

Socialist Worker

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LATEST NEWS FROM
CAMPAIGN** PAGE 11

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THESE GREEDY ARROGANT SCROUNGERS

Michael O'Leary:



THIS MAN has made €125 million in the last five years just by selling shares.

He donates to the Progressive Democrats and had the Tanaiste Mary Harney at his recent wedding.

His ambition is to get control of a second terminal at Dublin airport so he can cut his landing charges.

This is why is he backing Transport Minister Seamus Brennan's attempt to break up Aer Rianta.

He has attacked workers at Dublin airport for being 'dyled in the wool head bangers' and running a 'union rat hole'.

He allowed Aer Lingus to use one of his planes to scab on the cabin crew dispute.

Denis O'Brien:



DENIS O'BRIEN made a £239 million fortune when he was awarded a mobile phone licence and then sold it off.

He once claimed to have given £100,000 to the Minister responsible, the infamous Michael O'Leary – but later denied it.

He now lives in Portugal as a tax exile' so that he does not have to pay the €55 million in taxes that were due.

O'Brien thinks 'there is too much shite going on inside Ireland. People are too negative to politicians, government and entrepreneurs.... People are screaming like spoiled children. We are fast moving into a communist state'

HALF OF the Irish population now believe that the politicians are corrupt and only 5 percent think they are honest.

There is a mood of anger that has not been seen in decades.

And it is no wonder.

The political establishment have cut taxes on wealthy sharks like Michael O'Leary and Denis O'Brien to the bare minimum. But even then the greedy few do not want to pay up.

We have to subsidise their greed by putting up with run

down public services and new stealth taxes.

If the government went

QUOTE

'There is too much shite going on inside Ireland.. People are screaming like spoiled children we are fast moving into a communist state'

—Denis O'Brien, tax refugee

after the €1 billion in unpaid taxes from the rich, there would be no need for bin

charges.

But they prefers to lock up working people while they hob nob with the rich..

The mood of anger is making the rich nervous. This is why they lash out verbally with O'Leary calling workers at Aer Lingus 'head bangers' and O'Brien calling

us all 'spoiled children'.

They sound just like the French aristocrats before they were overthrown.

We don't have to take these insults from the idle rich. We need to reclaim our unions and take action to put manners on these greedy brats.

Bank job

THE FORMER general secretary of Fianna Fail, Pat Farrell has a new job.

He is now the chief lobbyist and director for the Irish Bankers Federation.

The banks are facing another scandal over off shore accounts – so they have hired a top Fianna Fail hack who is close to Bertie Ahern.

Farrell took time off from his last job to accompany Ahern in election tour of the constituencies in 2002.

Just another example of the rotating door between the business and political elite.

Harney holidays



■ Time to crack open the bubbly again?

MARY HARNEY is forever lecturing workers about productivity.

But it is a different matter for the TDs. After a long twelve and a half week long summer break, the Dail sat for just twelve days.

Then up popped Maggie Harney to propose another week off.

'All schools will be off next week' she said 'There are some deputies who are looking forward to spending some time with their children'.

She was probably referring in particular to the deputies who had a strenuous time playing in the parliamentary rugby league abroad.

Next time you are told to work harder to earn your benchmarking award, remember to put in an equality claim with the TDs.

Now a real challenge to SIPTU leaders

DEREK DELANEY, a 28 year old shop steward with Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council is looking for a nomination from SIPTU branches for the election for SIPTU Vice President.

Derek is a council worker and has been a member of the Dublin County Councils branch committee for over five years.

Derek believes that council workers have not been given proper leadership in the bin charges struggle

In his letter of nomination he says,

'We have heard statements condemning bin charges – but where is the action.

'Our union has not stood sufficiently by council staff who are being used as a political tool by management to impose bin charges.

Defend

'Council workers were not employed to work under police protection –our original contract was to collect all bins.

'Why didn't our union stand up and say they would defend workers who do not feel they can implement the policy of not collecting the bins of non-payers'.

Each union branch of SIPTU is obliged to call a special meeting of all its members before November 14th to decide who it is nominating.

Often attendance at these meetings is low and the union machine seeks to bring out its loyalists to back their candidate.

The machine candidate this year is Brendan Hayes who appears to have concluded an informal voting pact with the newly elected General Secretary, Joe Flynn..

If Hayes is elected, it will push the union even further to the right.

Derek Delaney is one of then

new breed of union activists.

He has travelled to anti-globalisation protests in Prague and aims to bring the new spirit of protest back into SIPTU.

Date

The other declared candidate in the field is Des Derwin, a long time left activist, who polled poorly in the last election.

SIPTU members should contact their branch secretaries to find out the date of the special meetings and get their workmates along to vote for Derek's nomination.

\$ 4 billion: The big Iraq oil rip-off

THE Madrid conference on Iraq was supposed to raise money to help reconstruct the country.

But a British charity organisation, Christian Aid, is claiming that a staggering \$4 billion in revenues from the sale of Iraqi oil has disappeared.

The report, Iraq: The Missing Billions, reveals that oil money transferred to the US controlled Coalition Provisional Authority has effectively disappeared.

One of the authors John Davison told Aljazeera.net that serious questions need to be asked about the accountability of the CPA.

"This is money that belongs to the Iraqi people, and it's money that should be used to improve the

lives of the Iraqi people. Who is deciding where this money is spent? There has to be a system in place that makes people accountable and above suspicion of wrong doing," said Davison.

Killers of Muslims

THE 2,000 Spanish troops who have been sent to Iraq will wear on their shoulders the Cross of St James of Compostela—popularly known in Spain as "the Moor Killer".

The saint is supposed to have guided the re-conquest of Spain from the Muslims.

The Spanish brigade in central Iraq will patrol the sacred Shia city of Najaf.

Legal immunity for oil companies

US oil companies in Iraq have been granted legal immunity from any sort of prosecution until 2007.

There can be no prosecution for ecological damage or health and safety failures towards their workforce.



Bush royal parade cancelled

FEAR OF anti-war protests has already hit George Bush's attempts to turn his visit to London next month into a political triumph.

The British government has abandoned plans for Bush to parade with the Queen down the Mall during his visit to Britain.

The warmonger is said to be "disappointed", and no wonder. The procession was supposed to be the high point of a state visit.

A senior Buckingham Palace official said detailed plans had been made for the procession.

"But," added the official, "Downing Street, anxious about possible anti-war protests from the start, has now decided

to pull the plug on it.

"We are liaising with the White House and they have not attempted to hide their disappointment.

"They saw it, obviously, as a great photo opportunity."

Media told 'See no evil'

★ 341 US troops have been killed in Iraq, including 202 since major combat ended May 1.

But the media are legally banned from filming the return of the coffins. This is Bush's latest move to crack down on information about his dirty war.

Disability groups take action

A WIDE range of disability and civil action groups have launched a campaign against government legislation on disability due to be brought to the Dail in November.

At present there are 380,000 people in Ireland who suffer from some form of disability.

Most of these lack adequate services and Ireland has some of the worst access facilities in the developed world. Disgracefully hundreds of people with severe intellectual disabilities are left idle in homes without even the most basic occupational or educational services.

Many disabled people are prevented from living a full life by lack of access to services provided for the able-bodied population in areas like education, health, employment, housing and transport.

The government's legislation gives only a vague commitment to providing these services and crucially does not provide for a right of access.

Without this right, the state is not under no obligation to improve disability services.

For more information on how to help out with the campaign go to the Disability federation of Ireland website at www.disability-federation.ie

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GO WRIGHT GO!

HAVE Fianna Fail politicians no shame?

First, G.V. Wright knocked down a woman after a spree of drunk driving.

Then he was hit by a new revelation that he got donations from Frank Dunlop.

In one case, he received a share of a £10,000 bonanza from property speculators who wanted their land rezoned.

Car dealer Denis O Mahony told Frank Dunlop,

who organised the donations, that he 'knew the way the world worked'..

Sure enough, the rezoning was pushed through against the 2,500 objections that were lodged to it the price of O Mahony's land jumped from £180,000 to over £13 million.

Meanwhile G.V. Wright is sitting tightly on a Dail seat to keep out the jailed councillor Clare Daly from winning an election.



■ Wright: "Want a lift?" and Dunlop: "Want a brown envelope?"

editorial



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 OPPRESSION
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.

REPRESSION AND MEDIA BLACK-OUT:

They will not break bin charges struggle

BRID SMITH and Chrissie Heffernan were the last of the first batch of bin tax protestors to be released from jail last week.

Fifteen people were imprisoned and more legal threats have been issued against protestors in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Alongside the repression, the corporate media have sought to undermine the campaign.

At the height of the jailings, the *Evening Herald* carried a disgraceful article to try to blacken the name of individual protestors such as Anna Dorna and Karen Heffernan (see page 11).

Since then they have returned to the old tactic of 'cutting off the oxygen of publicity' - so that people do not hear about the scale of the protests.

But neither of these tactics will work.

The anti-bin charges campaign has become a mass movement in working class areas in Dublin where hundreds come to meetings each week.



Bin tax protestors in Mount Tallant

PHOTO: R WHELAN

The strength of the campaign is demonstrated by the fact that the councils have not, so far, tried to implement their policy of non-collection in areas where the campaign is strong.

The key to victory lies in forging unity with the bin workers.

Action

They are already balloting for action over the anti union

firm Oxigen which has been given the contract to collect the 'green bins' which are supposed to be for re-cycling. (In fact, their contents is mainly disposed in landfills).

Oxigen is the most likely

company that will take over the depots if there is privatisation. It already owns many of the bin trucks and leases them back to Dublin City council.

The bin charges campaign should mount mass pickets at the depots during this strike - to show in practice that it will stand with the council workers when they fight privatisation.

Fight

The wider trade union movement should also be pushed into a partnership with working class communities who are leading this fight.

The Dublin Trades Council needs to call another mass demonstration that is well built for - and that has far more representation from union branches than the last march.

The battle over the bin tax is all about the revival of working class organisation.

It cuts across the social partnership framework of recent years. It challenges government's strategy of pushing indirect taxes onto working class people - while the rich virtually get away with paying nothing.

This is why it has to be won.

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS
VOTE SOCIALIST FOR A REAL ALTERNATIVE

THE main parties in the North—Sinn Fein, SDLP, UUP and DUP—seem to be at each other's throats all the time.

But the reality is they share a common agenda when it comes to the issues that most affect working class people.

Recent figures from the Equality Unit at Stormont shows the poorest quarter of households have 6% of the total disposable income in the North, while the top quarter

have 56%. Both Protestant and Catholic households suffer from this shocking level of inequality.

But you'd never know things were this bad if you only listened to the main parties. The only inequality they seem to recognise is that between Catholics and Protestants. It is true that Catholics are more likely to live in poverty than Protestants. But the poverty gap between the two communities is growing ever narrower, while the gap between the

well-off and the poor within those communities is growing ever greater.

The Programme for Government agreed by the main parties before the Assembly collapsed is full of measures which will serve to increase poverty: cuts in services, privatisation through PFI and PPPs, water charges levied on all while big business gets tax cuts and cheaper electricity.

The huge anti-war march in Belfast on Feb. 15th showed there is a mood for change.

We need to use the elections to build on that mood. This is why the presence of a socialist alternative is vitally important. Eamonn McCann, one of the socialists standing in the Assembly elections, summed it up when he reiterated: "There is no solution to problems of poverty in Catholic working-class areas which would not also be a solution to problems of poverty in Protestant working-class areas: we will advance together or not at all."

Join the Socialists!

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comment



Eamonn McCann

SPREADING THE VENOM OF RACISM

THE former mayor of Craigavon Fred Crowe took a lot of stick a couple of weeks back for pig-ignorant remarks about Muslims.

In the aftermath, even his fellow Ulster Unionists backed a council motion condemning racism and extending a welcome to "people of all ethnic minorities."

Opposing the building of a mosque in Craigavon, Crowe had told BBC News that Muslims were "out to wipe out Christianity", that "Christianity is the enemy of the Muslim," and that "We know what Muslims did in the United States in September 2001."

The remarks came at a time of almost daily reports of attacks on members of the Muslim and Chinese communities in the North.

Every local newspaper and a range of voluntary organisations and individuals voiced outrage at Crowe's odious opinions. But maybe the problem was not what Crowe had said but with the crass way he'd said it.

Satan

Even as furore was erupting, the man recently appointed Undersecretary of Defence for Intelligence in the US was delivering himself of the opinion that God had put George Bush in the White House to lead "the global fight against Satan disguised as Islam."

Lt. Gen. William Jerry Boykin explained that he had become aware of God's role in earthly affairs when the deity intervened to protect him and his troops in the "Black Hawk Down" battle in Somalia in 1993.

Boykin immediately realised that the battle had been a fight between God's legions (the US soldiers) on the one hand, and "the principalities of darkness" (local Muslims) on the other.

In what way does this differ from the sentiments which caused a deluge of denunciation to descend on Fred Crowe?

Or take BBC1's sensational "The Secret Policeman" documentary, in which trainee constables in Manchester were recorded exulting at the idea of murdering a "Paki" or dressing up in Ku Klux Klan-style head-gear to snarl about a need to "eradicate the whole f---g country" of Asians.

Nothing squawked by Crowe came anywhere close to this for offensiveness and threat. And yet the initial reaction of the Home Office under New Labour was not to announce root-and-branch reform of the police but to attack the BBC for the undercover reporting methods used in the programme.

Libelled

Or take *Irish Times* columnist Kevin Myers. As liberal commentators were stoning the Crowe, the *Times* carried the latest in a series of rants by Myers likening the arrival of African immigrants in Ireland to the invasion of one's home by uninvited strangers.

"It is not racist", he argued, "not [to] wish to share your home with people who have insinuated their way under your roof with lies, and who then intend to help themselves to the contents of the fridge."

Myers' specific targets were Nigerians, of whom, he informed his readers, there are "uncountable numbers....in Ireland."

Nigeria, he went on, "has two major natural resources: oil and fraud." Thus was a nation of more than a hundred million people casually libelled.

Nor did he balk at inviting people suffering from the underfunding of the health system to channel their anger at immigrants, making an explicit link between "densely inhabited hospital corridors" and "dense throngs of foreigners cheating their way into the witless benignities of our welfare system."

In an echo of Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech in the 1960s, Myers continued: "It is imbecilic to think that the numbers of foreigners pouring into this country will not soon become a major source of unrest...We have no choice but to turn all illegal immigrants around at the point of entry (pregnant ones especially)."

Crowe had said nothing as calculated as that to give a booster-shot of venom to race hatred. Disowning Fred Crowe is one thing. But you have to cut far deeper into society to reach the roots of racism.

ASSEMBLY ELECTION

Eamonn McCann: WHY I AM STANDING

THE last time I stood was for the Derry Labour Party in the June 1970 Westminster election. After 33 years, I suppose it's time to have another go.

I agreed to go forward at a Socialist and Environmental Alliance meeting in Derry on Tuesday night. I'd gone to the meeting to support the idea of standing candidates.

At least a dozen people made the point that if I took this view I ought to be willing to go forward myself. By the end of the meeting I'd run out of rebuttals to this argument.

Challenge

I have no illusions about the scale of the challenge the SEA faces. We need all the help we can get. We have no premises and haven't a penny.

But, come November 26, if we haven't made a mark it won't be for want of trying. We are going to give this a real lash.

We are acutely aware we are cutting against the grain of traditional politics.

But we believe that there are many thousands in the North who don't just want to get over the current crisis but want to get over the whole Catholic-Protestant thing, and to burst out into a better future.

This doesn't mean ignoring the communal issues. The key point is, you cannot solve the communal problems if you set out in the first instance to solve the communal problems only.

If your sole focus is on the line of communal conflict, you cannot eradicate that line as the main basis for politics. This isn't a matter of ideology, but of common sense.

The main local parties implicitly suggest that the great issues of the day are of no interest to us here, that we are a petty people. But we are not.

We want to relate the fight to preserve public services from private profiteers to the same fight going on across these islands and across the world.

We are part of the anti-capitalist movement and



■ Eamonn McCann at a protest in Derry

the anti-war movement. We follow the old slogan, Think globally, act locally.

We ask everyone in

Foyle and East Londonderry who sees the sense of this approach to support our campaign.

Eamonn McCann will stand in Foyle and Marian Baur (a union activist from the area) will stand for the SEA in East Londonderry.

The Manifesto of the Socialist and Environmental Alliance

WE want the interests of the working class put first.

The main reason the mainstream parties are in deadlock is precisely that they relate only to issues reflecting the sectarian divide. We need a re-alignment.

If elected, our candidates will declare themselves neither Nationalist nor Unionist but 'Others'. We are for the fullest respect for religious and Cultural expression. But we reject the notion that religious belief and political outlook should be one and the same.

The four main parties are at each other's throats on communal issues. But they have a common agenda when it comes to the basics. Their Programme for Government centred on curbs on public spend-

We wouldn't have taken George Bush's hand at Hillsborough except to twist it up his back and run him out the door.

ing, private finance in schools and hospitals, and lower taxes on business.

We say no to these priorities. We will back workers action for decent pay and job security and against privatisation.

We will back campaigns for non-payment of water charges.

Northern Ireland is the most unequal area in these islands. We say—Tax the rich to pay for public services.

We are part of and take heart from the global movements against capitalism and war. The vast sums spent invading Iraq would fully fund health and education. We reject the idea that the

t just mean Catholics and Protestants having equal shares of scarce resources.

If elected, we will accept only the average industrial wage. What is left will go towards campaigning on the issues we are standing on.

We are out to build for the future a broad organisation open to all individuals and organisations who support these ideas and who agree to work together to make them a reality.

Our aim is a socially just and ecologically sustainable world from which exploitation and oppression have been cleansed, in which there is peace, and where the common people are defended from hatred, want and the abuse of power.

When we use the word 'equality' we don't

UPRISING IN BOLIVIA

HOW THEY DID IT

Now yes,
Civil War

REPORTS FROM the radical news agency Econoticias tell the story of how the revolt developed.

Thursday:

At least a quarter of a million workers and people from almost all the lower class neighbourhoods of El Alto and La Paz have surrounded the government palace.

In the Plaza San Francisco the mass agreed to extend social mobilisation throughout the country and instructed people to prepare themselves for street fighting against tanks and machine guns.

"Dig trenches in each neighbourhood in each block. Set up self defence pickets," says the miner Jaime Solares, leader of the Bolivian Workers Centre (COB).

The slogans of the mass of people are more radical than yesterday. "Ahora s', guerra civil, ahora s', guerra civil" ("Now yes, civil war"), chant men, women, old people and children, waving thousands and thousands of clubs.

In the city centre are the miners, the coca growers, the peasants from the south, the students, the teachers, the pensioners, the stallholders, the young people—very many young people. In some streets, there are clashes, teargas, barricades and burning tyres.

There are people suffering from gas attacks and some bleeding. In other streets, coca growers and local people share bread and soft drinks with police. This is the popular uprising, many-faceted, contradictory.

Friday:

The streets of the cities and the roads of the country as a whole are dominated by workers and the poor.

This is the real power that is dictating to the formal power.

The president has fled to Miami. The troops have left the streets. The stone and the club have defeated the tank and the machine gun. Celebrating miners, cocaleros and peasants are returning home.

Their leaders say they will not back the new government, but give it time.



Miners and the poor poured into the streets of La Paz in October

Stones and clubs defeated the tanks

A mass revolt has brought down the president of Bolivia, South America's poorest country. Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada had to flee in a helicopter in the latest revolt against neo-liberalism.

THE UPRISING was the culmination of a month of strikes and demonstrations after troops killed seven demonstrators on 20 September.

The protesters were calling for a referendum over the neo-liberal government's export of natural gas to the United States.

The shootings led to blockades of roads across the country and to calls for a general strike by the country's COB union federation. Then on 12 October, troops carried out another massacre, this time in Los Altos, the huge working class suburb of the capital, La Paz.

Up to 130 protesters were killed. In response, the whole of the working class united with the

peasants in an unstoppable movement to get rid of the president.

It was clear that the choice

US fully backed the bloody regime

THE BOLIVIAN uprising is a blow against George Bush. The US State Department rushed to defend President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada the day after the massacre in Los Altos:

"The American people and their government support Bolivia's democratically elected president. Washington will not tolerate any interruption of the constitutional order in Bolivia, nor will it support a regime that results from undemocratic

facing the whole country was between a military-based repressive regime and a successful

means."

The US embassy in La Paz added, "The government should not be replaced by one based on criminal violence. Sticks and stones are not a form of peaceful protest."

There were no harsh words for a government, which had machine-gunned unarmed demonstrators, including children. The magazine *Pulso* claimed US officials have played a central role in directing the repression organised by the gov-

uprising.

The general strike was effective throughout the country, and

ernment.

The new President, Carlos Mesa Gisbert, comes from the same political stable as the last. But he is weak and has no popular base.

The Bolivian unions have warned that if he does not accede to their wishes and stop exporting Bolivian gas and oil, they will call a popular assembly to take these industries out of the hands of the multi-nationals themselves.

convoy after convoy of protesters poured into Al Alto and La Paz.

The situation was like that in neighbouring Argentina 20 months ago when people overthrew the president, De La Rúa, for implementing a neo-liberal IMF programme that impoverished millions of people.

But this time it was not just a spontaneous crowd that took to the streets. At the centre of it were the country's tin miners armed with the tools of their trade—sticks of dynamite!

Alongside them marched the country's peasant federation and the organisation of cocaleros—coca growers whose only way of getting a livelihood is being destroyed by the US "war on drugs".

IN BRIEF

Swiss poll shock

RESULTS OF the general election in Switzerland showed a worrying surge in support for the far-right SVP party.

The SVP is led by Christoph Blocher, a multimillionaire. It campaigned hard against immigration and any possibility of entry to the EU and gained at the expense of more moderate right

wing parties.

The SVP gained 12 seats in the lower house, raising its total to 56.

The Social Democrats gained one seat bringing their total to 52, while the Greens upped their total by four seats to 13.

The Radicals and Christian Democrats (the rough equivalent of the Liberal and Tory parties) both lost heavily. The SVP gained from this crisis on the right and from

people's anger against record unemployment.

Women left to die

FIGURES released by the World Health Organisation show that women in sub-Saharan Africa have a one in 16 chance of dying in pregnancy or childbirth.

Of the 529,000 maternal deaths in 2000, 95 percent were in Africa and Asia, 4 percent in Latin America and 1 percent

in the rest of the world.

Many of these deaths could have been avoided if women had access to a skilled health worker during pregnancy and delivery and to emergency care if needed. Go to www.who.int/reproductivehealth/MNBH/maternal_mortality_2000/index.htm

Kosovo says 'UN out'

KOSOVO IS often used as proof of the benefits of Western military

intervention.

But four years after the NATO war against Serbia even Kosovans who backed the war are furious at what they call the "corruption" and "colonial ways" of the occupying forces.

There is also anger that after 1,500 days of "nation building" Kosovo still suffers daily, large-scale power cuts.

Before the war Kosovo was a net exporter of electricity. Demonstrators last

week called for the United Nations forces to get out.

Italy strikes over pension rights

TEN million Italian workers went on strike for four hours over plans by the Berlusconi government to cut their pension entitlements.

The strike was accompanied by huge demonstrations.

The Italian government has

introduced changes to prevent workers retiring before they have 40 years pension contributions.

At the moment, Italians can retire at 57 if they have paid into the pension system for 35 years.

The last Berlusconi government was toppled when he tried to introduce a similar reform. More protests are planned if he does not back down today.

Why students were right to boycott Coca Cola



STUDENTS at UCD have voted to ban Coca Cola from their Student Union shop in a recent referendum

They took this action in response to information supplied by the Colombian trade union, Sinaltrainal.

Sinaltrainal allege that Coca Cola have been involved in the murder and torture of trade unionists who have tried to organise in their plants.

The vote of the students marked a welcome return to radicalism. For the past decade and a half, the UCD Students Union – the largest in the county – was dominated by Fianna Fail.

But last year, FF dominance was ended with election victories for socialist candidates.

The referendum was marked, however, by one extraordinary intervention.

On the eve of polling a leaflet appeared with an official SIPTU logo, calling on students to vote against the boycott.

It was produced with the support of Anne Speed, the Branch Secretary of the Food and Drinks branch of SIPTU.

Six elected SIPTU shop stewards from the Coca Cola bottling plant on the Naas Road arrived in UCD to distribute the leaflet. It is unclear whether they did this in their own time – or were paid by the company.

Anne Speed is a member of Sinn Fein and one might, therefore, wonder why she appeared to be offering some comfort to a company that has come to symbolise US capitalism.

She offered two reasons to justify her position. She claimed that the 'boycott will affect jobs in Dublin without directly saving any lives in Colombia'.

However, it is doubtful that a boycott by one or more colleges is going to hit Coke profits to such a degree that they lay off workers.

On the plus side, however, the boycott has already helped to alert people to what Coca Cola is doing in Colombia.

This means that the company is going to have to be more careful about how it deploys violence against union organisers.

Anne Speed's other reason for rejecting the boycott, however, is that there is 'no direct link between Coca Cola and atrocities in Colombia'.

Now this is a truly amazing statement. Like many multi-nationals operating in develop-

ing countries Coca Cola tries to pretend that its bottling plants, Bebeda y Alientos and Panamerican Beverages have nothing to do with it.

It is like Nike claiming that it is not responsible for sub-contractors who solely supply it.

The reality is that the bottling plants operate under the control and authority of Coke.

On December 5 1996, a 36-year-old Isidro Gill, a union leader at one of these plants, was pulled out of the factory by paramilitary gunmen and shot dead.

He had been trying to negotiate a union contract with the firm. Hours after his murder, paramilitary troops set fire to the Sinaltrainal office in Carepa.

Two days later, a paramilitary squad entered the plant and forced workers to terminate their union membership on the spot.

In all seven Colombian Coca Cola workers have been brutally assaulted and murdered during periods of negotiation with the company.

The scandal is so large that relatively moderate US union leaders such as James P Hoffa, the Teamster General President and the Steelworkers union have joined the campaign of protest.

There can, of course, be real discussion about particular tactics such as boycotts. And it would be stupid not to concede that Coca Cola workers may feel worried – just as tobacco workers may have fears about the smoking ban.

However, opposing the student actions from the standpoint that Coke is not associated with the murders is a complete breach with the norms of workers' solidarity.

Some will argue that Sinn Fein activists have become more ambiguous about Coke since the company gave them a donation of \$15,000 dollars.

It is doubtful, however, if this is the explanation for what happened.

There has always been a narrow nationalism in sections of the Irish labour that stemmed from a Fianna Fail influence. The preservation of jobs in Ireland was supposed to be the only thing that mattered.

It seems that some Sinn Fein activists are falling back into that tradition.

Coming soon:

THE GATS ATTACK

Brought to you by the World Trade Organisation



Bin charges and other user fees

THE battle against bin charges in Dublin is presented in the corporate media as a trivial selfish issue.

In fact, it is part of a global agenda of resistance to 'user fees'.

'User fees' is the latest jargon that is used when multi-nationals want to turn an essential service into a commodity that is used for profit.

Bin charges are just one of the ways that 'user fees' is being introduced into Ireland. But developing countries in Africa and Latin America have had to put up with them for years.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund insist that these countries bring in such fees for health and education.

A 1998 report from the World Bank said that 'about 40 percent of the projects in the Banks health, nutrition and population portfolio and nearly 75 percent of the projects in sub-Saharan Africa included the establishment or expansion of user fees'.

These charges have brought terrible devastation. In one region in Nigeria, maternal deaths rose by 56 percent after 'user fees' were introduced in hospitals.

In Zambia education for second level girls has dropped after the introduction of 'user fees'.

In Bolivia and South Africa, there have been riots after 'user fees' were introduced for water.

WHY ARE governments trying to introduce charges for services such as bin collection or water?

Why do they all speak the same language about 'de-regulation' and privatisation?

The answer lies in a little known international treaty that is sponsored by the World Trade Organisation.

The World Trade Organisation was set up in 1994 to enforce rules about free trade. Its biggest source of funding—about 16%—comes from the US. Originally, 74 countries joined the WTO but it has now risen to 141.

The organisation is effectively run by the Quad—trade bureaucrats from the EU, US, Japan and Canada.

The Quad normally conducts informal negotiations between each other and then presses the developing countries to sign up to their agreements under threat that aid will be withdrawn.

The WTO's whole philosophy is to regulate governments—not the big corporations. They want to stop 'government interference' and so a disputes panel has been set up which can issue binding judgement against any government.

The disputes panel is composed of three unselected bureaucrats who deliberate in secret.

One of the main sets of rules that the WTO seeks to implement is the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). In the past, there was huge pressure to establish free trade in manufactured goods.

But now over 60 percent of the GDP in developed countries is in services.

Remove

Services can be defined to include anything from health care, cleaning, waste collection, and education.

The WTO definition of services, according to one researcher, Scott Sinclair, 'reads like a catalogue of occupations and human needs'.

Under the GATS agreement, government are not supposed to remove all regulation that is 'more burdensome than necessary'. If fees are collected for service then the whole sector has to be opened up to multi-national 'service providers'.

Once foreign companies have been allowed to enter a service industry, they must be treated exactly the same as

domestic firms.

The majority of the 141 countries have so far committed themselves to liberalising a small part of their public services.

However, once they make a commitment, they cannot break it for three years—and have to offer as compensation another set of liberalisation measures.

Lobby

In coming years, however, it is expected there will be new waves of liberalisation.

The world's biggest multi-nationals have organised themselves into powerful lobby groups to use the GATS agreement to open up service to private competition. In the EU, they have come together since 1998 into the European Services Forum, which is led by the chair of Barclay's Bank, Andrew Buxton. They regularly draw up hit lists of services that the EU presses to be liberalised.

The EU officially acknowledges that GATS is a 'bill of rights' for the big corporations. It states 'GATS is not just something that exists between Governments. It is first and foremost an instrument for the benefit of business and not only for business in general but for individual service companies.'

Water: Make them pay!

WATER is a good example of a service that will be affected by GATS.

Ever since the nineteenth century, governments recognised that they had a responsibility to provide free essential sanitation services and water. Otherwise, waterborne diseases could spread throughout the population.

But since the Thatcherite revolution this has all changed.

Water is now seen as a service that has to be opened up to market competition. The first step is normally the introduction of water charges.

Instead of investing in the piping infrastructures, governments typically begin by blaming individual consumers for 'wasting' water and claim that charges are necessary.

The OECD, for example, has already urged the Irish government to bring in a charge of €200 per household.

Once the charge is introduced, water will then fall

under GATS rules and must be opened up to 'competition' from water suppliers.

Expansion

The EU has a general strategy of using the WTO to push for water privatisation. It has made a submission demanding that there has to be more

competition to 'offer new businesses opportunities to European companies as the expansion and acquisitions abroad by European Companies show'.

The reason for the EU's passion for water privatisation, is that there are key French based multi-national who have taken a lead in this area.

given responsibility for the running of five secondary schools in Ireland. One teacher in one of these schools has informed *Socialist Worker* that they have to seek permission from the company, and then pay, for school use for extra curricular activities.

Health is another area, which will be directly affected by GATS. The US

Vivendi, Suez-Lyonnaise and SAUR are the pioneers on water privatisation—and the EU looks out for their interests.

The same companies, coincidentally, are often involved in waste collection.

If the battle on bin charges is defeated, there will not only be privatisation of waste—but also of water.

Our world is not for sale

WATER is only one area where GATS change our lives.

The global multi-nationals are preparing to open up education for profit. The investment group Lehman Brothers sees education 'as the final frontier of number of sectors once dominated by public control'.

Already, the British building group Jarvis has been

Coalition of Service Industries says that 'we believe we can make much progress in GATS negotiations to allow the opportunity for US business to expand foreign health care markets.'

The first sign of the GATS effect is the establishing of for-profit nursing homes—which have been given relief by Charles McCreedy.

Where the resistance is organised

FROM November 12th to 15th activists from all over Europe will gather together in the European Social Forum to plan how to resist the GATS attack

and the drive to war. A number of bin charge activists from Ireland will be joining the estimated 50,000 activists who will attend.

The last ESF in Florence named February 15th as a day of action against war. It inspired the largest anti-war movement that world has

seen. This time there will be a push to organise a 'social February 15th' where we coordinate action against the GATS

agenda and war. To find out more about the Irish delegation travelling to the ESF, contact Rory Hearne on 087 152 3542

Pope's 25 years of obstructing social change



■ Pope John Paul II

By DAVID LYNCH

THERE is something about an anniversary that makes many writers and political commentators toss away all their critical sensibilities and focus on the supposed 'positives'.

This was very much the case with the marking of the 25th anniversary of John Paul II papacy last month.

Places where one would expect some critical evaluations of this pope's papacy were instead eulogising the work of the Polish Pontiff.

The *Irish Times*, the *Guardian*, and the *Financial Times* all carried very favourable pieces on the last quarter of a century of John Paul II's rule.

At the same time RTE broadcast in full 'a rose tinted' documentary marking the visit of the Pontiff to Ireland in 1979.

In 1978 Karol Wojtyla, 'the humble Polish priest' was elected Pope in a shock election result.

The stranglehold of Italian control of the Papacy had been broken, but this was essentially the final act of unorthodoxy in a Pope's reign that has been marked by its reactionary and conservative nature.

Castling aside what many in the Church saw as the 'liberal result' of the Second Vatican Council, John Paul II re-asserted traditional conservative moral teachings.

The Pontiff's trip to Ireland in 1979 is instructive here. It is said that he had a particular love of Ireland.

No wonder. The Ireland of 1979 on the surface was very much faithful to the Catholic Church with over 2 million people coming out to welcome him.

However as we now know, scratch under the surface and you would find the Ireland of the Madeline Laundries, the sexual abuse of children carried out and covered up by the Church, and the church of utter hypocrisy.

When the Pope visited Galway he was greeted by the two 'poster boys' of Irish Catholicism at the time.

Fr. Michael Cleary and Bishop Eamon Casey were mercilessly satirised by Dermot Morgan as examples of the 'Father Trendy' types.

But while Cleary and Casey were side by side with the Pope preaching the teachings of the

one true church, both men had secretly fathered children.

The double standards and hypocrisy in hindsight is now clear for all to see.

While many commentaries have said that the Pope has shown a 'willingness' to reach out to the developing world, the facts of the matter are quiet different.

This Pope has supported dictators in Latin America and worked hand in glove with Reagan and Thatcher during the Cold War.

He turned his back on the 'liberation theology' movement in Central America in the 1980's that saw many Catholics criticising American policy in the region.

The most glaring example of this is John Paul II's failure to make the murdered Oscar Arnulfo Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador a saint (despite a huge campaign in San Salvador) while the founder of the right wing Church group Opies Dei was awarded sainthood by the Vatican.

The Bishop of San Salvador had been murdered by American sponsored right wing guerrillas in 1980, because of his attacks on US foreign policy.

In the realm of contraception the Pope has consistently argued and campaigned against safe sex even in the parts of Africa where there is an Aids epidemic.

Steve Bradshaw's brilliant BBC Panorama programme last month showed how in the Philippines, Nicaragua and Kenya, he found the catastrophic effect of the church's teaching on contraception causing widespread death across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Everywhere he went he found the church's iron grip.

In a Kenyan village where a third of the people were dying, the church had prevented any condoms being distributed.

While there are many members of the church who are socially concerned and stand up against the rich and powerful the Pope is not one of them.

He is the head of the Vatican an extremely powerful and rich player in world politics.

Although he can make some speeches about the need for the first world to care more for those less fortunate, he has consistently turned his back on real movements of social change.

This has been the real legacy of his 25 year rule.

INTERVIEW WITH MIKE HAYNES

Russia 1917—was it a revolution or a coup?

THE RUSSIAN Revolution took place 86 years ago this month. Critics claim that this historic event was merely a coup by the Bolshevik Party and its leader Vladimir Lenin.

Mike Haynes, a socialist historian and author of many books about Russia, takes on this argument.

The Russian Revolution began in February 1917 with an uprising that brought down the hated Tsar. By October a new government was founded led by the Bolsheviks. What happened?

The revolution was not a choice between a society in which everything was perfect, and a mad gamble on the future.

The start of the revolution occurred during the First World War. The aim of the revolution was to end that war.

The German revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg famously said that people faced a choice between socialism and barbarism, a choice that she saw as flowing out of the war.

A process began in February 1917 which created a wave of radicalisation that is difficult to appreciate.

Immediately after the revolution everyone declared themselves to be a socialist of some kind. That created an environment in which all sorts of things seemed possible.

Some of the roads people took after the revolution are well known—the inspiration for artists, musicians and some writers.

Of course some of the intellectuals of the old order were frightened out of their skins by what was going on but others were enormously inspired.

What fascinates me is the more basic inspiration that occurred. One of the things I discovered was that even dentists were inspired to wonder whether they could have a different kind of dentistry in 1917!

What happened in February 1917 created not just a fantastic shift to the left in people's political ideas but also an astonishing level of democratisation.

What form did that democracy take?

The democracy that emerged was based in factories and local communities. Workers would set up committees in individual workshops and factories.

School teachers set up committees, school students set up committees, and there were even cases of committees of monks being set up in the monasteries.

From these basic democratic institutions at the base of society there was an attempt to create soviets, or workers' councils, which usually represented areas or towns. The most famous was the soviet in the capital, Petrograd.

You would have an election within your local community, school or factory, from which you would send representatives to the town soviet, rural soviet or regiment soviet.

Out of this coming together of representatives from local committees you began to see the build-up from the base of a new kind of democracy.

This mass new institutional base for democracy really belies the idea that what happened in 1917 was based on the activities of a tiny number of people.

It was based on one of the biggest explosions of popular democracy that we have ever seen anywhere in the world.

The workers' councils, or soviets, became increasingly important in the run-up to October 1917. How did their role change?

In the first instance the soviets and workers' committees had a primarily defensive role.

Workers were trying to make sure that things didn't get worse and that they defended the gains that were made



■ The Russian Revolution saw millions take to the streets to change the world and (inset) Lenin

forces, which argued that the revolution had to limit itself.

One of them was the liberals, who organised in a party called the Kadets. Essentially they represented the capitalists.

The second force was the Socialist Revolutionaries, a party that grew explosively. They combined left wing intellectuals, some workers, soldiers and large numbers of peasants.

The third force was the Mensheviks, who were a much more authentically left wing group based among workers. But they also had a very conservative expectation of how far the revolution could go.

They all wanted to stop at the very limited democratic rights achieved after the February Revolution, and to continue fighting the First World War.

But it became obvious that you couldn't keep fighting the war without Russian society falling apart, and you couldn't "stabilise" the political situation without making a choice between the people at the bottom and those at the top.

So political support started to drift away from these organisations.

The Bolshevik Party began to grow fantastically quickly, especially during the summer and early autumn of 1917.

The wider process of democratisation was so radical that often the Bolsheviks were chasing after it.

One of the things that enabled them to succeed was that they were a flexible and democratic party, more than any other party.

So they were able to reflect the mass democratisation from below and the confidence that ordinary people came to have in 1917.

The Socialist Revolutionaries' party split.

The people that had led it began to push out the left. The majority split away to form the Left Socialist Revolutionaries.

That was crucial because, although the Bolsheviks led the revolution, they had the Left Socialist Revolutionaries on their side.

Given this explosion of democracy, radical ideas and the gains of the October 1917 Revolution, how was Stalin able to come to power in 1928-9?

The Bolsheviks and their allies wanted to create a revolution that would spread internationally. They knew in 1917 that if Russia was left isolated it could not survive.

There were echoes of the Russian Revolution around Europe in 1918 and 1919. But Western socialists did not link up with the revolutionary democracy of Russia.

So the Western states were able to turn on Russia to crush it in the civil war that followed the revolution.

This created a huge military strain between 1918 and 1921. It also created economic chaos, which destroyed a large part of the factory life and urban life.

So the October Revolution made it possible for people to use the power they had won to put into practice some of the ideas flowing out of the revolution.

But the chaos of the civil war undercut the basis for this to happen.

An enormous gap opened up between the intellectual inspiration of the revolution and the horrible reality that existed.

There was a wonderful example from a children's theatre. In it there was a famous animal trainer who wanted children to understand what the revolution was about.

He was used to training animals to

perform in plays. After the revolution he turned the animals which had traditionally played the role of cowards into heroes.

The idea was that the children could understand that roles are not fixed and can be changed.

The tragedy was that with people starving it was hard to keep the animals alive and the temptation must have been to eat them.

Another consequence of the civil war was that the working class itself began to disappear—they simply could not survive in the towns.

The mass democracy that had existed in Russia in 1917 was based on large numbers of workers.

By 1921 the civil war had created a situation in which the factories and towns had been drained of those workers, so there was no longer a working class to be democratic.

Out of this process you see the beginnings of the degeneration of the revolution.

It took a few years for this to become complete.

Stalin came to power in 1928-9. But the origins of his rise to power are to be found in the fact that the workers in the factories in 1917 were no longer there in 1921.

The revolution came from the strength of revolt from below. Stalin's rise came from the destruction of that strength and confidence.

Many people argue that Lenin led to Stalin. What do you think about that?

There was a complete break between them.

On the left there have always been those who wanted to hedge their bets.

While Stalin was in power the Communist parties took the position that there was a direct continuity, which was what Stalin himself said.

The more critical people on the left recognised there were elements of discontinuity, but didn't want to say that Stalin had overturned everything.

I think we want to make it clear that Stalin did overturn everything.

He destroyed what people fought for in 1917 and he physically liquidated many of the people who fought in 1917 because they carried the memory of the revolution.

At the beginning of the 1930s everything is turned on its head and Stalin destroys any relation with what had happened in 1917.

Is the Russian Revolution relevant to people in the anti-capitalist movement today?

We have to rediscover the Russian Revolution. It is a tremendous inspiration because of the democratisation that I talked about.

That democratisation has, to an extent, been repeated throughout the 20th century.

It is being repeated at the start of the 21st century as people protest about the World Bank, economic crises and so on.

What happened in 1917 was a sustained shift to the left and a sustained development of new ways of organising popular power from below.

We can learn both from negative and the positive things that historians have tried to wash over.

Books

■ **Russia: Class and Power 1917-2000, €17**

Phone SW Books 01 8722682

A Century of State Murder, by Mike Haynes and Romy Husan, £15.99.

Available from Bookmarks, phone 020 7637 1848.

technology

Socialism in one computer

GNU Linux is an alternative operating system for your computer. The principles under which Linux is developed are similar to the principles of socialism.

Linus Torvalds started Linux in 1990. He developed the core or kernel of the system. Then the GNU contributed software and utilities which would work with the kernel.

The difference between Linux and Microsoft's windows system are quite striking. From a purely technical point of view, Linux runs much more efficiently, rarely crashes and doesn't have a tendency to get viruses. You can see the design and source code of the system. This information is not hidden from you.

From an ethical point of view, you are free to give Linux to all your friends, without risk of prosecution. The developers of Linux don't reserve the right to spy on your system.

Disability

Linux is also far superior for people who have disabilities, which prevent them interfacing with a computer, the way most able bodied people would interface with a computer. The software for people who have a disability is provided free and as an integrated part of the system.

The situation with Microsoft's windows system is very different. If you read the new licence agreements from Microsoft you will see that they reserve the right to check your computer for software and documents that they feel may be infringing copyright.

Microsoft licence agreements also state that you will be prosecuted to the maximum extent under law if you break their licence agreement. This has led to people being executed in China for making copies of Windows!

Microsoft provide no real support for people with a disability. It is the considered opinion of Microsoft that these users of their system should have to contact a third party to obtain extra software at an extra cost. This cost can add as much as €2000 to the price of the computer.

From a technical point of view, we have all experienced Windows crashing, and we have all lost hours of work. Windows is very prone to viruses. So you are often forced to spend more on extra software to obtain protection against them.

Virus Attacks

With Windows the source code of the system is hidden from everyone. This inhibits people modifying the system to prevent virus attacks. This is akin to selling a car with the bonnet welded shut.

It is also a major part of the problem which is faced by, the third party developers of software for people who have a disability, to whom Microsoft have abdicated their responsibility for providing equality.

Linux working far better than the Windows system produced by Microsoft precisely because it is built by those who use it.

You may ask why Microsoft continue to produce a product which is more expensive, of inferior quality, and far less ethical than their competitors?

The reason is simply that people keep purchasing the upgrades, in the hope that the next version cannot be any worse than the last version. This is not the case. Often the later versions of Microsoft products suffer more problems than the earlier versions.

Microsoft's dominates such a high proportion of the software market that they effectively 'trap' their customers into a technically inefficient system. They aim to convince people that everyone else is using M\$ products and there is no point using any other.

Microsoft have claimed that Linux can never work as there is no corporation driving it. They are of the opinion that movements which are built from the ground up will never be able to focus on developing a working system.

Funnily enough they seem to share the same attitude as our elected representatives. Just elect me and pay me to think for you.

If you want more information on Linux you can visit <http://www.linux.ie> or <http://www.gnu.org>

martin_osullivan@vodafone.ie

<http://martin-osullivan.tripod.com>

book

How Bush stole America

by DAVID LYNCH



■ Moore has a lot to be angry about and he is in flying form again in this new book.

MICHAEL Moore is back. The once rather marginalised radical documentary maker has in the space of just three years come centre stage.

He is now probably the most recognisable American critic of the Bush administration and US foreign policy.

With the huge success of his book 'Stupid White Men' and his multi-award winning film 'Bowling for Columbine' Moore has followed it up with his new literary offering 'Dude, Where's My Country?'

With just twelve months to go before the next US Presidential election and six months

into the American occupation of Iraq Moore has a lot to be angry about and he is in flying form again in this new book.

Humour

All the usual characteristics of Moore's writing are here. The angry easy to read text, the use of a variety of sources with plenty of

facts and finally the constant humour.

Moore himself has said that the book "is also my humble attempt to violate the Patriot Act on every single page of the book. "And, I have learned that many want to get on John Ashcroft's evildoer list with me."

To go by the print run the publishers and

Moore himself are expecting this book to be a huge seller. 'Stupid White Men' had a first print run of 50,000 but this new book already has some one million copies printed in its first run.

The success of Moore's books and films in the US and abroad shows that there is a huge thirst for left wing literature among people involved in the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist movements.

Target

In this new book Moore also provides some telling criticism of American liberals but in the end his chief target is the Republican Right.

He attacks the reasoning behind going to war in Iraq, the collapse of Enron and other companies, and the relationship between the Bushes, the Saudi Arabian government and Osama bin Laden.

But what shines through is his optimism. He believes that the vast majority of American people are actually opposed to Bush and his policies. He could be right but we will also need much more than just another Democratic party alternative..

■ 'Dude, Where's my Country?' is available now in hardback

film

Tarantino's bloody games

by DAVE LORDAN

KILL BILL Volume 1 is a highly stylised and self mocking carnival of violence.

The film runs through a series of choreographed set pieces where beautiful women hack each other and many others to pieces while performing impossible feats of flying combat with their varnished limbs.

The martial arts sequences are reminiscent of those in the Matrix movies, only even more kooky and blood-soaked.

The film is set in the US and Japan. In both countries ritualised vio-

lence has long been a mainstream code in both cinema and life and both countries' film industries have drawn sustenance from each other in pursuing this theme.

The Magnificent Seven westerns, for example, were inspired by Japanese Samurai movies.

Kill Bill parodies this aesthetic glorification of murder. Firstly by the surreal comedy already mentioned. But also in the way it messes around with the conventions of film. It mixes animation with ordinary footage, colour with b/w, uses split screen shots and comes in chapters with silly, revolting names like 'the blood spattered bride'.

The audience is never allowed to 'sus-



■ Carnival of violence

pend its disbelief' and think that what they see on the screen is any way real.

Vile

This contrasts with the glut of movies like Black Hawk Down which present their vile propaganda as if it were documentary truth.

Tarantino has taken it as his cinematic mis-

sion to draw our attention to how the cult of violence in popular culture, specifically in American cinema, has contributed to our acceptance of violence in the real world. This is the world where everyday acts of mass murder sustain the rule of capital.

Early in the film a Texas cop at the scene of a mass murder

remarks how the killers' handiwork reminds him of 'a Nicaraguan death squad'.

Aftermath

Later the camera pans across a restaurant floor where fifty yakuza lie drowning in fountains of their own blood. This struck me as a visual paraphrase for the aftermath of a bombing.

Some may attack the film for being too much of an amusing game for film buffs or for adding to the mess it seeks to criticise.

Others, like myself, will just be glad they don't live in California or in Quentin Tarantino's imagination.

Aer Lingus cabin crew say 'enough is enough'

AER LINGUS cabin crews, members of IMPACT, took strike action in late October.

On the first one day strike on October 23 the 1,100 cabin stopped work over the refusal of the company to pay a 4 percent increase due since March without strings.

Socialist Worker talked to some of the strikers.

"The company refuses to pay our 4 percent rise which we have been due since March 2003 unless we agree to new conditions," said Deborra, one of the striking cabin crew.

"They insist we agree to a 25 minute turn round during which we disembark passenger, clean lavatories and the aircraft, and board passengers for the next flight."

Anti Union

Another worker added, "Some of us used to work for Ryanair, the anti union company.

"We came over to Aer Lingus to get decent conditions, but I can tell you, we were even paid better in Ryanair!"

"We got this airline off its knees and again after September 11, but the man-

away the traditional travel concessions for our families with virtually no notice.

"They think they can treat us any way they like."

As the workers congregated around the main roundabout leading to the airport, passing buses, trucks and cars beeped in

support of the strikers.

"We have had great support. Other workers in the airport and the company have expressed their support.

"They don't want to see what was done to them, done to us."

The cabin staff

expressed anger at Aer Lingus' use of outside planes to cover for the strike.

Anger

"The bringing in of outside planes to break the strike is dreadful," one of the strikers told *Socialist Worker*. Another said,

"Everybody knows Michael O'Leary of Ryanair is anti union. But Willie Walsh is a Michael O'Leary wannabe.

"He won't be satisfied until he has dragged down our conditions to that of Ryanair."

After the first day of

strike action, the Labour Court issued a recommendation that the workers accept the new 25 minute turnaround time.

It showed a blatant pro-employer bias and many now believe it will be rejected by their fellow workers.

By **KEVIN WINGFIELD**

agement give us no credit for this.

"Since 2001 we gave up 600 redundancies and reduced annual leave. We have given up increments of €830 per year.

"We work with one less crew member per flight.

"We also work a 35 hour week but we can be made to work up to 39 hours and we are not paid for the extra four hours.

"But all this was not enough for Willie Walsh [boss of Aer Lingus] and we have been refused our PPF increase unless we give more.

"As a result we have been working to rule - sticking to the 'black book' agreement.

"Aer Lingus then took

Strike planned over cancer care

By **ROY HASSEY**

OVER 200 people attended a public meeting called by the Waterford Council of Trade Unions to discuss the failure of the Special Review Group to recommend a radiotherapy unit for the area.

The rationale behind the decision was that the

region did not have a critical mass of population.

However, the report used outdated population figures from the 1996 census which predicted that the south-east would not reach a population of 400,000 until 2015, when in fact the area has already reached that figure.

Seriously ill patients from the region are forced into a potential nine hour round journey to get treatment.

The day after the report was issued the Minister for the Environment, Martin Cullen revealed that plans were underway to construct a private radiotherapy facility in Waterford under Public Private Partnership.

Rejected

This will cater for those who can afford private healthcare but leave public patients facing the gruelling journey to

Dublin for treatment.

Those at the meeting rejected the plans to build a private facility.

It was decided to extend the campaign throughout the region and call a 'Day of Action' in the New Year which would include a work stoppage and a march in Waterford city.

President of the WCTU, Dick Roche told the *Socialist Worker*, "We have to mobilise ordinary working people across the south-east to

take part in a work stoppage and bring an economic pressure on the government.

"The trades council have already organised a stoppage and three separate marches, but this time it will be on a much larger scale.

"We are hoping for thousands of people to take to the streets with the stated aim of reversing this decision and taking on this government".

Speakers at the event include:

Patricia McKenna (Green Party MEP); **Eamonn McCann** (Journalist and Author *Bloody Sunday*); **Mike Davis** (Author *City of Quartz* and American socialist); **Alex Callinicos** (Author of *An Anti-Capitalist Manifesto*); **Brid Smith** (PRO Dublin Campaign Against the Bin Tax); **Sinead Kennedy** (Author and Chair *Abortion Reform*); **Goretti Horgan** (Author *Women and Globalisation*); **Joe Carolan** (*Globalise Resistance*); **Rory Hearne** (*Irish Social Forum* organising committee); **Luke Choto** (Zimbabwean socialist); **Richard Boyd Barrett** (Chair *Irish Anti War Movement*); **Kieran Allen** (Editor *Socialist Worker*); **Segun Nelson** (Nigerian Socialist); **Dick Roche** (President Waterford Trades Council)

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CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE BIN TAX

Victims of *Evening Herald* abuse hit out

ANNA Doran and Karen Heffernan were jailed in Mountjoy for protesting against the bin charges.

But within days they appeared on the front page of the *Evening Herald* in a supposed scandal story.

The *Herald* said they were costing taxpayers over €3,000 a week to be locked up – and the scandal was they had waivers!

Investigated

The *Evening Herald* has never investigated the activities of their owner Sir Anthony O'Reilly who claims to live in Bermuda – so he can avoid paying tax. But they attacked two working class people who dared to protest.

Anna Doran spoke to *Socialist Worker* after she came out of prison.

'If the bin charges go through, the service will be privatised. Then the waiver system will be out the window,

'The *Evening Herald* tried to belittle what I stand for. They made a personal attack on me which was designed to intimidate my family.

'Just because I have a waiver, doesn't mean that I

cannot protest. I will never buy that rag again'. Karen Heffernan was equally disgusted,

'I have never received any written confirmation from the Dublin City Council that I was entitled to a waiver. So how come they were able to confirm it to the *Evening Herald*.

'Most other newspapers said I was from Mount Tallant but only the *Evening Herald* gave my true address at School Street.

'The council were collaborating with the *Evening Herald* to set me up and blacken my name.'



■ Protestors sit down in Mount Tallant and (inset) prisoners released from Mountjoy jail

PHOTOS: R WHELAN

Bin strike ballot

WORKERS in Dublin City Council's bin depots are set to ballot on a protest strike at the end of October.

An emergency Section Committee meeting of SIPTU council workers was held on October 22 following disgraceful actions by the management of Oxygen and the threat of privatisation.

Oxygen is half way through a ten year contract with the City Council to collect the Green Bins which has already netted it €4 million in profits. It also owns all Dublin City Council's bin trucks which are leased back to the Council.

Workers in Oxygen have attempted to unionise the company but have been met with strong arm tactics. One shop steward was followed home and his door kicked in recently and SIPTU official Jim Finnegan was assaulted.

As one shop steward in the council told *Socialist Worker*, "Oxygen has some of Dublin City Council's

biggest contracts. It refuses to recognise the union and they cannot be allowed get away with these tactics.

Our Section Committee has decided to ballot all the bin-men for a protest strike for a couple of hours and a march to the Civic Offices planned for November 6 to bring the issue into the open.

"It is obvious that if the Council gets away with bin charges, privatisation will come in and Oxygen will be lifting all bins next."

THE Campaign Against the Bin Tax has great support among bin men.

One shop steward told *Socialist Worker*, "We haven't paid the tax either. We want to be collecting all bins. Workers were very pleased when campaigners distributed a letter thanking them

PRISONERS SPEAK OUT

'THE WORST thing was the loss of liberty. But it opens your eyes

'There are a lot of people who should not be in jail. Young people who take drugs while the drug barons walk free; people with psychiatric problems – the system is failing them' said Bernie Hughes from the Finglas campaign.

'Whenever working class people make any legal gains they just change the law. After people in Cork dumped their rubbish at City hall, the Supreme Court ruled that the bins had to be collected. But they just changed the law – so

that people like us could be jailed'.

Derek McMahon also comes from Finglas and spent two weeks in jail.

'The unions have to come out on this. They are just acting like managers of social partnership at the moment.

'They dropped the ball when they did not look at the hidden stealth taxes during the recent negotiations.

'I think there has to be an alliance of left parties to tackle this issue. They have to come together to fight in the next local election and on wider campaigns – it is the only way'.

Workers support campaign

for their support after recent protests.

'At the moment in the City Council, the plan is that Litter Wardens would go round saying which bins to lift and which to leave behind. But the Litter Wardens are not our boss – we shouldn't have to be told by them how to do our job.'

Another shop steward told *Socialist Worker*, "We don't want to be put in a position where we are leaving bins behind."

Many bin workers have told *Socialist Worker* that they would welcome a clear and unambiguous instruction from their union officials not to cooperate with non-collection.

Council uses bully-boy tactics

COUNCILS claim that the bin tax is fair because people on low incomes are given waivers excusing them from paying.

But the reality on the ground is very different.

Chris from the Dun Laoghaire campaign told *Socialist Worker* of the bullying and dirty tricks the Council is using in his area.

"I know of several cases where pensioners have been refused waivers because they are just over the limit.

"One old lady pensioner here told me she had gone to the Council and was told she was told she was €2 or €3 over the limit. Unfortunately she went to the

council on her own and was pressurised into paying €20 on the spot and was intimidated into agreeing to pay a further €20 each week. She was too afraid to take someone with her or argue with the council."

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Council is also using the bin charges to blackmail people due to be rehoused.

Chris explained the example of the Laurel Avenue Estate. "This estate was built about 27 years ago but was badly built and is now condemned and earmarked for demolition.

"The council has ceased providing maintenance – tenants complain of faulty

fuse boxes and other issues that the council refuses to put right saying they will be demolished soon. But the remaining tenants have been told they will not be rehoused until they pay the bin tax.

'A similar situation exists in Fitzgerald Park in Monkstown. Fifteen years ago when the council was trying to enforce water charges, people were rehoused without having to pay up and it is important that tenants do not face the council on their own today when they are due for rehousing.'

Cork gets organised

CORK City Council have announced that they will implement a non-collection policy from November 17th for those who have not paid the bin charges.

And in another twist of the screw, they have said that payments will not be taken from people who do not pay off arrears. At least 50 percent of the arrears has to be paid off.

The announcement has led to a revival of the campaign in the area. Sixty people attended a meeting in the Mayfield Community Centre and discussed the possibility of staging a blockade.

Another meeting is now planned for Ballyphehane. Local community organiser, Willie McCormack said, 'It's a double tax.

'The PAYE workers are already 100 percent compliant. If other sectors paid their tax, there would be no need for these charges'.

The meeting takes place in Ballyphehane Community Centre Monday November 3rd 8pm.

Blockades defeat new dirty trick

South Dublin Council has resorted to a new dirty trick. They are confiscating bins of non-payers.

But the council van that was picking up these vans was soon sighted and blockaded in.

After a seven and a half hour stand-off, the council had to give back most bins.

Socialist Worker

inside:

*Russia 1917:
Was it a Revolution or
a Coup? —PAGE EIGHT*
Uprising in Bolivia—PAGE FIVE

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

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS:

20 REASONS TO VOTE SOCIALIST

THE Socialist and Environmental Alliance is a coalition of socialists in Derry standing two candidates in the forthcoming elections. Eamonn McCann will stand in Foyle and Marian Baur will stand in East Londonderry.

They are offering a real alternative to the tired old communal politics that has dominated the North for decades.

Here are 20 good reasons why you should vote for them.

- 1 We will register in the Assembly as 'Others' and speak for the common interests of all working people.
- 2 We will oppose water charges and support a non-payment campaign by local communities.
- 3 We are against the illegal war and occupation of Iraq. We support the global anti-war and anti-capitalist movements. We oppose militarism and paramilitarism and arms manufacturers like Raytheon.
- 4 The billions spent on war should go towards solving underfunding and low pay in our public services. We will campaign for an increase in investment in public housing and housing benefits.

- 5 We will defend the National Health Service and the public sector from cuts and closures and all forms of privatisation.
- 6 We are for integrated, comprehensive education and a proper system of modern apprenticeships. We are against student fees.
- 7 The minimum wage should be increased to £7 per hour with no exceptions.
- 8 We want all anti-union laws abolished. We will support all workers action to defend jobs, wages and conditions. We urge resistance to the race to the bottom which leads to low pay, and jobs being exported to even lower-paid regions.
- 9 Cannabis should be legalised so as to break the hold of gangsters and the connection with hard drugs.
- 10 We support the extension of the 1967 abortion act to Northern Ireland.
- 11 In relation to policing, we will represent the working class. In every society the police represent the ruling class. We won't say, Join the police. We do pledge to police the police.
- 12 We are for recycling and opposed to waste policies that include

incineration. We want government support for renewable forms of energy.

- 13 We are in favour of votes at 16.
- 14 We are opposed to racism, sexism and homophobia. We will campaign against the criminalisation of asylum seekers, for equal pay and for equal rights for gays and lesbians.
- 15 We want greatly improved benefits including the abolition of the social fund and the restoration of direct grants. We fight for high-quality care for children, the elderly and the disabled.
- 16 We will oppose any and all future pay rises for MLAs.
- 17 We are for open diplomacy. No more secret talks.
- 18 We won't ever act as extras in scenes starring war-mongers.
- 19 We will work closely with people from across the border and across the water who are campaigning along the same lines.
- 20 Our programme can bring working-class people together.

NOW TURN TO PAGE 4 FOR FULL S.E.A. MANIFESTO