

Socialist Worker

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PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY €1.00 / £0.70p

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**G8 POLICIES DESTROY
OUR WORLD** —PAGE 12

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CORPORATE PRESS**

—PAGE 4

THOUSANDS GATHER TO PROTEST AT EVIAN



AROUND one hundred Irish anti-capitalists are travelling to the big international protests against the G8 in Evian.

The G8 leaders are the masters of business and war. They draw up the broad plans which shape the policies of the IMF and the World Bank.

They share information on how to restrict the rights of immigrants or on how to cutback on civil liberties in the name of "anti-terrorism".

They affect all our lives because they lay down the economic doctrines privatisation, "flexibility" and competition rather than co-operation.

And their plans are just not working.

The global environment is in mess. Millions of people have died from famines. Wars are becoming more frequent. Their whole system stinks.

But the new message of the anti-capitalist movement is that Another World is Possible.

That message is coming to Ireland, fast.

After the Evian protests, hundreds of activists will demonstrate outside the Global Conference of Newspaper Editors in Dublin on June 9. They will bring home that message that the corporate media is not a "free press" but a propaganda press for capitalist values.

And plans are already afoot, to stage a huge protest at a gathering of the World Economic Forum in Dublin on October 20-21. This is a body that brings together arms dealers, oil barons and executives of multi-national companies.

These are just the big events. The success of the anti-capitalist movement comes also from linking the local to the global.

The people who are fighting bin charges in working class communities are a key part of this movement. So too is the coming struggle of Dublin busworkers against privatisation. Or the rights of disabled people and their carers for proper respite services.

The anti-capitalist movement embraces everyone who wants a world which puts people before profit—a world where every human activity is not something put up for sale.

Let's bring the message of Evian way back home.

OUR WORLD IS NOT FOR WAR!

SNOUTS IN THE TROUGH



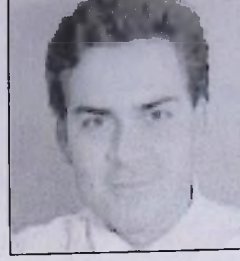
■ Michael O Leary



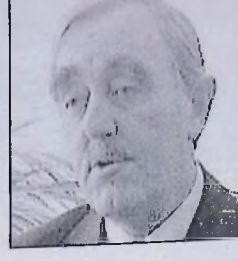
■ Mike Soden



■ Liam O Mahony



■ Gavin O'Reilly



■ Michael Buckley

The *Sunday Business Post* has compiled a list of what Ireland's Chief Executive Officers earn.

Here is what the fat cats who preach wage restraint for others are getting:

■ Michael Buckley, from Allied Irish Banks: Gets a salary of €539,000 and a bonus of €250,000.
 ■ Mike Soden, of Bank of Ireland: Is on a Salary of €740,000 and a bonus of €382,000

■ Dave Went of Irish Permanent: Gets €563,000 and a bonus of €223,000.
 ■ Gavin O'Reilly of Independent Newspaper gets €333,000 but no bonus.

■ Liam O'Mahony of Cement Roadstone gets €910,000 and a bonus of €309,000.
 ■ Michael O'Leary, of Ryanair, gets €474,000 and €180,000 as a bonus.

The new privatisation scam

EVIDENCE is growing of a wide scale scam being operated by private businesses that are ripping off state funds.

The main device they are using is Public Private Partnerships.

These were supposed to bring much needed investment for public services through co-operation with the private sector.

But it is like winning the Lotto for profit hungry businessmen.

Beaumont Hospital in Dublin, for example, entered

a joint venture with Howard Holding to build a car park back in 1998.

The deal was to charge patients for parking at the hospital.

But it now transpired that the company managed to wheedle €13 million from the state.

Instead of giving back the hospital €1.8 million a year in rent, the hospital only got €120,000.

It meant that money that could have been used to cut waiting lists, went into the pockets of the fat cats.

Meanwhile, a new scandal has broken about another PPP scheme to build a toll road from Killocock and Kinnegad.

A secret deal, which was revealed by the Labour TD Joan Burton, gave the private company Eurolink a special tax concession worth €35 million.

The company will get the right to collect tolls for 30 years.

NOT SUCH A HERO!

LIEUTENANT Colonel Tim Collins of the Royal Irish Rangers was supposed to be a hero of the Iraq war.

His "great deed" was to give a rousing speech where he told his troops to treat Iraqis properly.

Prince Charles liked the rhetoric so much that he said he was "profoundly moved".

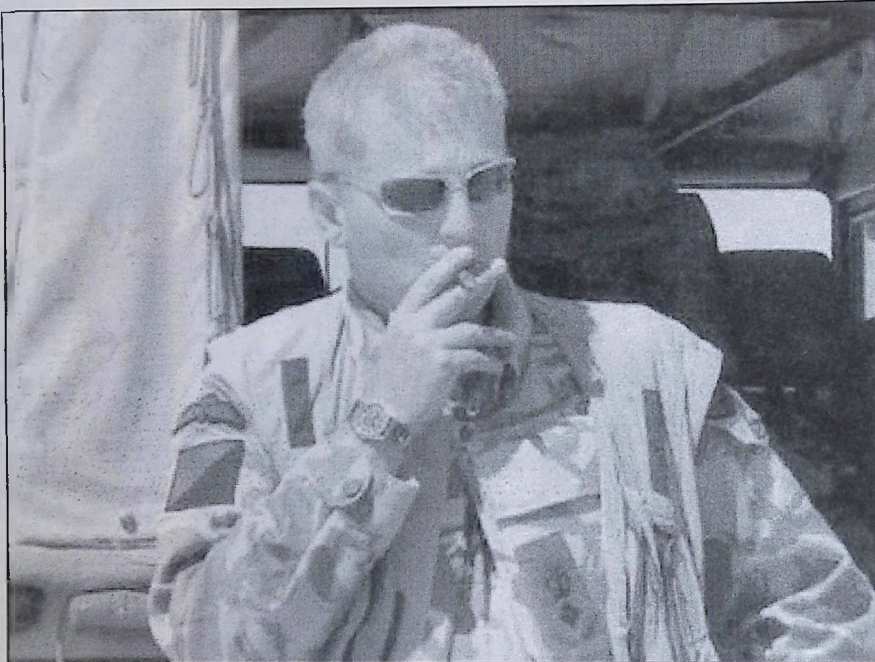
But Collins, whose nickname is "Nails" is now alleged to have pistol-whipped an Iraqi civilian. He also shot at the feet of Iraqis and the tyres of vehicles when there was no threat to lives.

Slapped

The allegations came from an American major in charge of reservists.

Another former British Army hero, Bob Stewart leapt to his colleague's defence, claiming that there are situations where officers can go "over the top". Stewart said he slapped a woman around the face in Northern Ireland because she was "uncontrollable"!

But the myth about Collins



■ Another courageous bully-boy: Lt Col Tim "Nails" Collins

began to crack even wider when a Northern Ireland taxi driver, Billy Cochrane, revealed what had happened to his son Paul while he was in

Collin's regiment.

Paul Cochrane committed suicide while he was serving in the Royal Irish Rangers. He had been driven into despair

by bullying.

In a letter to his family written a few hours before he killed himself, Paul told of the fierce bullying. "I want you to

get these people who are forcing me into this corner" he said.

Collins told the family he would investigate what happened.

But no inquest was held and no reports or documentation from the army's internal inquiry unit was passed on.

Mangled

In the note to his family, Paul had claimed that he taped a conversation between himself and his superior where they gave out to him for making the allegations of bullying.

The tapes disappeared and were found later to have been mangled and interfered with.

Supporters of Collins are now trying to close the story down by pretending that it is all a plot to run down the Royal Irish Regiment.

Unionist MP Jeffrey Donaldson says it is all part of a "hidden agenda" to destroy the regiment.

In reality it is Donaldson, who is playing up the old siege mentality to cover up for an army that brutalises Iraqi civilians—and its own soldiers.

Mobile phone fraud

"MORE competitiveness is the way to reduce prices". This is Mary Harney's answer to revelations that Ireland is the most expensive country in the EU.

However, the mobile phone business shows why

this is a myth.

O2 is Ireland's largest mobile phone operator, raking in €1.7 million a day. Its profits have just shot up by 50 percent, taking them to a grand total of €123 million.

One of the reasons for

the super-profits is that its "earnings margin" is 36 percent higher than its international parent company MM02.

Or put more simply, it is able to fleece Irish customers with charges that are one third higher on

average.

The same thing is happening with its competitor, Vodaphone. Its customers are spending an average of €542 each on their phone each year. That is more than subscribers pay in any other country, with the exception of Japan.

Vodaphone and O2 control 94 percent of the market between them.

Yet when Eircom was being privatised, the main argument used was that more companies would lead to greater competition and this would reduce prices.

In reality, a state run monopoly has been replaced by a cartel of two companies who fleece their customers.

Once again, de-regulation and the free market has brought super profits—not better or cheaper services.

Dying early because of poverty

SIX THOUSAND people die in Ireland each year because of poverty.

These shocking figures were revealed by Dr Jane Wilde, from the Institute of Public Health.

Wilde looks at the death rates for the decade before 2001. This was at the height of the Celtic Tiger

when social partnership was supposed to

bring benefits to the poor.

Wilde claimed that the gap in the death rates for the rich and poorer groups was "gigantic".

In particular age groups, the poor were twice as likely to die as the wealthier.

If they had same life expectancy, then 6,000 more people would be alive each year.

Ireland tops price league

IRELAND is the most expensive country in the euro zone.

The latest figures from Eurostat, the EU statistics agency, shows that inflation is growing much faster here than elsewhere.

Under partnership agreements, workers will be getting pay increases that are less than the 4.6 percent rate of inflation.

One of the reasons for the high prices is the indirect charges that the government has put on hospitals, col-

lege registration fees and bin charges.

Nearly half of Ireland's inflation rate is accounted for by these government charges.

The main reason for the charges is that Ireland has cut the level of direct tax so that is the lowest in the EU.

The establishment parties cut taxes on profits and used tax cuts on wages as a way of getting through their partnership deals.

Instead of direct taxes, there are indirect taxes which hit the poor most.

IRELAND ABSTAIN ON GAY RIGHTS

A UNITED Nations resolution enshrining the rights of gay people has been postponed following a vote in which Ireland abstained. It was the only EU country to do so.

The Vatican lobbied hard against the resolution and influenced Ireland and a number of South American countries.

All other EU States on the United Nations Commission on Human Rights voted against deferring the proposal for a year.

Gay rights campaigners here criticised the Government's stance.

The FF-PD Government is split: Let's get them out!

THE Fianna Fail-PD government are wobbling. The row over university fees was a sign of deeper conflict over how to handle their growing unpopularity.

The Fianna Fail core vote has fallen and is now only 10 percentage points ahead of Labour in the opinion polls. Everyone knows FF lied in order to buy the last election.

They promised to cut hospital waiting lists—but now there are 28,000 people on the queue.

They promised to get rid of sub-standard schools—but parents and children have to demonstrate just to get half decent education.

Respected

Before the Nice referendum, they guaranteed that Irish neutrality would be respected and Irish troops would only serve in conflict zones after authorisation from the UN.

Now Defence Minister Michael Smith says it is enough if there is an EU sanction.

The unpopularity has caused panic in FF circles. One Fianna Fail TD, Sean Ardagh, has started to call himself a "republican socialist".

Education Minister Dempsey tried to cover his attempt to introduce university fees with talk of bringing greater access to working class students. The Labour Party were supposed to be "pseudo socialists" and the tax cutting, corrupt, brown envelope party was the real thing!

The whole farce has backfired. Despite the media framing of the debate as a "middle class" backlash, many saw university fees as yet another element of the neo-liberal agenda—paying "market prices" for public services that once were free.

Dempsey has been forced to retreat—and then had to cover himself by announcing new measures to help disadvantaged students.

Mood

Now is the time to turn on the pressure to throw out this weak, divided right wing government.

There is huge anger in the country on a range of issues—not least the scandalous state of the health services.

After the great mobilisation on February 15, there is a new mood to protest.

People came out in numbers never seen before—and liked the idea of "people power" on the streets.

We need a national focus to pull together the anger with this government.

A start could be made if all the union leaders got behind the Irish Nurses Organisation campaign against the health cuts.

If we could march in our tens of thousands to oppose war in Iraq, we can also mobilise against the other face of corporate globalisation—the run down of our public services to suit a minority of the super-rich who do not want to pay tax.

The plunder of Iraq



■ Oil refinery in Iraq now under US control

The UN Security Council has agreed to the re-colonisation of Iraq by the US and Britain. By 14 votes to nil, with an abstention from Syria, the only Arab country, they gave them a UN mandate for direct control.

The old conflicts between France, Germany and Russia were put aside after the US did a backroom deal to give them some oil contracts and agreed to repay Russian debts.

Despite some tension, the

Western powers are united again in the plunder of a developing country.

Yet, the situation in Iraq cries out for action against this brutal imperialism.

Acute

300,000 Iraqi children are currently facing death from acute malnutrition, according to UNICEF in a report issued on May 14.

This is twice the number that faced malnutrition under the Saddam regime in February.

The World Health Organi-

sation has also reported that Iraq is facing catastrophe with its health system functioning at one fifth of its capacity.

The US has done virtually nothing to repair the water supplies they destroyed. The result is a huge rise in chronic dehydration, gastroenteritis, and cholera.

Bush only wanted to grab the oil and then turn the reconstruction of the country over to multinationals such as Bechtel and Halliburton.

He wanted to stop Iraq denominating oil prices in euros rather than dollars, as this might have started a chain

reaction that damaged the US economy.

This is why the US army is presiding over a country that is rapidly descending into chaos.

Despite a few PR stunts, no weapons of mass destruction have been found. Except that is the 2,000 tons of depleted uranium that was dropped on Iraq. Despite the fact that the residues of these bombs cause cancer, the US has refused to inform Iraqis about exactly where they were dropped.

Nor has much been done about the unexploded bombs. There have been 300 casualties, mostly children, in the Kirkuk, Mosul and Kifri regions alone from these.

In the cities, warlords are growing strong as gangs organise themselves for looting and survival.

The imperial overlord that has been appointed to run Iraq is Paul Bremer, a protégé of the war criminal Henry Kissinger.

However, even his plans for running Iraq are being scuppered by an intense factional struggle at the heart of the US regime.

The Pentagon wants its pet politician, Ahmed Chabi, to be eased into running the country even though he has no support whatsoever.

Justify

The State Department, wants to co-opt a moderate Sunni muslim leader, Adnan Pachachi.

Despite the split, the US justify their direct control over Iraq by claiming that Iraq is a "sick society" that needs some time to recover from the Saddam Hussein dictatorship before it can work as a democracy.

This racist theory is evident in the attitude of the occupying troops. *Sunday Times* reporter, Mark Franchetti quoted a US Corporal, Ryan Dupre, saying "The Iraqis are a sick people and we are the chemotherapy. I am starting to hate this country. Wait till I get hold of a friggin' Iraqi. No, I won't get hold on him. I'll just kill him."

The Irish Anti-War Movement was right in opposing this war. We should now support any genuine anti-colonial resistance to this brutal occupation.

Thousands died...

AN INDEPENDENT organisation, Iraq Body Count, has put the number of dead from the US bombing and invasion at between 4,065 and 5,223 civilians.

The figure comes from meticulous checks of casualty reports.

The actual number of dead is likely to be far greater as Iraq Body Count

use a highly conservative method of counting the casualties.

Their single largest entry—between 1,482 and 2,009 dead—comes from the 19 Baghdad hospitals most likely to receive the dead and injured in the capital, according to the Red Crescent.

This was during the period 19 March to 9 April.

World Newspaper
Congress
June 8-11

**PROTEST at
Corporate Media
Global Conference
Monday June 9**

***12pm RDS, Ballsbridge
and
*At the Press Baron's Ball,
Guinness Store, James St
8pm**

Called By
Globalise Resistance

Can there be a Socialist Bloc in the Assembly Elections?

Over recent weeks, there has been a real buzz in the North around the possibility of getting a socialist bloc together to present a united socialist alternative to the communal politics that dominates the Assembly.

Eamonn McCann, for example, has suggested that the programme of an alliance of socialists in the North might centre on opposition to imperialist war-plans, opposition to sectarianism and oppression, a pledge to use seats won to help the fight against privatisa-

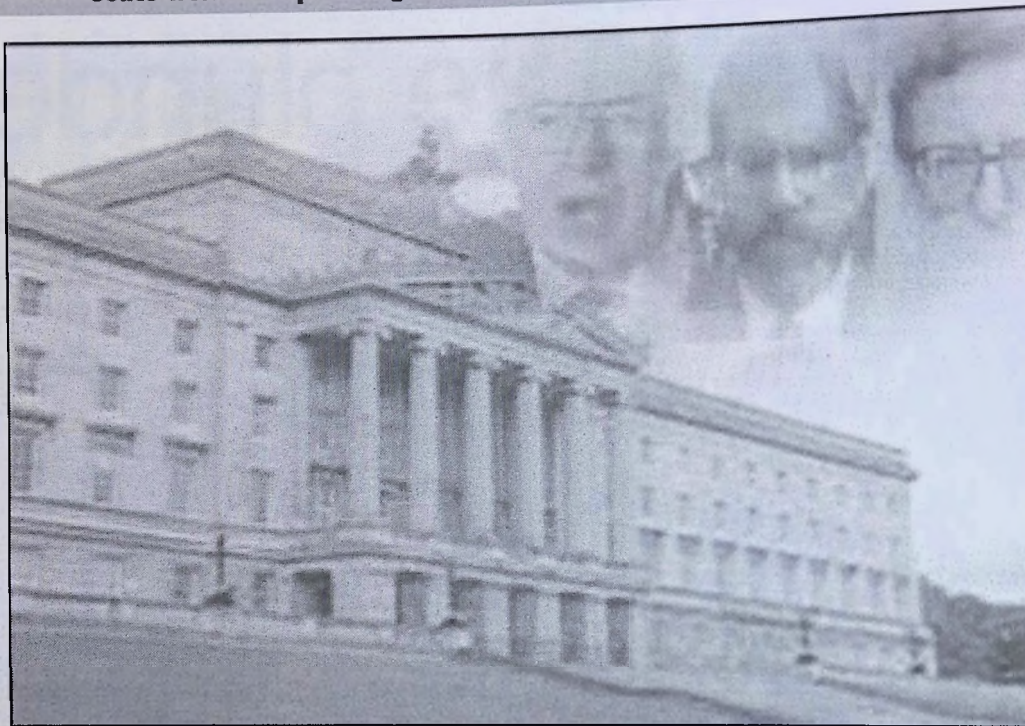
tion and for decent wages, union rights, support for a woman's right to choose and integrated comprehensive education.

Socialist Worker spoke to three trade unionists who support the idea of a united socialist bloc in the next Assembly elections.

Let's get away from tribal politics

GORDON MCNEILL, a T&G shop steward at Belfast International Airport, was sacked for going on strike for higher wages and improved conditions.

At a rally on May 24th in support of the sacked airport workers he gave a rousing speech calling for working class unity to fight the attacks on wages and conditions. He spoke to *Socialist Worker* about the need for a socialist voice in the Assembly elections.



What I am about is shifting away from the tribalistic politics that have characterised this country for the last thirty years.

I certainly wouldn't want in any way to trivialise what has happened here during that time but I do feel that working class people need to fight together if we are to stop the erosion of wages and conditions and to stop the introduction of stealth taxes like water charges.

I have often thought that I have a romantic view that an attack on one is an attack on everyone, but the more I talk to working class people, I know that people are sick of the rhetoric of the Assembly politicians while nothing changes for the better.

There is a real feeling around for a different approach.

Do you think then that working class unity should be extended to the Assembly elections?

Over the past few years the failure of the Assembly has shown that communal politics just doesn't work.

Working class people need a political voice that doesn't accept that because of the troubles and thirty years of neglect and mismanagement that we should accept employers who want to inflict poverty

Socialists worked together in the anti war movement: Let's do it for Assembly elections

EILEEN WEBSTER is Chair of the Foyle Trust branch of the public sector union, NIPSA. She has been very active also in the Derry Anti War Coalition. She explained why she thinks we need a socialist bloc in the Assembly elections:

I think the working class voters of Northern Ireland need and deserve an alternative to vote for. I am concerned about soundings from the Irish Labour Party that they might organise North of the Border, given their record in the South.

And similarly the old question of the British Labour Party organising here has been raised again.

Not only have we had the role of New Labour in the war and the invasion of Iraq, but also the

fact that they have failed to reverse the Tory anti-union laws. Currently, some of the leading unions in Britain are having discussions about their relationship with New Labour.

The firefighters certainly are, and understandably, so are the Transport and General Workers Union. So, we need our own indigenous socialist alternative.

But when you look at the parties locally that claim to be in some way socialist—the SDLP and Sinn Fein—well, there's nothing socialist about them, is there? Mark Durkan as Minister for Finance pushed the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and PPPs.

Sinn Fein's attitude to PFI/PPP is supposedly "ambivalent" but in reality, as Ministers in the Executive, they worked it happily.

The recent economic situation, with all the job losses, has seen a real need for a socialist alternative to organise a decent fightback and I suppose the

biggest fight is going to be on the water charges. I think we can win on that. But we need a clear socialist opposition, akin to the fight against the poll tax in Britain.

We need a clear socialist voice supporting workers in struggle—like the firefighters, the social workers, workers generally.

Do you think it is possible to pull a united socialist bloc together?

We were able to do it locally in Derry in the Socialist Environmental Alliance for the last local elections—and that was before the anti-war movement.

It won't necessarily be easy but it's always worth keeping the red flag flying, I think.

We would need a common agenda. That might pose difficulties, but it's not insurmountable.

Look at the response to the anti-war movement recently—

that gave me heart. I'm not saying that everyone on those anti-war marches were socialists, but a lot of them were.

And for the first time in over 30 years, young people felt enabled to become active politically against the war and become involved in left-wing politics for the first time since the Civil Rights Movement.

Those young people started off against the war, but they were quickly reading up on and talking about American imperialism and corporate globalisation.

It really showed that young people are willing to struggle and are not apathetic. It's important that it brought a new layer of young people into socialist politics and all that has impacted on their consciousness. So you're not starting from scratch.

The Left worked well together in the anti-war movement, so I see no reason why we can't do the same in the Assembly elections.

wages and bad conditions.

The framework that the Assembly politicians work within doesn't allow people here to move forward."

Do you think such a left or socialist bloc is possible?

The key thing here is unity. I expect there to be disagreements and we will have to deal with those but I want to see the parties, trade unionists and others to put differences aside and get behind those issues we can all agree with and fight together on.

We showed that this could be done on February the fifteenth.

We were part of an international movement. On that day Belfast was no different from anywhere else in the world.

February the fifteenth was for me the turning point.

All around the world the attacks are the same: privatisation, water charges, millions spent on the war on Iraq—and then come the

attacks on health, education and welfare.

Just as we have to fight against these attacks with strikes, rallies and demonstrations, we should also use the elections to build a platform as well.

We need an anti-sectarian voice in the Assembly

DAVEY MCAULEY is a member of the GMB union in an IT factory in Derry that doesn't allow trade unions.

He supports the calls for a united socialist bloc:

Because people have been radicalised over the

war and are so pissed off with all the factories closing and the carry-on of the sectarian politicians, there's never been a better time to stand a socialist alternative.

While the factories were closing, the politicians here were arguing about the name of the city.

The workers in those factories know that their jobs are going to developing countries in the pursuit of profit, so they respond to arguments against corporate globalisation and link cuts in public services to the billions spent on war.

We need an anti-sectarian voice in the Assembly and to bring real politics to the North of Ireland. We need to do it NOW.

LATIN AMERICA



■ Poster supporting Lula in last year's presidential election

Brazil's Lula clamps down on his left wing

LULA, THE former socialist and leader of the Workers Party who was elected president of Brazil last year, is turning on left wingers in his own party who oppose the pro-business policies he is pursuing in office.

Three Workers Party deputies in Brazil's Congress are being threatened with expulsion from the party for opposing Lula's tax and pension plans which will hit workers.

It is a clear sign that Lula is determined to show his right wing governing coalition allies and international bankers that they can rely on him to look after their interests.

Lula has made some gestures to his base among Brazil's workers and poor since he took over the presidency in January.

He has initiated limited programmes to tackle hunger in the poorest areas and he has agreed to give some land to landless rural workers organised in the radical MST movement.

But the thrust of Lula's policies have been to show the country's rich and international bankers that he is no threat to them.

Austerity

He has set an austerity budget and is planning to cut public sector worker pensions. Lula's policies were even praised by US Treasury Secretary John Snow on a recent visit to Brazil.

Incredibly Lula's budget targets are even more austere than those demanded by the International Monetary Fund.

The IMF demanded money be pumped out of Brazil to pay international bankers as a condition for agreeing new loans last year to stave off a collapse of the country's currency.

The three congress deputies threatened with expulsion from the Workers Party are echoing the growing

discontent among party members and those who voted for Lula.

That direction is summed up by the *Financial Times* business paper—though it underestimates the degree of opposition Lula faces within the Workers Party.

"The rift between a minority of hardliners and the more market-friendly moderates in government has deepened since the Workers Party accelerated its move towards the political centre after taking power in January.

"The government has not only adopted orthodox economic policies the PT used to criticise, but is now moving to cut pensions benefits of civil servants, among its core supporters."

Threat

Luciano Genro, one of the deputies threatened with expulsion after joining recent trade union protests against the pension cuts, says, "We cannot accept pleasing new allies to break with our old allies."

Joao Batista de Araujo says of the expulsion threat he and the others face, "We are being used as an example to show international investors the government can approve whatever reforms they want."

In an echo of the kind of language those familiar with attacks on the left have faced in European-style Labour parties, Workers Party president Jose Genoino argued, "We have the obligation to ensure the viability of this government."

"The comrades went too far. They engaged in systematic opposition."

The three facing expulsion have won wide support in the Workers Party.

The opposition to Lula's policies is likely to lead to bigger and sharper clashes between workers and the poor and his government in the months ahead.

EUROPE IN REVOLT FOR SOCIAL RIGHTS

France

A battle for pensions



■ These postal workers, dressed in mail sacks, are just some of the millions who have demonstrated against the government

THE BATTLE to defend workers' pension rights in France has reached a critical stage. Chirac's government has been rattled by strikes and demonstrations when up to two million workers joined marches across the country.

Prime minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin is determined to press ahead with plans to force workers to work longer and pay higher contributions, yet get lower pensions. "The street will not govern," he declared.

Many workers will face lower pensions, as the government seeks to force them to take out additional private pensions linked to the stock market. Some workers could see pensions cut by up to 35 percent.

Firefighter Julien Valois told *Socialist Worker*, "We have a pension scheme that allows us to retire at 55. It's a hard job and we don't want

to be forced to work until 60 or 65 even.

"The government talks about 'reform', but that always seems to mean cuts and making us work longer and harder."

"It's simple," Samuel Thalieu, a 23 year old rail worker, said. We pay 37.5 years contribution for our pension now.

"The government wants us to pay for 40, even 42, years. It's like in 1995 when the government attacked welfare. We all had to strike. We have to do the same today."

The opposition Socialist Party verbally backed Tuesday's protest, but its leaders agree with the government on pushing through pension "reform".

But the strikes, the biggest since the 1995 revolt which broke a previous assault on welfare by a right wing government, have pushed the govern-

ment to hold talks with union leaders.

The government's strategy was to offer minor concessions in the hope of splitting the opposition. It succeeded, up to a point.

The important CFDT union federation accepted government proposals which offered some changes to the pension plans, but left the main thrust intact. But its leaders faced opposition within their own ranks.

Denounced

The significant rail workers' section of the CFDT bitterly denounced the federation's national leaders and said they would back further protest action.

France's other big union federations walked out of talks with the government, denounced the deal and pledged more mass protests.

The powerful CGT and FO national union federations, as well as the main teachers' unions, called the huge demonstration on Sunday.

Many workers have also been taking action to keep up the momentum of the fight, often in a tussle with their own national union leaders. Council workers in some cities stayed out for several more days after the national stoppage.

And in some areas, such as in Paris, tube, bus and rail workers did the same.

There is no doubt of the mood and potential among workers for the kind of sustained and militant strikes and protests that could, as in 1995, defeat the government.

The key battle in the coming days will be between those within the unions who want to build on that mood and those who want to contain it.

Germany

Strikes and protests add to turmoil

DEMONSTRATIONS took place in Germany against government plans to cut unemployment and other welfare benefits.

The government wants to make it easier for bosses to sack workers.

Over 10,000 marched in Berlin. The protests came as strikes in key sectors hotbed up over a demand to cut working hours.

The welfare cuts are

part of an assault by the Social Democrat (Labour) government. Germany officially slid into recession last week, with unemployment already at over 4.5 million.

The assault on benefits and employment rights by German chancellor Gerhard Schröder is causing huge political turmoil. It has caused

union base of his Social Democrat Party.

Some 6,000 workers in the powerful IG Metall union at key engineering

firms, including Volkswagen, staged brief warning strikes (a traditional form of protest in Germany) over the demand for a cut

in working hours.

The strikes are in areas which used to be in East Germany.

Workers in engineering there get the same wage rates as those in former West Germany, but the eastern workers do a longer 38-hour week.

Union leaders were to meet this week to decide on possible moves

Austria

THERE WERE more massive strikes and demonstrations in Austria against the right wing government's assault on pension rights. Last month saw the biggest national strike in Austria since 1945.

Why socialists oppose Third Level fees

by CONOR KOSTICK

The Minister for Education, Noel Dempsey, is pushing hard to introduce fees for third level education in Ireland, despite deep unease about the electoral consequences of such a move among FF backbenchers and the PD's.

The strange feature of his argument for fees is that it sounds like a socialist measure. He claims the measure is all about improving access to education to those from working class backgrounds by introducing what would effectively be a tax on the very rich.

Although Dempsey is under pressure to back down, he has support from Ahern who gave the impression to the Dáil that fees would be aimed only at those people who earned over €200,000 a year.

Dempsey is trying to get the cabinet to agree the principle with the income thresholds to be put in at a later date.

Those Fianna Fail deputies willing to stick their necks out on the issue are attacking Labour and Joe Higgins, claiming that if they were genuinely socialist they would support the fees proposal.

But of course socialists are in favour of retaining the free fees system.

Firstly, Dempsey is simply lying when he says that there has been no improvement in access to education since fees were abolished in 1994. In fact the Clancy Report of 2001 shows that while the very wealthy, farmers and the upper-middle class are still over represented in third level education, the inequality gap did in fact narrow by some 15 percent between 1992 and 1998.

Problem

The main problem for students from unskilled working class backgrounds is in fact lack of support at second level; only 65 percent of them get the Leaving Cert compared to 90 percent of students from middle-class and skilled working class backgrounds.

If you want to really tackle educational inequality you have to reduce social inequality so that working class students have space to study and are not forced into part time low paid jobs.

Secondly, the objection socialist have to reintroducing fees is that it is just the first step to larger numbers of PAYE workers paying for education. If you look at the figures you can see at once that the idea that these fees will be only applied to the super-rich is fiction.

There are 10,000 individuals earning more than Ahern's stated €200,000 a year. On average this would represent about 125 students a year from that income bracket going into third level education. Multiply this by the €8,000 that was leaked as the proposed figure for the fee and the government will gain only €1 million a year from the measure.

At the moment free fees cost the government €240 million. There is no way that Fianna Fail are going to risk a political backlash for the saving of just a million euro—and in any case the administrative costs of changing the system would be more than that.

It is clear that they are intending a much more radical change. This is more or less admitted when Cabinet members refer favourably to the Australian system. This is one where students have to take loans not just for maintenance but for fees. The huge debts that they then incur are repaid by an additional tax on their income in later life.

Ironically, given Dempsey's rhetoric, the Australian system has increased inequality hitting those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Although the poor are equally entitled to apply for the loans, understandably they are less inclined to do so for fear of the debt burden that will result.

In any case, talk of addressing inequality in education is completely shameful from a Minister in a cabinet that is increasing registration fees, cutting the local government grant and cutting the Back To Education Allowance, a scheme specifically aimed at those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

'FREE PRESS CORPORAT

THE PRESS barons of the world are holding a global media conference in Dublin from June 9th to 11th. Hundreds of anti-capitalists are scheduled to protest outside.

We are supposed to live in a democracy with a "free press". As long as newspapers are controlled by governments, they are supposed to be free to allow all opinions to be voiced.

But it is not true. In his unpublished introduction to *Animal Farm*, George Orwell once wrote that "unpopular ideas can be silenced and inconvenient facts kept dark, without any need for an official ban".

This is exactly what happens when the press is run by giant corporations.

Media ownership has become a big business and so naturally promotes business values.

Seven giant media companies now dominate the globe. They are Disney, AOL-Time Warner, Sony, News Corporation, Viacom, Vivendi and Bertelsmann. They produce the words, images, music that dominate our lives.

Yet they barely existed fifteen years ago. They have come into existence through a set of mergers that was made possible by the de-regulation of the media industry.

Agencies like the World Trade Organisation have spread this de-regulation out from the US so that the whole world has been opened up to these media oligopolies.

"What we are seeing is the creation of a global media oligopoly", Christopher Dixon, a media analyst explains. "It happened to the oil and automobile industries earlier this century. Now it is happening to the entertainment industry".

The media corporations operate through a policy of "synergy"—they move from dominance of one sector of the media to promoting their products in others sectors.

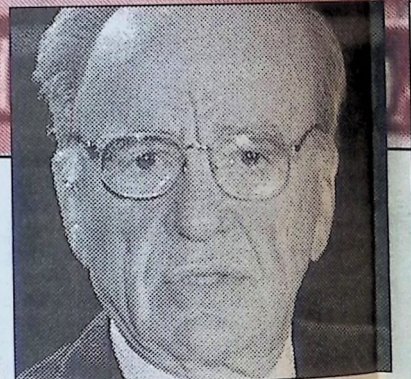
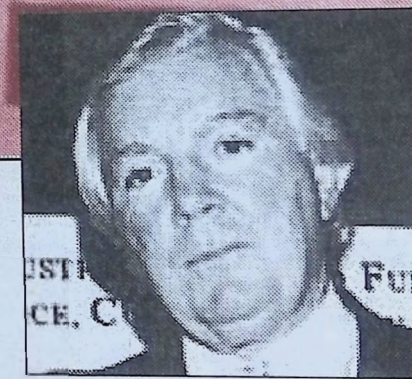
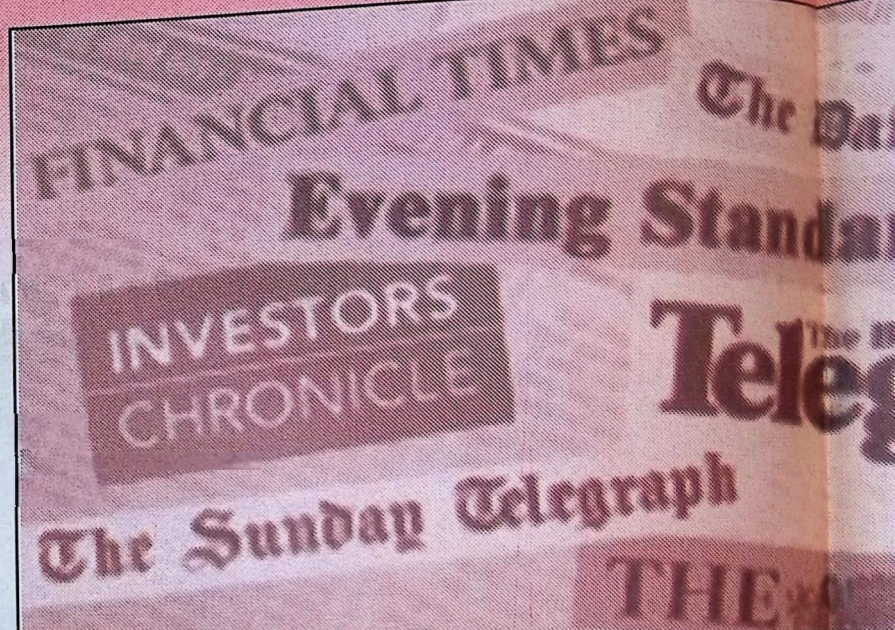
Control

So Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation uses their control over Sky News to push stories in the *Sunday Times* and this paper in turn will promote new books from its publishing wing Harper Collins.

The control exercised by these corporations is now frightening. They dominate all but one of the US television networks, control 80-85 percent of the music industry and squeeze out small independent publishers to control the book trade.

In America, just four companies now control educational material for schools and universities.

Around the big seven are a second



■ Press Barons: Sir Anthony O'Reilly; Rupert Murdoch and Lord Conrad Black

tier of media barons such as Berlusconi's media empire in Italy or O'Reilly's Independent group in Ireland.

These start by dominating one

region and then spread out to other countries.

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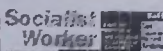
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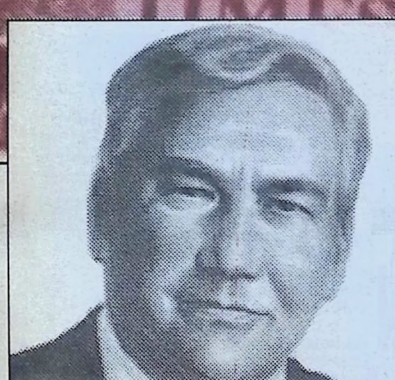
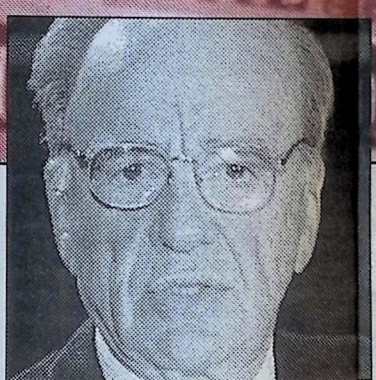
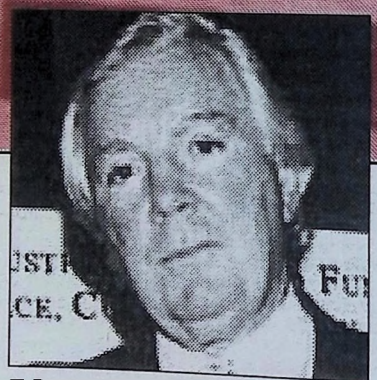
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Sunday newspapers except the *Sunday Business Post*.

They own the *Independent*, the *Evening Herald* and the *Star*.

But they have also moved into India, South Africa and New Zealand.

Everywhere they operate, the corporate media promote the values of the free market, racism and imperialism.

More subtly, newspapers accept uncritically notions such "competitiveness" and report on the capitalist economy as if it was the only possible system.

Increasingly, they use "human-interest" stories and "sensationalist

Corporate control—corporate values

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Take Vivendi International.

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Naturally, its main television channels in France support policies which advocate privatisation!

In Ireland, the Independent Groups of newspapers is the most vicious exponent of corporate values.

The pages of the *Sunday Independent* are full of rants by fanatical right-wingers such as Ruth Dudley Edwards and Eoghan Harris.

Their main enemies are left wing ideas, Sinn Fein and anything to do with "political correctness".

The Independent group of newspaper does not investigate the scandal of the super-rich claiming to be "non-residents" for tax purposes.

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DO THE CONTROL IDEA

THE corporate press claims to be objective and fair whereas papers like *Socialist Worker* are supposed to be biased and propaganda sheets.

But this ignores how the structure of private ownership affects how stories are written.

"Objectivity" in reporting normally means accepting the framework and priorities of the existing society.

This is seen most dramatically in reporting on strikes. Typically, the press never interview actual workers on strike as their views are considered "unnewsworthy" and "biased".

When they report earnings, they usually take figures from the top of the pay scale. They focus mainly on the effects of the strike rather than the causes.

They run headlines such as "Hopes of Settlement Grow" to convey an impression that strikes are a "bad thing" and the sooner they are settled—no matter what the outcome from workers point of view—the better.

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CLASS' IS A RATE PRESS



Conrad Black
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Increasingly, they use "human-interest" stories and "sensationalist

features" to transform the media into an entertainment industry rather than an organ for critically understanding the world.

Through such mechanisms, the media have huge influence over people's lives.

Conflict

However, it is untrue to claim that they are able to indoctrinate workers.

Many people's direct experience conflict with media images. So a nurse who goes on strike and hears her struggle denounced in the pages of the *Independent* may become more critical of other strike reports.

The media has a bigger influence when people are isolated and atomised.

However, when they move together—in huge anti-war protests for example, they help to generate a different view of the world.

In times such as this, the corporate media may even shift its emphasis to keep up its readership.

The Italian Marxist Gramsci summed it up best when he claimed that workers had a "contradictory consciousness".

One part of their heads take in the official line of the state and the media barons but the other half knows the values of solidarity and standing up to the bosses.

Build the alternative press

Socialist Worker is part of the alternative press that challenges corporate control of the media.

We report struggles from a worker's point of view. We do not pretend to be neutral in these conflicts—as the corporate media does.

We try to link our reporting to answering the question "what is to be done". Our reporting is not passive commentary but an active part of the struggle.

We look at the experience of other struggles and the wider traditions of the workers' movement to find tactics to win.

The socialist press does not have money for a huge distribution network. It relies on its readers to become organisers for the paper—taking a few copies to distribute to their friends and workmates.

The Eamonn McCann column

Where stands Sinn Fein?

A BELFAST Sinn Fein councillor was recently reportedly "spluttering" at a suggestion I'd made that his party, far from being socialist, might be described as "centre right".

"Absurd!", the councillor fumed. "So absurd nobody could take it seriously."

Many Sinn Feiners will instinctively agree. The party is widely seen, particularly in the South, as standing to the left of Labour, competing for left-of-Labour votes with the Greens and others. Even if it isn't quite as far to the left as the SWP, for example, it is surely a distortion to describe Sinn Fein as centre right....

What I'd said, in a radio interview on an independent New York station, was that judged by its behaviour on class issues on the Northern Executive, Sinn Fein is centre right.

Privatisation in health and education, hostility to term-time workers in schools when they struck for job security and pay, the refusal to push for progress on a woman's right to choose, on these issues and others vital to working class people, Sinn Fein occupied ground which it is perfectly accurate to describe as centre-right.

Answer

Sinn Feiners who see themselves as socialists have an answer to this.

It is that normal political rules don't apply in the North. Under the rules of the Agreement, the Executive operated—and will again if the institutions are revived—on the basis of compulsory coalition.

To take up its Executive positions, Sinn Fein had to implement a programme for government agreed with the UUP, DUP and SDLP.

To have made defence of the public sector or of trade union or women's rights a sticking point would have rendered the system unworkable.

Even if this were a sound argument, which it isn't, it doesn't explain Sinn Fein's behaviour.

Introducing the raft of privatisation schemes which went through during their tenure of office, Bairbre de Brun and Martin McGuinness didn't say—

"We do this with a heavy heart, but we have no choice. We maintain our objection...We will work for the day when health and

education will be brought back fully within the public sector..." The exact opposite is the truth.

The record shows that Sinn Fein went along with the flogging off of our hospitals and schools to fat-cat entrepreneurs every bit as compliantly as any other Executive party.

The business of "compulsory coalition" is, anyway, a canard.

As the SWP has consistently pointed out, the option of going into opposition and mobilising the mass of the people against the centre-right priorities of the other parties was always available.

It was never even discussed.

But, say Sinn Feiners, the key consideration now is to make the Agreement work to the benefit of Nationalists after decades of second-class citizenship.

Issues

Class issues like privatisation and union rights are important, sure, but aren't the immediate priority. Which is no more than a Northern adaptation of de Valera's old dictum that "labour must wait."

That this is Sinn Fein's real view is confirmed in circumstances where the "compulsory coalition" argument doesn't arise.

Following the disastrous decline in the garment industry in the north west, for example, Mitchel McLaughlin and Mark Durken were given 2,000 words each in the *Derry Journal* on February 28 to outline their respective party's "New Economic Vision."

As was pointed out here at the time, the only sharp difference between the two "visions" was that the SDLP man at least mentioned the need to involve trade unions, while the SF national chairman didn't refer to a role for unions at all.

This from a party which, on paper, has a policy of "actively opposing" companies which fail to recognise trade unions!

To describe Sinn Fein as centre right is not to suggest that this defines the personal beliefs of individual Sinn Feiners.

But it does describe what the party does in practice, as opposed to what Ard Fheis motions say. In face of all the facts, it is absurd to argue otherwise.

CONGO: THE WAR YOU DON'T HEAR ABOUT

Who is to blame for the 3.5 million dead?

SOON AFTER the 11 September attacks George Bush declared that the US and the world were facing "the first war of the 21st century".

He was contemptuously brushing aside a war in which almost 3.5 million people have died. This has been going on since 1998 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in Central Africa.

It still goes on today.

Some of the 3.5 million have been killed directly in the fighting. Many more have suffered lingering deaths because of starvation and disease because the war has shattered Congo's agriculture, economy and society.

Three out of every four children born during the war have already died or will die before their second birthday.

In the entire 225-year history of the US—including the American Civil War, First World War, Second World War, Korean War and Vietnam War—around 900,000 US citizens have died either on the battlefield or because of the conflicts. This is less than a third of the number killed in DRC in the last five years.

The war has drawn in seven African countries to fight over the country's wealth. But there are far more powerful forces involved than the ruling classes of Zimbabwe, Angola, Uganda, Rwanda, Namibia, Chad and Sudan.

The Great Powers and imperialism are involved, just as they have always been in Congo's history. In the 1960s the Great Powers brought Joseph Mobutu to power. This dictator ruled from 1965 to 1997 over a country which he renamed Zaire. It was a prized asset during the Cold War. One attraction was the mineral wealth. The mineral belt in Katanga province contains copper and zinc in far higher concentrations than neighbouring countries.

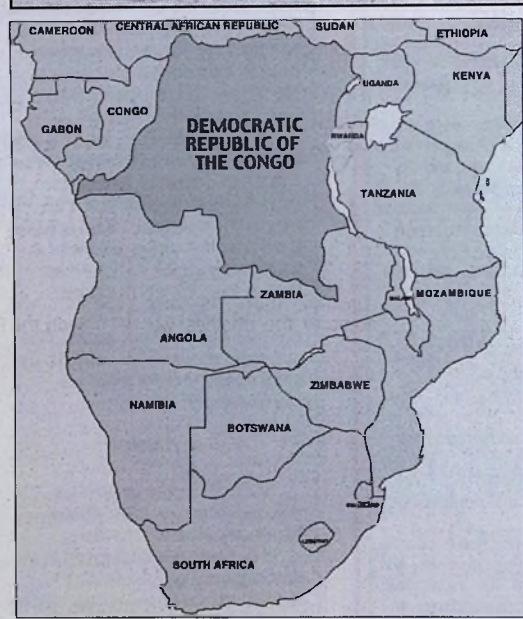
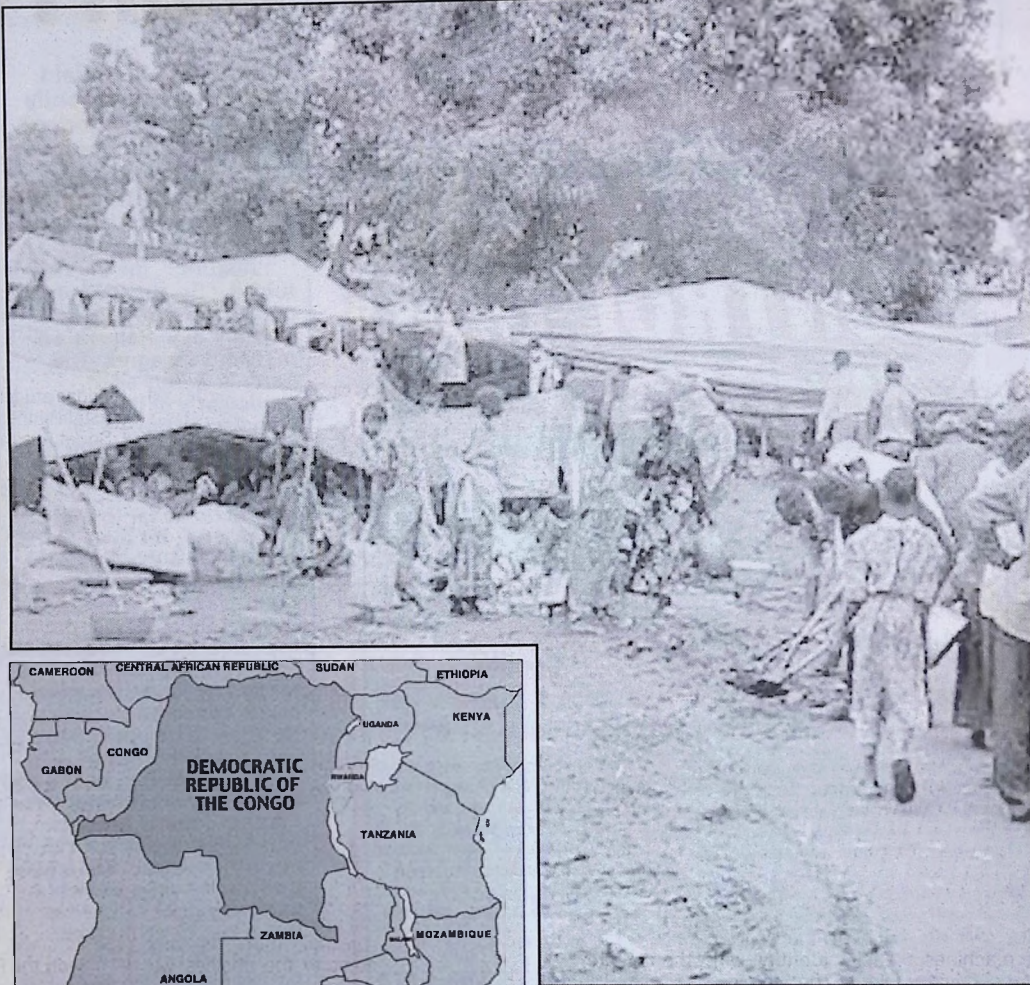
Cobalt is a key mineral for jet engines. The US has no domestic source of supply, and Zaire produced half the world's supply in the 1980s.

No wonder a US ambassador once referred to "the Congo caviar" in a cable back to headquarters.

But even more important to the US was keeping strategic control over a huge swathe of Central Africa. Mobutu could be relied on as an ally against the USSR—so long as he was thrown enough loot and allowed to butcher his opponents.

Mobutu was allowed by his Western backers to plunder so much money that he became legendary in Africa. When he bought a \$5.2 million villa on the French Riviera he asked as an afterthought whether the price was in dollars or Belgian francs.

The 39-fold difference was unimportant for a man with a country's treasury at his disposal. Mobutu stayed in power because he murdered his opponents, and because he could rely on Western backing. During the Shaba rebellion in the 1970s the US organised a military airlift and France parachuted in legionnaires to



■ Congolese refugees fleeing the fighting which has seen millions dead and maimed

time, dominated by members of the Hutu group, unleashed a meticulously planned campaign of murder against people in the Tutsi group and opposition Hutus.

In response to the killing, a Tutsi-dominated rebel movement of Rwandan exiles invaded Rwanda. Those who had organised the genocide and hundreds of thousands of ordinary Hutus fled the country.

Many ended up in eastern Zaire under Mobutu's protection. The Rwandan and neighbouring Ugandan governments wanted to smash the potential threat from

the Hutu militias.

In 1997 they allied with the Zairean opposition under Laurent Kabila to drive Mobutu out. But instead of ushering in a new era of freedom, this opened up widespread slaughter. It detonated a struggle between regional competitors and, behind them, the US and France vying for control of an area where both believed they should dominate.

In 1998 Uganda and Rwanda fell out with Kabila and organised a military rebellion against him. Kabila turned to Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola for military assistance. The rebellion split into many factions as the local and international ruling classes fastened like vultures on the rapidly decaying corpse of what was now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Charlie Kilmber

crush Mobutu's enemies.

French and Belgian troops flew in to police the streets when the army rioted in Zaire's cities during the 1990s.

The present war in Congo has its roots in the horrific events of 1994 in neighbouring Rwanda, when around 800,000 people were slaughtered in a hundred days.

The Rwandan government of the

Profit system unmovable even by this scale of suffering

DURING THE last five years most of the countries involved have changed sides at some point, and the US and France have also shifted their allegiances.

They have channelled loans and grants and sold arms to a variety of ruling classes, prolonging and intensifying the war.

Through all this power-play the ordinary people have suffered unimaginable horror. Hardly anyone has noticed.

What happens in Congo does not cause the slightest stir in the boardrooms of London and New York.

Whether 3.5 million live or die is unimportant to them.

But the decisions made by those country's rulers and capitalists have a huge impact on the people of Congo.

Arms sales, military alliances, debt enforcement, changes in commodity prices and withholding aid can all mean death for hundreds of thousands.

In addition the example of how the Great Powers use violence is not lost on the ruling classes of Africa.

If it is legitimate for the US to blast Yugoslavia and Afghanistan and Iraq in pursuit of its interests; then how can anyone complain if African countries

dismember Congo?

Rampant imperialism creates a general climate pushing countries to reach quickly for the gun and the bomb.

As the killing continued last week the UN considered declaring that what was happening was "genocide". This could trigger intervention.

A century of "intervention" has wrecked Congo. The last thing it needs is even more Great Power manoeuvres.

Last year an alliance of Congolese trade unions, religious groups and women's groups put out an appeal that said, "The world has forgotten us and

left us to die. But seeing what it has done to us in the past we almost fear to be remembered."

Tony Blair famously told the Labour Party conference in 2001 that the fate of Africa was "a scar on the conscience of the world".

Yet he and his allies have created a global order where horrors like the Congo can happen almost without a murmur.

Opposition to what Bush and Blair are doing in Iraq is part of a wider confrontation with the brutal system that brings hunger and violence across the world.

History

Colonial conquest

THE CONGO was first torn apart by Belgian colonialism. At the end of the 19th century European powers began what became known as the "scramble for Africa", a frantic competition to seize chunks of the continent.

The Belgian King Leopold II targeted the area around the River Congo. When he died in 1909 the royal treasury was overflowing with money made from Congolese rubber, and 8 million Congolese people had died from his policies.

Leopold's money was more than usually blood soaked. As one investigator reported, the king's colony was based on "legalised robbery enforced by violence".

One of Leopold's African subjects wrote, "We are sent out to get rubber, and when we come back with little rubber we are shot. When we did not bring enough rubber the white men would put some of us in lines, one behind the other, and would shoot through all our bodies."

The most potent symbol of colonialism's brutality was the "severed hands". African soldiers in the pay of their Belgian masters were sent out to smash opposition. To demonstrate that they had not wasted their bullets they hacked the hands from their victims, alive or dead.

Africans did not meekly accept colonialism. They rose in rebellion in 1908 and were defeated only by a desperate government pouring in large numbers of Belgian troops.

This brutal rule was finally shattered by rebellion in 1959.

Lumumba murdered

THE BELGIAN government was forced to concede independence. But it hoped to hand power to a pliant ruler who would look after the profits of the giant mining companies.

To their horror, the radical nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba was elected as Congo's prime minister.

Belgium, the US, Britain and, crucially, the United Nations, came together to undermine Lumumba, have him removed from office, and then to murder him in 1961.

The Great Powers and the UN brushed aside the wishes of Congo's people, destroyed the country's unity and set Joseph Mobutu up as a pro-Western tyrant.

As Ludo De Witte writes, "It is a staggering example of what the Western ruling classes are capable of when their vital interests are threatened."

Links

Adam Hochschild

King Leopold's Ghost

Brilliant and harrowing account of the colonial period.

Ludo De Witte

The Assassination of Lumumba

How imperialism snuffed out the challenge of Patrice Lumumba after independence.

Michela Wrong

In the Footsteps of Mr Kurtz

A journalist's account which reveals some of the horrors of the Mobutu government.

Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja

The Congo: From Leopold to Kabila, A People's History

Detailed history of the modern era.

Ronan Bennett

The Catastrophist

A novel set in the Belgian Congo just before independence.

film

THE MATRIX RELOADED

Resistance to Revolutions

television

CAMBRIDGE SPIES:

Upsetting the *Daily Telegraph*

by AOIFE NI FHEARGHAIL



■ Anyone who has ever questioned the priorities of the world we live in will easily identify with the plot of *The Matrix*

MATRIX Reloaded has opened to packed cinemas around the world.

The first Matrix took cinema-goers by surprise with its kick-ass martial arts, "guns ... lots of guns" and revolutionary special effects. But it is the story of the Matrix more than anything else which has guaranteed that the sequels will be worldwide hits.

There are many who believe the Matrix is deeply profound. Indeed, if you have the time to, you could spend hours on the metaphysical navel-gazing of doctoral geeks churning over Descartes, Heidegger, Husserl, Hegel and Sartre along with Christianity, Buddhism, Gnosticism and Zen to find the definitive analysis of the Matrix—without reaching any conclusions.

Undoubtedly, the film is awash with religious symbolism.

However, for today's anti-capitalist youth what is really stimulating about *The Matrix* is its anti-corporate, anti-authoritarian ideology.

At its core, this is a film about raw exploitation, state coercion and resistance.

The story centres around Thomas Anderson (Neo) a computer programmer with software giant MetaCortex who leads a mundane life working in a dreary office environment with a domineering boss.

At night Neo hacks into computer programmes trying to figure out what it is that is fundamentally wrong with the world.

Enter Morpheus—underground resistance leader—who frees Neo by opening his eyes to the real nature of the world he inhabits.

Neo believes it to be 1999 whereas it is closer to 2199 in a world where mankind is fighting a

100-year war against the artificial intelligence which now rules the world.

The Earth has been turned into a barren desert after mankind scorched the sky in an attempt to destroy the heat which the machines depend upon for survival.

However, the machines responded by sourcing an alternative power supply—human bio-energy.

Survive

Humans are now harvested in giant bio-fields so that the machines can feed off their energy.

Humanity survives in a collective virtual consciousness—a computer programme known as the Matrix which is designed to stop mankind from waking up and attempting to liberate itself from slavery.

However, the real villains of *The Matrix* are not the life-sucking machines, but the special "Agents"—sentient programmes which exist

within the Matrix to seek out and destroy the resistance, in particular Morpheus who they claim is the world's "most dangerous terrorist".

Anyone who has ever questioned the priorities of the world we live in will easily identify with the plot of *The Matrix*.

The "real world" of *The Matrix* is based on crude exploitation—the harvesting of human beings into bio-batteries.

The exploited humans are misled into believing that life is continuing as normal.

The status quo is maintained by special Agents who hunt down and destroy the Resistance.

Is the real world of 2003 so very different?

We may not be ruled by machines, but our society is one based on economic exploitation.

A tiny minority steals what we create and prevents us from having any say in how our world is run.

Although we're not

hooked into a virtual simulation, we are fed a daily drip of lies which mislead us about our role in society.

More often than not, when we challenge the existing order we are met with all the force of the State.

What Marx called a vast political and ideological superstructure exists to prevent us from challenging the economic base on which our society is organised. The superstructure can do this in two ways.

Powerful

Either by convincing us that our rulers are too powerful to be overthrown—so like "Cypher" in the first film we become disillusioned when we fight back and retreat into our own world.

Or by convincing us that the existing social relations are part of the timeless natural order of things which cannot ever be challenged.

But all around the planet millions of people don't buy into this version of reality. Our ruler's system of control is breaking down.

Like many "anti-capitalist" films *The Matrix* contains no great gems of wisdom for the movement. Indeed, the film itself has generated millions for the coffers of Warner Bros., Nokia and Sony.

But it sheds light brilliantly on the nature of

SOMETIMES it's easier to judge the worth of a TV series by the people and organisations that it angers rather than those who enjoy it.

And if we are to take this as our litmus test of value, then *Cambridge Spies* a drama series currently running on Friday nights on BBC 2 is well worth a look.

Both the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Telegraph* have railed against this series which focuses on one of the most famous spy rings of them all.

The sympathetic portrayal of Kim Philby, Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess and Anthony Blunt the Cambridge students growing up in the heart of the British establishment in the 1930's who became spies for Soviet Russia, has raised the anger levels among the British reactionary press.

The argument that it was wrong of the BBC to spend £4.5m glamourising the 'treacherous wretches' has been developed by many critics.

No lesser an authority than Oleg Gordievsky, the former Soviet double agent, took it to task in the *Sunday Telegraph* for altering historical fact to create a drama "akin to a piece of KGB propaganda".

What *Cambridge Spies* has in fact done is look at the motivation of the young students. Rather than just weak willed traitors, the men are shown to be people sickened by the privilege that they were growing up in while many in Britain lived in constant poverty.

They were also influenced by the radicalisation which was taking place in the 1930's. The rise of Fascism, the Spanish Civil War, the influence of the Russian Revolution all had a major impact on the young students.

It was the belief that support for communism was the only way to defeat fascism, and that anyone interested in the future of Europe had to take sides, which was the main influences behind Philby, Maclean, Burgess and Blunt's decision to become spies for the Soviet Union.

Sadly the Russia that the Cambridge spies were working for was far from the high ideals and practice of the Bolshevik Government in the early years after the 1917 revolution.

By the 1930's Stalin had almost completely consolidated his power, Trotsky had been exiled, Lenin was dead and the bureaucracy which was loyal to Stalin had extinguished any democratic legacy left by the revolution.

In the years after the revolution, Russia had been isolated and attacked by the international capitalist governments. The devastating effect of civil war at home and the failure of socialist revolutions to spread across Europe meant the Russian workers and the Bolsheviks had their revolution strangled.

Stalin

So while Russia in the 1930's had nothing to do with the socialism envisaged by Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, it was almost impossible for sympathetic left-wingers in foreign countries to see this. The four Cambridge Spies believed that Russia still represented a socialist country which was the only force that could defeat fascism in Europe.

It was this belief rather than real 'love' for Stalin or the Communist leadership which drove the spies to make such sacrifices.

It was not until the treachery of Stalin during the Spanish Civil War, the Nazi-Soviet Pact before the Second World War and in later decades the Soviet tanks crushing the workers in Prague and Berlin, that many left wingers saw that Soviet Russia was a totalitarian regime with no connection with socialism at all.

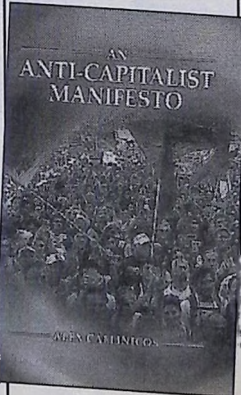
The series does a great service by showing the men as idealistic and driven.

This "spy scandal" was like a nuclear explosion among the ruling class in Britain when it was exposed. Four men with contacts throughout the British establishment had become socialists by conviction rather than circumstance.

The reaction of the *Daily Mail* echoes this initial anger from the British ruling class to the news of the soviet spy ring.

Whatever the cost of the series it was definitely worth it just to see these people's collective noses put out once again.

OUT Now!
An Anti Capitalist Manifest
by Alex Callinicos



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a guide for the movement

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MARCH IN SUPPORT OF SACKED AIRPORT STAFF

ONE year ago 22 security workers at Belfast Airport were sacked by their bosses in the ICTS company.

The workers were looking for a living wage and decent conditions.

A year later eighty trade unionist marched in Belfast to express their solidarity with them.

Those at the rally were critical of the behaviour of the union, the ATGWU.

But instead of giving

the airport workers full backing, the leaders of the ATGWU let them down badly.

At the time the

ATGWU was led by Bill Morris. Morris had sacked the regional secretary of the ATGWU Mick O Reilly and Eugene

McGloin.

It was a blatant coup by the right wing of the union who used people who mouthed a fake left

rhetoric but did little.

One of the groups who suffered from these antics was the Belfast airport workers.

Fortunately, Bill Morris has now resigned and Mick O Reilly and Eugene McGloin have jobs back as full time officials.

But it is now time to reclaim the union for the rank and file and genuine socialists.

NIPSA Conference

NIPSA, the North's largest trade union with over 40,000 members, is holding its Annual Conference from the 27th-30th May.

In the year since the last conference, we have seen workers in NIPSA involved in a number of important struggles

with civil servants and social workers taking action.

Delegates will propose continued opposition to the government's privatisation plans, the 'war on terror', and against proposed job cuts and charges in the water service.

A number of branches are also seeking to

force NIPSA to initiate a serious campaign for decent pay in the civil service, a crucial issue relevant to some 20,000 NIPSA members.

Organising

Campaigns, on the issue of water charges for example, should be fought not only by the

union leadership but by NIPSA members, organising in every branch and workplace.

If we cannot pressure the union leadership into mobilizing the mass of members then union activists will need to be organising and co-ordinating them.

'Time for Change' is one group already in a

position to do this.

There are also clear links between many of the issues.

Low pay, privatisation, corporate accountability, pension cuts, modernization, war and water charges are all part and parcel of the neo-liberal agenda relentlessly pursued by the government.

This agenda is designed by those who will attend the World Economic Forum in Dublin this October.

If we can push NIPSA into a position of supporting opposition to this meeting in the form of protests and counter-conferences, that would be a most positive outcome of the conference.

Dublin Campaign Against the Bin Tax

PROTEST AT THE DAIL

Wednesday
28th May
7.00pm

Campaign Hotline: 087-2837989

North City Health Action Group formed

by JOE CAROLAN
FORTY people came together to form a Health Action Group for the North Inner City last Thursday in Phibsboro.

With job losses, bed closures and cancellations of operations on the way in the Mater Hospital, local people are coming together with trade unionists to mobilise community sup-

port for the coming fight-back, which the Irish Nurses Organisation is preparing for in June.

Jo Tully, Shop Steward with the INO in St James', outlined the horrific nature of the cutbacks on the hospitals. "Emergency beds are already full- with the result that there are no beds when urgent cases arrive at A and E. There are now queues for the trolleys that are waiting for beds."

Tommy Mc Donald, a SIPTU Shop Steward at the Mater, spoke about the reality behind the cutbacks there. One Mater hospital consultant has already compared to "decommissioning the lifeboats on an already sinking ship".

Joe Carolan, SWP, called for an end to the two tier health system, and a properly funded free universal health care system for all. This was echoed by

Joe Costello, TD from the Labour Party.

The North City Health Action Group is putting up a regular picket at the A and E entrance to the Mater. They are determined to fight for every job and bed.

Links are being made between the health unions and the community- people in Monaghan and Louth have already shown that thousands of people are

ready to march and support strikes to defend our hospitals.

The North City group is hoping that other communities across Dublin will now begin to set up action groups in their areas, to organise and support the coming revolt this Summer.

■North City Health Action Group—Contact Joe at 087 9032281

Marxist Forums

Big ideas discussed in informal settings



Artane-Coolock

Wednesday June 4th 8pm
Artane Beaumont Family Recreation Centre Evian G8
Protest: Eyewitness Eport

Ballyfermot:

Ruby Finnigans Pub
Wednesday 4th June 8pm
Eyewitness Account from G8 Summit - Evian

Ballymun:

Will Labour bring a Fair Society or a Blair Society?
7.30pm Thursday June 5th
Axis Centre

Belfast:

Anti Capitalism and the World Economic Forum,
Thursday 12th June, 8.00pm
Cafe Arcadia

Blanchardstown:

Wednesday 4th June 8pm
Castleknock Community Centre, Laurel Lodge: Will Labour deliver - a Fair Society or a Blair Society?

Bray:

8pm Thurs 5 June Eyewitness report from Evian G8 summit protest. Lenehan's Pub, Main St, Bray

Clondalkin

Thursday 5th June 8pm
Oakfield Lodge Hotel, Clondalkin Eyewitness Account from G8 Summit - Evian

Dublin North City-Drumcondra

Wednesday June 4th The Snug Dorset St 8pm Evian G8 Protest: Eyewitness Report

Dublin South City:

6pm Wed 4 June Eyewitness report from Evian G8 summit protest, The Meter Cafe, Tara St

Dundrum:

8pm Mon 9 June Eyewitness report from Evian G8 summit protest, Dundrum Family Recreation Centre

Dun Laoghaire:

8pm Thurs 5 June Eyewitness report from Evian G8 summit protest, Farrell's Pub, Marine Road, Dun Laoghaire

Fairview

Will Labour bring a Fair Society or a Blair Society?

8pm Tuesday June 3rd
Smyth's Pub, Fairview

Harold Cross:

8pm Thurs 5 June Eyewitness report from Evian G8 summit protest. Rosie O'Grady's Pub

Liberties:

8pm Wed 4 June Eyewitness report from Evian G8 summit protest. Viking Lodge, Francis St

Rathmines:

8pm Wed 4 June Eyewitness report from Evian G8 summit protest. Grace's Pub, Rathmines

Lucan/Leixlip:

Eye witness account from G8 Summit - Evian Thursday 5th June at 8pm Contact Micky McGuigan for details at 086 3849882

Rialto:

Wednesday 4th June 8pm St Andrews Community Centre Eyewitness Account from G8 Summit - Evian

Ringsend:

8pm Wed 4 June Eyewitness report from Evian G8 summit protest. The Committee Room, Charlotte Quay,

Ringsend Rd [below the Ocean bar]

Stoneybatter-Cabra

Tuesday 8pm June 3rd
Augrim St Parish Centre
Evian G8 Protest; Eyewitness report

Tallaght:

Eyewitness Account from G8 Summit - Evian Tallaght Welfare Society Tallaght Village Wednesday 4th June 8pm

Tralee:

Racism: Where it comes from and How we Combat it, Cumman losaf, Wednesday June 4th, 8pm

Waterford:

Thurs June 19th 8.00pm
Which Way for Left? Old Rogue Michael St.

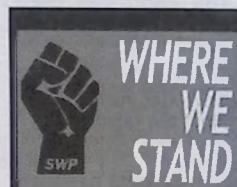
■ For details of other Marxist Forums contact (01) 872 2682

OTHER EVENTS STOP THE PRIVATISATION OF OUR SERVICES

DUBLIN BUSWORKERS PUBLIC MEETING
TUESDAY 10TH JUNE 8PM
Tel 087-2858388 for details

Waterford: Globalise Resistance Report Back meeting from Evian
Thursday June 12th: ATGWU Hall
Keyser St, 8pm

Crumlin: Public Meeting - Save Our Hospital
Wednesday 4th June Cashel Hall, Crumlin 8pm



SION

We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

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!

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. We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc. We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

Capitalism 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

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy. 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.

END RACISM AND OPPRES-

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Around the Union Conferences

CPSU:

Mood of anger at government attacks

DELEGATES from the Civil and Public Services Union gathered in Tralee for the Annual Delegates Conference under the shadow of a lock out of 150 members in the Department of Agriculture. Civil servants are now at the sharp end of government attacks.

There was a new sense of a need for a more combative and campaigning union.

Union members overwhelmingly rejected both benchmarking and the new partnership deals. However, because CPSU is part of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, it is outvoted by the larger, pro-deal unions.

The union is then forced to work under these deals that are of no benefit to the lower paid, as they contain below inflation pay rises. Resentment was built up in the union towards the ICTU.

A motion was passed demanding a special delegates conference to debate disaffiliation from ICTU, despite opposition from Blair Horan, the General Secretary. Union activists want cooperation with other unions who are tired of the ICTU operating like a state agency when it comes to partnership agreements.

A fringe meeting on Evian was held where the discussion focused on the positive effects of the anti-capitalist movement. After the meeting two people decided they would go about getting sponsorship within the union to travel to Evian.

This will help bring some of the experience and politics of the anti-capitalist movement to the trade unions here. Those present wanted to be put on the Globalise Resistance e-mailing list.

The union has also affiliated to the Irish Anti War Movement. Speakers for the motion described the disaster of the occupation of Iraq and the achievements of the antiwar movement.

Nicola Coleman from the Central Statistics Office branch was elected to the Executive Committee. Her victory was a sign of anger against the government attacks and the slow reaction of the union leadership to them.

She ran on a platform calling for escalation of the agriculture dispute, a debate on disaffiliation from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, a halt to privatisation, and the ending of Social Partnership.

IMPACT:

Debate on servicing military aircraft

AT THE biennial divisional conference of the Civil Service Division of IMPACT dissatisfaction was expressed with the low increases received under the Benchmarking process.

Many felt that they had not been properly compared with similar positions in the private sector.

The emphasis was on trying to get a more open benchmarking system.

However the political radicalisation in the country was clearly reflected at the conference with motions on third level fees, changes to the Freedom of Information Act, the abolition of Dúchas and the defence of the rights of non-national workers being overwhelmingly endorsed.

Conference also voted that the union should sponsor the Irish Anti War Movement.

The biggest debate was on a motion from the CLME branch that provides meteorological services for aircraft.

It called for the union to recognise the moral right of individuals to refuse services to non-Irish military aircraft.

Although lost on a card vote, almost 40 percent of the delegates in attendance voted in favour despite strong arguments against from the Divisional Executive.

A motion opposing the use of Shannon by US military was also passed at the Local Authority Division Conference.

CPSU members still locked out

ON APRIL 1 the Dept. of Agriculture removed 150 CPSU members from the payroll. This was the Department's response to a limited work-to-rule.

The work-to-rule meant not answering phones or doing counter duty. It was a protest against miserable promotional opportunities.

The Department of Agriculture is viewed as the worst area in the civil service when it comes to promotions and grade structures. Some have spent 20 years at the same grade.

During the Foot and Mouth out-

break, management had promised improvements.

Members had to perform extra work during the outbreak. But two years later the Department were unwilling to make any changes.

Pickets

The work-to-rule started on March 18 when negotiations came to nothing.

Two weeks later, CPSU members were taken off the pay roll, the day before further negotiations were scheduled. This has set a dangerous

precedence for the unions in the civil service, undermining the basic union right to stage a work-to-rule and to have union representation.

Pickets have been placed on the Department offices in Mayo, Limerick, Galway, and Kerry since April 2.

"We're determined to stay out as long as it takes to win", said the Limerick department union rep, June Danaher.

"With 6 weeks done on the picket lines the feeling is that we won't back down without major improvements, and if we don't win these we'll never gain anything again".

Aine the Mayo rep echoed this pointing out that "if they get away with this it could be any department next".

Talks happened this week but the two sides didn't come to an agreement, with no date fixed for further talks.

Delegates at CPSU conference unanimously passed a motion calling for a one-day stoppage across all government departments and mass picket of the Department of Agriculture.

To get a collection sheet for your workplace contact 085-7158567

Huge Ballyfermot meeting against Bin Tax

OVER 400 people in the Ballyfermot Inchicore area filled the public hall in the Civic Centre to protest to their TD's over the bin tax.

The meeting heard excuse after excuse from Michael Mulcahy TD for Fianna Fail and a representative from Fine Gael on behalf of Gay Mitchell TD.

Both of these parties have a record of voting for the bin tax in Dublin City Council.

But this year Fine Gael voted against the 30 percent increase in the taxes. They are feeling the pressure in their constituencies.

A massive non-payment campaign has taken off right across Dublin.

Brid Smith, who is the convenor for the Campaign Against the Bin Tax in Ballyfermot told the crowd that "The politicians are well aware of the opposition to the bin tax."

"That is why they try to excuse their party's disgraceful record on voting for this tax in the Council.

"They want to make us pay twice for this service. If they can show it is a lucrative business they will move to privatise our service, just as they have done elsewhere throughout the country."

New environmental legislation being pushed through the Dail will give the local authorities the right to refuse to collect the bins from the huge numbers in the campaign who have not paid the bin tax. This will mean a massive environmental and health hazard to our communities.

The new law will also

take away the democratic right of local representatives to vote on the bin tax. The bureaucrats of the local councils will fix the rate and have sole power to decide on waste management, including the issue of incineration.

The Ballyfermot meeting showed the anger in working class communities. One local activist Teresa McGouran said "We cannot even afford

to use our community hall in Ballyfermot because the service charges are so high. But they can give themselves huge pay increases and buy fancy jets worth millions. It's time we told them where to go."

Ray Stack from Inchicore called for a regime change. "These politicians are only lining their own pockets and the pockets of their rich

friends. In the next elections we should make sure they all go. They're no good to us for anything."

Roasting

In Crumlin, Drimnagh and Walkinstown area over 600 hundred people turned up a month ago to give the politicians a roasting at a public meeting.

Council workers at the

Ballyfermot meeting indicated they would be supporting the campaign in resisting non-collection.

As one of the workers put it "Mulcahy says there is no plan to privatise the service in Dublin. But that's because we are not paying for it. As soon as they can make us pay they will sell it off to some multinational and the costs will be astronomical."

March to defend Liberties school

OVER 200 people marched from St. Brigid's National School in the Coombe to the Department of Education and Science (DES) on Wednesday May 21 to demand a new school building.

On route they stopped at Dublin City Council (DCC) Offices to hand in petitions and a letter calling on the City Council not to sell the site of land beside the school to private developers. This is the site on which the new school is due to be built.

It is understood that offers of up to €9 million have come in for the half acre site.

However, the huge opposition from the local community has forced all local politicians to oppose its sale. At an area committee meeting of Dublin City Council on the same day as the march, there was unanimous opposition to its sale.

The Department of Education agreed to meet with representatives of the campaign at the end of the march. While protesters chanted slogans outside, the Secretary of the Department



Education in properly equipped schools should be a right

discussed St. Brigid's case with a delegation of teachers and parents.

He indicated that the DES has changed its position.

Before the campaign began, the Minister Noel Dempsey had been clear that no money would be spent on any school this year that didn't make it onto the Department's list. St. Brigid's was not one of the 23 schools listed for building work this year.

The Department now says they will find the money to buy the site from the city council if it is offered at a "reasonable rate".

According to Deirdre Cronin, campaign co-ordinator, "We are now calling on City Council to do the decent thing. This land is public land. The idea that it has to be purchased at market value for use by a school is crazy. If there was any logic

in the way this country was run it would be handed over to the school free of charge, but that is not the way things work.

"We have drawn up a motion that we want taken at the next full meeting of Dublin City Council, on the second Monday in June. It will instruct the City Manager 'to sell the site to the DES immediately at a price that will facilitate its purchase for use by the school community'. Local councillors have been approached to ensure it makes it onto the agenda.

"We are calling on councillors from across the city to back this motion. This campaign was begun to ensure that the children of this area were given the best chance possible in education.

"We will be organising a mass lobby of the meeting and invite support from all over Dublin. Our campaign will keep going until we get the new school built"

MASS LOBBY..Sell the site to the DES NOW!, Monday June 9 contact 087 6650442 for details

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Support Evian protests against war and world leaders' brutal policies

G8 POLICIES DESTROY OUR WORLD

THE masters of the world, the G8, are holding their annual meeting this year in Evian, a small French village. George Bush will be jetting in for the summit, fresh from the slaughter in Iraq.

They preside over a world where 1 percent of people own as much wealth as 57 percent of the world population. The result of their economic policies is famine, war and run down public services.

Each year, for example, 19 children die from preventable disease because developing countries have been forced to adopt policies drawn up by the IMF and the World Bank.

But pressure is growing on the G8 and the protests have grown each year. The G8 leaders have responded with PR stunts designed to show their concern about poverty.

Five years ago, at a similar meeting in Birmingham, the leaders of the G8 countries were pushed into promising big debt reduction for poorer countries.

The US, British, Japanese, Canadian and European governments all made great play of their desire to help the world's poorest countries. It was a

gigantic hoax.

An authoritative new report released recently shows the promises were empty.

Debt, the bankers' weapon of mass destruction, is still in operation. The result is that 19,000 children still die every day because money is spent on repaying debts rather than on health and education.

■ Only a third of the \$100bn write-off promised at Birmingham has been delivered.

■ Only eight of the world's most impoverished countries have seen a significant cut in their payments to Western creditors.

■ Four of the countries that entered the debt write-off programme will pay more in debt service in 2003-5 than they did in 1998-2000. Senegal's debt service rose by 61 percent in 2001 despite 60 percent of the population living below the poverty line.

"The majority of the world's poorest and most indebted people remain enslaved by debt, with no real hope under existing policies of being freed from indebtedness," the joint study by Jubilee Research, Cafod and the Jubilee debt campaign says.

It adds, "The prospect



■ Third World debt condemns millions to poverty, starvation and disease

of meaningful reform to the global financial system to bring about a fair, transparent and independent process for resolving debt crises, remains almost as distant as ever."

Targeted

A World Bank study shows that 19 of the 26 countries targeted for

help still have debts of more than one and a half times their national income.

Countries have continued to stack up debts because falling prices of commodities like coffee have cut into export earnings.

Between 1998 and 2002, the 26 poorest countries received a \$29bn debt write-off and

borrowed a further \$24.2bn.

Even when debts are written off, it is at the price of implementing policies which hurt the poor and help the multinationals.

Debtors can be instructed to privatise industries, ruthlessly cut public spending and foist increased charges on basic services. Guyana, one of the first countries

to reach the initial qualifying stage for debt reduction, has yet to receive a full write-off because it has refused to privatise the national sugar company.

Famine

Malawi was told last year to sell off "surplus" food stocks in order to repay debt. It had just

done so when famine struck and thousands died. Other cases include:

■ Zambia being told by the IMF to privatise its banking system. It refused but relented as famine and debt escalated.

■ Senegal was refused full debt write-off status until it privatises its state-run peanut business.

■ Ghana was told to make a vast increase in petrol prices and impose VAT on goods.

■ Rwanda was forced to rein in social spending and told it has too high a budget deficit.

Jubilee Research economist Romilly Greenhill says, "Desperately poor countries are being denied debt relief because they refuse to cut public spending, sell off the family silver or further squeeze the wages of their civil servants.

It is ironic that Rwanda, one of the poorest countries, is being denied debt relief because of her 'excessive' budget deficit, while the US racks up record deficits to provide tax cuts for the wealthy."

Everyone should support the protests around the Evian summit-against war, against debt, against the destruction that capitalism causes.