

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p

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Solidarity price £1

Celtic Tiger

IT'S ALL FOR THE RICH

Who gains from the Celtic Tiger? Turn to pages 6 & 7

DRUGS WAR HYPE

DURING THE general election Fianna Fail promised to provide £20 million to help reduce the demand for drugs.

But now Chris Flood, the Minister for State, has said this was only "aspirational". In fact only £1.25 million is to be paid out.

Anna Quigley of the Dublin City Wide Drugs Crisis campaign says that the government is "not as

committed to the drugs as we would like them to be. Their approach is more directed towards law and order and headline grabbing."

Fianna Fail have found plenty of money to cut the taxes on the rich.

Yet they have little to give to communities who are organising to remove the social conditions that give rise to drug abuse.

Meanwhile, recent figures show the reality behind the Garda's 'War on

drugs'.

According to the Garda's annual report for 1996 cannabis was involved in 62 percent of the cases where controlled drugs were seized.

Going after people who take the relatively harmless drug cannabis is a complete waste of time and money.

That money would be better spent funding communities who want to tackle poverty and unemployment.

Poverty in Tallaght

RECENT figures reveal a shocking state of poverty in the Tallaght area.

Three districts in West Tallaght which has a population the size of Sligo are among the poorest 1 percent of all districts in the country.

These are Fettercairn, Jobstown, and Killinarden which have a population of nearly 18,000 between them.

In all, six of the 14 districts in Tallaght are in the poorest 10% in the whole country.

While media figures praise the wonders of the Celtic Tiger, those at the bottom of the pile know that little has changed.

Corruption

Wealthy scramble to cover their tracks

THE FLOOD Tribunal into planning corruption has asked for access to Garda files on investigations into the Fianna Fail politician Ray Burke.

But the Gardaí have delayed giving out the information, claiming they are awaiting "legal advice".

The files cover three investigations from 1974, 1989 and 1993. Included are interviews with Ray Burke and a fellow TD, John Boland, as well as

county councillors.

During the 1974 investigation Burke, then a county councillor, was questioned around 20 times by gardai over a £15,000 payment from a company called Brennan and McGowan.

None of the three investigations resulted in any politician or official being found guilty of corruption. So if no one was guilty why are the Garda so concerned with keeping the files confidential?

It seems politicians are using the law to try to prevent their dealings with big business from

being investigated.

Charles Haughey has gone to the High Court to challenge the Moriarty investigation into his extraordinary wealth. Other Fianna Fail TDs have been told by Moriarty that they do not have to reveal the source of their funding.

Files

It is likely that the case of the Burke files will be decided by the Attorney General. If the files are not released to the Flood Tribunal, Burke could be let off the hook.

Contrast these manoeuvres with the treatment of working class people by the law:

■ Building workers are being prevented by the courts from picketing Crampton's sites in Dublin and from producing "de-

famatory" leaflets about the dispute;

■ Peadar O'Grady, a Socialist Workers Party election candidate, was dragged before the courts on Public Order charges and only cleared his name thanks to a campaign of demonstrations and pickets.

Top politicians and businessmen have always had the ear of the judges and the best legal aid money can buy. They have the power to sue for libel if a newspaper makes allegations against them.

When it comes to ordinary people the papers can carry screaming headlines about "nannies from hell" and the like. But we do not see headlines about "the building boss from hell" or "the politician from hell".

As always it is one law for them and another for us.

A flood of planning scandals

THE FLOOD Tribunal was set up to investigate corruption in the planning process.

It followed the revelation that the Fianna Fail minister Ray Burke had received up to £80,000 from two Dublin building firms. Burke had to resign as Minister for Foreign Affairs because of the scandal.

One of the main cases being investigated by the Flood Tribunal is the rezoning of 90 acres overlooking the Liffey Valley near Lucan.

Advice

In March 1993 the old Dublin County Council voted to rezone the Liffey Valley land for housing.

This went against the advice of the council's own planning officer who said the land should be kept for agriculture.

The votes of two Progressive Democrats councillors helped to swing the decision.

But the then PD leader Des O'Malley had promised residents' groups from Lucan that the party would oppose the

rezoning.

Residents say that one of the owners of the land near Lucan was "a prominent supporter of the Progressive Democrats".

Last year Fingal County Council approved planning permission for several hundred houses on the Liffey Valley site, despite a local vote of 2,420 to 80 in favour of the land reverting to agricultural use.

Among other cases being investigated at the Flood Tribunal are:

■ The rezoning of land near Malahide, including a site at Robswall. Comeragh Properties wanted to develop this site and agreed to give financial benefits to local sporting organisations in return for their support.

■ The purchase of five acres near Tymon Public Park is being challenged by Jackie Dunne from Tallaght. Dunne told Justice Flood of "threatening and abusive phone calls which had subsequently been discovered to have come from the offices of Dublin County Council".

Fianna Fail's secret letter

CHARLES Haughey is using a secret letter issued to his former Fianna Fail colleagues as an excuse not to reveal the source of his wealth.

The secret letter from the Moriarty Tribunal was issued to Seamus Brennan, the Fianna Fail chief whip, after the party's TDs queried a request for information.

The tribunal is investigating donations made to Charles Haughey by big business as well as his connections to the Ansbacher bank account in the Cayman Islands.

Haughey has gone to the High Court to challenge the tribunal's right to make him disclose his financial dealings. It was revealed in the High Court that the tribunal had sent a letter to TDs asking them to list every political contribution over £500 which they had received while in public life.

But Fianna Fail TDs were "confused" by the request. So

they asked Brennan to get "clarification" from Moriarty.

The reply to Brennan put the deputies' minds at rest. The original letter was not to be taken literally and TDs did not really have to disclose details of every significant donation.

All they had to do was disclose any connections they might have with Ansbacher.

Brennan was instructed to keep the letter to himself but he could tell his colleagues of its contents.

Haughey claimed in court that he was being "singled out" because the secret letter had let his former colleagues off the hook but had not been sent to him. But the whole affair stinks of a setup to let Haughey off the hook. It is a disgrace that all Fianna Fail TDs were not asked to reveal their financial backers.

But it will be even more disgraceful if this shabby little manoeuvre allows Haughey to cover up his web of corruption.



Desmond's Haughey connection

TOP businessman Desmond claims he did not raise funds for Fianna Fail or gain any political favours from them.

He admits having "private arrangements" with Charles Haughey since 1994 but says he gave no money while Haughey was Taoiseach.

But Desmond has some explaining to do about some political connections he admitted to before 1994.

Letter

In 1991, Desmond, as boss of National City Brokers (NCB), bragged in a letter to a client about his political clout.

"We orchestrated entirely the successful campaign to get a positive tax opinion from the Revenue Commissioners, which involved using personal contacts at the highest level", wrote Desmond.

Further on in the letter he

said: "We used up a large proportion of the favours we can call upon from our political contacts--and no doubt we will pay a price on the other side."

Desmond got rich by setting up the Irish Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Dublin, with the backing of Charles Haughey.

He played a major part in the restructuring and privatisation of several state-owned companies.

NCB acted as consultants for Telecom Eireann, ESB and Bord na Mona and helped to sell off Greencore and Irish Life.

While workers in these companies have faced job losses and worsening conditions, Desmond has made a killing.

In 1993 the investigation into the Telecom scandal reported that Desmond was the main beneficiary in the sale of the Johnston, Mooney and O'Brien building in Ballsbridge.

what we think

Ahern and Blair bow to Unionists

THE BRITISH and Irish governments have produced a "heads of agreement" document which has been hailed as bringing about a breakthrough in the Northern talks

After the killing of the young cross-community worker, Terry Enright, many will hope that the talks can really bring peace.

But the proposals do not get at the fundamental causes of violence in the North.

Instead both governments have bowed to the demands of David Trimble who cynically used the spate of loyalist murders of Catholics to extract concessions.

Agreed

According to the *Sunday Tribune*, before the document was agreed Ahern telephoned Trimble several times to find out what was acceptable and what was not.

When the Unionist Party held a briefing meeting about the document, a spokesperson revealed that, "the spirit was very hearty".

The heads of agreement document is proposing:

■ **A Northern Ireland Assembly which will guarantee an in-built Unionist**

majority.

This could see David Trimble elected as Prime Minister with control over vital areas of policy.

■ **A watering down of the proposed North/South institutions.**

These will now have to be answerable to a Northern Ireland Assembly where Unionists have a majority.

David Andrews, the South's foreign Minister has already apologised for claiming that the North/South body would have executive powers.

■ **A Council of the islands with representatives from the South, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.**

This is an idea which was first developed by the Progressive Unionist Party and then taken up by Trimble. Its aim is to balance out any links with the South.

Violence is built into the North because the British government have always refused to take on the bigots who dominate Unionism.

The last attempt at powersharing, in 1974, was broken because the British army refused to face down the UDA thugs who mounted barricades to back up a loyalist strike.

Typically Fianna Fail governments, which wave the green flag in opposition,

simply go along with these concessions.

The latest concessions to Trimble show this pattern is being repeated.

The one area that is totally ignored in the joint document is the poverty and unemployment that exists in both Catholic and Protestant areas.

Sectarianism

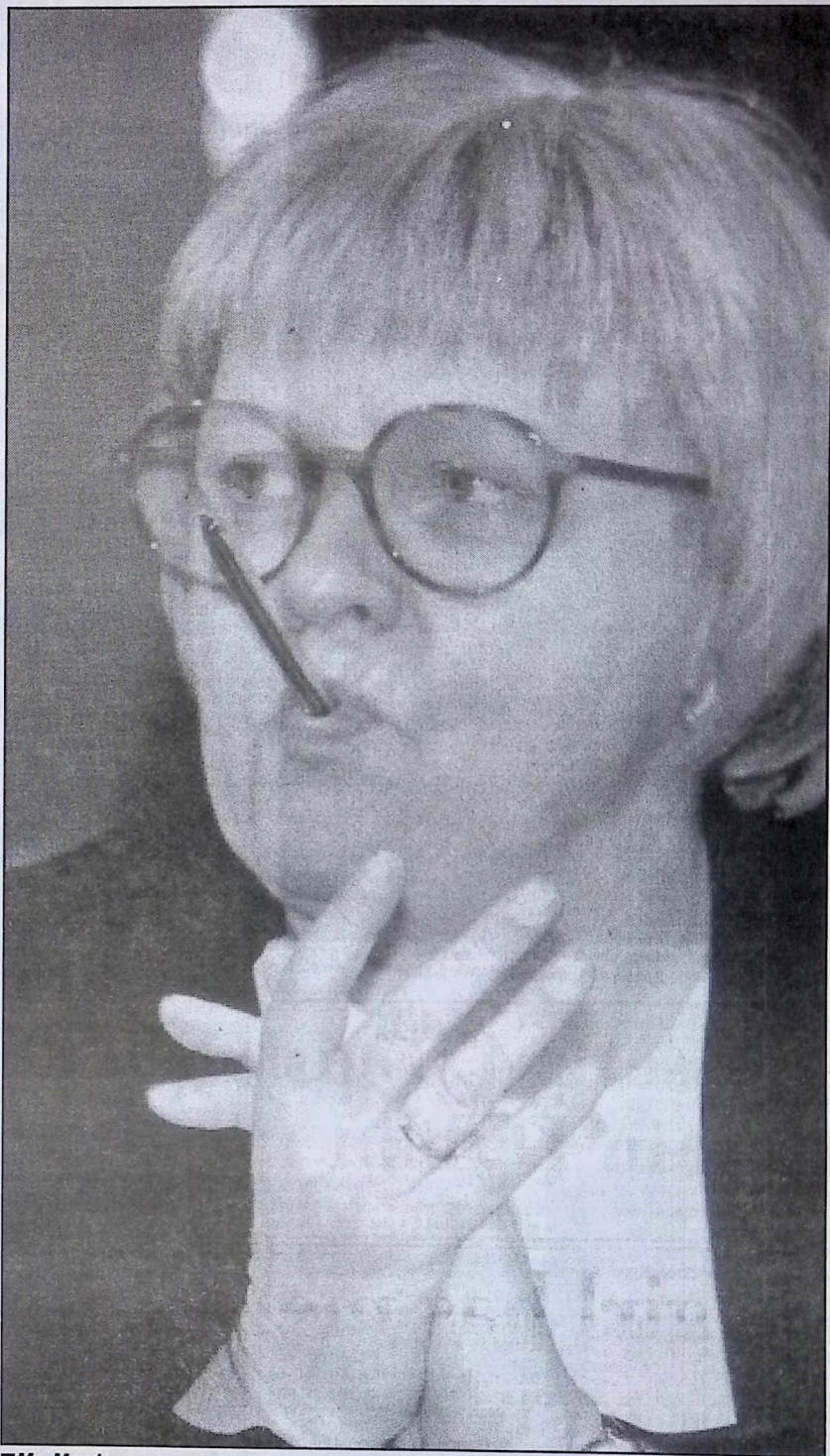
The proposals that are being discussed are about modernising and managing sectarianism rather than removing the divisions between Catholics and Protestants.

Sinn Fein has indicated that they will stay in talks, despite their objections to the proposals. The leadership seems to be so committed to the whole process that a final settlement still remains possible.

But it will be a shaky, unstable settlement where the scourge of sectarianism will have ample room to grow.

Instead of relying on the talks to deliver peace, it is vital that the growing mood for class unity, which was shown in the large Protestant attendance at the funeral of Terry Enright, is politicised and built on.

The key to that is a socialist minority that can provide a strong backbone to the general mood for class unity.



■ *Mo Mowlan*

Huge publicity for racist party

THE DECISION of the Late Late Show to give Aine Ni Chonail a platform to present her racist views was a disgrace.

Ni Chonail has set up Ireland's first anti-immigration movement, the Immigration Control Platform.

Its approach is modelled on the activities of Le Pen in France and Pauline Hanson in Australia.

The strategy in both cases is to present a respectable image but to lay the basis for hard racist attacks on refugees and immigrants.

Ni Chonail makes no secret of her racism.

She has written repeated letters attacking British people who are living in West Cork as "blow-ins".

She claims that a multi-racial society is impossible and quotes racist attacks in Europe.

What she never admits is that these incidents happen

because of a minority of hardened racists who follow politics like hers.

Ni Chonail has won no major support.

When she stood in Cork during the General Election she received a derisory 293 votes.

Despite national publicity for her party's launch, a mere 20 people attended its first meeting in Ennis.

These were vastly outnumbered by over 100 anti-racists who turned up to protest.

Platform

Yet despite all this, she has been given a national platform by RTE and sections of the press.

Some of these argue that it is better to have someone to articulate racism so that the issue can be debated.

But experience elsewhere shows that once these hardened racists are given a platform, they help create an atmosphere

where attacks on black people start to increase.

This is why Ni Chonail should be opposed every time she tries to get a platform to air her racist views.

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news of the world

Unemployed protests

"THERE'S A whiff of December 1995 in the air."

That's the verdict of the respected French daily paper *Le Monde* on the unemployed protests which have rocked the country's government in recent weeks.

The 1995 wave of strikes and protests broke the back of the country's previous right wing government and helped sweep the Socialist Party to office in last year's general election.

The unemployed protests have won huge popular support as they have grown over the last five weeks, and show little sign of ending.

The government has been badly rattled and prime minister Lionel Jospin was forced to announce he would speak about the protests on national TV.

He was expected to announce plans to increase benefits for the unemployed.

That comes after a series of earlier concessions, including promises of up to £100 million of government cash to help the jobless.

Then France saw the biggest demonstrations yet in the five week old movement as tens of thousands of people marched through cities across France in support of the unemployed.

Some 20,000 marched in Paris, with thousands joining marches in cities from Marseilles to Lille, Rouen to Bordeaux.

These demonstrations came just days after similar marches in some 30 cities around the country.

The movement began when unemployed activists began occupying dole offices around the country before Christmas.

It has since become a focus for a popular mood, impatient with the lack of change since the Socialist Party government was elected.

Over 70 percent of people support the unemployed movement, and the demonstrations have won backing from employed workers, including the country's most important union federation, the CGT.

An indication of the atmosphere came at one of Paris's poshest restaurants last week.

Unemployed protesters marched into La Coupole, demanding free meals.

They refused a first offer of sandwiches in the basement.

"We will not eat hidden away while the rich eat upstairs," said one protester.

The restaurant was forced to serve free meals, including oysters, to the protesters in the main dining area.

Other restaurants have faced similar invasions in recent weeks, and last week unemployed protesters also forced a luxury hotel in Paris to put them up for the night and serve them breakfast the next day.

The unemployed movement is demanding a rise in

The restaurant was forced to serve free meals, including oysters, to the protesters in the main dining area.

benefit levels.

But it has also become linked with the debate due in parliament this month about a plan to create jobs by cutting working hours to 35 a week without loss of pay.

The CGT union and the unemployed protesters have called a national day of action for 27 January as the 35 hour parliamentary debate begins.

Bosses are worried and unhappy with the concessions Jospin's government has been pushed to make.

But they and France's politicians are also increasingly nervous that the protests so far could be the herald of a bigger revolt.

rock France



French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and Labour Minister Martine Aubrey offering concessions to unemployed

Spanish miners fight on to beat jobs axe

TEN THOUSAND coal miners in the Asturias region of Spain were still out on strike fighting government plans to bow to European Union demands to slash jobs.

The increasingly bitter dispute saw one miner killed when he was run down by a truck.

There have been clashes with riot police and miners have repeatedly blocked rail lines and motorways in the area.

Accused

The fight began just before Christmas when miners accused the country's right wing government of reneging on a deal signed earlier in the year.

That deal agreed a cut in coal production and

jobs as older miners retired, but it also included promises to create new jobs for the young unemployed in the area.

Now the European Union is demanding harsher job cuts and—in line with its free market dogma—wants the

removal of public subsidies from coal mining.

The result is that Spain's miners face pit

closures and devastation of communities.

The strikers want the agreement signed last year to be honoured.

Mexican outrage at state repression

MEXICO CITY saw its biggest demonstration for many years in January.

It was in protest at repression by state forces against the indigenous people of Chiapas in the south of the country.

Just three hours before the demonstration police had opened fire on a protest in the town of Ocosingo against the military presence,

killing an Indian woman and wounding her baby.

The latest shootings came after the Christmas massacre of 45 Indians by a paramilitary group linked to local officials of the PRI party which has run Mexico since the 1920s.

Struggle

The Mexico City demonstration was called jointly by the main left

of centre opposition party, the PRD, and the "Zapatista" front that leads the struggle in Chiapas.

Significantly, the Zapatista banners vastly outnumbered those of the PRD.

Detaining

The government's response to the shootings and the protests has been to make token gestures allegedly

aimed at ending the repression, even replacing the governor of Chiapas and detaining some of the police after the recent killing.

But the troops in Chiapas, clearly acting in consort with key figures in the ruling party, are stepping up the harassment of the local population and the Zapatistas while allowing paramilitary "white guard" groups to operate with impunity.

Turkish Courts ban Islamic party

TURKEY's constitutional court has ordered the closure of the largest party in parliament, the Welfare Party.

Welfare is an Islamist party which won 21 percent of the vote in the last general election.

It was the senior partner in a coalition government with one of Turkey's two conservative parties until June of last year.

It fell from power after a series of political scandals and under pressure from the army.

Secular

Now Turkey's top court has said the Welfare Party is in breach of the secular principles embedded in the country's constitution.

The Welfare Party has won support from the urban poor and claims four million members.

But, despite its sometimes militant rhetoric, it offers no challenge to big business and the army.

The party has tried to channel the desire for far reaching change among many of its supporters into drives to introduce the veil and its version of Islamic law.

Such policies are against the interests of workers.

Risking

But those banning the Islamists also want to make workers and the poor pay for the economic crisis and the cost of Turkey's continuing war against the Kurds.

The Turkish establishment is risking pushing Islamists into underground, armed opposition to the regime.

That is what happened in Algeria after the army launched a coup to prevent the Islamist FIS from winning elections in 1992.

The politics behind the Loyalist death squads

JUST A few weeks into 1998, and loyalist death squads have killed five Catholics.

Most of the deaths have been claimed by the Loyalist Volunteer Force—but there is evidence that other loyalist paramilitaries are involved.

It is now almost certain that the UDA/UFF were behind the murder of Eddie Treanor, a young Housing Executive worker, in a North Belfast pub on New Year's Eve.

The car used in the killing was hijacked in the Lower Shankill, a stronghold of the UDA and five UDA men from the area have been arrested for the murder.

Yet despite this bloodletting, the Ulster Democratic Party which is aligned to the UDA and is led by John McMichael, is allowed to maintain a respectable image.

When the IRA carried out a bombing in Canary Wharf they were frozen out of all official contacts. But the UDP has had meetings with Trimble, Blair and David Andrews.

During her visit to the Maze, Mo Mowlam even met Johnny 'Mad Dog' Adair, until recently the commander of the UDA in the Lower Shankill.

Boasted

Adair has boasted that he is responsible for the murder of 20 Catholics.

Mowlam's prison visit and most media coverage of it, accepted claims that recent Loyalist murders were simply retaliation for the murder of LVF leader, Billy Wright.

This argument is used to portray the conflict in the North as being between two "warring tribes", with the British government playing the role of impartial mediators.

But the reality is that the loyalist murder campaign began long before Wright's shooting.

Most of the press have ignored the brutal statistic that of the 20 people murdered in Northern Ireland last year—15 were killed by loyalists.

Behind the blind sectarian hatred that individual killers may have, there is a political strategy.

Just like the way the death squads operate in Latin America, the killings in the North are designed to convey a political message.

Billy Wright's himself was always open about the politics behind the killings.

Between 1989 and 1994, his Mid Ulster Brigade of the UVF murdered 40 Catholics, including two teenage girls, a preg-

'Members of the security forces have said that we have done what they couldn't do.'

nant mother of five and two old-age pensioners.

His purpose was to terrorise the Catholic community in order to put pressure on the IRA to surrender.

Strategy

He added that "members of the security forces have said that we have done what they couldn't do."

The political strategy was also evident in the murders throughout 1997.

In May, Robert Hamill was kicked to death in the centre of Portadown by a Loyalist mob, chanting "Die, Fenian die", while the RUC looked on.

The message was that Portadown was the Alabama of Northern Ireland



■ The body of Fergal McCusker murdered by the LVF in Maghera, Co Derry.

and was not safe for Catholics at night.

When Bernadette Martin, shot dead in her Protestant boyfriend's bed in Aghalee the message was that mixed relations are off-limits.

The killings have not

been confined to Catholics.

Beaten

David Templeton, a church minister, was beaten to death by Loyalists, after the RUC leaked

the fact that a gay porn video was seized from him.

Loyalists want to enforce an image of "good upstanding respectability" on Protestants themselves.

Instead of seeing loyal-

ist violence as simply blind fury—it is vital that the full horror is faced up to.

Loyalism is as much built on a strategy of organised and directed violence as is the Ku Klux Klan in America.

The respectable politicians behind the thugs

THE DAY after Terry Enright was murdered in a pub owned by David Ervine's sister-in-law, Ervine began to reveal the full truth behind the loyalist death campaign.

Ervine claimed that the LVF was not acting alone but was being advised by seemingly respectable politicians.

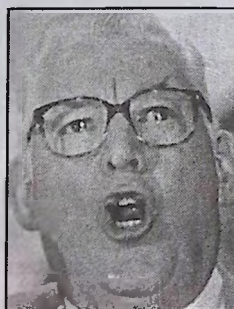
All the evidence points to the fact that he was referring to links with sections of the Democratic Unionist Party.

■ The LVF originally grew from elements that came together to picket the Catholic Church in Harryville.

The picket was first organised by sections of the DUP.

■ Wright has called Ian Paisley "a spiritual giant who has led thousands in the direction of Christ".

■ When Wright was under a death threat from the UVF and UDA, William McCrea, DUP MP for mid-Ulster shared



■ Paisley



■ Trimble

a platform with him at a rally in Portadown.

■ Recent reports indicate that the defunct Ulster Resistance which was set up by the DUP to resist the Anglo-Irish agreement is handing over its guns to the LVF.

Visited

But while the DUP has maintained hidden political links with elements of the LVF, the Unionist Party itself has also gained from their activities.

David Trimble visited Loyalist prisoners in the

Maze three days before Mowlam, despite claiming he would "never talk to men of violence."

The pay-off came when the talks resumed, when Mowlam proposed a new discussion document which emphasised the role of a "Council of the Isles", a key demand of Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party, which would reinforce the link with Britain.

Included in the new document is an assembly for the North, guaranteeing that partition will remain. The smile on Trimble's face told the real story.

No progressive loyalism

MANY HAD hoped that politics could eventually shift to the left in the North through a symmetrical arrangement whereby Sinn Fein represented the interests of Catholic workers and the PUP looked after Protestant workers.

But the last few weeks has demonstrated why this is an illusion.

Despite talking about working class issues, the PUP are unable to offer an alternative to Loyalism.

They are based on paramilitary organisations, built on the hatred of Catholics, not trade unionists. As a result, they are continually pulled back into sectarianism.

David Ervine even claimed that the murder of Billy Wright was "an attack on all Protestants."

The PUP has repeatedly attacked the 'concessions' to republicans.

But when the PUP leader David Ervine, pushed to give an example of concessions to republicans during a radio interview, he referred to a school closure on the Shankill Road.

The remark was code for an argument that resources should go to Protestant rather than Catholic areas.

In the past groupings like the Independent Orange Order have tried to represent working class interests from within the spectrum of loyalism.

But the experience has shown that progressive policies are always drowned before the beat of the Orange drum.



■ David Ervine

Protestants against Loyalism

THE VAST majority of Protestant workers despise the loyalist death squads.

When Margaret Wright was murdered in a loyalist club in Tiger's Bay, the local population ensured that it was bulldozed down.

When a Catholic worker, Maurice O'Kane was murdered in Harland and Wolf, the whole workforce downed tools.

The Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party only won votes because they promised to challenge the fur coat brigade of Unionism and seek an accommodation with the Catholic neighbours.

Both these promises are now being discarded.

But while the hard loyalists are a minority among Protestant workers, the sectarian structure of the North means that they can draw people towards them at key moments in time.

What is missing is a committed minority that can build on the sentiment for non-sectarianism.

Links

Republican politics can never do this. Its strategy is to look to pan-nationalists alliance that links Catholics workers with right wing politicians in the South and the US.

Its prospect of a "new Ireland" offers little to any Protestant who wants to break fully from loyalism.

It is only socialist politics that can forge real unity between Catholic and Protestant workers because it puts class before creed and because it has no allegiance to any state in Ireland or Britain.

Building the socialist network throughout the North is the key task in the months ahead.

Massacre in Algeria



TWO VILLAGERS' children crying after their family were killed in the massacre

Who's to blame?

THE HORROR in Algeria has reached new heights with the brutal massacre of around 1,000 people in the Relizane region.

The Algerian government blames the slaughter on the GIA (Armed Islamic Group), an Islamist terrorist group fighting the regime.

This group has carried out such atrocious massacres. But the GIA and other such organisations are not the only ones engaged in terror.

Up to 1,000,000 people have been killed in the bloody civil war that has gripped Algeria since 1992.

Amnesty International has produced a report on Algeria which shows that the regime itself is responsible for much of the slaughter.

"Government backed militias are responsible for widespread deliberate and arbitrary killings. Such groups received arms and ammunition from the army and security forces," says Amnesty.

What has caused the horror unfolding in Algeria?

In 1962 a national liberation struggle ended 130 years of French colonial rule. The fight was led by the nationalist FLN, which won mass popular support. After independence the FLN, through its control of the new independent state, sought to develop the economy.

But by the 1980s economic crisis meant the mass of Algerians faced austerity measures. Those at the top of the regime lived in luxury amid a vast web of corruption.

In 1988 a wave of riots, strikes and demonstrations erupted. The regime survived through savage repression and the austerity continued.

In those conditions, and with no-one else providing a focus for popular feeling, support grew for the Islamist FIS party.

The FIS combined some radical slogans and demands with other extremely reactionary notions. It attacked the wealth and corruption of those at the top of society and demanded "social justice", decent housing and jobs for the poor.

But with its own interpretation of Islam, it argued that women should

wear the veil and not be allowed to work. It attacked strikes and trade union organisation.

By 1992 the FIS had won widespread popular support and emerged the clear winner in the first round of elections.

But before a second round of voting, which would have given the FIS a majority of MPs, the key figures in the regime acted.

'Algeria supplies oil and gas. So the West backs the regime and turns a blind eye to its role in the killing'

The military took over the running of the country, cancelled the election results and banned the FIS and other Islamist groups. The military takeover led to a wave of repression, which has continued ever since.

Almost all Western governments and commentators backed the military in the name of preventing an "Islamic" takeover. In Britain papers like the *Times*, the *Sun* and even the *Guardian*, which all claim to back democracy, justified the military takeover.

Britain has continued to supply the Algerian regime with weapons. In 1996 alone Britain sold machine guns, bombs, mines and tanks to Algeria.

There is no doubt that Islamist groups have been involved in massacres. But as the violence has spiralled on it has become clear that sections of the regime are centrally involved.

The *Financial Times* suggests the killing benefits the regime as it "serves to justify its continuance in power and its exclusion of Islamists from the political process".

Behind everything happening in Algeria lies the country's biggest source of wealth and profit oil and gas.

Algeria supplies one fifth of Europe's natural gas needs and massive amounts of oil. The regime works closely with

major oil multinationals, including Britain's BP, to pump out the oil and gas wealth.

That is a key reason why Western governments have backed the regime and turned a blind eye to its role in the killing.

Now some in the West are worried that the violence is getting out of hand.

They fear it could threaten the country's stability and even hit the security of the oil and gas fields.

But they all agree that the key to the solution is the regime and the Algerian state. The truth is that they are a central part of the problem.

There is nothing new about sections of the state carrying out terror or sponsoring paramilitary groups to do so.

In El Salvador in the 1970s and 80s the military and its US backers did exactly that to try and crush popular revolt. In Nicaragua in the 1980s the US sponsored the right wing Contras in similar fashion.

Terrorise

And in Mexico today the state has created paramilitary "self defence groups" to terrorise people in the state of Chiapas, where the Zapatista rebel group opposes the government.

The forces opposing these various regimes vary—sometimes being genuinely progressive, in others such as Algeria much more reactionary.

But in all cases the existing state and its forces are not the defenders of democracy or the answer to the problem.

The solution lies elsewhere, in the mass mobilisation of those who suffer at the hands of those at the top of society.

In Algeria that can look a remote possibility today. But it is only ten years since exactly that kind of mass movement shook the country.

Since then the lack of such a movement has allowed the Islamists to grow. But a new glimmer of hope was seen just before Christmas, when the biggest mass demonstrations and protests against the regime since 1988 took place in Algeria.

These movements, not the Algerian regime, hold the hope for an end to the slaughter.

by Paul McGarr

Paul Sweeney, the research officer with the SIPTU trade union, has produced a book on the Celtic Tiger. Many will be surprised to find that it is full of praise for Irish capitalism. *Kieran Allen* looks at the reality beneath the boom.

DESPITE its praises of the system Paul Sweeney's book gives an important insight into the thinking of the new union leaders who are replacing the old guard who dominated since the seventies.

Key figures like Phil Flynn and Billy Attley, who had a very close relationship with Fianna Fail, are retiring and are being replaced by former left wingers like Des Geraghty.

Some had hoped that this might lead to a radical shift inside the unions.

But Sweeney's book shows that they are even more committed to the idea of social partnership. Their arguments are based on a naive optimism about the Celtic Tiger.

In the past a group of intellectuals around the old Workers Party claimed there had to be an industrial revolution in Ireland before a socialist strategy could be pursued.

Argued

Influenced by Eoghan Harris, they argued that workers had to welcome multinationals in to industrialise the country because the Irish rich were too "lazy".

Sweeney has built on this tradition of supporting multi-nationals to celebrate the industrial revolution that is now taking place.

In the process, he virtually ignores the growing class divisions that are taking place at the heart of the Celtic Tiger.



The boom is fuelled massive shift in w

LIKE many other commentators Sweeney claims that the only problem with the boom is that a relatively small marginalised group have been left behind.

This grouping is supposed to be mainly composed of the long term unemployed. Long term unemployment in Ireland certainly stands at twice the rate of OECD countries, with 58 percent of the unemployed out of work for over a year.

But the boom has not just left a small marginalised group behind—the vast majority of workers have lost out.

Sweeney's own book provides devastating evidence that the boom occurred through a massive shift in wealth to a privileged elite.

WHO THE C

How long will the boom last?

THE TOP economics institute the ESRI has claimed that the boom in Ireland will last until at least 2005. Paul Sweeney accepts these predictions without the slightest criticism.

He claims in the next few years Ireland will "see the most broadly based period of economic growth since the early part of this century".

He even claims that the boom has 'the potential to make Ireland one of the world's leading economies'.

Unbelievably this was written just after Asian Tigers collapsed.

Where the Irish economy has grown sharply only in the last few years, the Asian tigers showed growth rates of 8 percent of GDP for several decades.

This however did not stop them succumbing to the inevitable boom-slump cycle.

Yet the Irish boom is even more fragile

than the Asian Tigers. The comes from the influx of abo which now account for one manufacturing.

These are concentrated in eas—electronics, pharmaceutical products.

Sweeney argues that because will always be needed, sectors are virtually immune from

But this is like saying that ple needed clothing, the co could never go bust.

The computer industry is the rest of industry. When it sh of profit, capital flows into it.

This leads to a frenetic bu disc drives, computer serv boards, software.

But because the economy they come up against shorta or materials. They find that computers is not as large thought.

Suddenly capitalists who mitted begin cutting back. B creates a ripple effect as their pulled down with them.

This is why every boom co of its own destruction.

And the signs of this are Seagate was once hailed as the computer industry but tounounced that 10 percent of i workforce will be axiled.

Advising workers to pin the economy that will boom for y fore a disgrace for a union lea

Workers should instead l present shortages of labour to pvements and strengthen th organisation.

Foreign and Irish capitalists have not significantly increased their rate of investment in the economy despite the favourable conditions.

Capital investment has only grown by 2.5 percent a year which is well below the rate of growth of the overall economy.

Instead super-profits have accrued because there is a consensus in the political establishment to cut taxes of the rich, ensure low wages and use the union leaders to press for extra productivity.

Take the issue of taxes. In 1980, at the time of the PAYE marches, taxes on company profits were at 50 percent. Today they have dropped to 36 percent and are scheduled to drop to a nominal 12.5 percent in 2010.

By that year the banks will be paying less on their profits than a young worker who is employed

by McDonalds.

Or look at wages. Ireland's comparative usual in having a young and highly e workforce. Today 40% of those ente workforce have a third level education. I for computer companies searching the v cheap educated labour.

Wages

Partnership programmes have been the misms by which wages have been held o the midst of the boom.

Between 1993 and 1994 for example in Ireland grew by 28 percent while wag by a mere 5 percent.

Huge increases in labour productivity h

DO WE GAIN FROM THE CELTIC TIGER?

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comes from the
which now account
for one quarter of all
manufacturing.

These are concentrated in three main areas—electronics, pharmaceuticals and cola products.

Sweeney argues that because computers will always be needed, sectors like electronics are virtually immune from recession.

But this is misleading because people needed clothing, the cotton industry could never go back.

The computer industry is no different to the rest of industry when it shows high rates of profit, capital is poured into it.

This leads to a frantic burst to produce disc drives, computer servers, motherboards, software.

But because the economy is not planned they come up against shortages of labour or materials. The market for computers is as large as they first thought.

Suddenly capitalists who are over-committed begin to pull back. But this in turn creates a recession as their suppliers are pulled down.

This is why the boom contains the seed of its own destruction.

And the same is true of the Celtic Tiger. Seagate was hailed as a flagship for the computer industry but today it has announced that it is pulling out of Ireland. Advising workers to pin their faith on another union leader.

Instead of using the labour to press for improvements in their shop floor



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been recorded because the union leaders have given the employers a free hand. Today Ireland is one of the least regulated economies in Europe after Britain. Employers face few laws covering dismissal, temporary workers, or length of hours.

The simplest indication of the shift in wealth is the declining proportion of wages in the national economy—even though the workforce is growing. In 1970, the wage share of the Irish economy stood at 82 percent in 1970 but today it amounts to only 63 percent. This contrast with a European average of 72 percent.

The gap between the rich and poor has also increased enormously. In 1987 the top ten percent of the Irish population were earning three and a half times what the bottom ten percent earned. Today they are earning five times as much.

Which side are they on?

ACCORDING to Paul Sweeney, many workers "enjoy the change that the flexibility of annualised hours" brings. He denounces those who oppose the new changes as "backward".

It is a testimony to just how much out of touch the SIPTU bureaucracy is that a union research officer could write this.

The reality for most workers is that "flexibility" has become a sick joke—a code for ever more pressing demands from the employers.

Bitterness

Sweeney has missed out on a new mood of bitterness that could soon explode into widescale action.

Historically one of the effects of a boom is that workers feel they are more needed.

Confidence begins to return as

new workers join the factory or office.

Writing of Russia between 1910 and 1912 when there was a shortlived boom, Trotsky noted that there was: "the improvement in the economic situation and a favourable conjuncture which acted to reassemble the demoralised and devitalised workers who had lost their courage."

"They realised again how important they were in production; and they passed over to an offensive, first in the economic and later in the political field".

While union bureaucrats can praise the free market for producing the boom, socialists need to pay greater attention to the changes it has already started to produce in the heads of workers.

So 1998 is likely not to see more admiration for the Celtic Tiger—but the outbreak of major struggles within it.

Thirty years since the Tet offensive...

How America lost

by SIMON BASKETTER

Midnight on 31 January 1968 was the beginning of Tet, the Vietnamese new year. Drinkers in the bars of American hotels in Saigon heard explosions in the distance. They assumed it was fireworks—the war could never get that close.

They were very wrong. The greatest battle of the Vietnam war had just begun.

The Tet offensive involved uprisings against the Americans and the puppet regime in South Vietnam. Thirty six major towns were taken over, including the third biggest city and ancient capital of Hue.

The guerrilla fighters of the Viet Cong captured whole sections of Saigon including the US embassy for some time. They bombarded the headquarters of General Westmoreland the chief of staff of the US army and destroyed the government radio station.

The Americans tried to play things down. President Johnson told a press conference that the offensive had been a failure. Yet in the following days the North Vietnamese attacked, with success, town after town.

It took US troops over a week to halt the offensive. They were only able to do this by shelling the very towns they claimed to be defending.

As one American major put it after the demolition of the Mekong Delta town of Dentre: "it was necessary to destroy the town in order to save it."

Half a million US troops, with unlimited firepower eventually succeeded in holding on to the cities. But whatever the purely military outcome, it sealed the fate of the American war effort in Vietnam.

It showed that the South Vietnam regime did not have the support of the people.

Vietnam had originally been colonised by the French but they were defeated by national liberation forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

The Geneva accords, which ended the conflict, ruled that there would be a temporary partition of Vietnam. The North was to be governed by the liberation forces, the Viet Minh led by Ho Chi Minh.

Power in South Vietnam was handed to a former high ranking civil servant Diem who had cultivated extensive contacts with the US elite. By 1956, there was supposed to be nationwide elections and the country was to be once united again.

However the United States intervened to stop this as soon as they realised that the Viet Minh would win the elections. They spoke of Vietnam as another "domino" that could set off a chain of left wing regimes in Asia.

When John F Kennedy became President in 1960, he decided to send thousands of US "advisors" to prop up the South Vietnamese regime. Soon the cost of the war began to rise out of control. As unease grew in the US, Kennedy's successor, President Johnson, promised that the war would soon be over.

In the five years before the Tet offensive, the US military repeatedly predicted victory in "twelve months



■ US marines torment a Vietnamese civilian after they have retaken the city of Hue during the Tet offensive.

time". After Tet, it was clear that a US military victory was impossible.

The supposedly "ignorant, incompetent peasants", as the US General Westmoreland called them, had started the offensive by attacking an obscure border town of Khsanh in the days leading up to the holiday.

This was meant to draw US troops away from other targets in South Vietnam and the Americans fell straight into the trap.

In the walled City of Hue, firecrackers were let off, to cover the initial gunshots, and people in the city rose up while North Vietnamese troops attacked it from the outside.

Pham Thi Xuan Que was a nursing student in the Town:

"Weapons were smuggled into us, and we joined the fighting at twelve. Within hours we had overrun the city.

We had printed a huge number of leaflets calling people not to carry out reprisals when we took over the city. The people hated those who had tortured them and it was difficult to stop people, but we did."

The Americans took a month to retake the city, virtually destroying it in the process. Nguyen Thi Hoa lived in Hue:

"They destroyed the street where I lived with artillery. All the houses and trees were destroyed. They directed rocket fire against the homes of people in my neighbourhood. They were using kerosene and gasoline so their homes burst into flames. Old folks and children couldn't escape and so were burned alive in their homes." Eighty percent of those who sur-

vived the bombardment were made homeless.

A US soldier was interviewed on television during the assault on Hue: "It's horrible, you cannot describe the smell of death, but it was there when you ate your rations, it was like you were eating, breathing death."

Another GI said "We are running around in sewers, in the gutters, anywhere. Just hope to stay alive. Everybody just wants to go back home and go to school. We lost, the whole thing stinks, really."

As the South Vietnamese regime became more isolated, discontent grew in the US army itself. In the remaining eleven months of 1968, 239 American officers were "fragged".

This was the term used to describe how officers were blown up with fragmentation grenades thrown by their

own troops who no longer wanted to fight. Official reports revealed that soldiers cheered after the deaths of their officers.

The war also entered the US cities as television and photographers brought the reality home. In one particularly horrific scene General Luan of the American backed South Vietnamese army shot a prisoner in the head live on television.

General Westmoreland responded to the crisis by demanding 206,000 more troops. This caused the popularity of Johnson to reach an all time low. By 1968 there were 500,000 US troops in Vietnam at a cost of \$27 billion dollars a year.

In a desperate effort to turn the tide, the Americans intensified the bombing of North Vietnam. But they no longer had a strategy. Walt Rostow, the National Security advisor, was asked what the plan to win the war was.

He said: "The chiefs of staff tell me that they hope to wear down the Vietnamese and they will have enough." When asked if it was likely they would reach that point soon, he replied "No, not just yet."

In military terms the Vietnamese lost the Tet offensive, they didn't hold on to any of the cities they had taken. They suffered far more casualties than the Americans — yet they achieved a political victory.

They drove home the message to the American public that their government was fighting an imperialist war they could not win.

It even affected ruling class opinion. Senior advisors told Johnson that "The establishment—yes, Wall street—had turned against the war."

On 31 March 1968 Johnson broadcast to the nation saying he would not seek nomination for another term as president. He knew that he was going to be defeated by the anti-war candidate, Senator McCarthy. Announcing his decision, Johnson said "A house divided against itself cannot stand, there is division in the American house now".

That was a real understatement. Every major city in America experienced riots. The Civil Rights movement became more radicalised and this led to the formation of the Black Panthers. When 10,000 turned up at the Democratic Party convention to protest at the war, the only response left was to beat them off the streets.

From Northern Ireland to Prague to Mexico people rebelled against the system. The fight of the Vietnamese and their refusal to be beaten was an inspiration to millions.

America eventually lost the war because the determination of the Vietnamese was supported by a massive anti-war movement.

Today former radical nationalists from Gerry Adams to Yasser Arafat argue the US is a superpower that can never be defeated. Their solution is to try to "get on side" with the Pentagon and the White House.

But thirty years ago, the people of Vietnam understood the weakness behind imperialism.

It is a lesson we should also remember today.

The Titanic

The poor were left to drown

JAMES Cameron, director of the film Titanic, says the ill-fated ship symbolised "greed and arrogance".

Cinemagoers now have a chance to see if Cameron's blockbuster tells the true story of greed that lay behind the sinking of the famous White Star liner in April 1912.

The Titanic was the brainchild of Lord Pirrie, chairman of Harland and Wolff.

In 1907 Pirrie persuaded J Bruce Ismay, White Star's chief executive, to build a new class of liner which would be bigger and more luxurious than ever before.

White Star was in fierce competition with the Cunard line for domination of the North Atlantic routes and wanted to beat the speed record for crossing the Atlantic.

The Titanic's maiden voyage in April 1912 was marked by a show of bravado. The new ship was "practically unsinkable", declared its owners.

But those in the know seemed less confident. A remarkable 55 passengers cancelled their trip at the eleventh hour.

Among them was JP Morgan, a leading US banker, who claimed he was too ill to travel. Morgan was in fact the boss of International Mercantile Marine (IMM), the company which owned White Star.

Disaster

He was found by a reporter in a posh French resort a few days after the disaster and was "in excellent health".

Life on board the great ship reflected the class divisions.

The first class passengers enjoyed untold luxury while the poor were stuck in the bowels of the ship.

The 700 third class passengers came from as far afield as Ireland, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. They had scraped together their fares to seek a better life in the New World.

Meanwhile White Star's boss, J Bruce Ismay, travelled for free.

He went along to persuade Captain Smith to keep up the speed so the Titanic could prove itself even faster than its sister ship, the Olympic.

Smith ignored several ice warnings and failed to slow down the vessel.

This failure to slow down led to the fatal collision with an iceberg on the night of Sunday 14 April.

The richest passengers now went all out to

In a final show of brutal snobbery, wealthy passengers refused to return in their lifeboats to rescue those in the water. They ignored the screams of the dying to avoid being "swamped".

save their own skins at the expense of the poorest.

The third class passengers were locked below deck and had to fight to escape. Ship officers fired shots to deter people from boarding lifeboats.

There were too few lifeboats for all on board and, even then, most of them sailed away half empty.

In a final show of brutal snobbery, wealthy passengers refused to return in their lifeboats to rescue those in the water.

They ignored the screams of the dying to avoid being "swamped".

After the disaster White Star's greed knew no bounds.

The surviving crew had their pay cut off from the moment the ship went down.

The company only paid £663,000 in compensation out of £17 million claims against them.

Most disgusting of all, some people actually profited from the disaster.

Marconi wireless systems were crucial in organising the rescue.

In the days that followed, the price of Marconi shares began to rise.

One man who bought 10,000 Marconi shares two days after the Titanic went down was Rufus Isaacs.

Inquiry

Isaacs was none other than the British Attorney General, the man who represented His Majesty's Government at the Titanic inquiry in London! Isaacs passed on 1,000 shares to a Liberal Party colleague, the future prime minister David Lloyd George.

When the Marconi "insider trading" scandal broke in 1913, the profits gained by senior politicians from the deaths of 1,500 people on the Titanic were studiously ignored.

by DAVE McDONAGH

film

War that drove sane men insane

by MEGAN TRUDELL

REGENERATION is a new film based on the first book in Pat Barker's powerful First World War trilogy.

The books totally condemn the horror and futility of a war that killed ten million people by looking at the psychological effects of the war on the men who fought it.

They examine the different class experiences in the trenches and how men sought comfort and friendship and sexual release with each other.

Gillies MacKinnon's film is very faithful to *Regeneration*.

It centres on the real relationship between Siegfried Sassoon, officer and war poet, and William Rivers, a psychologist treating war neuroses at Craiglockhart hospital in Scotland.



Sassoon was sent to Craiglockhart instead of being court-martialled for his outspoken anti war views.

The film shows Sassoon and Rivers grappling with the moral dilemmas of whether to

return to France and how to face men after cracking up.

It shows the overwhelming futility of thousands being ground into the mud for the sake of a few yards of territory.

Sassoon insists he is

not a pacifist, but abhors the idea of a war for imperial gain.

Class

A strong class element is provided in the figure of Billy Prior, a

working class officer.

He is at the hospital for being unable to speak or remember what struck him dumb. Prior recovers his voice to tell of the shocking class inequalities of the war. He is savage about the way is waged.

Men and officers may both suffer traumas or shell shock. Yet officers are sent to comfortable hospitals, while ordinary soldiers are simply thrown out of trenches to die.

Rivers was ordered to "make a sane man insane"—that is to get Sassoon to drop his protest against the war and return to France.

However, Rivers lives the war through his patients and approaches a nervous breakdown himself.

The film traces the disillusionment the men have suffered in the course of the war and how their ideas about why they are fighting have changed.

Poems by Sassoon and Wilfred Owen—also at Craiglockhart at the time—are weaved in without seeming strained.

Owen's famous "Dulce et Decorum Est" is read out while scenes of the idyllic countryside around the hospital are cut with scenes of the trenches.

Regeneration is not an action packed movie. It moves slowly at times and is a bit disjointed in places.

But as a serious thought provoking film it is incredibly good.

It reminds us that the working class was sacrificed in huge numbers for the greed of a few.

film

Nazi images and relentless violence

THE LATEST blockbuster movie by the man who brought us "Showgirls" is at best bizarre and at worst deeply reactionary.

The movie mugs its audience, the effects are impressive, the violence relentless, and the plot almost non-existent.

But underneath the in movie jokes and overplayed irony the movie has an unpleasant theme.

Starship Troopers is about young, beautiful teenagers straight out of American soaps dressed in Gestapo uniforms, saving society from invading insects.

The characters may be wooden, but they become glorified in defence of their fascist state against the "outsiders".

In part it is a soap opera. In between blowing things up, the protagonists spend their time trying to seduce each other. A sort of boy meets girl, girl gets boy, girl gets eaten by insects scenario.

All of this is covered in some unsubtle and ineffectual satire. The square jawed Aryan hero is so wooden as to beggar belief.

At times the movie shows the contrast be-



Which one is the cockroach?

tween the heroes aspirations of glory and the violence of war. But the whole point of the movie is to revel in the violence, and the battle scenes are half the reason most people will sit through this nonsense.

People will tell you this film is just a laugh, or worse might like to pretend it's a satire. It isn't. Based

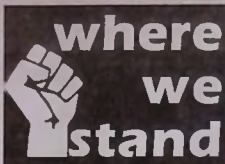
on 50's right wing novel, by Robert Heinlein, *Starship Troopers* just replaced dodgy philosophy for special effects and kept the rotten politics.

The attacks on the genre of the war movie are so heavy handed that it can't really be seen as irony.

At first I tried cheering for

the insects, but after a while the over use of nazi regalia made it impossible not to take it seriously. Watch *Mars Attack* on video if you want a funny sci fi film, and if everyone avoids watching *Starship Troopers* then hopefully they won't let Paul Verhoevan make any more movies.

—SIMON BASKETTER



Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system.

The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion.

To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST

The SWP welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class.

We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry.

We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army. Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class.

Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states. We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:

Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it.

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

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:

To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWP aims to build such a party in Ireland.

BUILDING WORKERS DEFY CRAMPTONS

IN THE last three years, 41 building workers have been killed and hundreds have suffered injury, according to the Health and Safety Authority. But now a major protest movement is underway.

The fightback began at the Crampton's sites in Clonskeagh and Dublin City University.

Dave, a member of the Building workers and Allied Trade Union, explained to *Socialist Worker* what happened.

"The dispute began when men were taken on at the Smurfit Business Park site in Clonskeagh.

"The day afterwards they presented their P45s but were told by a 19 year old subbie that they had to stay on the dole. When they refused, they were sacked."

Picket

The five bricklayers put up an unofficial picket to demand the right to be employed directly with proper cards.

Crampton's responded by going to the High Court and getting an injunction against the workers.

"What sort of justice is this? Zoe Developments were fined for causing the death of a building worker.

"But trade unionists who demand their rights are threatened with jail," says Dave

In the past, injunctions were

enough to stop action. But not any more. A strong rank and file grouping has been formed within the building workers and it is defying the Industrial Relations Act.

"The Industrial Relations Act is being used to destroy the unions. We are not standing for it. I was disgusted to learn that this act originally came in after the ICTU leaders swanned around with Bertie Ahern and agreed to it. This law stops any sort of effective picketing," a member of Building Workers against the Black Economy explained.

Immediately after Crampton's got an injunction the rank and file body organised 80 workers and their supporters to break the injunction at the Clonskeagh site.

That same morning, another 30 workers took up picket duty at the site in DCU. The day afterwards pickets were extended to a site at the National College of Art and Design.

While they were picketing, a Crampton's engineer attempted to photograph them. He also toured around the cars taking pictures of the registration numbers.

"It's all about intimidation. But it won't work this time. We have got on to other trade unionists for support.

"This issue doesn't just affect us. We've all got to make a stand against casualisation.

"I want to see a mass movement of workers that is going to take the employers on. The time is ripe for it now" says Dave.



■ Building workers and supporters at a mass picket of a Cramptons site

What Sub-Contracting is all about

BILL, a bricklayer who has worked the sites for 25 years, explains what sub-contracting is all about.

"When David Crampton took over in 1987, the company got rid of hundreds of direct workers.

"The only people they employ directly today are engineers and site managers.

"They use sub-contractors to hire the rest.

"One of the managers boasted that they could run a building company from a phone box today."

Employers

"Sub-contracting is a way for the employers to get out of their obligations.

"They don't have to pay holiday payments. They can abolish travel time which can be up to two hour's pay.

"They get rid of wet time — and that is very important to a building worker.

It can amount to £7 an hour

and is a guarantee that there is at least some wage when it is pouring out of the heavens.

"Sub-contracting means that the employers get out of paying pension contribu-

tions.

"It produces an atmosphere where each man is out for himself.

"I have seen people start to dismantle scaffolding as peo-

ple are still working. It's a cancer that we have to get rid of.

"The lack of trade union presence also means there is no proper safety."

Build from the rank and file

IN 1993, a small advertisement appeared in the Evening Herald asking building workers who were concerned about sub-contracting to get together.

There were so many replies that a new organisation, the Committee of Labour Trades, or COLT was formed.

"They posted Dublin with notices denouncing

the C45 system—so called after the tax certificate used for sub-contracting.

Over 500 building workers turned up to a meeting in Liberty Hall to protest.

"But the movement was hijacked by the union leaders.

"The big protest meeting demanded immediate strike action and the ICTU leaders promised to organise the ballot. But they did nothing."

But lessons were drawn from this experience.

Today many COLT activists are working inside the unions.

They have protested about the fact that the Construction Industry Federation was sending money back to their unions.

They have brought in new rules to take cards off sub-contractors. And they are now preparing for an all-out fight to rebuild the unions on the sites.

Gags on the press

CRAMPTON'S are not just trying to stop picketing—they also want to gag the press.

The injunction they got from the High Court is supposed to prevent defamatory material being published against the company.

Crampton's have used this ruling to ban the Sunday Business Post from printing photographs of pickets calling for direct labour.

Other media organisations have backed away from the story because they fear a libel action from Cramptons.

Socialist Worker, however, also had a photographer at the pickets. We are not going to let Crampton's tell us what to print and not print.

Socialist Worker Public Meetings

DRIMNAGH:
Wednesday 28th
February 8pm
St Andrews Hall, South
Circular Road
**Che Guevara and the
Politics of Revolution**
Speaker: Kevin
Wingfield

MAYNOOTH:
Wednesday 4th Febru-
ary 7.30
Class Hall B, Maynooth
College
**Fight Racism in
Ireland**
Speaker: Brid Smith

RINGSEND:
Thursday 5th February
8pm
Ringsend Community
Centre

**"The Celtic Tiger—
Who Benefits?"**
Speaker: Kieran Allen

DUBLIN CENTRAL:
Wednesday 28th
January 8pm
ATGWU Hall, Middle
Abbey St

**"The Revolutionary
Ideas of Karl Marx"**
Speaker: Kieran Allen

ARTANE:
Tuesday 27th January
8pm
Jolly Beggarman,
Collins Avenue

**"Che Guevara and the
Politics of Revolution"**
Speaker: Brid Smith

DUN LAOGHAIRE:
Tuesday 27th January
8pm Boylan Community

Centre
**"Roads, Pollution and
the Environment"**
Speaker: Paul O'Brien

BELFAST:
Thursday 5th February
8pm
Garrick Bar, Chicester
St

**"Che Guevara and the
Politics of Revolution"**
Speaker: Mike
Gonzalez

DERRY:
Wednesday 4th Febru-
ary, 8.00pm
Tracey's Bar, Waterloo
St

**Latin America—From
Solidarity to Revolu-
tion**
Speaker: Mike Gonzalez

SWP branch meetings

BELFAST
Meets every Thurs 8pm contact
8722682 for details

CORK
Meets every Weds at 8pm in
Dennehy's Pub, Commarket St.

DERRY
Meets every Tues in Badgers
Bar at 8pm

DUN LAOGHAIRE
Meets every Tues at 8pm in
Christian Institute.

ENNISKILLEN
Meets every fortnight Contact
national address for details

GALWAY
Meets every Thursday at
7.30pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre
Square

MAYNOOTH
Meets every Thursday at 6.30pm
Class Hall D Arts Maynooth
college

WATERFORD
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in

ATGWU Hall, Keyser St.
DUBLIN NORTH-WEST
Meets every Tuesday at 8:30pm
in The Snug, Dorset St.

DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK
Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm
Artane/Beaumont Recreation
Centre opp Artane Castle

DUBLIN DRIMNAGH
Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm
in the Black Forge (formerly the
Bentley), Drimnagh Rd

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL
Meets every Wed at 8:30pm in
Conways, Parnell St.

DUBLIN RATHMINES
Meets every Wed at 8pm in
O'Connells Pub, Richmond St.

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL
Meets every Thur at 8pm in the
Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

DUBLIN TALLAGHT/CLONDALKIN
Meets Monday at 8pm in the
Steering Wheel, Clondalkin

There are *Socialist Worker* members in:
COLERAINE; LURGAN; CAVAN; DONEGAL; NAAS; KILKENNY;
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 send in your reports: telephone (01) 872 2682, fax: (01) 872 3838

Action as Shorts transfers work

EIGHT hundred workers at the Shorts factory in Belfast staged a walk-out on January 8th.

The workers, who are members of the MSF, held a mass meeting outside the factory gates.

The meeting was called to discuss a ballot for strike action.

In recent weeks management have launched an all-out attack on the union.

Shop stewards have been de-recognised and the company is refusing to allow the union use the facilities inside the plant.

In the past the union was able to hold mass meetings in the canteen.

The dispute has escalated because the company has broken an agreement on job security.

Trade unionists at the plant believe that the Bombardier company which owns Shorts is centring the design, engineering and associated functions in its Canadian plant.

Much of the production and electrical work is also scheduled to be transferred to Romania.

The company has publicly stated that it has given no commitment not to resort to compulsory redundancies.

Yet some months previously Ken Bundle of Shorts agreed that there

would be no compulsory redundancies on condition that no major contract had been lost and that matters were mutually agreed between the union the company.

MSF insist that these conditions have been fully met and that the company has no right to go back on its guarantees.

Bombardier received £1 billion in state aid when

Shorts was privatised. They promised to create a significant number of extra jobs by the mid-nineties.

Seventy three percent of the 900 strong MSF mem-

bership took part the strike ballot and 71% voted for strike action.

One worker at Shorts told Socialist Worker,

"We are a centre of acknowledged excellence

world wide and there is work there for us. Management won't let us work because they want cheaper options elsewhere. They have no commitment to their staff."

Ryanair: Fighting to join a union

MARY Harney's favourite company Ryanair has entered a bitter dispute to stop its staff joining SIPTU.

Despite priding itself on being the face of modern Ireland, Ryanair have all the attributes of William Martin Murphy in 1913.

Despite huge opposition from the company, 95% of the ground handling agents in Ryanair have joined the SIPTU.

The staff are paid only £13,000 a year.

For this princely sum they have to work at weekends and other over time.

This wage is substantially less than workers at Aer Lingus and other airlines get.

Ryanair also operates a vindictive policy to keep their staff in line.

Workers are penalised £108 out of their basic pay in a month if they miss a day's work to due sickness.

Safety

Workers are also also concerned about health at safety at the firm.

The workers joined SIPTU at the end of 1997 and put in a claim for a substantial increase in pay, a proper staff grading structure, overtime rates that conform to the industry norm and proper health and safety procedures.

The company only responded

to these claims after industrial action threatened to disrupt flights over the Christmas period.

But they have made it clear that they will have no union on their company.

Ryanair has made huge profits from cheap labour. Last year Ryanair made £20 million and this is expected to rise to £35 million in 1998.

Three executives, including Michael O'Leary who has tried to organise a scabbing operation, received £24 million between them in a share handout.

Support for the Ryanair workers has been magnificent.

An opinion poll in the Sunday Independent showed that 91% think the company should talk

to SIPTU.

150 shop stewards from airline unions also turned up to a solidarity meeting in January to pledge support.

Danger

Collections and benefit nights are being organised for the strikers.

The danger now is that SIPTU will rely entirely on a publicity campaign to help bring the union into Ryanair.

But effective industrial action from other workers will be the key.

Full scale blacking on Ryanair should be organised until they accept the right of their staff to join union.

P2000 fails to deliver on union rights

THE HIGH Level Group report into trade union recognition, published in recent weeks, has been dismissed by Mick O'Reilly of the ATGWU as "a wretched document".

He should know; O'Reilly was a member of the group that compiled it.

The report does nothing to tackle the issue of companies who refuse to recognise unions.

It lamely suggests a voluntary code, but where would such a code leave Ryanair workers, or the growing number of Irish people who work for multinationals like Seagate, which refuse point blank to recognise trade unions?

The outcome is no surprise.

The High Level Group, appointed by Mary Harney under the Partnership 2000 agreement, was made up of senior civil servants, members of the bosses union IBEC, and trade union officials.

Naturally enough, IBEC members voted down any attempt to impose penalties on companies that refused to recognise trade unions.

The businessmen and employers who are members of IBEC don't want unionised workers to get in the way of their profits.

Yet again, the mechanisms set up under Partnership 2000 have failed to come up with a solution to a basic issue affecting workers.

Yet public support for workers in Ryanair, who have stood up in defence of their right to be represented by a union, is overwhelming.

Already 6000 civil aviation workers around the country have pledged their support for the baggage handlers.

Now this solidarity needs to be built on, and turned into concrete action.

Similarly the unions should be launching massive drives, at grass roots level, to get the unions into huge non-unionised multinational plants, like Intel in Leixlip.

This is the way forward—not futile discussions with the bosses.

Vote Jimmy Kelly for ATGWU Executive

JIMMY KELLY, the chief shop steward of Waterford Crystal, is standing for the General Executive Council of the ATGWU as a rank and file candidate.

The ATGWU has traditionally been a left wing union in both Ireland and Britain. It has opposed Partnership 2,000 in the South and its leader Bill Morris has made some critical remarks about the direction of the Blair government.

The problem is that the left wing policies does not lead to action. They are largely rhetorical.

The national leadership, for example have effectively disowned the Liverpool dockers after they refused to accept miserable settlement terms.

Despite attacking the Tory anti-union laws, the ATGWU failed to officially back a group of workers who actually stood up against them.

In the South, the ATGWU opposed resistance in Packard and urged workers to accept longer hours in a vain attempt to keep the factory open.

The result of this inaction, has been a pronounced decline in the union.

In the past, the ATGWU was entitled to two positions on the wider union Executive that has representatives from both Britain and Ireland but now this has declined to just one.

Deals

To make matters worse, these elections are normally sorted out by means of deals done behind closed door.

Until Jimmy Kelly ran it was assumed that Norman Cairns who has been on the Executive for many years would be returned unopposed.

Despite having few left

wing credentials, he seems to have done a deal with Mick O'Reilly who has recently taken over as General Secretary in Ireland.

Discontent has started to grow in the union and a Broad Left grouping has been formed.

Jimmy Kelly has been nominated by 26 branches. In his election address he pledged to press for official backing for workers who defied the Industrial Relations Act in the South and the anti-Tory laws in the North.

He has called for a major recruitment campaign to be based on a pledge to actively support workers who want to get organised.

He wants the ATGWU to spearhead the movement towards a national stoppage for a £5 an hour minimum wage.

Jimmy Kelly is a member of the Socialist Workers Party.

Seagate: Union needed

Hundreds of jobs could be risk in the Seagate plants in Derry and Limavady.

Seagate's management announced a profit warning in mid-January, arguing that sales were down because of a glutted market for hard disk drives.

Only days later the Limavady management said it would close the plant for one or even two separate weeks over a three-month period.

The same happened in Derry over the Christmas period. Workers were forced to take that week out of their annual holidays.

And now it has emerged that Seagate is laying off one in ten workers in its worldwide operations.

The company is under pressure to cut costs, either by rationalising or by moving to a cheap labour country as in the case of its Clonmel operation where 1,400 workers lost their jobs before Christmas.

Seagate's share price dropped amidst all these warning signs. Its sales are likely to be further affected by Asia's economic crisis.

Computer markets are amongst the most unstable in the global economy. The price of memory chips fell from \$50 to \$10 in just under a year in

Killinarden youth campaign for facilities

YOUNG PEOPLE in Killinarden are trying to gather in a campaign for a youth club with decent facilities.

Killinarden, like many areas in Dublin, has been left neglected in the shadow of the Celtic Tiger.

Young people with a future of unemployment or low pay often turn to heroin or other drugs from despair.

One of the active campaigners is 15 year old Lisa who gathered signatories for a petition calling for traffic lights and calming measures on the Blessington Road.

Lisa's 14 year old school friend died after being knocked down by a bus.

Another teenage girl was seriously injured in an accident in the same place near the end of last year.

When Gardaí came upon Lisa and her friends waving down drivers to get them to sign the petition in support of traffic calming measures, they were entirely unsympathetic.

They told the group they would have to stop 'disrupting traffic' and pushed them down the road. One boy was lifted off his feet and thrown when he said he would not go.

The council now says that new traffic lights will be installed this year but so far there is no sign of them making good on their promise.

Instead of co-operating with these young people who have shown initiative, the Gardaí have harassed them and the council has ignored them.

1995, sparking the fall of South Korea's economy. Samsung and Hyundai, two giant companies, are now making outright losses and have switched to cars and other products.

Workers at both plants

should learn the lesson of what happened in Clonmel and not rely on management's assurance about the future. They should instead join a union and prepare to defend their interests.

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p

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The politics behind the Loyalist death squads: Page 5

How America lost the Vietnam war—PAGE 8

Solidarity price £1

DON'T LET BLAIR DESTROY THE WELFARE STATE



"IT'S WHAT she would be doing if she were prime minister".

That's what a spokesperson for Margaret Thatcher said as Tony Blair launched his "welfare reform roadshow".

Thatcher says she is delighted with Blair's welfare plans which will mean cuts of £3.2 billion from benefits.

New Labour claims it is imposing an "affluence test" but the reality is a plan to means test and cut benefits.

Lone parents will have their payments cut by up to £11 a week.

Pretending

Official figures from the House of Commons show that the government plans to cut £2.5 billion from disability benefits.

Tony Blair and Harriet Harman tried to justify the attacks by pretending they would only affect "affluent" people who did not need benefits.

They used the example of Statutory Maternity Pay as something from which even well paid women benefit.

It is true that women on big

LABOUR'S PLAN TO ATTACK DISABLED

LABOUR plans some harsh new cuts in its review of disability benefits.

■ They may tax **DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE (DLA)**.

This benefit is to cover the extra costs of a disability and you are eligible whether you work or not.

Taxing or means testing DLA will mean a poorer standard of living for the disabled and prevent some from taking work because the loss of benefit could leave them worse off.

salaries can receive this payment but the money they get is only a small proportion of the total cost of the benefit.

Taxes

Out of £500 million a year paid out on Maternity Pay just £21 million went to women

whose pay was over £30,000 a year.

Rather than attacking the benefit itself, the government should increase taxes on the minority who are paid such big salaries.

New Labour's aim is to

■ **INCAPACITY BENEFIT** is for those unable to work and not getting sick pay.

The government is floating plans to limit the time you can receive Incapacity Benefit to 13 weeks.

■ **INDUSTRIAL INJURIES BENEFIT** could also be attacked.

The government may seek to make employers pay the compensation by getting insurance.

But that could leave massive scope for bosses to refuse to make payouts.

scrap universal benefits—those which apply across the board—and replace them all with means tested benefits.

They are using "affluence tests" as a smokescreen to launch an attack on the poorest in society.

An attack on every worker

BLAIR had hoped that he could scapegoat lone parents and "dole cheats" to convince the rest of the working class to accept benefit cuts.

His arguments rely on the Victorian idea of the "undeserving poor"—people who had to be forced into work-houses and made to help themselves.

This is the real agenda behind New Labour's plans for Welfare to Work.

But there is huge opposition to Labour's plans and many workers do not accept the myth that the poor are "undeserving".

Welfare to Work will not just force the unemployed off benefits and into low paid jobs.

It will also be used to drive down the wages of all workers.

Workers will be faced with a stark choice—accept lower wages or lose your job and face poverty.

Labour claims the market will provide jobs and that "temporary pain" for the poorest will eventually be to their benefit.

But even the bosses' *Financial Times* has revealed that the government forecasts a sharp rise in unemployment in 1999. Jobs will be destroyed not created.

Fifty years ago the welfare state was created so that the misery of the "hungry thirties" would never be repeated. Universal free health, education and welfare would assist workers from "the cradle to the grave".

Labour brought in the welfare state but now it plans to go even further than the Tories in attacking it.

The assault on welfare will affect every working class person and must be resisted.