

# Socialist Worker

## Keep up the pressure

# STRIKE ON MARCH 30th

BEHIND ALL its talk of 'sharing the pain', Cowen's government is preparing new attacks on workers.

According to the *Sunday Business Post*, 'a return to domestic water charges is expected to be recommended by the Commission on Taxation which publishes its report this summer'.

This Commission is dominated by the corporate elite. Its seventeen members include five accountants, three company directors, the CEO of the Irish Stock Exchange, a representative of the Irish Banking Federation, IBEC and the IFA – alongside one token trade union representative.

It will not advocate serious taxes on the fat cats.

Instead the FF- Green government has embarked on a strategy to cut wages by between 10 and 20% over the next few years.

The pension levy on public sector workers and the 1% levy on gross pay are only the start.

In addition to water charged they want to bring the lowest paid worker into the tax net, impose university fees and more pay cuts on the public sector.

We have to really fight to stop a reduction in our living standards

The huge 120,000 demonstration on February 22<sup>nd</sup> showed that workers are willing to fight.

Tens of thousands want the pension levy withdrawn and a special pension protection bond created for private sector workers.

But our enthusiasm to mobilise is not matched by the union leaders. They have been forced to call ballots for strike action but

■ They left 13,000 CPSU members strike alone. SIPTU and IMPACT even sent out letters to members to tell them – wrongly - that solidarity action was illegal.



The huge ICTU march in Dublin in February should be followed up with a one day national shutdown

Pic: Paula Geraghty

■ They deliberately left a six week gap between February 22<sup>nd</sup> and March 30<sup>th</sup> to allow the momentum of anger to drop.

■ The ICTU have refused to even demand the withdrawal of pension levy.

The danger is that the union lead-

ers will try to use the threat of strike action to enter talks on a 'social solidarity pact'.

Top business leaders have already held secret talks with FG and Labour to urge a reduction in conflict with the government.

After these talks, Labour leader

Eamon Gilmore changed his rhetoric and is now calling for a 'national consensus' – the same language used by Cowen.

Most union leaders are Labour Party members and will push the same line.

This is why Socialist Worker urges

its readers to build for the national strike on March 30<sup>th</sup> but to keeping up the pressure on the union leaders.

You can best do this by calling union meetings in your job to endorse the call of the grassroots organisation, National Public Service Alliance for strong action.

## SUPPORT THIS STATEMENT

**We urge all workers to Vote YES for action on March 30th**

**We demand:**

**1. Scrap the levy- complete withdrawal. No to wage cuts.**

**2. A one day national stoppage of all public sector workers to remove the levy.**

**This should be part of a determined campaign in all unions to**

**have the levy removed.**

**3. A pension protection fund for all workers in private sector.**

**4. Make the rich pay for crisis.**

**We are calling for taxes on the incomes and assets of the very wealthy and the removal of a tax reliefs and shelters which favour them.**

**We demand tax equity.**

**Add your name to the statement calling for a national stoppage to scrap the levy.**

**Circulate the petition in your workplace and sent it to the ICTU**

**You can download copies of the statement from the SWP website on [www.swp.ie](http://www.swp.ie) or email [info@swp.ie](mailto:info@swp.ie) to get copies or telephone 01 8722682**

**To submit articles or letters to Socialist Worker you can contact us at**  
 t: (01) 872 3054  
 e: editor@swp.ie  
 w: www.swp.ie

**Contact the SWP in your area:**

- COUNTRYWIDE**
- BELFAST**  
 t: 07717 123 462  
 e: sean\_mitchell1917@hotmail.co.uk
- CORK**  
 t: 086 266 8341  
 e: corkswp@yahoo.com  
 w: swpcork.blogspot.com
- DERRY**  
 t: 077 425 31617  
 e: derrywp@aol.com
- GALWAY**  
 t: 087 250 4254  
 e: 5dette@eircom.net
- TRALEE**  
 t: 086 739 7458  
 e: earthsoulrocknroll@gmail.com
- WATERFORD**  
 t: 085 163 8306  
 e: swpwaterford@yahoo.com
- DUBLIN**
- BALBRIGGAN**  
 t: 087 956 0301  
 e: eimearfinnigan@hotmail.com
- BALLYFERMOT**  
 t: 087 9090 166  
 e: smithbrid@hotmail.com  
 w: www.bridsmith.com
- BRAY**  
 t: 087 780 7838  
 e: owenbooks@eircom.net
- CLONDALKIN**  
 t: 085 7211 574  
 e: ginokenny@hotmail.com  
 w: www.ginokenny.com
- COOLOCK / ARTANE**  
 t: 087 828 9243  
 e: martin\_osullivan@eircom.net
- DUBLIN BUS WORKERS**  
 t: 087 285 8388  
 e: owenmccormack2002@yahoo.co.uk
- DUBLIN CITY CENTRE**  
 t: 087 121 5344  
 e: eastman20@yahoo.com
- DUBLIN NORTH CITY**  
 t: 087 988 9244  
 e: marnie.holborow@dcu.ie
- DUBLIN SOUTH EAST**  
 t: 087 288 6646  
 e: swpdublinsoutheast@hotmail.com
- DUN LAOGHAIRE**  
 t: 087 632 9511  
 e: rboydbarrett@hotmail.com  
 w: www.richardboydbarrett.com
- FINGLAS/BALLYMUN**  
 t: 086 307 4060  
 e: swpballymun@eircom.net  
 w: ballymunsocialist.wordpress.com
- RIALTO**  
 t: 086 810 7508  
 e: crearyder@eircom.net
- TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN**  
 t: 087 327 6267  
 e: photohuey@yahoo.com
- UCD**  
 t: 087 299 5167  
 e: tommac1888@yahoo.com
- ALL OTHER AREAS**  
 Contact (01) 872 2682 for details

# Waterford Crystal workers call on Government to intervene



Waterford Crystal workers lead the 120,000-strong ICTU march in Dublin on February 21. Pic: Paula Geraghty

By DONAL MAC FHEARRAIGH

WORKERS AT Waterford Crystal are continuing their occupation, now in their sixth week. Tom Hogan, a retired Waterford Crystal worker, spoke to Socialist Worker, "The occupation is still lively with over 40 people turning up every day. Representative from the occupation are traveling throughout Ireland and Britain to speak about the occupation and how people can support us". "KPS, a US vulture capitalist firm, has bought the

brand but it is still unclear how many jobs will be saved. The 10 million offered in compensation to the workers is completely inadequate. The 480 sacked workers are now living on the basic social welfare payment, the compensation offered will only last four or five weeks. Many families are now wondering how they will pay their mortgages, as statutory redundancy will not be processed for another 12 weeks. Workers are pushing that the 10 million be seen as a down payment for more compensation".

"The new owner's plan is that the manufacturing be done by a separate company. We are calling on the government to step in and take the manufacturing into public ownership. Over 300,000 people visited Waterford last year because of Waterford Crystal". "The receiver has been told not to go too far in any agreement until a full deal is worked out. The government has been informed in a written submission and it, along with ICTU, has been asked to organize a meeting of the national implementa-

tion body to get all parties into the same room". "The government has been dragging its feet on the pension issue. The bosses are doing everything to avoid responsibility for pensions. There is a strong possibility that the union may have to take legal action to get a pension bond established, where a scheme similar to the UK that guarantees 90% of a workers pension is established. The workers are clear that all these issues have to be resolved together, there can be no splitting up the issues".

"We are also pushing that the union hold another mass meeting so all workers are informed of where the negotiations are at and to keep everyone together and on board for an agreed strategy". The resistance by the Waterford Crystal workers is an inspiration to other workers facing cuts and job losses. On the 20th February workers at Element Six, previously DeBeers, in Shannon held a sit in to protest management plans to sack 150 workers out of a workforce of 620.

## Communities resist bus cuts

CUTS IN Dublin Bus services have only been postponed – NOT withdrawn. Dublin Bus still plan huge cuts in jobs and services across Dublin. Noel Dempsey, minister for transport, plans to make 290 workers at Dublin Bus and hundreds more at Bus Eireann redundant. The plan will see almost 300 buses put off the roads. Over 160 drivers at Dublin Bus are threatened with being laid off. Hundreds have turned out to meetings to organise solidarity between bus workers and communities to stop the cuts. Dave Murray, a bus driver

said, "Dublin Bus are one of the least subsidised bus companies in Europe. In addition we are faced with huge restrictions because of the handing over of routes to private operators". On Friday 27th February protests were held in Ballymun, Finglas, Rialto and Ballyfermot. More protests in these and other areas are to follow. Owen McCormack, a bus driver said, "These cuts make no sense at a time when the Government has just unveiled its new "smart travel" plan designed to get over 100,000 people out of cars. How can they announce this with a



Rialto protest to Save Our Bus Services. Pic: Paula Geraghty

straight face while at the same time sanctioning the cuts in Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann." "Brian Cowen stated that his priority was jobs, jobs, jobs, well let him prove it by stopping the company's cuts and keeping this city's and country's buses running"

"These drivers provide an essential service for this city, we need to look at expanding that service not reducing it. More people may be forced out of their cars due to economic necessity over the coming months. Unfortunately they will find that the bus services in their

areas will no longer be there. It is not good enough for the Minister to pretend that this won't affect peak service or that the system has enough capacity. One tenth of the network will be scrapped and it will have lasting and damaging effects on our city, country and communities".

## Teachers target Anglo Irish Bank

By NIALL SMYTH

TEACHERS UNITED, an alliance of trade union activists from across the three teacher unions, INTO, ASTI and TUI held a second protest outside the Anglo Irish Bank on Stephen's Green on Monday 23rd February. Around 30 teachers gathered to protest at the imposition of the pensions levy while bailing out banks with billions of euro. Many activists from Teachers United are also active in the National Public Service Alliance, which is calling for a complete reversal of the pensions levy, a national stoppage as a first step in



Teachers United at Anglo-Irish

a national campaign and for those who created the crisis to pay the price. Teachers United members are currently pushing for maximum 'yes' vote in

the upcoming ballot for industrial action across the three teacher unions. For further details contact teachersunited09@gmail.com and see: www.teachersunited.wordpress.com

## Ballyfermot protests education cuts

OVER 200 parents, teachers and schoolchildren marched together to the Fianna Fail clinic in Ballyfermot against the cuts to special needs in education proposed by Minister Batt O'Keefe. Nine schools in Ballyfermot alone would be affected by a miserable cut to the special needs budget of €6 million nationally. As Tracy whose two kids are special needs said, "A fraction of what they would spend on the banks could keep my kids in decent class sizes. If they lose a single special needs teacher it will set them right back." Parents and children had collected over 1200 signatures in Ballyfermot, during

a week when the schools had closed for two days on mid term break. The support for the march was very positive and the children made their own banners and chanted loudly "They say cutback We say fightback". The march arrived at the clinic of FF TD Michael Mulcahy just as his car pulled up to the community center. He refused to talk to people outside but agreed to meet a delegation inside. Local People Before Profit representative Brid Smith, who had organised the protest tried to present Mulcahy with the petitions collected by the community but he refused to talk to the

## Helping the Golden Circle

THE SCANDAL at Anglo Irish Bank has exposed the Golden Circle is alive and well in Ireland. The board of directors of Anglo included a who's who of directors from other major Irish corporations, from Smurfit to Greencore to Price Waterhouse Coopers. They all went along with the corruption and mad speculation frenzy. Fianna Fail tells us that these people are 'heroes'. Many of the new 'heroes' on board of directors at Anglo are more of the same crooks who caused the crisis.

Maurice Keane, the former Bank of Ireland chief executive, now at Anglo, tried to protect Declan Flavin when he was caught insider dealing at DCC (previously Fyffe's bananas). Others include David Byrne former attorney general; Bernard Somers, former AIB director; and chairman Michael Buckley, former AIB chief executive. Meanwhile PricewaterhouseCoopers response to the corruption and economic crisis has been to produce a short film showing non-executive directors how not to get sued. Its good to see we're all feeling the pain equally and especially those who caused the mess.

## Step out of the vehicle Prawo

THE GARDA intelligence unit has finally tracked down one of Ireland's most prolific criminals, "Prawo Jazdy". The mystery Polish Houdini clocked up 50 traffic offences using different addresses and evaded arrest. After six months investigation that involved finding a dictionary and learning how to use it, Gardai found, "Prawo Jazdy is actually the Polish for 'driving licence' and not the first and surname on the licence." Arrest warrants for "Seymour Carr" and "Max Speed" are still outstanding.



# Charles Darwin's discovery

By ALEX CALLINICOS

THIS YEAR marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin. It is also 150 years since the publication of the book that made him world famous, indeed notorious – On The Origin Of Species By Means Of Natural Selection.

For a man who consciously cultivated scholarly obscurity and whose real claim to our attention is as a natural scientist, Darwin's image is extraordinarily contested.

On the one hand, we have the benign sage portrayed in David Attenborough's recent BBC special, Charles Darwin And The Tree Of Life. On the other, you have the Darwin who is under constant attack from the Christian right.

His legacy has come under fire from those who campaign for "intelligent design" – the idea that God directly created all the complex variety of living beings, to be taught on equal terms with evolutionary theory at schools.

This is presumably why Attenborough devoted so much of his programme to carefully and vividly demonstrating how subsequent scientific research has confirmed the theory of evolution.



Charles Darwin

But Darwin is also suspected by many on the left. They fear that his ideas have served to legitimise a succession of reactionary ideologies.

These start with "Social Darwinism" in the 19th century – the attempt by various ideologues to prove that biological evolution justifies capitalist competition and the imperialist domination of "inferior" races.

Then, much more recently, there has been the development of sociobiology. This involves reducing the behaviour of human beings in society to the demands supposedly put on them by their genes.

None of this has much to do with Darwin. Social Darwinism was developed before The Origin Of Species was published, notably by the liberal sociologist Herbert Spencer, who coined the slogan "survival of the fittest".

Nor was Darwin a racist. He reacted with disgust when confronted with slavery in South America during his five-year voyage on HMS Beagle in the 1830s.

In his notebooks he attacked the idea that black people belonged to a different species from whites: "From our origin in one common ancestor we may be all netted together."

Indeed, at the core of Darwin's theory is the idea that, not just human beings,

but all living organisms, are "netted together" through the evolutionary process.

The Origin Of Species seeks to establish two basic claims. The first is that evolution, what he calls "descent by modification", happens.

The Christian orthodoxy of Darwin's day held that all the different kinds of plants and animals were "special creations". In other words, God designed all the different species as we know them today.

The implication was that nature has no history. But by the middle of the 19th century this had ceased to be credible.

The development of geology revealed that the earth itself had a history, and also exposed, often buried deep in rock strata, the fossilised remains of extinct plants and animals.

It was an obvious conclusion that these were the ancestors of the present day array of plants and animals. But if living organisms evolved – developed and changed from one kind into another – how did this happen?

Enter Darwin's second great claim, the theory of evolution by natural selection itself. This explained how evolution

worked on the basis of three assumptions.

The first is that, according to Darwin, "many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive... consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence". An organism's chances of survival will depend on how well adapted it is to its environment.

Second, the individual members of a species differ slightly from one

another. Moreover, they are able to pass these variations on to their offspring.

Third, some of these differences will allow the organisms that possess them, in a given environment, to reproduce better than others.

The reason why each variation takes place is nothing to do with any conscious or unconscious purpose of increasing the organism's chances of survival, they are random mutations in DNA – blind luck.

So evolution is blind, according to Darwin. It is the constant interplay between genetic mutations and environmental changes that leads to the proliferation of different species each representing a specific niche in the struggle for survival.

Darwin's great contemporary Karl Marx commented that The Origin Of Species "is very important and serves me as a natural-scientific basis for the class struggle in history".

Marx dethroned all the kings and queens, the great men and women of history. He showed how societies change as a result of the conflicts that develop in the way in which they organise production.

Darwin dethroned God. He allowed us to see all the variety and richness of life as nothing to do with divine purpose, as the result of a blind process of natural selection.

# THE GOLDEN CIRCLE

## Four of the ten Golden Circle revealed, all are major Fianna



### Gerry Gannon – A registered Fiann Fail contributor

- He co-owns the K-Club in Straffan, County Kildare with Michael Smurfit.
- He is the founder of Gannon Homes properties and owns a large amount of land in north and south Dublin.



### Joe O'Reilly, who was involved in suspect dealings with late FF TD Liam Lawlor

- The developer of the €1 billion Dundrum shopping centre.
- His company, Castlethorn, plans to build a €1.2 billion new town in Adamstown, west Dublin.
- He also plans a mixed-use development on O'Connell Street in Dublin.

## With a little help from his friends

IN ANOTHER example of how the rich and their hangers-on demand state welfare while preaching austerity to workers, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Co. Council has re-hired former County Manager, Derek Brady, as a "consultant".

Richard Boyd Barrett of the People Before Profit Alliance said, "In a direct kickback, Derek Brady walked straight out of his job as County manager and straight into a senior job with private developer, Noel Smyth who had major construction interests in the area – not least of which were plans that would have led to the closure of the local hospital".

"It exposes how the revolving door between companies and high

officials that makes a joke of democracy".

"Like the government and the Bankers, Derek Brady was a "yes" man for private developers.

"He facilitated, at almost every turn, their greed-driven plans and now he's back and being rewarded again".

"Brady was effectively pushing social cleansing of the area. He failed to provide adequate social and affordable housing "resulting in almost a doubling of the housing waiting list during his period in office.

"His plans to privatise the sea front were only stopped because of massive street protests. He should be barred from any 'consulting' with the council".

## The rich are feeling no pain

IT IS outrageous to slash the earnings of working people - already struggling to make ends meet - while the vast wealth and obscene salaries of the super-wealthy are barely touched.

The Central Statistics Office estimate that the top 1% of the population holds 20% of the wealth, the top 2% holds 30% and the top 5% holds 40%. However, if we exclude the value of housing wealth and focus primarily on financial wealth, the concentration of wealth increases. In this instance, 1% of the population accounts for around 34% of the wealth.

The focus on the asset base excluding residential property of the top 1% of the population is because residential property is only a small component of their overall assets, compared to the population at large, where the value of your home is the dominant asset and plays an important part in various financial decisions. For the rich wealth is concentrated in financial assets.

According to these figure the wealth, excluding property, of the top 1% was over €100 Billion last year.

Recently media reports have shown that taxes paid by a small layer of professionals account for a large portion of the national income tax take. This is because the super-rich pays no income tax. Either they evade tax by becoming tax exiles, or they only pay capital gains tax of 21% on shares and acquisitions. It proves that we need a 'wealth levy'.

But there is no talk of making these fat cats feel some pain. The Government wants workers, who created the Celtic Tiger but who saw none of the wealth, to pay with extra taxes, wage cuts and cuts in public services.

# ROLE REVEALED

**behind Anglo Irish have been  
a Fail donors and supporters.**



## Seamus Ross, Mr. Galway Tent & regular donator to Fianna Fail

- The founder of Menolly homes, the country's biggest homebuilders.
- He also owns Dunboyne castle in Co. Meath.
- In 2003, Mr. Ross made headlines when he told the planning tribunal, he paid Fianna Fail TD Liam Lawlor €40,000 to get the postal address of a housing development changed from Clondalkin to Lucan. The change enhanced the value his homes by up to €5,000 per house.



## Jerry Conlan

- He sold 400 acres of land in Naas in Co. Kildare (including his millennium business park) for €300 million in 2006 and used the proceeds of sale to found the Mount Carmel medical group private hospital.
- He's been described by his fellow Kildare man Charlie McCreevy as someone who 'believes in doing everything to the highest standards'
- His business partner is staunch Fianna Fail supporter Richard Conroy.

# Fat cats loosen their belts

FAR FROM facing cutbacks the rich are on a spending spree.

Paper and packaging magnate Michael Smurfit is selling his luxury yacht for €16.5m after buying it eight years ago for more than €40m.

Fifty metres in length and containing six luxury cabins, the Lady Ann Magee is capable of accommodating 12 guests. It has a Jacuzzi, a swimming pool and an en-suite sauna and requires 12-crew to operate.



Goodman gets an €8m Dauphin helicopter

But Michael isn't selling the yacht because he's feeling the pinch, but because it simply isn't big enough for him. He plans to spend over €44 million on a less cramped boat.

Beef baron Larry Goodman, who made a fortune in the 80s and 90s selling rotten beef while being insured by the Irish state, has splashed out on a new €8m Dauphin helicopter.

His company described the helicopter as "and is a highly efficient", and said, "It is used for transporting

managers to and from company locations".

Do you think they can afford to pay more tax?

# Descent into chaos? The US and Pakistan



Anger after the Mumbai bombing

By SINEAD KENNEDY

ONE OF the central tenets of Obama's presidential 2008 campaign was his call for the US to leave Iraq. Obama promised to bring about 'change' in the US, but when it comes to foreign policy it is becoming clear that it is a change in emphasis rather than policy.

The core principals of the Bush administration's "war on terror" remain worryingly intact.

He has just announced a further 17,000 US troops will be sent to Afghanistan. This has had net effect of opening up another front for the US, Pakistan.

According to the Obama's aides, Pakistan is the nation that really "scares" him. Following the Mumbai attacks Pakistan has become increasingly unstable and is threatened on an almost daily basis by a growing Islamist insurgency, economic collapse and a crisis of government.

Leaks of a US military review, conducted under David Petraeus, the American general in charge of the region, say he has concluded that Pakistan, not Iraq, Afghanistan or Iran, is the most urgent foreign policy issue facing Obama.

The Obama administration believes Pakistan is key to its objectives of pacifying Afghanistan and going after al-Qaida and has appointed the diplomatic "powerhouse", Richard Holbrooke, as a special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"We often call this situation Afpak," said Holbrooke recently, warning that US intends that "there will be more focus on Pakistan". The US fears that a recently announced truce between the Pakistani government and insurgents - known as the "Pakistani Taliban" - will allow Afghan insurgents to secure bases where they can regroup and organise attacks on occupation troops in Afghanistan.

The Pakistani government is finding itself in an increasingly difficult position. The government wants to position itself as a US ally especially as the Obama administration is dangling a \$1.5 billion aid carrot in front of its face.

At the behest of the US, Pakistan's military has been engaged in a bloody offensive on the border with Afghanistan against the "Pakistani Taliban" who are essentially what they call fighters who target NATO operations and resist the Pakistani army. But it is civilians who have borne the brunt of the assault. Many thousands have been killed. Amnesty International estimates that fighting has forced up to 500,000 people from the area to flee.

The Pakistani government's collusion with the US is deeply unpopular with ordinary people in Pakistan. In the Swat valley region of Pakistan, which borders Afghanistan,

hundreds of thousands joined a march that stretched for 20 kilometres, chanting anti-government and pro-Taliban slogans.

However, the government's recent talks with Islamist leader Sufi Muhammad, against the wishes of the US, are recognition that it cannot win the war. In exchange for Sufi Muhammad - who despite having fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan is regarded as a "moderate" - brokering a ceasefire with more hardline Islamist forces, the government is offering to implement a version of Islamic sharia law in the border areas.

This deal has the US worried: "We're troubled and confused about what happened in Swat," says Holbrooke. "It is not an encouraging trend. The people who took over in Swat are very bad people."

It is easy to see why he is worried. Any deal that emboldens the Pakistani Taliban will likely make the job of "pacifying" southern Afghanistan even harder. But there are other problems too.

The Pakistani government has sought to win public backing for its military operations by raising the possibility of a Taliban takeover of Pakistan. Ministers have insisted that democracy is in peril and that if the Islamists were not checked, they would soon advance on cities such as Karachi and Islamabad.

This reasoning convinced many liberals, and even some left wingers, to support the government's bombing campaign.

The decision to allow sharia is, therefore, a confusing and bitter blow to those who thought they were joining the government in a fight against extremism.

Legal recognition for sharia is hardly new - various Pakistani governments have done deals over the issue in the past. In theory, it allows for religious co-judges to sit in on cases and does not replace Pakistan's official legal code.

The government hopes that by coming to an agreement with Sufi Muhammad, the radicals can be brought to heel.

Islamist organisations have so far been able to articulate growing anger at the disastrous military offensive, while reflecting the rage of sections of the middle classes and the rural poor at inflation, unemployment and the collapsing economy. But the leadership of the Islamist groups have no answer to the growing crisis that is crippling the poor.

A power sharing arrangement between the various Islamist groups in Swat and the wealthy minority that runs the Pakistani establishment will do nothing to protect the interests of millions of workers and peasants who are suffering the daily realities of this war.

# Marx and the Alternative to Capitalism

Part 2 of a three part series,

By KIERAN ALLEN

**K**ARL MARX studied capitalism from a dialectical standpoint. This way of analysing the world stretched back to ancient Greek philosophers such as Heraclitus. It contained two essential ideas.

First, that every society was in a fluid state – like, as Heraclitus put it, a river into which you cannot step twice. To really understand it, you had to grasp it as a movement heading towards its destruction.

Pro-capitalist writers, such as Adam Smith, took an opposing stance. He thought that capitalism arose from a natural tendency to trade and barter and so had always existed, at least in embryonic form.

By contrast, Marx argued that capitalism came into existence from the 1550s and industrial capitalism only developed after 1870s. In *Capital* he tried to understand its peculiar laws of operation, while recognising that it would eventually cease to exist.

Second, he thought that real change did not come primarily from great leaders or new ideas but grew out of the internal contradictions in society itself. The key contradiction in modern society was between the social organisation of production and the private seizure of profit.

Capitalism brings humans into a greater relationship of dependency on each other than any previous society. Our ancestors lived in small self-sufficient farms or small villages. But we cannot even acquire food or shelter without relying on the work of millions in different parts of the globe.

This social division of labour stands in direct contradiction to the control exercised by corporations who exist to benefit a tiny number of private individuals.

This contradiction is mystified by the pseudo-scientific language of modern economics which pretends that the economy has little to do with conflicts over the distribution of wealth.

Instead of recognising that collective human labour is the basis of society, we are supposed to accept that that 'market forces' should dictate how long we work or whether we have wage cuts.

Yet these same 'market forces', which are code words for the manic greed of capitalists, produce a boom slump cycle, the summit of which is a general crisis of the sort we are currently witnessing.

Once that occurs, the mystical veil is torn aside and we are forced to confront the question: Can we organise our collective social labour differently?

Socialists propose three ways in which we can.

## 1. Take corporations into public ownership.

A corporation is a legal entity to allow shareholders to take the fruits of the labour of others. Shareholders add nothing to the production process – they do not work, plan or even help



**A corporation is a really collective psychopath that does not care about its workforce or about its impact on the environment.**



Karl Marx

to sell what is produced. They merely buy coupons which allow them a share in the exploitation of others.

Banks control the surplus money which arises from production and is waiting to re-enter into another cycle of production. In the interval, the financiers can choose to speculate, buy other shares or loan it out to other capitalists at an interest. But the money they control is nothing but 'congealed human labour'.

For a period, they can delude themselves that through the mysteries of 'financial engineering', that money just makes money. But the pathetic nature of this illusion is revealed when the system hits a general crisis.

The modern corporation is organised around a dictatorship of money. The richest millionaires get several million votes to select a Board of Directors while the middle class shareholder gets a handful.

The sole purpose of the Board of Director is 'shareholder value' – or maximising the exploitation of workers. Some money may have to be spent on PR to pretend that there is 'corporate social responsibility' but this is only spin. A corporation is a really collective psychopath that does not care about its workforce or about its impact on the environment.

Socialism means taking such corporations into public ownership.

A simple example will illustrate this. There are ten corporations which control half of all legal

drugs which are produced on the planet. Each has about 15 people on its board of directors, often representing other corporations in an interlocking chain. This means that about 150 people dictate the collective labour of millions of people and for what purpose they are a set to work.

Instead of producing drugs for the sickest people, they spend about 30% of sales on marketing to convince healthy people that they may be sick. Between 1975 and 1997, 1,393 new drugs were produced but only sixteen were for tropical illness.

Socialists propose giving redundancy notices to this golden 150 so that the pharmaceutical industry is owned in common and cheap generic drugs are produced to help the poorest and the sickest.

## 2. Workers Control

Modern work processes are based on a sharp division between thinking and doing.

A managerial layer – whose first loyalty is to the shareholders – does all the thinking, planning and conception. They decide what is produced, how products are designed, work is organised. As capitalism grows older, they expand in numbers to supervise the exploitation of others. They create ever more paper work to check how the Key Performance Indicators of one group of workers 'benchmark' against another. They even develop their own strange business speak that is used as a marker for entry into

elite circles. Their aim, however, is to intensify exploitation so that shareholders get more profit.

By contrast, the mass of workers – whether blue collar or white collar – 'are not paid to think'. They have no say what is produced or how work is organised.

A handful of overpaid managers function like the priesthood of old – they are all wise and all seeing and, it is assumed, that only they could possibly know how to organise.

Socialists propose to end this absurd fiction to enable workers control of production.

Workers should periodically discuss how to run their enterprise. They should be free to discuss better ways to raise productivity without feeling this will lead to job losses. Higher forms of productivity should benefit all through, for example, cutting the working time or enabling workers to build up credits to access higher forms of learning.

The breakdown of the division between thinking and doing will do away with vast amounts of unproductive, over paid managers.

In any large organisation, some people will still need to function as co-ordinators. But these can be elected democratically or else the function can even rotate.

Workers control rather than managerial dictats will, therefore, unleash the creative energies of millions who are now told 'not to think'

## 3. Democratic Plans for what we produce.

Even if the large corporations were taken into public ownership and workers control of production prevailed, there still has to be a mechanism through which the resources of society are allocated for different human needs.

Under capitalism, this takes place according to the laws of supply and demand. If there is a huge demand for, let's say, holiday packages to Malaga, the prices will increase.

These high prices send out a signal to capitalists to charter more planes and hire hotel spaces in Malaga.

Through such mechanism the 'hidden hand' of the market, is said to allocate scarce resources in an efficient manner.

But how just how efficient is a system which cannot allocate cheap water purification tablets to the five million people who die from water borne diseases each year?

And if the hidden hand works so well, why will 50 million people loose their jobs because of the current global depression?

Instead of pretending that there is a great machine known as the Market which we must adore but not interfere with, socialists propose democratic structures to decide how to allocate resources and to plan what will be produced.

How this might work, will be the subject of part three

# Gig for Palestine and Afghanistan

ON MARCH 16th in Vicar St, The Irish Anti-War Movement (IAWM) is hosting Unoccupied Minds in solidarity with the people of Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan - to raise awareness about the impact of war and military occupation on these long-suffering peoples.

Artists like Christy Moore, Stephen Rea, Sinead Cusack, Mick Pyro from Republic of Loose and others, will be joined by actors from the Abbey Theatre and their forthcoming production of Seven Jewish Children - A play for Gaza, recently written by leading English playwright, Caryl Churchill.

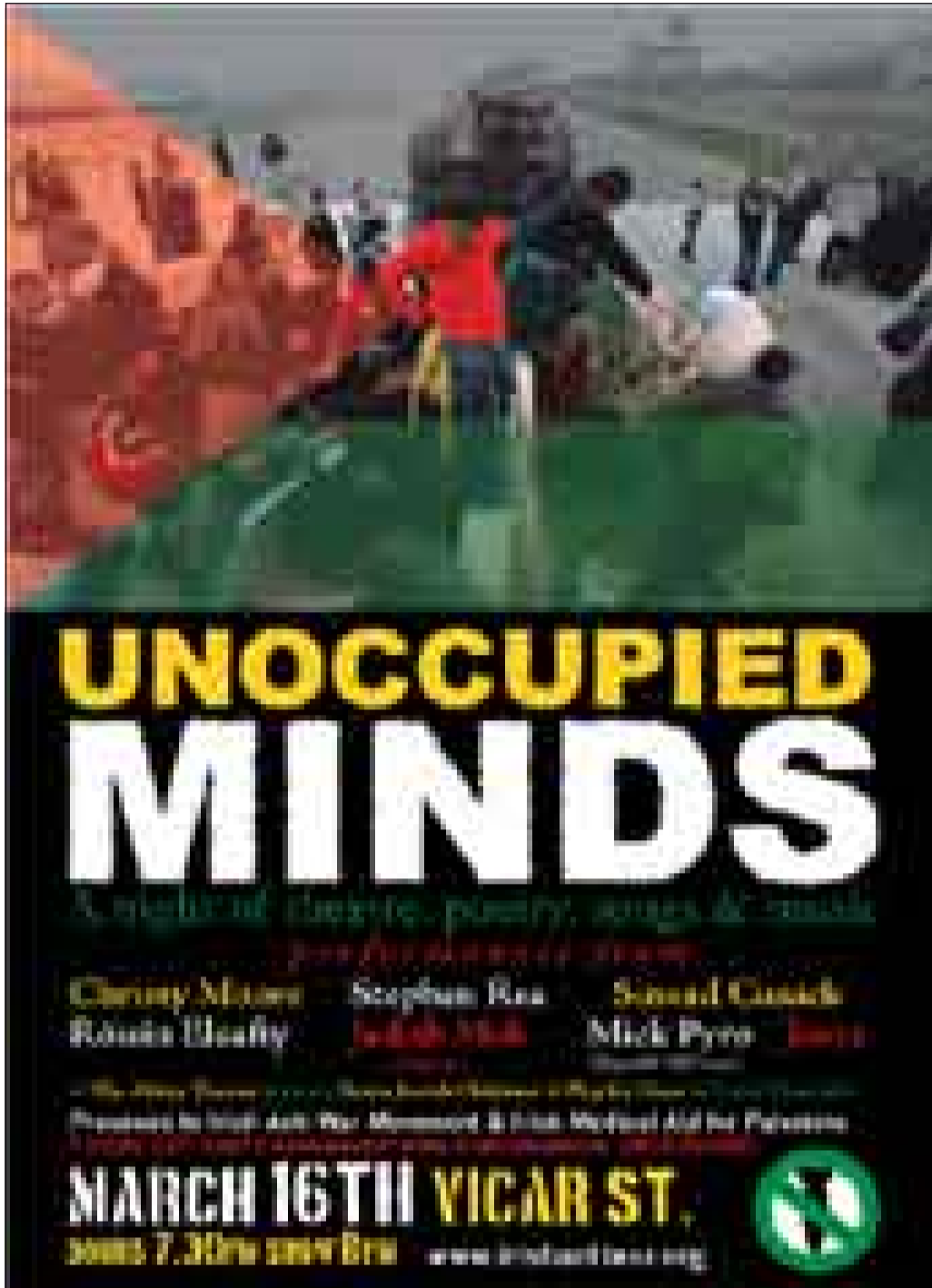
Richard Boyd Barrett, chairperson of the IAWM said, "In Gaza, one of the most immediate needs is to bring medical aid to the thousands of innocent civilians - including hundreds of children - who were maimed and injured during the recent assault."

"However, beyond the immediate crisis, there is also an urgent need to raise awareness and solidarity for the people of Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan as they continue to struggle for justice, self-determination and an end to the occupation of their countries".

"Great hopes have accompanied the election of the new US President, Barack Obama. However, powerful forces remain, at the highest level, in both the US and other parts of the world, who seek to continue on the path of war and militarism."

We must continue to raise their voices against the use of war and occupation as a means to pursue their political objectives".

Tickets €25 from [www.ticketmaster.ie](http://www.ticketmaster.ie)



## Force Eircom to drop contract with Israeli firm

THE IRISH Anti-War Movement (IAWM) is organising a campaign to break investment links between Eircom and the Israeli military.

The IAWM held a picket outside the Eircom Headquarters in Dublin to protest against the company's plans to award a multi-million euro contract for a new computer billing system to a consortium that includes the Israeli multinational firm, Amdocs, as the major sub-contractor.

Representatives of the IAWM, Islamic Foundation of Ireland (IFI) and the Ireland-Palestine

Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) appealed to Eircom not to award the contract with IBM led consortium that included Amdocs.

Rejecting the Amdocs bid would be a significant signal to Israel over its treatment of the Palestinians.

Richard Boyd Barrett, chairperson of the IAWM said, "Amdocs is a major player in the Israeli economy, that by its own admission has a huge personnel overlap with the Israeli military. That means Amdocs personnel were certainly involved in the recent atrocities in Gaza that claimed the

lives of over 1300 Palestinians, including more than 300 children.

"We are very disappointed that Eircom intend to put company profits and commercial concerns before human rights considerations, when it comes to making their decision on the awarding of this contract".

"After Gaza, Israel's inhuman treatment of the Palestinians simply cannot be allowed to continue. Boycotting Israel - as apartheid South Africa was boycotted - will be an essential part of any campaign to force Israel to comply with international law and human's

rights when it comes to its treatment of the Palestinians".

Saleem Khan, Liaison Officer for the Islamic Foundation of Ireland added, "There are 50,000 people of Muslim faith in this country. If Eircom ignores this appeal we will be forced to advise our community not to do business with Eircom. We cannot stand by and watch Israel being treated as if it is a normal state, after the horrors we witnessed in Gaza and as it continues to deny Palestinians the most basic human rights."

For campaign updates check [www.IrishAntiWar.org](http://www.IrishAntiWar.org)

## Freed Guantanamo detainee to speak in Ireland



Binyam Mohamad

his case and its close links to Shannon's involvement in "extraordinary rendition".

GAAW spokesperson, Niall Farrell: "A special rapporteur for the Council of Europe, Dick Marty, established that the CIA planes and crews that kidnapped Mr Mohamad and brought him to be tortured in Morocco and months later to a similar fate in Kabul's 'Dark Prison' not only travelled through Shannon airport but stayed over night there."

"While in Morocco and Kabul Binyam Mohamad suffered unbelievable torture and the Irish government played a part in that crime."

"In order to highlight these acts of criminality we will be getting him to come and speak in Galway and if possible all over the country. Naturally, he needs time to rest and come to terms with the 7 years of horror he has endured".

"Clive Stafford Smith of

Binyam's legal team says he has clear evidence his client was tortured.

"At the moment he is pursuing a high court case in the UK to have secret documents disclosed that would collaborate this evidence".

"According to legal advice

GAAW has received from the Belfast solicitor's Madden & Finucane, if the torture of Mr Mohamad can be proved then a very viable case could be brought before the Irish courts to prevent US military aircraft from landing on Irish soil lest they too are complicit in torture."

### COMMENT

## Workfare increases child poverty



By EAMONN MCCANN

POVERTY LEVELS in the North are set to get worse as the Executive imposes curbs on workers' rights demanded by New Labour.

Work and Pensions Secretary James Purnell is steering his "workfare" bill through Westminster—and all of the main Northern parties are following suit.

Purnell's scheme will see £360 million a year handed to private companies to deliver a "personalised service" to encourage the unemployed to find work. The "encouragement" will involve the withdrawal of Jobseeker's Allowance—£60.50 a week—if they can't show they are actively seeking work or refuse to take whatever job the personal adviser finds for them.

Lone parents with children as young as seven will be subjected to the "Welfare to Work" regime. In the Commons, Purnell was asked whether benefits would be withdrawn from a lone parent who, for example, refused an offer of child-care to free him or her to take whatever job was available because the creche was too far away or not up to standard. He responded: "In the end it will be the personal adviser's decision with the possibility of appeal, because if we did it the other way round, that would clearly have the potential to drive a cart and horses through the conditionality regime."

To allow the claimant any say in the matter would undermine the very purpose of the scheme.

People on incapacity benefit are to face the same pressures.

New Labour claims that "Welfare to Work" will reduce child poverty. Hound the adults in households living in poverty into work, and the children will benefit. It sounds vaguely plausible. But it leaves out of account the fact that, over the period 2004/05 to 2006/07, half of the 110,000 children in poverty-level households in the North were living in families with an adult in full-time

or part-time paid work. Of the 60,000 children in poverty with two parents, more than half were in families with at least one of the parents working.

Tens of thousands of children in the North, then, and their parent or parents, will be in poverty whether an adult works or not. This figure will rise as unemployment climbs.

From a conservative point of view, the scheme may have made some sense when there were jobs to be had. It makes no sort of sense now—except to ensure that the poor pay the price of the recession.

Control of social security has been devolved to Stormont. Different aspects come under Sir Reg Empey's (Ulster Unionist) Department of Employment and Learning and Margaret Ritchie's (SDLP) Department of Social Development.

Empey is a fan of Welfare to Work. In May 2007 he visited the Wildcat Service Corporation in Harlem and professed himself "amazed" at its "achievements". It provides "work habits training" to the unemployed, who are "incentivised" to take part through the denial of welfare benefits if they refuse.

At Stormont on February 2nd, Ritchie was asked "to what extent do decisions on social security policy that are taken at Westminster have an impact on social security policy in Northern Ireland?" She replied that funding of social security in the North "is predicated on the maintenance of parity...We have little option but to implement them."

In other words, the Executive has no intention of even trying to ease the impact of a neo-liberal measure which will drive down the living standards of some of the most vulnerable sections of the working class. The DUP, Sinn Fein, the Ulster Unionists and the SDLP are all behind the measure.

We need working class resistance to the Stormont consensus. We might start with the sort of upsurge which brought 120,000 people onto the streets of Dublin.

Get your copy of Socialist Worker every fortnight

Six month subscription €15/£10stg

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive \_\_\_\_\_ copies of Socialist Worker each issue  
Return to PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, with a cheque/postal order or a bank lodgement receipt. Bank Details: Socialist Workers Movement, AIB, 37/38 Upper O Connell St, Dublin 1. Account No: 85173469. Sort code: 93-11-36

# Socialist Worker



## HEALTH & TRANSPORT

# FIGHT THE CUTBACKS

PEOPLE IN Northern Ireland are being hit hard by the recession with job losses, home repossessions and high prices.

We are also seeing cutbacks in services happening across the board.

Take for example the Health Minister Michael Mc Gimpsey and his proposals to axe 700 nurses from their posts in Northern Ireland.

Under these proposals in the next 2 years there will be cutbacks amounting to £340 million, 2500 health and social care posts will be lost in the North.

This is the last thing that workers need in a time of recession.

Such drastic cutbacks would have a disastrous effect and place hundreds onto an already rising dole queue.

But also the health service would be seriously damaged by such huge proposals.

Mc Gimpsey's plans to cutback and attack public services should be thrown into the dustbin.

There are also proposals for cutbacks within transport.

Bus company Wrightbus- who just recently signed a £11 million partnership deal with a Dutch coachbuilder has stated that it is to slash 235 jobs in Ballymena.

These cutbacks and job losses come on the top off closures of Woolworths and Zavvi amongst other stores.

The recession is already affecting people, these cutbacks and job losses will make peoples' lives



Nurses to face the axe

much more difficult in the period ahead.

The fact that we are in the worst economic crises since the 1930's is not the fault of workers in Northern Ireland but of the bankers and the crazy logic of the capitalist system.

Therefore we should demand that working people don't pay for the recession whilst billions of taxpay-

er's money get handed to bailout the bankers.

The Assembly has previously stated that they would fight calls from Westminster to cut funding to the Northern Ireland executive, yet it is precisely the Assembly that is proposing cutbacks in relation to health and a whole range of other areas.

Stormont must protect people's

jobs and ensure that services aren't cut in this period of economic recession.

Whilst different parties in the Assembly sometimes speak out against individual proposed cutbacks they all bear responsibility for them.

It was all the main parties in Stormont who actually agreed to the cutbacks in the assembly budget.



Health Minister Michael Mc Gimpsey

Such meager attempts of protest are merely done to strengthen their own standing.

A fantastic example of how people can resist job losses and redundancies is that of the workers in the Waterford Crystal plant.

Threatened with redundancy and a pension removal workers in Waterford crystal occupied their plant.

The only reason why they have a real possibility of saving their jobs is because they took action, occupied and fought back.

Unless workers across the north take action and fight against cuts in services and job losses then it will be they who are forced to pay for the recession.

We must ensure that it doesn't happen.