms as the next 11 countries together.

Overtake
 Until it was snared in recession, the Japanese economy was poised to overtake the US. The EU represents an economic block of roughly comparable size. In the years to come China is set to become a considerable power across Asia, constituting another serious rival to US domination.

The US has responded to these challenges by seeking "full spectrum dominance". For this to be achievable it must exercise its unrivalled military power. It calculates that it can use the fear of its military prowess to wrestle economic concessions from its rivals. For example, the US clearly intends to decide how Iraqi oil fields are to be handed out to various multinationals. Even the chairman of BP complained that his company was to be cut out of the post-war carve up by US multi-nationals.

Re-group
 It is still possible that a huge anti-war movement can cause the Bush gang to hesitate. But without destroying capitalism and imperialism, the same forces will regroup for more wars.

If not prevented these wars will lead to explosions of popular revolt in the Middle East, endangering the US's client regimes such as Egypt and Jordan. It is also possible that the flames of revolution will spread into the core of the system.

Collapse
 Imperialist war abroad means class war at home. Bush has recently used post-September 11 special powers to decree that 800,000 federal blue-collar employees are to have their jobs privatised and lose union protection. The Administration has also stepped in on the side of the bosses to smash the longshoremen.

As well as building the largest possible mass anti-war movement, we need also to build a revolutionary party that links the fight for workers' rights to the fight against war and capitalism. The only way the planet will be rescued from constant war is workers' revolution.

— by KEVIN WINGFIELD

New Socialist Worker Pamphlet STOP THE WAR ON IRAQ
 The case against Bush and Blair
 £1.50 from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8.
 Tel: (01) 872 2682

Resistible rise of Mussolini

IT WAS 80 years ago that fascism first came to power, and it happened in Italy. There is a myth that Benito Mussolini seized power after his March on Rome and the occupation of the city by his fascist shock troops.

Fascist columns did assemble at four points near the city—but they were lightly armed, ill fed and left standing in the rain.

Workers had ripped up railways to stop the fascists reaching Rome.

Mussolini himself was miles to the north in Milan, close to the Swiss border in case he had to make a speedy escape.

He did not march into Rome. He was summoned by the Italian king, who appointed Mussolini as prime minister even though the fascists had few parliamentary seats.

Mussolini's appointment as head of a coalition government was supported by big business, the military and the Vatican.

Fascist troops did not occupy Rome. They were shepherded in by the army in special trains and allowed to march around before being ushered home.

Mussolini was a former socialist firebrand. He had made a career out of attacking parliamentary democracy first from the left and then from the right.

So why did the rulers of

Italy summon him to power?

For two years the country had been in the grip of civil war in which fascist terror had spread from town to town and city to city.

A new book, *The Resistible Rise of Benito Mussolini* by Tom Behan, explains why this happened and shows that Mussolini's triumph was not inevitable.

Fascism was not just another form of dictatorship. It represented the end of all democracy and free speech, and state control of all areas of life.

Above all fascism represented the unleashing of civil war against the working class movement.

Neither was fascism simply a tool of big business.

It represented a mass movement that collaborated with the police and army but retained its independence.

Fascism was attractive to big business because it could unleash politically committed thugs on common enemies. But fascism's independence meant big business felt uneasy about giving power to Mussolini.

In 1922 Italy had been a united country for only 60 years and its ruling class was divided.

In the north there were great industrial cities, in the north and centre capitalist agriculture, and in the south virtual feudalism.

The decade before the 1914-18 First World War saw an explosion of industrial militancy in the northern cities, and strikes and land seizures by agricultural labourers and peasants.

The industrialists and landowners became disillusioned with the ineffective parliamentary politicians in Rome.

DURING THE First World War many issues in Italian society came to a head. A substantial section of the Italian ruling class felt they had been cheated out of colonies promised to them by their allies, Britain and France.

The Italian working class and rural masses rose in a sustained rebellion which led to 1919 and 1920 becoming known as the Red Years.

In the end, while workers occupied the factories, their leaders turned their backs on revolution and brokered a deal.

The ruling class was relieved. But the government's refusal to use the army against the workers because it could not trust the soldiers' loyalty left it feeling humiliated and thirsty for revenge.

Mussolini had broken with the left to support Italy's entry into the war. His new Fascist Party was marginalised during the revolutionary storm, but now he bragged that he would inflict revenge on the left.

In central Italy the landowners employed the fascists against the socialist-led rural labourers' trade unions. Columns fanned out across the countryside, burning union offices, and beating up and murdering activists with weapons

supplied by army officers.

The rural trade unions were destroyed. In Bologna and other cities the fascists occupied the town and removed elected socialist councils.

The fascists' confidence was boosted when the left failed to mobilise against them.

The Italian Socialist Party should have been a mighty force. It had a mass membership and its leaders talked endlessly of revolution.

But the leadership believed that all they had to do to win this revolution was wait for it to drop into their laps.

They let the revolutionary challenge of 1919-20 pass them by, preferring to build their party in isolation from the real struggle for revolution.

The party focused on parliament, not mass action, and its leaders had no strategy for resisting fascism.

A section of the Socialist Party became so frustrated by the leaders' failure to take on fascism that they broke away to form the Communist Party, inspired by the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Tragically this new party dismissed Mussolini as being just another right winger and refused to work with other forces on the left to stop him.

Matters reached ridiculous heights during 1921 and 1922 when former crack soldiers, the Arditi del Popolo (Shock Troops of the People), organised resistance to the fascist Blackshirts and inflicted serious defeats on them.

The Socialist Party denounced the Arditi for being so militant and then signed a pact with Mussolini—which he, of course, ignored.

The Communist Party ordered its members to quit the Arditi's ranks because non-Communists led them!

Tom Behan's book provides the only description in English of this heroic resistance and the left's failure to embrace it.

In 1921 the Italian economy entered recession and industrialists began to subsidise fascism, hoping it would wage a war on the trade unions and the left.

In 1922 Mussolini signalled

that the ruling classes could cut a deal with him.

Mussolini's supporters were overwhelmingly middle class, with a core of brutalised former soldiers.

They hated the workers' movement, but they also resented big business and the banks. Mussolini promised them a revolution for the "little man"—the shopkeeper, ex-officer and small businessman.

But Mussolini talked in two tongues. By 1922 this former republican was reassuring the officer corps he was in favour of the monarchy.

The ex-atheist was singing the praises of the Catholic church. And he was reassuring big business he would allow it a free hand.

The main trade union federation called a general strike against fascist violence, but it made no preparation and the strike crumbled within hours.

The fascists felt confident to attack and conquer militant centres of the Arditi like Livorno, and some cities like Genoa and Milan.

The Italian working class had waged a far, far greater resistance than German workers would later offer to Hitler. But now demoralisation and the physical isolation of the cities began to undermine it.

In the autumn of 1922 big business, the army command, the king and the Vatican felt reassured they could gamble on Mussolini.

Mussolini was installed as head of a coalition of different political figures, but he quickly squeezed them out and instituted a dictatorship, backed by his new supporters.

OUTSIDE ITALY Mussolini is remembered as something of a buffoon. But he unleashed a cruel violence that, though it might not match that of Hitler or Stalin, was then something new in the world.

Mussolini was responsible for the deaths of a million people. They were killed during the terror in Italy and vicious colonial wars in Libya, Somalia and Ethiopia.

They died because of his support for General Franco in the Spanish Civil War and fascist Italy's own butchery in the Second World War.

And Mussolini's alliance with Hitler involved the deportation of Italian Jews and compliance in the Holocaust.

Mussolini also waged a merciless war against the anti-fascist Resistance movement that liberated so much of Italy between 1943 and 1945.

In April 1945 Mussolini himself met justice in the form of a Resistance bullet.

There are two lessons from Mussolini's rise to power.

Firstly, compromise in the face of a revolutionary crisis leads to disaster.

An Italian anarchist leader warned at the height of the revolutionary wave of 1919-20, "If we do not carry on until the end we shall pay with tears of blood for the fear we now install in the bourgeoisie."

He was right. Looking back in July 1923 Mussolini bragged that the Italian left had not known how "to profit from a revolutionary situation such as history does not repeat".

Secondly, Tom Behan's book demonstrates how unity in action is needed to stop Mussolini and his heirs. Events 80 years ago prove that we ignore that advice at our peril.

■ *The Resistible Rise of Benito Mussolini* by Tom Behan, £8. Available from Bookmarks—phone 020 7637 1848.



MUSSOLINI LEADS his fascists through Rome

O'Casey's anti-war message

IT'S EASY to imagine that the Abbey Theatre trots out a production of *The Plough and the Stars* on a yearly basis, but it is eleven years since Gary Hynes's controversial production raised a storm at the National Theatre.

The long gap indicates just how much O'Casey's reputation has declined in the last twenty years. His trilogy of Dublin plays have been attacked from both left and right by Seamus Deane and Gary O'Connor. They argue that O'Casey in later life had not kept pace with the stark modernism associated with the likes of Samuel Beckett.

O'Casey is complicated. He was a socialist, who despised the Ireland that emerged after the War of Independence and immersed himself in the controversies of the time.

He never for a moment hid his politics and he battled against the world with what he did best, writing plays that raged against injustice and oppression.

Yet he is adored by the Irish-Americans who flock to every performance of the Dublin plays, and who seem hardly aware of the fury generated during the first production of *The Plough and the Stars* in 1926.

Attacked

Republicans led by Hannah Sheehy-Skeffington rushed the stage and attacked the actors. They objected to the tone as much as the content of the play. Yeats leapt to O'Casey's defence hurling his contempt at the audience, "You have disgraced yourselves again".

The Plough and the Stars is set in the Dublin slums during the 1916 rising against the backdrop of World War I. O'Casey wanted to challenge and evaluate the outcome of the Irish revolution.

O'Casey writing in 1925 believed that nationalism had failed to deliver on the ideals of 1916 and this failure was beginning to make itself felt in the Easter Rising itself.

O'Casey considered himself a communist, but ironically the socialist character in *The Plough and the Stars*, Covey, is incapable of relating to the real world. Instead he mouths slogans that are as irrelevant as the empty rhetoric of the nationalists whom he despises.

As always with O'Casey he looks at the world through the eyes of the ordinary people - the slum dweller, "degraded, yet capable of nobility". He brings together *The Plough* - the symbol of the working class and *The Stars* - their dreams of a better life.

O'Casey was right to shine a light on a turning point in Irish history, but he offers little alternative. The heroes of republicanism are merely replaced by the dignity and stoicism of the ordinary people.

O Casey was a former secretary of the Irish Citizen's Army - but he disagreed with its involvement in the fight against the British empire.

Yet the tragedy of the Irish revolution was not that workers did not fight - but rather that they accepted the advice of nationalist leaders like de Valera that 'Labour Must Wait'.

The production of *The Plough and The Stars* makes it a profoundly anti-war play. The director Ben Barnes emphasises, "this is an anti-war play, and the world is obsessed about whether or not there will be a war in Iraq and the consequences of that for the Middle East".

Prison

Barnes is to be congratulated for this approach, which frees O'Casey from the academic and historical prison that he has languished in and makes him relevant to a new generation of theatregoers.

Barnes production pulls back somewhat from Haynes 1991 interpretation, but he resists the temptation to fall back on the traditional Abbey style, thanks largely to the powerful abstract set.

It has some of the elements of a mainstream production, but it is the pace and force of the play, of events overwhelming the characters, that stick in the mind.

As Fintan O'Toole remarked in the Irish Times, "You do feel watching the play that this is the way history really looks from the bottom up".

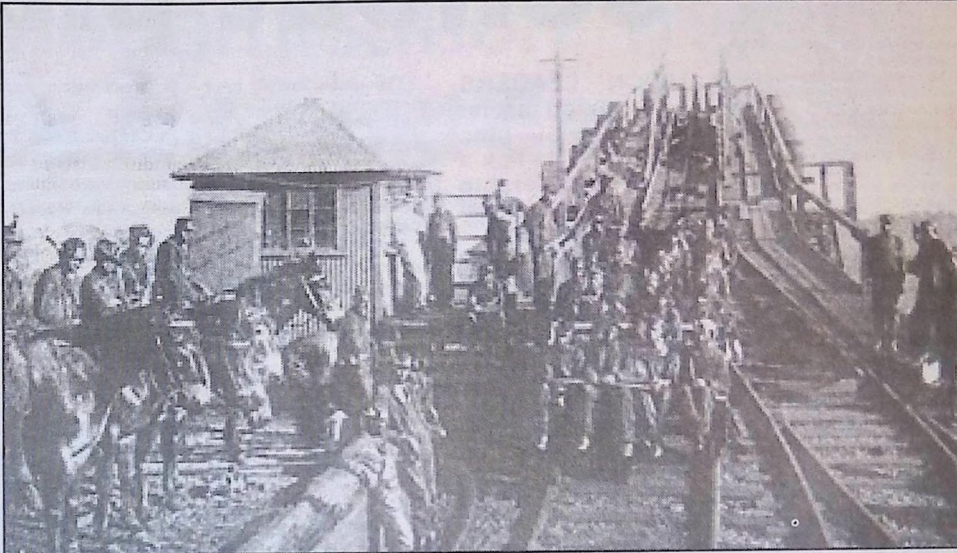
by PAUL O'BRIEN

Xmas shopping problems solved

by WILLY CUMMING

WITH NAOMI Klein's *No Logo*, Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation* and Michael Moore's *Stupid White Men* at the top of the best-sellers list there is no shortage of political books to read and give this year as presents.

Anti-Capitalism - A Guide to the Movement with articles by Susan George, George Monbiot, Alex Callinicos and many others is an excellent and concise summary of the issues and events that have inspired the movement. José Bové, jailed for attacking a McDonald's, is one of the symbolic figures of the movement. *The World is not for sale - Farmers against Junk Food* is an extended interview with him and Francois Dufour. With the ongoing debates on the



COAL MINERS strike in Alabama

wreck of the revolution and how, despite the fall of the Iron Curtain, this class still dominates the new Russia.

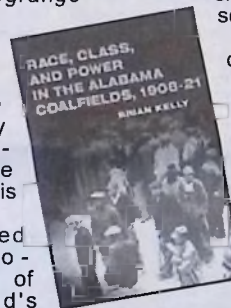
Brian Kelly's *Race, Class and Power in the Alabama Coalfields, 1908-21*, winner of this year's Isaac Deutscher prize, is an inspiring read. Kelly explores the forces

that united miners, black and white, during the hard fought strikes at the start of the 20th century and the systematic efforts of the region's powerful industrialists to foment racial divisions as a means of splitting their workforce.

Shelley the romantic poet is famous, Shelley the revolutionary is less so. Paul O'Brien's *Shelley & Revolutionary Ireland* looks at Shelley's involvement with the movement for Irish

Independence. Included are all Shelley's writings on Ireland.

Newgrange and the Bend of the Boyne by Geraldine Stout is a detailed exploration of Ireland's most famous complex of



Neolithic monuments and the forces that have contributed to create the landscape of today.

The activities of kings and priests, landlords and cottiers and modern farmers have all had a visible influence.

If you're interested in Ireland's past or her countryside add this to your Christmas wish-list.

book

The roots of racism in Ireland



future of Irish agriculture, an invaluable read.

'Another world is possible' is the slogan of today. But the spectre of Stalinism still haunts us.

If revolutions can lead to tyranny, how do we fight for a new world? *Russia, Class & Power 1917-2000* by Mike Haynes challenges the myth that Stalin's Russia was socialist. It shows how a powerful ruling class emerged from the

RACISM AND Social Change in the Republic of Ireland by UCD lecturer Bryan Fanning is an overview of racism in Ireland, past and present.

Fanning rejects the assertion that racism is a relatively recent phenomenon and argues that Ireland was never immune from the racist ideologies.

He locates the development of racism in Ireland to two specific causes; the symbiotic relationship between nationalism and Catholicism, with all the religious sectarianism and anti-Semitism that that involves; and

Ireland's complicity in western imperialism.

The Irish were disproportionately represented in the British army at the height of the imperialist project and the participation of Irish missionaries in colonial regions precipitated a paternalistic and chauvinistic attitude towards other races.

Absence

In the absence of a racial minority in the country, racism developed as state-sanctioned anti-Semitism and discrimination against Protestants (in 1901 Protestants represented 10.7% of the population of the 26 counties, by 1991 this was down to 3.2%).

Fanning recalls the Limerick program of 1904 where a small population of Jews were driven from the city by a vicious campaign spearheaded by a group of Catholic priests.

Influx

He also recounts an editorial by Arthur Griffith in the United Irishman in the same year as the program where he rails against the "continuous influx of Jews into Ireland" and refers to Jews as "strange, alien people" depriving Irish people of jobs. Sounds familiar?

The author also shows that there was sympathy in the highest echelons of the

Irish civil service for the Holocaust.

The long-standing racism against travellers is also chronicled.

The book shows how the current hysteria against asylum seekers has its roots in institutionalised racism. But Fanning doesn't make the link with the state-sponsored racism against asylum seekers across Europe.

This is not only as a result of historical racism fostered over the last three centuries, but also from a current crisis in capitalism which requires scapegoats for the failings of the system.

by ROY HASSEY



**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 workers' interests. We oppose Social Partnership agreements which restrict wages while letting profits thrive. We fight for 100 percent trade unionism, free collective bargaining and fighting trade unions controlled by the rank and file.

We support the union leaders when they fight but oppose them when they betray workers. We stand for independent rank and file action to change our unions.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWP aims to build such a party here. We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc.

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

PHONE REPORTS ABOUT STRIKES/LOCAL CAMPAIGNS/PROTESTS

Secret benchmarking sellout plan revealed

UNION LEADERS are holding secret talks with the employers to link a new partnership agreement to a deal on benchmarking.

Documents which have come into the hands of *Socialist Worker* show that special meetings were set up for four sectors - civil service, education, local government, and health - to work out how 'modernisation' might be linked to pay.

The meetings were convened by Dan Murphy, the right wing secretary of the Public Service Committee of the ICTU.

The talks were "of an informal nature" and the aim was to "develop positions which might be tolerable in the context of a successor to the PPF and the implementation of benchmarking".

The union leaders have no mandate to make this link. The benchmarking awards belong to the last partnership agreement and should not be tied to a new deal to make the meagre pay awards look better.

Yet the ICTU leaders have already agreed to a special chapter in a new national Programme which would "contain commitments to change and modernisation which would be applicable across all sectors of the Public Sector".

The employers have drawn up a wish list on what this 'modernisation' might mean.

In the Civil Service the employers want

- A 'rating system' for performance management.
- Direct recruitment to certain grades to cut back on internal promotions.
- New arrangements on probation, probably to get new workers to meet performance tests.

● 'Greater use of fixed term contracts'

In Education they want:

- More school plans, more Department of Education assessments, more evaluations
- Students to be treated as 'customers' and new Performance targets set.

In Health they want:

- New clause to prevent strikes.
- Extended hours of service.
- Greater use of health care assistants to replace nurses.
- A ban on 'new technology claims'.

ICTU leaders have even been advised that they are not to have any 'formal report back to individual unions'.

So who are they representing?

CIE: Resist privatisation

DUBLIN BUS drivers balloted for industrial action on the 28th of November over Seamus Brennan's decision to 'franchise' out 25 routes.

This is a form of privatisation under another name.

Union representatives expect an overwhelming vote in favour of the action, as the drivers understand that any breaking up of the bus network will lead to wholesale redundancies.

The union leaders are being pressed to call a one-day stoppage in January. They are due to draw plans for action in early



STRIKING for better pay

December.

One danger sign is that the National Transport Forum has already done a report, which recommends the break up of CIE; the appointment of a regulator and the granting of new routes to private operators.

Rank and file activists believe that the NRBU and SIPTU should reject this report and launch a

determined fight against Brennan.

This is all the more urgent because CIE is also threatening to close part of Iarnrod Eireann's freight operation.

This would be a disaster for drivers and for the environment. This will mean hundreds of lorries transporting these materials through towns, adding to traffic and pollution.

Finglas

Support the lift strike

30 ENGINEERS employed by Pickerings Lifts have been on strike since November 12th after the company called a worker into a disciplinary hearing.

The strikers have been voluntarily maintaining a free emergency service for hospitals and the Ballymun estate. But the dispute had worsened following the withdrawal of mobile phones from a number of those on strike.

As a result, the union said, its ability to provide an emergency service in Ballymun had been undermined, while a number of hospitals would also be affected.

"There are procedures laid down in the National Lifts Agreement. This was signed in 1977 by the TEEU and IBEC, of which Pickerings is a member. However the company refused to follow these procedures and went ahead with their own disciplinary hearing," a TEEU rep explained.

"If we let Pickerings get away with this then all the other employers will do the same and the National Lifts Agreement will be dead throughout the industry."

A spokesperson for the Ballymun branch of SWP, Kevin Wingfield, said, "The strikers have done everything possible to minimise the effect on tenants of Ballymun. It is important that residents of Ballymun stand together with the Pickerings strikers."

Journalists bite back

JOURNALISTS HAVE a bad name because of the tabloids. Sometimes we forget they are also responsible for news we are interested in.

What is little known

is that their wages have been rising very slowly, especially compared to the huge profits experienced by the regional newspaper owners.

The national agreement, which governs regional journalists' wages, has not been reviewed since 1973.

At recent national meet-

ings of NUJ chapels across the Regional Press Sector there have been calls for strikes if journalists do not get a major pay increase soon. Union members are also calling for the elimination of the current age-related scale, which gives journalists minor pay increases when they turn 23, 26 and 28 years of age.

IFI Richardsons occupy

TWO HUNDRED people marched in Cork in support of the IFI workers who want a better redundancy deal.

Last month, the workforce of Richardsons in Belfast occupied their factory. One of the workers told *Socialist Worker*, "Eighty to 100 of the workforce were involved in the occupation. Our action got results."

"Until then the receiver

required us to sign a waiver, renouncing all claims on the company in order to get an interim payment of £3,000.

"This would mean if we ever became ill because of working with hazardous materials we would have lost all rights to claim. The waiver has now been withdrawn."

Angry

But workers are angry that their factory was closed and their livelihood taken because of the attitude of the Irish govern-

ment, a 51 percent shareholder in IFI.

As one Belfast Richardson's worker commented, "Mary Harney is another Maggie Thatcher. I'm from a Protestant background. Harney and her colleagues are always talking about North-South relations. If this is the sort of Ireland she wants to get us into I don't many workers from whatever background will want it."

Tragically the occupation of Richardson's was not spread to the South because of the inactivity of the SIPTU leaders.

INTO

THE INTO is launching a campaign of action to fight the increased workload on teachers.

Teachers will withdraw from any new non-urgent written policies, from inservice-training for the new curriculum and refuse to co-operate with Department of Education inspections.

One teacher said, "A huge amount of

anger is being expressed at branch meetings about the inadequacy of the benchmarking award and the delays in implementation. The "modernisation" agenda is not acceptable.

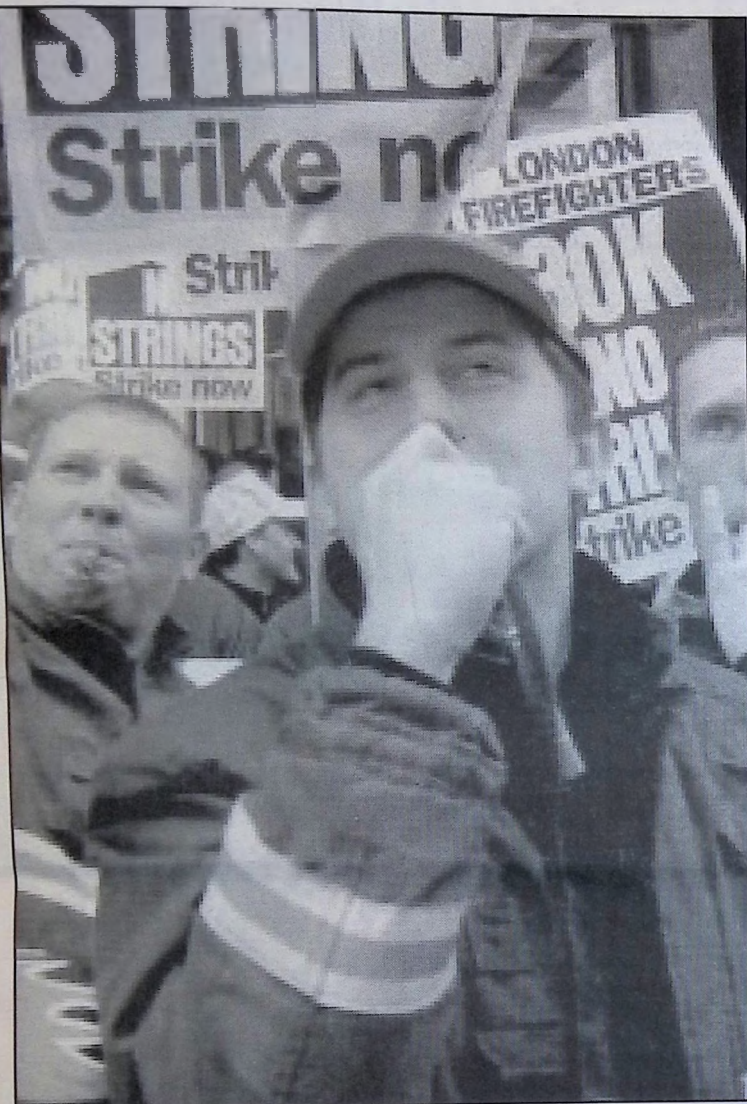
Our pay award has to be delivered with no strings attached. Many teachers will be keen to see the action extended and a real fight on the pay issue launched."

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PHONE REPORTS ABOUT STRIKES/LOCAL CAMPAIGNS/PROTESTS

Firefighters take on Blair

'Modernisation' means job cuts and fire deaths



Firefighters took to the picket lines last month

BLAIR'S "modernisation" plans will cut the fire service to the bone. Prescott says 20 per cent of staff will be retiring early.

That's 11,000 firefighters. The government wants to replace as few of them as possible

Here is why the FBU opposes the government's five main demands.

■ **Staff cuts:** Prescott and Blair want to slash the nightshift.

There may be fewer fires overnight — but they are far more lethal. In 2000, 241 people died at night. That's 92 more than during the day.

And 7,000 people were injured, almost 5,000 more

than during the day. Fewer firefighters would mean more fire deaths.

■ **Merged control rooms.** Ambulance controllers can help keep patients alive and advise paramedics what equipment they need to bring.

Fire brigade control staff can tell people how to stay alive in a burning building and they deal with chemical, biological and radiation accidents.

It would be madness to merge these two jobs.

■ **Training firefighters as paramedics.** This is a ruse

to push through cuts in the ambulance service.

It also contributes to the overload of firefighters.

■ **Letting part-time firefighters travel with full-time crews.**

Another madcap plan to pave the way for cuts in the full-time workforce.

Every firefighter works with other members of his or her watch for 48 hours a week. They know each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Throwing other firefighters into a crew can only disrupt the teamwork

and could lead to fatal mistakes.

■ **An end to the overtime ban.**

Another key ingredient to facilitate the government's planned job cuts.

Yet the government's own figures show that, far from saving money, this would COST £18 million.

And long hours put workers' health at risk — nowhere more so than in the fire service

As the FBU's Northern Ireland secretary, Jim Quinn, says: "Blair's agenda was only ever a wrecking agenda which would result in an inferior fire service for the public."

The FBU wants to modernise by improving the service not by reducing the number of firefighters and stations, putting the public further at risk."

"I never thought that I would have to go on strike, but Blair has made it clear that this is no longer about pay — it's about class!"

□ **Brian, a firefighter from Central Station in Belfast**

Is this Blair's Miners Strike?

"The Labour government are determined to break the union. They'll find that the FBU is a wee bit stronger than anticipated."

"The firemen are a close-knit community: we work together, we sleep together, we live together."

"We're determined to see this out and we'll continue to stand together on the picket lines."

□ **Carlo from Northland Road station in Derry**

TONY BLAIR and his advisors have repeatedly called the firefighters leaders 'Scargillites'—a reference to the miners strike of 1984-85.

Right-wing newspapers like the *Sun*, are egging Blair on telling him to 'Do a Maggie' and crush the firefighters union in the same way that Thatcher broke the National Union of Mineworkers.

But there are crucial differences between those disputes in 1984-85 and the FBU's battle in the year 2002.

Blair, like Thatcher,

thinks that New Labour will only stay in power if the unions remain cowed and weak.

He has also swallowed neo-liberal economic thinking hook, line and sinker. It dictates that the public sector be cut back and privatised as far as possible.

But in contrast to Thatcher, Blair has not prepared himself to take on the unions. Thatcher was out to get the miners who had humiliated the Tory government in 1974.

The NUM's strikes were so successful that prime minister Edward Heath called an election that year on the question "Who runs the country, the Tory Party or the miners?" He got his answer — the Tories were kicked out of office.



Blair: Doing a 'Maggie'

The police and army's dirty tactics

THROUGHOUT the strikes, firefighters have left picket lines to respond to life-threatening fires and traffic accidents.

This has been organised through mobile phone contacts with local police and ambulance services.

But in an outrageous

move, Fire Service management in Northern Ireland has deliberately put lives at risk by breaking these lines of communication.

A memorandum has gone out to all ambulance control staff, ordering them NOT to contact the fire service directly — even if there is a life-threatening incident.

"This is an attempt to use moral blackmail, especially with part-time retained fire-

fighters, who live and work in small towns and communities," says Derry FBU rep Ciaran Barr.

"If there is a death they will want to blame that on the firefighters."

On top of that, an internal police briefing memo, given to police across Britain, instructed them to arrest firefighters who leave picket lines to attend emergencies.

The memo said: "Such 'humanitarian' responses are being used in their propaganda war and undermine the military position."

FBU leader Andy Gilchrist said: "The idea that they are doing it as a PR exercise is frankly sickening."

This sets a new record in Blair's hypocrisy stakes. He claims the FBU strike is putting us at risk. Yet he's allowing the police and the army to play Russian roulette with people's lives.

"The negotiations are crap. Four per cent is all that is on the table, but we are determined to get what we deserve."

□ **Garey from Central Station: "Members are disappointed and angry that government interference has blocked the way forward. It's hard to believe that it's taken a Labour PM to out-Maggie Maggie Thatcher!"**

□ **Jim Quinn, the FBU's N.I. regional secretary**

SECRET REPORT

A GOVERNMENT commissioned a report last year called for a doubling of the fire service budget to £3.8 billion and an increase in the number of firefighters. New Labour refuses to publish the report.

Blair's figures don't add up

★ Blair says the FBU pay claim could cost £500 million and "the country can't afford it".

The proposed invasion of Iraq would cost between £10 BILLION and £12 BILLION.

★ The richest 1,000 people in Britain have personal wealth of £159,699 BILLION.

That's enough to give every public sector worker in the land a 16% rise without strings - ten

times over; or four times what it would take to fund a general 40% rise.

★ Bringing corporation tax back to 35% would bring in at least £12bn a year.

Socialist Worker

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Solidarity price □ 2.00

MILLIONS FOR WAR

TONY BLAIR wants a war on Iraq. He will spend billions to help Bush grab hold of Iraq's oil reserves - but he says there is no money to pay fire fighters a decent wage.

It is a disgusting piece of hypocrisy. In Northern Ireland, Blair says he is a 'man of peace'. He lectures us in a condescending way about how Catholics and Protestants must come together and turn their backs on the 'men of violence'.

But on a global scale, Blair wants to bring far more bloodshed to the people of Iraq than all the paramilitaries have shed in thirty years.

His government has just produced a dossier to indict Saddam Hussein for human rights abuses.

But in the 1980s, the British government helped to arm Sad-

dam Hussein. Even after he attacked Kurdish people in Halabja with poisonous gas, the British government tried to blame these attacks on Iran.

And if Blair were really concerned with human rights abuses, he would not be selling weapons to countries such as Pakistan.

British and US warplanes are already bombing Iraq. They pretend that the UN Inspectors Team is carrying out a neutral investigation. But they are only using inspections as an intelligence gathering exercise before they unleash a war.

Fed-up

We need a mass movement that cuts across the sectarian divide to give Blair a few lectures on peace!

FBU Leader Andy Gilchrist says that he is fed up with New Labour - and wants a Real Labour Party.

We certainly need an alternative to Blair. This Labour

government will spend a fortune on war - rather than providing decent public services.

New Labour is set to buy two aircraft carriers at the cost of £3 billion. It will spend £9 billion on 232 euro fighters. It has even agreed to sign up to Bush's mad Stars War project.

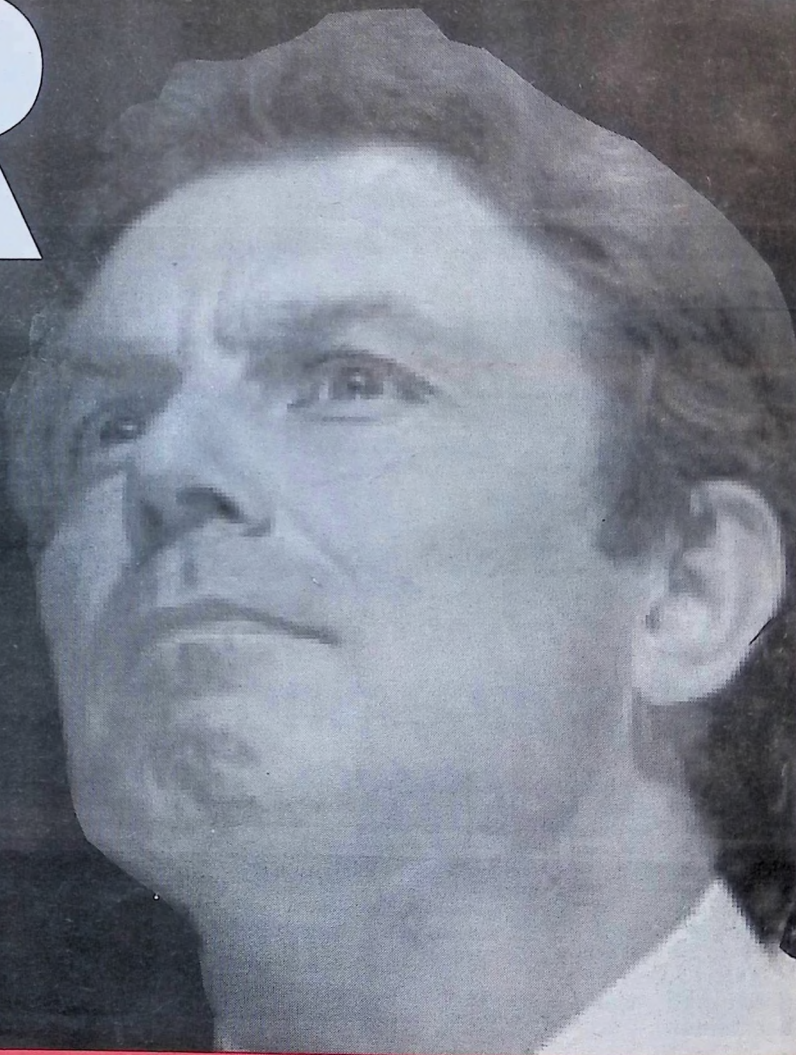
Gilchrist was attacked in the media for making political statements. But it is right to be political.

The tragedy is that Gilchrist has not carried through on his remarks. The decision to pull the next eight-day strike has been taken as a sign of weakness.

Rank and file fire fighters need to get hold of this strike and press for major solidarity action from other public sector workers.

Over the last year, many unions have elected left wing leaders. There is a new mood of resistance.

Instead of compromising with New Labour - we need to carry through the fight for decent pay and an end to war.



BUT HE WON'T PAY THE FIREFIGHTERS