

Socialist Worker

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inside

The vandal attacking our health service *pages 6-7*



DEVASTATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA



CANCEL THE DEBT NOW

FULL STORY PAGE TWO

GET THE BANKERS OFF THEIR BACKS

Firefighters 98% vote for action *page 7*

World War One



THE REVOLUTIONS THAT STOPPED THE KILLING

page 8

COUNCILLORS SCRAPPAGE BONANZA *page 2*

Students

1,000's MARCH FOR A DECENT EDUCATION



page 10

NORTHERN PEACE DEAL IN CRISIS *page 4*

Also in Socialist Worker:

My Name Is Joe and



Victor Jara reviewed

From page one

**CANCEL
THE DEBT
NOW**

HONDURAS and Nicaragua have been devastated by floods from Hurricane Mitch.

Over 11,000 people have died and 70 per cent of the bridges have been destroyed.

After the worst hurricane in 200 years, development has been set back decades.

If there was a world order, the richer countries would rush in huge amounts of aid and cancel any debts these countries owed.

Yet the response to the floods has been sickening.

Initially the United States pledged a paltry £30 million in aid and then increased it to £100 million after it was embarrassed by reports of its meanness.

Against

A decade ago, the US donated £180 million a year to Honduras to help fund the Contra war against the radical government of Nicaragua.

The US was terrified that the 1979 revolution in Nicaragua could threaten its interests in the region.

When it comes to defending privilege, money is not spared in Washington. But when poor people cry out in despair for, all they are met with is cruel meanness.

What a contrast to the recent crisis in the world's stock exchanges.

On 23 September news reached governments and stock brokers that the little known company, Long Term Capital Management, which profits from currency movements, had gone bust with debts of £200 million.

Within hours, bankers were brought together and ordered to deliver a rescue package of £3.5 billion or else face the risk of what Clinton called 'the biggest threat to the global financial system in 50 years.'

When the stock brokers get into difficulty, governments and financiers move to the rescue.

But when ordinary hard working people in Central America try to recover the bodies of their friends from the flood waters, there is little help for them.

Honduras and Nicaragua are paying over a £1.3 million a day to the international bankers.

This is money that is robbed from children who need decent education and health care.

We need to tell the bankers to get off the backs of poor countries.

Instead of talking of a 'moratorium' or temporary suspension, these debts should be cancelled immediately.

Low pensions for workers but... Scrappage scam for councillors

DUBLIN CORPORATION councillors are queuing up to take advantage of a scrappage scheme that could see a few of them earn over £10,000.

Under the Local Authority Act passed this year councillors who do not run in the next elections in June will receive a large bonus sum.

The amount of money they could get depends on their years of service.

Even councillors who have already retired can get their special 'gratuity'. Already 33 of Dublin Corporation's 52 councillors have applied for their money.

Among those who have applied are:

Noel Ahern: Bertie's brother stands to gain £10,500 and he can keep his Dail salary of £35,000 a year.

Ben Briscoe: Fianna Fail claim that refugees are costing the country too

much money.

But Briscoe will get a nice little bonus of £19,000 if he decides not to stand in the next election.

Pat McCartan: This Left Councillor has already retired as a councillor to become a well paid judge. But he has put in for a gratuity of £8,697.

Meanwhile the workers who do the hard work of cleaning the streets and keeping services going have to put up with miserable pension schemes.

As one Bray corporation worker told *Socialist Worker*, "People in my depot are furious about this scheme. We contribute to a pension scheme every week and after thirty years of service you could still be coming out with a pension of just £30 a week. But these political hacks just sit at meetings and then get £10,000 for retiring — it is a disgrace."



BEN BRISCOE

PLAN TO STOP INVESTIGATION INTO THEIR CORRUPTION

THE TRIBUNALS into political corruption are being deliberately bogged down by business men and politicians

Fianna Fail are hoping that the electorate get tired and lets the whole affair grind to a halt.

The evidence of obstruction by the rich is overwhelming.

Dunnes Stores did not give the full details of their donations to the politicians to the McCracken Tribunal.

In 1993 the company's auditors knew that a £100,000 cheque had been given to Celtic Helicopters which is owned by Ciaran Haughey, son of the former Taoiseach. But they said nothing to the tribunal.

The effects of the victory the Haughey family secured in the Supreme Court are now becoming clear. Not only did they force the Moriarity tribunal to hand back key documents to them, they have also managed to slow down the inquiries considerably.

Many of the judges on the Supreme Court were appointed by Haughey.

All the main figures who are implicated in the allegations about corruption in local planning are refusing to give evidence to the Flood Tribunal. Ray Burke, Michael Bailey of Bovale Developments and the engineering firm JSME will not be making any statement.

Even the judge had to criticise this disgraceful attempt to hide the truth.

Lawyers repressing JSME have forced the Tribunal to delay hearing evidence from James Gogarty, the key witness who claim they gave £30,000 in a brown envelope to Ray Burke.

Gogarty is 81 years old and is very frail. The delay is seen as a cynical manoeuvre to stop the evidence ever being heard.

An affidavit from Gogarty was deliberately leaked to the Sunday Independent, which is owned by O'Reilly. Allegations have been made that O'Reilly made donations to Burke.

Now the Fianna Fail government are claiming that the leaks damage the credibility of the Tribunal itself.

O'Donoghue plans more repression

JOHN O'DONOGHUE is planning to give the gardai draconian new powers.

O'Donoghue is seeking cabinet support for the measures, presented to him by an "expert group" of top gardai and legal officers.

The new powers are modelled on powers already given to the gardai for dealing with drug offences.

The gardai will be able to arrest crime suspects without a warrant for offences carrying a sentence of five years or more.

Senior gardai will

be given the power to issue search warrants without having to go to a District Court judge.

The gardai will have new powers of entry, search and seizure in cases of "hot pursuit".

Ordinary gardai will be allowed to detain people for 12 hours. A superintendent could then extend this by another 12 hours.

A District Court judge could authorise 24 hour detention on top of this, or 48 hours in "serious cases".

The right to silence would be curtailed on grounds of "compelling interest".

Politicians usually try to justify such measures because of a rise in crime. But crime figures in Ireland have dropped in the last few years.

Needless to say these new measures will not be used against the corrupt bosses of AIB, but against working class people.

The politicians realise that the growing anger against their system will soon lead to explosive struggles. In recent weeks the gardai have been sent in against striking building workers and protesting students.

O'Donoghue is trying to

renew his macho image after attempts to deport a Romanian family in Dublin backfired following local anger.

He should not be allowed to give more powers to the very police force who raided the Costinas' home before dawn and then told them to leave the country.

PINOCHET'S IRISH FRIENDS

THE FORMER Chilean dictator Pinochet has at least one friend in Ireland to line up with Margaret Thatcher in his support.

Senator Edward Haughey is the Chilean Consul to Ireland. In a debate in the Seanad, on the arrest of 'the Butcher of

Santiago', his was the only voice to be raised in defence of the dictator. He complained of the "illegal arrest" of Pinochet with little concern for the illegal arrest of thousands of workers under the Chilean regime. Senator Haughey is the Chairman of Shorts in Northern Ireland. There is absolutely no link between the fact that Shorts makes a

lot of its profits from arms sales and the admiration for despots shown by Haughey!

Meanwhile, the former US ambassador to Chile, Edward Korry, has revealed the role US multi-nationals played in overthrowing the elected socialist President, Allende. The companies involved included Coca-Cola, ITT and Anaconda Copper. A month before the coup, PepsiCo Chairman, Donald Kendall telephoned US President Nixon to demand action against Allende. Within hours a secret memo from CIA headquarters to the US station chief in Santiago said, "It is the firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup. Please review all your present and possibly new activities to include propaganda, black operations or anything else your imagination can conjure."

HURRAH FOR IRELAND ON SUNDAY

THE DAILY Mail's publishing company, Associated Newspapers, is set to buy a 30 per cent stake in Ireland on Sunday.

The Mail is the favourite read of Britain's middle class Tories. It is also has a rotten right wing record.

In the 1930's it carried a headline "Hurrah for the Blackshirts!", supporting Mosely's fascist thugs.

In 1973 The Mail defended the coup by Pinochet in Chile and opposes the tyrant's extradition to Spain.

This right wing rag should have no problem lining up with Ireland on Sunday, the paper which refused to recognise the NUJ trade union.

Bigot's bonanza

REMEMBER Harry Whelehan?

He was the Attorney General who ordered that a 14 year old rape victim be prevented from going to England for an abortion.

He later resigned over the cover-up of the Brendan Smyth child abuse scandal.

Whelehan has now made an estimated £4 million from the sale of his family's chemical company.

The family of Fine Gael politician Peter Barry are involved in the buy-out.

This wheeling and dealing among the political elite shows how the Golden Circle remains unbroken.



HARRY WHELEHAN

what we think

Storm clouds over Celtic Tiger

THE OPTIMISTIC reports about the future of the Celtic Tiger have started to wear thin.

Up to recently the top economics institute the ESRI was predicting that the boom would continue to the middle of the next decade. In his recent book on the Celtic Tiger, SIPTU economist Paul Sweeney even claimed that the continued growth could transform Ireland into one of the world's leading industrial countries.

But now an article in the bosses magazine *The Economist* has compared Ireland to London's bubble economy a decade ago. It noted that "as Londoners know, boom can be followed by bust".

Downwards

Growth forecasts are already being revised downwards. One major economist, Jim Power from NCB stockbrokers has warned that the recession in Britain will have a major impact on Irish owned industry.

He argued that "wage flexibility will be needed. Workers will have to accept wage cuts".

The employers have grabbed the lion's share of the boom. Since 1987, the percentage of national income going to profits has risen by 10 percent while wages have fallen by a similar amount.

But as the storm clouds gather, the bosses will demand that workers pay for the effects of the recession.

Fruit of the Loom workers in Donegal and Derry look set to become one of the first groups to experience a wave of sackings and redundancies.

The company got £20 million in grants from the Irish state and its director, Bill Farley, scooped up £39 million from selling shares on Wall Street after he hyped up company results. Yet Farley is now demanding that workers pay for the costs of the company's difficulties.

The government and the union leaders only response is to argue that 'nothing can be done' because we are living in a global economy.

But this is nonsense. At the height of the financial crisis in September, the leading businessman Tony O'Reilly called for government intervention in the economy to help maintain profits. In Japan the government has nationalised banks to help save its financial sector.

If governments can intervene to save profits, why can there not be government intervention to save workers jobs?

As the threat of recession grows, workers should demand that firms which declare redundancies should be taken into public ownership.

In the case of Fruit of the Loom this makes perfect sense. There is a huge need for cheap clothing in the world. If the employers were willing to take a cut in their profits there would be no need for the closure.

Instead of letting Fruit of the Loom hop around the world looking for labour at 50p an hour, this government should be told to take action to ensure that workers lives come before the greed for profit.

When Mary McAleese joined Queen Elizabeth in opening the memorial to Irish soldiers who died in WWI, the political establishment were ecstatic. "A sign of maturity", the former Fine Gael Taoiseach Garret Fitzgerald noted

David Trimble was also very pleased. He was 'very glad that the Irish Republic is recognising those who fought for freedom along with the rest of us in First World War'

Debating revolutionary ideas

photo: Paula Geraghty



Three hundred people turned up to the Marxism '98 conference, making it one of the largest socialist events for some time. Buses arrived at the conference from Belfast and Cork. At the end of the weekend, eleven people joined the Socialist Workers Party. Eamonn McCann caught the mood at the opening rally when he said the audience for socialist ideas was the biggest he had seen since 1968.

Death on the Somme

Yet the tragedy is that thousands of Catholic and Protestant soldiers did not die for freedom — they were slaughtered to protect the profits of an empire.

Instead of celebrating their memory, we should mourn the fact that they followed John Redmond and Edward Carson into giving their lives for a cause they gained nothing from.

Our rulers have always tried to hide the reality of wars with pomp and dignity.

In the Gulf War of 1991, they told the soldiers they were fighting for freedom and democracy in plucky little

Kuwait. Nearly decade later the Al Sabah feudal family still dominates that country and the soldiers who suffered from the Gulf War syndrome are ignored or lied to.

Image

Now the British and Irish establishment are trying to use the image of 'reconciliation' to hide how their forefathers duped the soldiers of yesterday.

Phillip Orr wrote a book, *The Road to the Somme*, which examined how the memory of 36th Ulster Division was used in Protestant culture.

This was the mainly Protestant regiment who lost many lives at the Somme.

He noted that 'If we use the Somme as something to learn from the damage inflicted by war on European peoples ...we may use history to make us a more open people, prepared to seek solidarity not just with Britain but all the peoples of Europe and all the other peoples on this island'.

That sentiment which examines what really happened during the First World War is a far better tribute to the soldiers who fell in the trenches than all the pomp that was evident in Ypres.

UNITY MARCH AGAINST DEPORTATIONS

DECEMBER 5TH,

Assemble Department of Justice, Stephens

Green, Dublin at 1:30pm.

CALL BY THE ASYLUM RIGHTS GROUP

ANTI NAZI LEAGUE, ANTI RACIST CAMPAIGN,

ASSOCIATION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN IRELAND, AND OTHERS





Indonesia

Protesters defy bullets

THE BIGGEST demonstrations since the overthrow of General Suharto in May shook Jakarta and other Indonesian cities at the end of last week.

On Saturday commentators talked of a "second revolution" directed at the army and the government of B J Habibie, who succeeded Suharto earlier this year.

Police and troops opened fire on 20,000 students and workers who were protesting outside a special session of parliament on "Bloody" Friday. By Saturday morning they had left 18 unarmed demonstrators dead.

At the same time thousands of slum dwellers took to the streets attacking symbols of wealth and power—banks, department stores, car dealerships and police stations.

Ibmuriyadi, one of the student protesters, told *Socialist Worker*, "The army say they are only using blanks or plastic bullets. But they are using live ammunition. They are killing people."

Journalists report seeing one student shot in the neck from ten metres away.

Many students retreated to the campus of the Atmajaya University on Friday night.

But troops formed a line 30 metres from the perimeter fence and fired into the grounds.

Inside, medical workers performed emergency operations without anaesthetics.

Many workers, whose living standards have plummeted in the economic chaos that has gripped Indonesia in the last year, sympathise with the students. Some joined the protests.

Ibmuriyadi says, "The demonstrations were very

big. The traffic in Jakarta was dead and almost all the schools and colleges were closed.

"Offices and banks were closed because the workers were going out onto the streets with the students. They were fighting together against the police and the army."

Ari, an insurance salesman who was throwing rocks at the police, told journalists, "Tell the world that we, the people of Indonesia, don't want this president, this government which we inherited from the old regime."

Repress

Half of Indonesia's 200 million population do not have enough to eat each day. B J Habibie has been forced to grant some democratic reforms, such as moves towards elections next summer, but has cut food subsidies, slowed moves to greater democracy and called on the army to repress the student movement.

He used a televised address on Saturday night to denounce the protests. He said, "These movements and actions can now be categorised as subversive and are endangering the unity of

the state."

But that same day protests took place in other cities across Indonesia.

About 5,000 students occupied the airport in Medan. Students also seized the airport in Ujung Pandang.

As *Socialist Worker* went to press thousands of troops had occupied strategic points in Jakarta and student groups had united in calling for a three day general strike.

A joint statement from a coalition of four student groups read, "In the fight for a just society, we urge all to go on a three day national strike against those in power who still use Suharto's methods."

Police had also moved to arrest leading intellectuals and politicians who had signed an open letter calling on Habibie to resign.

EMERGENCY ACTION

● **A motion of solidarity with the Indonesian student movement is available from 0171 538 5821**

● **Picket the Indonesian embassy, Thursday 19 November, 5pm-6pm, 38 Grosvenor Square, London W1 (nearest Bond Street)**



STUDENT PROTESTERS marching towards Indonesian parliament

Divided at the top

THE HORRIFIC violence meted out by troops has fuelled demands for the resignation of Habibie and General Wiranto, the commander of the army.

Wiranto has sought over the last six months to protect the central role the army plays in Indonesia.

Under its "dual role" the army has reserved seats in the parliament and two thirds of its personnel have "civilian" functions as part of the state bureaucracy.

The army also directly runs huge chunks of the Indonesian economy.

Habibie has ordered the repression, but that does not rule out Wiranto overthrowing him and seeking to establish a military dictatorship.

Habibie has been unable to stabilise the Indonesian regime over the last six months. He lacks mass support and a base within the army.

The students' and workers' movement has produced tensions within the army.

Soldiers in the Marine Corps have marched alongside students, in part hoping to keep order but also because they sympathise with

their demands for democratic change.

One infantry lieutenant told journalists before Friday's shooting, "I was a student once myself and can understand where they are coming from."

"We are trying to be persuasive with these people, but there are many of us who agree with the demands they are making."

Mainstream opposition leaders have felt forced to side with the students. Abdurrahman Wahid, leader of the 30 million strong Muslim organisation *Nadhlatul Ulama*, says, "The students were shot at. They were forced to use molotov cocktails because they had nothing else to fight back with."

Spill

"The armed forces should stop using violence for the fulfilment of the personal ambitions of certain individuals."

The mainstream leaders are looking to elections next year and do not want the movement to spill over into a challenge to the regime as a whole.

But forces are now emerging within the student

movement and among workers which are fighting for much more far reaching change than that demanded by the mainstream opposition leaders.

The Workers Committee for Total Reform (Kobar) and the student reform organisation (Komrad) have tried to unite students and workers on the protests which have raged against Habibie over the last six months.

They have begun to raise

calls for the overthrow of the Habibie government and for workers to take over the rice mills and storehouses to distribute food to the poor.

Such demands offer a way out of the economic catastrophe which engulfs Indonesia.

The alternatives are increasingly becoming workers imposing a solution from below or the army crushing the limited democratic space won by the revolutionary upsurge in May.

Malaysia

DEMONSTRATORS DEFIED government bans to march against Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad three times in 24 hours last weekend.

Police fired teargas and water cannons at hundreds of anti-government protesters in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, just as leaders of the Pacific Rim countries met there at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit.

The marchers called for the release of former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim who is in prison facing trumped up charges.

But their demands have broadened beyond calls for Mahathir's resignation.

They include calls for democratic reform in the authoritarian country and for policies to limit the economic hardship workers and the poor are facing.

Some also carried banners denouncing all the leaders at the APEC summit.

Zimbabwe

General strike rocks government

ZIMBABWE'S MAJOR cities were at a standstill last week as a general strike halted most industries and offices.

Another strike was planned for this week.

Groups of striking workers in the Mufakose and Glen View townships around Harare blocked roads and set up pickets around industrial areas.

The strike was sparked by a government announcement of a 67 per cent rise in fuel prices. But it is rooted in much wider issues.

For over a year workers have been fighting against President Mugabe's attempts to make them

pay the price for the problems of Zimbabwe's economy.

More recently anger has grown over the huge cost of sending 11,000 Zimbabwean troops to fight in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Scores of soldiers have deserted.

Morgan Tsvangirai, secretary general of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, says, "The war is the last straw. Inflation is sky high, the economy is in a mess and now this fighting. People question why we are in the war when we have so many pressing problems here. We cannot afford this."

Worries grow over North's peace deal

WORRIES ARE growing that the Belfast peace deal may break down after the political parties in Northern Ireland failed to meet a deadline for setting up a shadow executive.

The issue of de-commissioning has provided Trimble with an excuse to enjoy the trappings of office while excluding Sinn Fein from the Cabinet.

Now pressure on Sinn Fein is being stepped up as the political establishment sense they are in a quandary.

Practice

In the House of Commons the Tory leader William Hague has called for an open trade off between prisoner releases and de-commissioning.

In practice, this means holding prisoners from both sides hostage until their respective paramilitary groups de-commission.

Trimble has always been close to the Tory ranks and his influence is what's behind Hague's new turn.

Although he signed the Belfast agreement, Trimble is now supporting this new piece of

blackmail.

The Loyalist Volunteer Force are also being used in support of Trimble and Paisley's demands for de-commissioning.

This ultra sectarian group has cultivated close links with the Paisley's Democratic Union Party in the past.

When David Ervine expressed scepticism about LVF plans for de-commissioning, they denounced him as a 'communist'.

The LVF are due to hand in a 'small but significant' number of weapons to the de-commissioning body headed by General John de Chastelain.

This in turn will be used to put pressure on both the UVF and the IRA.

But the reality in the North, is that the most dangerous weapons are not even being included in the de-commissioning argument.

The RUC remains fully armed and is still engaged in harassment of young working people.

Over 100,000 weapons are also in the hands of the Unionist fur coat brigade which provides the bedrock support for Trimble and Paisley.

Decommissioning has become a smokescreen for Trimble to play sectarian games and to keep his divided Union Party in one piece.



BOSSSES UNITY: Ben Dunne's friend the developer Noel Smyth and David Trimble plan the future of Belfast

Divisions at Donegal Celtic

HUGE DIVISIONS have emerged in West Belfast over the decision of Donegal Celtic to play the RUC. For the media, the story is a simple matter of Provo intimidation of local people.

But the reality is that a number of Donegal Celtic supporters and players themselves are against the decision to play the RUC.

One family who are totally against the fixture is the Livingston family who have long been ardent supporters of the club.

One of their family members, Julie Livingston lost her life after being hit by a plastic bullet fired by the RUC.

At the time Julie, a young 14 year old teenage girl, was going to her local shop to purchase a bottle of milk.

Pressure

Considerable pressure has also been put on the club to play the police. More grants and the promise of upgrading into a more senior division are at stake.

In recent weeks there have been huge meetings held in West Belfast under the auspices of the Patton Commission on policing.

Many have spoken of their anger at being harassed and insulted by the RUC.

However, few have offered any strategy for effectively opposing the RUC.

Sinn Fein for example have even made a submission to the Patton Commission claiming that ex-paramilitary prisoners should be allowed join a 'reformed' police force in Northern Ireland.

Faced with the decline in effective opposition in the area, it is no wonder that many football supporters see the issue simply in terms of the progress of their club.

The republican response to this situation seems to have been to issue warnings to individual members of the club.

Having lost a vote among club supporters in this solidly republican area by 180 to 90, a number of republican supporters visited the homes of players.

According to Ed Maloney, of the Sunday Tribune, 'at least seven players were visited either at home or at work by men purporting to be from the IRA'.

This is a stupid and disgraceful move reflects the bankruptcy of republican policies.

If the republicans cannot win an argument in West Belfast about the RUC, there is no room for calling in the IRA to add extra weight.

This sort of response reflects the psychology of alternative policemen rather than of genuine socialists who advocate mass resistance to police harassment.

'It is the politics of the gutter'

THE WHITE City is a Protestant housing estate in North Belfast. It suffers from high levels of unemployment and poverty. There are now plans to build a much needed community centre there.

However republicans living in nearby Catholic areas have objected to the new centre. Homes in nearby Catholic areas of Whitewell, Serpentine and Antrim Road have received leaflets calling on them to object.

It is widely believed that the leaflet has been produced by Sinn Fein members.

The leaflet opposes the centre on the grounds that it is a 'mis-use of public funds'. It asks, "How is the centre to be justified given the number of church halls in the area and the variety of clubs and facilities available to them".

contain a single shop, or youth club, or church hall. In fact it contains nothing but houses.

The leaflet proposes selling the land to a private developer to build new houses. This is an attempt to counterpose Catholics need for more housing with the Protestant area's need for community facilities.

Bigots

The bigots who produced the leaflet are trying to pit one deprived working class area against another in a competition

for resources.

The background to this latest controversy is an increase in sectarian violence in Whitewell, Serpentine and White City areas.

The source of much of this violence has been a few thugs belonging to the UVF who are active in the White City and the UDA which has expelled almost every Catholic out of the nearby Graymount estate.

One man living in the Whitewell area told *Socialist Worker*,

"I've had my windows broken by loyalists from White City, sectarian slogans have

been written on my car and bottles thrown at my house. I'm not naive about local problems. But when a leaflet came through against the community centre, I was disgusted. It is the politics of the gutter."

Over the last few months a Protestant family on the Serpentine Road has had sectarian slogans painted on their house, while a school bus carrying Protestant school children has been attacked on the Whitewell road.

Campaign

The campaign against the community centre will increase sectarian tension and can only lead to more of these disgusting attacks. The White City needs as much resources as it can get. The loyalist bigots thrive on the despair that grows with poverty.

The people of North Belfast are now living with the reality of the Good Friday Agreement - sectarian competition for resources.

The way out is a united workers fight for houses community facilities and jobs.

Traveller poverty growing

TWO REPORTS have pointed again to the unacceptable living conditions in which travellers in Northern Ireland are forced to live.

Local Councils were given 100 per cent grants to provide sites for travellers in their area. Only seven of the twenty six Councils took the grant, which

ends next year.

The Traveller Movement (NI) says there are only 1,300 travelling people altogether in the North.

Two out of three live on authorised sites, the rest live where they can, by the side of the road.

But an authorised site is not necessarily serviced and on the Monagh Wood site, 80 people share 13 toilets and standpipes.

Extend the Abortion Act

RECENTLY published figures show the health risks faced by working class women because of Labour's refusal to extend the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland.

The figures show that in 1997, over 19 per cent of women from the North had abortions after 12 weeks of pregnancy. This is almost double the proportion of British women having abortions after 12 weeks.

2.3 per cent of Northern women had abortions after 20 weeks, more than THREE times the norm in Britain, which is 0.7 per cent.

The reasons for these late abortions are obvious: Low paid working class women and women on the dole find it almost impossible to raise the £400 — £500 to pay for the operation and travel costs.

BOOK REVIEW

How US car workers turned to revolution

I HAVE read a fair bit about anti-racist struggles in the US in the 1960s. I had heard of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and the Black Panthers.

But I had not heard about a group of black car workers who became revolutionary leaders in the late 1960s.

Detroit: I Do Mind Dying tells the exciting history of this movement.

Inspired by previous struggles, such as the civil rights movement, these black workers sought to learn the lessons of the past and take on the system.

The most inspiring thing this book revealed for me was that ordinary black factory workers became revolutionary leaders.

The Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM) was formed from the best militants in a wildcat strike at the main plant of the Chrysler Corporation.

A massive black workforce of union members was disaffected by its conservative union leadership.

The everyday experience of work, where blacks were given the worst jobs in the worst conditions, led to people questioning why production should take place in this way.

Factories were "unnecessarily noisy, unhealthy and dangerous". Black and white workers were killed, paralysed and injured at work as a result of speedups on the production line and the drive for increased profits.

The book brings to life the alienation people experienced at work. They had a desire to escape the boring, mind numbing production line and not work for 30 or 40 years in the plants like their parents had.

Attacks

Black workers most sharply faced the continual attacks on jobs and conditions by the bosses, with white workers also experiencing these attacks.

The union leaders of the period refused to lead a fight. This has a familiar ring 30 years on!

DRUM and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers put forward a Marxist analysis of working conditions, but did not just confine themselves to conditions in the factories.

They also related to issues outside the factory gate-of bad housing, overpriced goods, police brutality and corporate power-and called for a socialist transformation of society.

"We see that this whole soci-

by **THERESA BENNETT**

ety exists and rests upon workers." they wrote, "and this whole motherfucking society is controlled by this little clique which is parasitic, vulturistic, cannibalistic and is sucking and destroying the life of workers everywhere and we must stop it."

The DRUM militants produced the Inner City Voice, which was used to spread radical ideas.

The black revolutionaries made links with other socialist and Marxist groups.

They broke from the crude black separatist ideas of groups like the Nation of Islam, which saw all whites as racist, and saw that white workers could be their allies in the struggle.

But unfortunately they underestimated the potential for building a united black and white revolutionary organisation.

The league members took a lead in fighting for better conditions for workers and exposing the racism to which black workers were subjected.

They were vocal in denouncing the role racism played in dividing black and white workers and sought to overcome that legacy.

The strikes led by DRUM involved black and white workers and showed the possibility of building unity.

The political radicalism of DRUM members led to opportunities for creativity to be expressed, and the film *Finally Got the News* was made, showing the League of Revolutionary Workers and their ideas.

DRUM did not survive beyond the early 1970s. Its demise, the reasons for it, and the debates this provoked are all examined in this book too.

All in all, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying* is a brilliant book.

34,000 on waiting lists but hospi

THIS VANDAL IS



The real cost of tax cuts

DESPITE having the fastest growing economy in Europe, the Irish government spends less on health care than the majority of its EU neighbours.

According to a recent report on "The Irish Health System in the 21st Century", between 1985 and 1990 health spending was reduced by 15 per cent. Today Ireland spends just 7 per cent of its GDP on health, putting it among the four lowest spending countries in the EU.

The revelation that the Minister for Health has been sitting on £32 million while the health services plunge into deeper and deeper crisis sums up the complete contempt that this government has for the health and well-being of ordinary people.

Favours

The cuts in the health service are the direct result of a policy which favours tax cuts for the rich. Despite the booming economy the equipment in many hospitals is out of date.

For example many general hospitals don't have CAT scans. These are vitally important for detecting head injuries. At present, many hospitals are forced to fundraise themselves in order to purchase their own scanners.

An EU report on Osteoporosis found that

Ireland had the lowest level of density testing equipment in Europe with only eight bone mineral scanners in hospitals in Cork, Dublin and Galway.

The level of specialist health services like speech and occupational therapy is way below levels in Britain and other European countries.

According to IMPACT, the trade union representing these workers, inadequate resources and unrealistic workloads are driving highly

skilled staff abroad.

There is a severe shortage of what are known as step down beds for patients who may need treatment in acute hospitals but will require patient care.

It was recently highlighted in the Daily Mirror that fifty state of the art beds are lying idle in Clare's Nursing Home in Glasheen since June because the money isn't available to the unit.

Is this real care in the C

The psychiatric services are also in crisis. A number of years ago a decision was taken by the Health Boards to move from institutional care to care in the community. However, this move has not been backed by proper funding and as a result patients are being placed at grave risk.

A psychiatric nurse working in the Southern Health Board Region spoke to *Socialist Worker*

about the situation in Cork. "At present there is absolutely no follow up of patients and vital facilities like day care centres and high support hostels are completely absent. Former patients have to go up living rough or alternatively get back to their families and turn their homes into mini mental hospitals. "Ten years ago there were four community nurses in the North Lee catchment area, which has the same geographical spread and population as the whole of County Kerry. Today there are none. "£10 million was spent on the

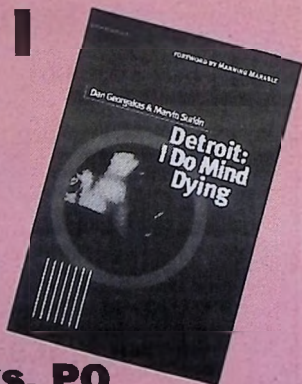
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hospital wards are closed down...

LEFTS ATTACKING OUR HEALTH SERVICE

Report by
DEIDRE CRONIN

EVERY DAY hospital beds are being closed as tens of thousands of people continue to languish on public waiting lists, many in pain and desperately in need of treatment.

The statistics are shocking. The Minister for Health, Brian Cowen, admitted that 2,000 hospital beds throughout the country are closed for periods of between one week and nine months.

Closed

In Dublin 530 beds have been closed in the five main hospitals so far this year. The Mater Hospital has the largest waiting lists in the country. Beds have

been closed in the gastrointestinal unit with the result that a staggering 345 appointments have had to be cancelled during the year.

One GP in the north inner city, told *Socialist Worker* "I have been receiving letters from the Mater for the past month refusing patients I have referred for the investigation of serious stomach and gastrointestinal complaints.

"In cases like these patients can be experiencing bleeding or severe stomach pain which can sometimes be an indicator of the presence of cancer. However, I am being told by the hospital that the unit has been shut down and no investigations can be carried out. It is an absolute scandal."

In Beaumont Hos-

pital 199 beds have been closed for an average of four and a half weeks. Beaumont is one of the main centres for neurosurgery in Ireland. However, because of the lack of resources, only two of the three neurosurgical theatres in the hospital are in use.

Emergency

As a result only emergency cases can be dealt with and 248 patients are waiting for over three years for surgery.

A nurse working in Beaumont was shocked to discover that "despite the availability of donor organs, kidney transplants often do not take place because of the shortage of both beds and staff".

Now it has been revealed by the Department of Health that 800 beds will

be closed for the month of December.

The reason for these scandalous closures is new legislation, introduced by the previous government and fully endorsed by the present one, which forces each hospital to stay inside strict budget limits.

The closure of beds exacerbates the already chronic problem of waiting lists. Currently there are a staggering 34,000 people on hospital waiting lists with one third of them on the list for over one year. Delays in obtaining treatment are often life threatening.

According to the National Cardiac Centre, at least 110 patients have died while waiting for heart surgery, all of whom had been on the list for more than twelve months.

At the moment 1,400 people are waiting for heart operations.

Pampering the rich

THE CURRENT budget surplus stands at a staggering £1 billion. Yet despite this abundance, the government continues to talk about the necessity of getting the public sector pay bill down and keeping spending under tight control.

As a result the budget will deliver nothing but minimal increases in areas like health and education. An 11 per cent increase in spending on health will merely maintain services at the existing level. Meanwhile the nurses will get nothing.

These calls for restraint do not apply when it comes to meeting the demands of the Irish rich.

Last year the Minister for Finance halved Capital Gains Tax and reduced Corporation Tax by 4 per cent, giving over £120 million to the wealthy in this country.

This budget will see a further reduction in Corporation Tax as the government moves to bring it down to a 12.5 per cent rate, which will be

the lowest tax on profits in the whole of the EU.

Big businesses in countries like Germany are forced to pay tax at 35 per cent and over.

It is just another example of the pampering of the Irish rich. AIB was allowed to get away with a tax fraud of £86 million while last year the Revenue Commissioners wrote off a total of £281 million worth of back tax owed by the rich. Against this background the running down of the health service is obscene.

There is no shortage of money to tend to the needs of the rich but when it comes to the health of the very people who have created the Celtic Tiger we are left to rot on waiting lists. The fight against hospital cutbacks in Galway shows the way forward. Its time to demand that this government tax the rich and fund a decent health service.

what do socialists say?

How do the bosses hold on to power?

All ruling classes maintain their rule by a combination of force and persuasion. These two aspects of ruling class power always complement and reinforce each other.

In the Middle Ages the feudal lord had his soldiers to ensure the peasants performed their work and paid their taxes, while the Catholic church explained to them that the feudal order was God's order.

If the peasants rebelled, the church was on hand to condemn their revolt as sinful. If anyone questioned the teachings of the church, the soldiers were on hand to burn them as heretics.

Today the ruling class has the police - and ultimately the army - to arrest picketers and demonstrators, and the mass media to explain that pickets and demonstrators are extremist monsters who threaten civilisation 'as we know it'.

In so far as the media is successful with its propaganda, it is easier for the police to smash picket lines. Equally every success of the police or the courts in breaking a picket reinforces the central message of ruling class ideology — that working people are powerless. The use of these two methods of control is something that does not change. It is a feature of all class societies.

The fundamental antagonism between the classes is such that no ruling class is ever able to rule purely by consent.

On the other hand, the fact that the exploited and the 'have-nots' always vastly outnumber the exploiters means that no ruling class can survive purely by force. What does change and sometimes very dramatically, is the balance between repression and ideological control.

Depend

In some cases, such as Indonesia or Burma, it is clear that the existing regime has lost practically all legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the majority of the population and therefore has to depend primarily on force.

In comparison, in Ireland and Western Europe the element of force, though undoubtedly increasing in recent years, is still a secondary factor.

The existing political and economic order still retains the support of the large majority. One of the most important features of bourgeois rule in modern capitalism is that simple ruling class manipulation of the education system and the mass media is insufficient to maintain ideological control.

The size, strength and organisation of the working class is too great, and the daily clash of interests at the point of production too all-

The Irish ruling class is weaker than some of its counterparts abroad and is far more inclined to work with 'the trade union bureaucracy.

pervasive, for straight-forward capitalist propaganda to be enough.

Besides, propaganda may be powerful but there is a limit to the extent to which it can get people to believe things that run directly counter to their own experience.

Consequently, the crucial role in the stabilisation of advanced capitalism is played by institutions which have their base not in the ruling class but in the working class and which are seen as expressing working class interests and working class opposition to the system's worst excesses.

Nonetheless, they accept and purvey the basic premises of the system and thereby serve to integrate the working class within it.

In Ireland this role is played primarily by the trade union bureaucracy. Their involvement in the structures of social partnership help tie the working class into acceptance of capitalism.

The Irish ruling class is weaker than some of its counterparts abroad and is far more inclined to work with 'the trade union bureaucracy.

It attempts to reach an accommodation with the trade union leaders so that they in turn will sell the deal to their rank and file and impose the necessary discipline to make it stick.

This was the approach of social partnership was pioneered by Charles J Haughey — but has the backing of every main party in the Dail.

There are times — such as in the mid eighties — when our rulers felt strong enough to do without these deals and used the whip of unemployment to discipline workers. But in general social partnership arrangements have become a key feature of maintaining capitalist rule over workers.

by KIERAN ALLEN

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cuts

road. severe shortage of what are known as art beds for patients who may not need acute hospitals but still require in-

ently highlighted in the Dail that the art beds are lying idle in St. James Home in Glasnevin since last the money isn't available to staff

in the community?

uation in Cork. there is absolutely no patients and vital facilities are completely families and turned into mental hospitals. ago there were four in the North Lee a, which has the same spread and population of County Kerry. Today n was spent on the

development of a special unit at the Mercy Hospital in Cork but it has been lying idle for the past year and a half. Meanwhile sixty patients are living in a draconian setting in St. Kevin's.

Originally intended as a temporary measure, it has been in use for six years now and it is totally unsuitable. It was built over a big gas boiler house and the ventilation is very poor.

"The issue in the psychiatric service is not one of waiting lists but instead one of complete community neglect".

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

When revolutions ended the killing

November is the eightieth anniversary of the end of the First World War. For four years you working class men slaughtered each other in the trenches.

Over ten million died in the fighting, while it is estimated other 13 million civilians died. Millions more were horrifically maimed. Establishment figures marked the anniversary with pious words and crocodile tears. These hypocrites say the war was a necessary horror. But most ordinary people see the war as futile.

Many of us studied the powerful antiwar poems of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon at school.

Novels describing the horror, like Pat Barker's *Regeneration* and Sebastian Faulks' *Birdsong*, have become bestsellers.

Some of the TV programmes marking the anniversary capture the brutality and senselessness of the war.

In *Veterans* Norman Collins, who was ordered to bury the dead of the Somme battlefield, remembers:

"The first one I came across had hair growing from his face, and, when I touched it, rats ran out. I realised then what death was.

"I realised all these young men, they were all going to put the world to rights, and all they did was die in a few minutes. It seemed to me such a terrible waste of life."

But there is one crucial element missing from most accounts of the war.

The war did not end because of the skilled diplomacy of governments and generals who ordered so many young men to their deaths.

It was ended through revolution, when German workers and soldiers rose up in November 1918.

On 4 November sailors of the German fleet at Kiel and Wilhelmshaven mutinied against their officers.

Their uprising sparked a wave of mutinies and strikes across Germany.

Hundreds of thousands of workers took to the streets in towns and cities and soldiers at the front laid down their guns and refused to fight.

In just five days workers and soldiers toppled the second biggest empire in the world.

The German king, the Kaiser, was forced to abdicate and flee and the government resigned.

One newspaper described how, "News is coming in from all over the country of the progress of the revolution. All the people who made such a show of their loyalty to the Kaiser are lying low. Not one is moving a finger in defence of the monarchy. Everywhere soldiers are quitting the barracks."

Suddenly hope replaced the despair of four years of war and hardship.

Millions of workers who previously supported the jingoism of their ruling class began to discard nationalism.

Democratic, elected councils of workers began to take over the functions of government.

Rank and file soldiers also set up councils. They were sick of the war and hardship and military discipline. They were sick of officers feasting in luxury while they only had meagre rations.

Their slogan became, "Workers of the world, unite!"

One commentator reports, "In November soldiers' councils sprang up spontaneously not only in all major German towns, but also in the field

by HAZEL CROFT

armies in Belgium and France, as well as in Russia."

Revolution ended the war which had butchered so many millions. It was impossible for the generals to continue the fighting.

WHEN THE war broke out in August 1914 such a revolutionary challenge to governments and generals had seemed impossible.

The main Labour type parties across Europe collapsed into nationalistic support for the conflict.

In every country crowds had cheered as the young men were sent to fight at the front.

Socialists who stood out against the war were a tiny and isolated minority.

The revolution in Germany which ended the war seemed to happen overnight.

But it was the result of growing bitterness and disillusion which developed through the course of the war.

As early as 1915 the revolutionary socialist Rosa Luxemburg noted, "The scene has fundamentally changed. Gone is the ecstasy, gone are the patriotic street demonstrations."

Governments and generals claimed to be fighting to defend the "nation" against outside threats.

But in reality the war was fought in the interests of the ruling class as part of their scramble to carve up the world for markets, colonies and profits.

At the front, soldiers faced huge class divisions. One eyewitness recalled, "The men slaved and engaged in perpetual drill, but the officers sat about idle, cleaning and polishing their fingernails and combing their hair"

The generals sent millions to certain death for just a few yards of soil. They persisted in this senseless sacrifice, no matter how big the cost and how little the gain.

At Verdun in 1917 some 250,000 French soldiers died for just 500 yards of ground.

There was a growing feeling both at the front and by civilians that ordinary soldiers were "lions led by donkeys".

In Britain the poppies many people will wear to commemorate the dead still carry the name of General Haig, one of the war's principal butchers.

The senseless massacres at the front, combined with poverty and starvation at home, began to fuel increasing bitterness and discontent among ordinary workers and soldiers on both sides.

The event which most decisively



SENSELESS MASSACRES at the Front, combined with hardship at home, fuelled the bitterness that erupted in 1917 and 1918. Nationalism was replaced with working class solidarity

transformed the situation was the Russian Revolution in 1917.

Millions of people in Russia were starving as a result of the war. Marches, riots and demonstrations demanding bread grew into a movement which toppled the Tsar in February 1917.

Through the following months of turmoil and revolt, Russian workers began to demand not only bread but the overthrow of the bosses altogether and an end to the war.

In October 1917 Russian workers succeeded and established their own rule through "soviets" or workers' councils. They immediately pulled out of the war.

The revolutionary events in Russia provided a beacon of hope.

Mutinies on the Western front of the war escalated in 1917.

Between April and September over half a million French soldiers were involved in mutinies against their officers at Verdun. They discussed setting up their own soviets.

A French general reported "the revolt of a regiment" and "in several others military policemen have been attacked and hanged, and in the leave trains soldiers are openly singing the Internationals."

In September 1917 British soldiers mutinied for five days in the notorious-

ly brutal camp at Etaples, and there were a series of mutinies among Italian and German soldiers and fleets.

In January 1918 mass strikes against the war broke out in Austria, Hungary and Germany.

They involved more than two million workers.

In Vienna workers' councils were elected which demanded the abolition of censorship, the end of martial law and the eight hour working day.

By the spring of that year a historian of the German army notes that, "many new, young recruits" were "infected with leftist, anti-war propaganda".

It was this growing anger and resentment against the war which would explode so decisively in Germany in November.

THE RUSSIAN revolutionary Lenin argued that the First World War opened up an epoch of wars and revolutions.

From 1918 to 1923 a wave of struggles swept across the world.

The revolutionary Victor Serge wrote, "Riots in Paris, riots in Lyons, revolution in Belgium, revolution in Constantinople, victory of the soviets in Bulgaria, rioting in Copenhagen.

"The whole of Europe is in move-

ment. Everything is possible, everything."

The Austro-Hungarian Empire collapsed in the face of revolutionary upheavals.

Germany remained in the grip of revolutionary struggles until 1923.

In Italy workers rose up in the strikes and occupations known as the "biennio rosso" or "two red years".

Some of the biggest strikes ever took place in Britain in 1919, including among the police.

British prime minister Lloyd George warned, "The whole of Europe is filled with the spirit of revolt. The whole existing order is being questioned".

Tragically none of these massive struggles ended in a successful workers' revolution and the wave of struggles subsided eventually.

But the revolutionary wave at the end of the war was one of the greatest eras of working class solidarity and internationalism ever.

Socialists remember the futility and horror of the First World War as showing the lengths our rulers will go to in the name of profit and power.

But we also remember the power of working class struggle to stop that barbarity and to forge an alternative based on the unity of all workers, no matter what their nationality.

in my view

Songs that haunt the General

"My song is part of the scaffolding
That carries us to the stars"
(Manifesto)

VICTOR JARA was a singer and a composer of songs, not the most obvious candidate to be one of the first victims of the military government that came to power on 11 September 1973 in Chile.

Yet for Pinochet and his co-conspirators who led the military coup, music seemed to be a dire threat. Pinochet's first decree banned the use of indigenous musical instruments like the pan pipes and the flute.

Four days later they murdered Victor Jara in the National Stadium in Santiago-but first they broke his hands.

Perhaps the guards remembered some lines from one of his most famous songs-the Worker's Prayer of 1969.

"Rise up and look at your own hands
Take now your brother's hand, and you will grow"

Jara's music was part and parcel of a surging movement of social change in Chile at the end of the 1960s. Strikes were increasing in number, land occupations were more and more frequent and the student movement was growing fast.

There was a mood for change, and it produced new forms of struggle and the beginnings of a different culture.

It was a time of excitement and optimism, and Victor, son of a poor family who succeeded as a theatre director and later a musician, symbolised the time.

When Salvador Allende was elected to the presidency in November 1970 the tide of struggle rose and those who had put him there waited eagerly for the transformation of their daily lives.

Drama moved to the streets and acted out the arguments for change, and a new cinema turned its lens on the reality of Chile.

Sneered

Jara sneered at those who hesitated in the middle ground:

"You, you're neither fish nor meat Christ, you're much too concerned with your own reputation."

Events were moving quickly. By mid-1972 Allende's desire to hold the middle ground had restored the confidence of the bourgeoisie.

Jara's prophetic song Winds of the People made clear how high the stakes were: "They want to stain the land red again with the blood of workers, They speak of liberty, but their hands are dirty."

In October they mounted an assault on the Allende government. While he vacillated, the working people who put him in power acted decisively.

They opened the closed down supermarkets, set the factories to work again and broke the bosses' lockout in the transport system.

Suddenly in Chile the historical alternatives faced one another in the street. By 1973 Jara's prophetic song *Winds of the People* made clear how high the stakes were.

"They want to stain the land red again with the blood of workers,

They speak of liberty, but their hands are dirty".

Jara, unlike those in the government, clearly foresaw that the defenders of bourgeois freedom will be the first to abandon it when their power is threatened.

What the ruling class feared most in Chile was a movement of workers that had begun to take the initiative directly, to defend what it had won and demand that the struggle carried on.

It was also a movement whose cultural expressions placed the exploited and the oppressed at the centre of things.

The Pinochet regime tried to wipe out the memory of a whole class by systematically murdering its leaders and activists. They tried to cut out its tongue by murdering Victor Jara.

Twenty five years on, his songs have come back to haunt the man who ordered his murder, they are sung on marches and demonstrations across the world.

Victor Jara's Manifesto has just been reissued on CD, together with his biography, Victor: An unfinished song, by his wife, Joan Jara.

MIKE GONZALEZ

film



JOE (Peter Mullan) confronts a DSS snooper

No ordinary Joe

Ken Loach fans will not be disappointed with his latest film.

My name is Joe returns to his favourite subject — the British working class and the result is a funny and very moving film.

The film is basically a love story but Loach as usual goes much further and gives the viewer an intimate portrait of

the lives of ordinary people with all their complexity, pain and beauty. This is where Loach is at his best.

There's Joe, who manages the worst football team in Glasgow, and who's desperately fighting his addiction to alcohol. There is the young couple he is trying to protect.

They are up to their eyes in debt to a dangerous local drugs baron. She is

by **EIMEAR MALONY**

an addict and forced into prostitution while he is desperately trying to repay the debt and so save his family.

It is four years since Loach tackled the subject of ordinary people trapped in vicious circumstances.

But the irony is that *Ladybird Ladybird*, which is about a

woman whose children are taken from her by the social services, was made under the Tories.

Its telling that New Labour has given Loach no reason to change his tune.

In My name is Joe the story is the same. The arms of the state, such as the police, the social services and the dole still work against the interests of working class people. When the characters become trapped in the clutches of the drug baron, they know there is no point

in turning to the police or social services for help.

The beauty of *My name is Joe* is its portrayal of the solidarity and love people are capable of showing each other in the face of desperate circumstances.

The film's tragedy is in its recognition that this isn't enough, that despite the best efforts of people like Joe, people's lives will continue to be ruined so long as they are governed by a state that puts profit before people.

book

New Lads or Old Sexism?

IN 1993 Independent Publishing Corporation launched a new men's magazine loaded.

It was marketed as an "antidote to the snooty fashion-based publications of the time" namely *Esquire*, *Arena*, *GQ*.

It was heralded by co-creator Tim Southwell as "the magazine of working class men".

Now Southwell has written a book, *Getting away with it*, recounting tales from his time with *loaded*. It is 258 pages of mind-numbing, self-indulgent rubbish as Southwell tells the reader of all his drink, drug and sex binges, conducted in the name of ground-breaking journalism. *loaded* was the first magazine that paid its writers drinking money" gloats Southwell.

The message is quite simple, Southwell explains. "look don't take us seriously, we're blokes and we're useless. You know it and we know it. We like football... drinking... looking at pictures of fancy ladies".

Southwell insists that *loaded* is not sexist even though it has more than a vague resemblance to magazines like *Penthouse* and

Playboy. The magazine does nothing more than treat women as idealised sex objects.

Southwell quotes feminists like Rosie Boycott, founder of *Spare Rib*, (now editor of the *Daily Express*) in his defence. This however says more about the failure of feminism than it does about the authenticity of *loaded*.

loaded is a huge profit making enterprise that tapped into the alienation and disillusionment felt by young men under capitalism. It tells them that its okay to be sexist, racist and homophobic, its all part of working class culture.

In reality it had very little to say to working class men. Its readership is predominantly young white middle class men. You only have to glance through the pages of the magazine with its Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren adverts to see who it is targeting.

Getting away with it, proclaims the exploits of a group of overpaid, homophobic, sexist journalists who have fooled themselves into thinking that they are the messiahs of a new culture.

Getting Away with it Tim Southwell Price: £11.49

—SINEAD KENNEDY

book

Making history

THERE HAS been a sustained attack on left wing interpretations of history since the eighties. Many academics rejected the idea that the English and French revolutions were based on class revolts.

The revisionist attack was influenced by the growing popularity of postmodern ideas which argued that there is no general pattern on which to base our conceptions upon.

Essays on Historical Materialism, based on a series of lectures at the recent International Socialist History School, provides a welcome antidote to all this.

The target is the misinformation that has swept around the Marxist method. It deals with the key debates of this period with general pieces by Chris Harman, Alex Callinicos and John Rees which contest the right wing philosophies of history.

There are also a number of specific studies. Lindsey German looks at the development of feminist historical analysis, Mike Hayes examines various right-wing interpretations of the Russian Revolution, Brian Manning looks at role of labour in the English Revolution, while Sam Ashman explores the strengths and weaknesses of the pioneering work of Marxist historians like E.P. Thompson and Christopher Hill.

Taken together this collection is a powerful attack on those who would denigrate the struggles of the past.

—SINEAD KENNEDY



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.

Thousands of students march to demand ...

Tax the rich to double the grant

by **DAVE LYNCH**

OVER 3,000 students protested outside the Dail recently, calling for an increase in grants and an end to high rents.

The grant was increased by a mere 77p this year.

More and more students have to look for low paid weekend and evening work.

Many would be financially better off if they went on the dole.

The accommodation crisis which began in Dublin is now beginning to affect the rest of the country.

With a shortage of housing many students have no choice but to accept sub-standard accommodation at ridiculously high rates.

No wonder hundreds shouted slogans like "Tax the Rich to Double the Grant".

The national protest was called on the back of a wave of militant action taken by students throughout the country where a huge wave of regional walkouts, demonstrations and protests have taken place.

Protest

Walkouts in Tallaght and Waterford Institute of Technology and a silent protest in Letterkenny Institute of Technology where students refused to co-operate or answer questions in lectures, have all put to bed the lie that Irish students are somehow apathetic.

However the national leadership of the students remains in the hands of



Photo: Paula Geraghty

Fianna Fail careerists. The clique who run the Union of Students in Ireland is marked by deep faction fighting which is often a feature of Fianna Fail politics.

Some of them are setting up a separate elitist union for university students.

The Forum for University Students Unions excludes the Institutes of Technology where most working class students are concentrated.

The Education Minister, Michael Martin has ready hinted that he might be prepared to recognise this organisation in future.

These manouvres contrast with the desire of most students for national unity.

Unity

This could be gauged by the great reception received by every speaker on the demonstration who

mentioned the unity.

The split would represent a further weakening of the students ability to fight, and would send out

a terrible message to the students suffering problems in IT's throughout the country.

The very fact that the

demonstration was called shows that the student leaders are now under pressure to respond to a new radical mood.

Only last June in the Irish Times a leading member of U.S.I. said that the days of mass student action was over.

The reception the Labour T.D Ruairi Quinn and the Fine Gael representative got from the crowd was one of open derision.

Jeers

Quinn was met by a cascade of jeers when he said that the students should wait for the following years local elections to bring change! This proved to be a dreadful miscalculation of the militant feelings in the crowd.

The smaller sit down outside Government buildings and the attempted occupation of Kildare House by a number of militant students could be a pointer to the future.

How can students win?

THE FIRST national demonstration for years showed the strength of students as a fighting force of change.

Students can become radical very quickly and possess a healthy suspicion of authority.

However they do not have the ability that the organised working class have to strike a blow at the system. This is not to say that students cannot help bring radical change.

Last May students in Indonesia toppled the brutal dictator Suharto after their demonstrations sparked off a revolt of the urban poor. Today students in Indonesia are still at the forefront of the revolution calling for greater reforms under the new Habbie government.

Struggle

However the best way for students to be victorious is to link their struggle to that of the wider working class.

The construction workers up on the scaffold at College Green who waved down to the students on their protest, have to be seen as potential allies.

These very same workers had brought the

whole of Dublin to a halt weeks before in solidarity action for the jailed workers protesting against the black economy on the sites.

Some of the problems of students are similar to those of the working class. Low paid jobs taken up by students leads them into direct contact with other low paid workers. The fight for a decent minimum wage is one that is important to both students and workers.

The accommodation crisis is a problem through-out the working class. Both students and workers would benefit from a policy of imposing rent controls on landlords.

The Celtic Tiger has polarised the consciousness of working people and students.

Everyone knows there is plenty of money around, but the rich are not spreading it around. This is when politics becomes very important. The problems of students and the problems of workers are both the result of the madness of the market.

This is what makes socialist politics more relevant than ever. We need a party that can link the struggles of workers and students. If we are successful then the chant of "Paris '68 Dublin '98" heard on the streets of Dublin during the march may ring true.

Join the socialists

If you want to join the Socialist Workers Party, fill in this form and send it to: PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682

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Address.....

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Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Garrick Bar, Chichester St

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BELFAST QUEENS UNIVERSITY:

Thursday 1.00pm Mature Students Room:

CORK:

Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in Dennehy's pub, Cornmarket

DERRY Meets every

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DUBLIN ARTANE /COOLICK:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30 in Artane/Beaumont Recreational Centre opp

MAYNOOTH:

Meets every Wednesday at 6.30pm in Classhall D, Arts Block Maynooth College

DUBLIN RIALTO:

Meets every Tuesday 8pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR, Rialto

DUBLIN TALLAGHT:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in Jobstown Community Centre

DUBLIN CENTRAL

Meets every Wednesday

DUBLIN WEST:

Meets every Thursday at

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DUN LAOGHAIRE

Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in the Christian Institute

DUBLIN RATHMINES:

Meets every Wednesday at O'Connells

DUBLIN 5TH CENTRAL:

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St

DUBLIN UCD:

Meets every Wednesday 1pm. Ring (01)8722682

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BATU

VICTORY AT SISKS

BRICKLAYERS and carpenters have scored a major victory over Sisks, one of the largest contractors in the country.

Sisks had victimised BATU shop stewards and were hoping to break up union organisation on their sites. During the first days of the strike they used their political influence to ensure there was a large contingent of Gardai to push through scab lorries delivering supplies.

But the network of union activists that has emerged Dublin responded quickly.

They came from all over the city in defiance of the Industrial Relations Act to take their place on the picket line.

Within a few days supplies to Sisks sites in Croke Park and Wheatfield prison dried up as workers from companies like Roadstone refused

to break the picket lines.

In the end, Sisks agreed to re-instate the three victimised shop stewards by the 7th of December.

They also agreed to enter negotiations to give parity settlements to the carpenters. Up to now the carpenters have fallen behind the gains that the bricklayers have made.

Compensation

In recognition of the hardship they caused, the company was also forced to make a compensation payment of £4,000 to the workers.

However the most significant gain in the strike is the agreement by the company to establish a fast track procedure on the sites.

They have committed themselves to resolving any issues in dispute within ten days

"This is a huge

advance for us. Up to now we had to go through all the procedures of the Labour Court. By the time the issue was resolved, the job might be over.

Now Sisks have said that workers can nominate their own representatives and they will be dealt with directly.

We have proved we could shut down this company and now they are trying to avoid disputes in the future' one BATU activist told *Socialist Worker*.

Meanwhile pickets have also managed to shut down the O'Connor's site in Conyngham road, Dublin.

O'Connor's is the firm that had two building workers committed to jail.

Despite winning the support of the courts, O'Connors have not been able to face down the unions. After the victory at Sisks the pressure on him is set to increase.

Firefighters

98% vote for strike action

Firefighters in Dublin Corporation have voted by a huge majority to take strike action for a 9 per cent pay rise. Only 14 out of the 800 firefighters voted against strike action.

The firefighters are angry that their wages are being pegged down to minimum increases while Gardai scored a major increase after two days of the 'blue flu'.

"We have been tied to Garda pay rates since 1968 and we are not letting go of that link now' one firefighter told *Socialist Worker*.

Savage

The firefighters offered Dublin Corporation a 13 point productivity deal in return for the pay increase. But it was thrown back in their faces by corporation officials who insisted on savage cuts.

The corporation want to reduce the number of fire engines in Donnybrook. They want only one firefighter to work turntable ladders rather than the present two.

They want to replace sick and injured firefighters who work in the control room with lower paid civilians.

More ominously, the corporation want to take the Civil Defence under their auspices. In future they say they want to use the Civil Defence in the case of staff shortages.

"If the Corporation say they want cutbacks, there is no need to start with the workers.

"There are three Assistant Fire Officers on £45,000 year who do little. Maybe they could show a little productivity" one firefighter said.

One of the new officers who has

been appointed to the fire service is Terry Gillick.

His appointment is a real insult to the workers. Gillick was the officer commanding the army during the 1988 firefighters strike.

After the huge vote in favour of action, firefighters need to keep the pressure on SIPTU to deliver action.

They will have the support of thousands of workers across the country who are looking for one group to break through on the pay front.

Botanic Gardens

FIFTEEN SIPTU gardeners in the Botanic Gardens in Glasnevin have been on strike for five weeks.

Recently the gardeners have been made responsible for training students on modular courses.

They demanded recognition of these increased duties. Instead the employers demanded the workers accept these duties or face suspension.

sion.

The gardeners immediately voted to strike if any of their number was suspended.

The employers then provoked the dispute by calling each gardener in and demanding they give an undertaking to accept modular students. When each refused they were suspended.

One striker told *Socialist Worker*, "It's a battle of wills between us and the management. We are prepared to picket out here for as long as it takes."

The strikers need collections to help sustain the strike. "We have had good support so far -- nearly £100 from passers by last Sunday for example. This helps with petrol and gives us a big lift."

Socialist Worker members and supporters have organised a fundraising table quiz for the strikers: Friday 27th Aston Hotel, (beside Virgin Megastore) at 8.30pm: All proceeds go to the Botanic Gardens strikers.

Galway students occupy

THREE hundred students occupied the Galway and Mayo Institute of Technology recently. They were protesting over lack of space, poor equipment, and cut backs in tutors.

"Many of the sculpture students have to carry out their work in the corridors. There is no allocated space for third years textile students.

"We have a very good building but it has not been organised for the benefit of students" one student union representative told *Socialist Worker*.

Annoyed

The students are particularly annoyed at the cut backs in teaching. A 20 per cent cut in the college's budget has meant that there are some classes with no lectures before 1.30 because there are so few tutors on the courses.

There have also been protests over the fact that the college has held on to the student grants in order to gain a few extra pounds in interest.

NUJ conference

FIFTY DELEGATES attended the annual NUJ conference in Dun Laoghaire in November.

Although the NUJ has consistently voted against partnership deals, the conference was addressed by Fianna Fail Minister Tom Kitt who spoke of the government's wish to see a new national wage agreement.

Speakers attacked the presence of Kitt for representing a government that presided over attacks on refugees and asylum seekers were applauded.

The conference was also attended by representatives of the Irish Nurses Organisation and MANDATE, the shop workers union.

The MANDATE speaker called on unions who opposed partnership to come together to make a concerted effort to oppose any new agreement.

The conference passed number of resolutions highlighting the continuing low pay in certain sectors, including free lancers.

They were also attacks on the yellow pack rates being applied in the Examiner group and the lack of union recognition at TV3 where management have kept people on six month contracts.

32 copies of *Socialist Worker* were sold at the conference.

Dublin Bus

Ballot pressure on buses

UNION LEADERS of the NRBU and SIPTU are set to ballot their members for a third time on a viability deal for Dublin Bus.

Although workers voted it down twice, the union

leaders are determined to ram it down their throats.

As one activist told *Socialist Worker*:

"The NRBU reps are saying that Mary O'Rourke is telling Bunting (the leader of the NRBU) that he has to deliver a deal by Christmas -- or she will do it for him".

Despite its former militant reputation, the NRBU is toeing the line of O'Rourke.

Hatchet

Intensive negotiations have already been opened up with the Dublin Bus manager, John Behan.

Behan is the hatchet man who was sent in to privatise TEAM Aer Lingus.

The company and the union leaders will try to cynically use the pressure that will be on workers in the run up to Christmas to get them to accept a deal which includes a £1,000 lump sum

offer.

However militant bus-workers will once again argue for resistance.

As the firefighters get ready to take on this right wing government, there is every chance they could win again.

CPSU

Time to reject P2000

THE CIVIL and Public Service Union (CPSU) is having a Special Delegate Conference to discuss withdrawal from Partnership 2000.

The CPSU leaders have been among the staunchest supporters of partnership deals, arguing that they protected low-paid civil servants.

General Secretary Blair Horan has gone on radio several times to protest that house prices are leaving his members behind. But he still insists that partnership can

work.

The conference will discuss several motions to ballot members to withdraw from P2000. But Blair Horan defends partnership,

saying that all that is needed is to shift the emphasis in the next deal onto the lower paid grades.

He argues for flat rate increases to boost the pay of

the bottom grades.

But this will not benefit workers on average wages.

The average increase will still be pegged at around three percent, so the average worker might still only get one or two percent.

Horan argues that "moderate" overall increases are needed to curb inflation.

But workers need bigger increases just to keep pace with inflation.

The conference should pass the motions for withdrawal but should also instruct the Executive to lodge a 15 percent pay claim, based on the increase won by Gardai following the Blue Flu.

Telecom

TWENTY-TWO mechanics in Telecom Eireann recently threatened strike action over the closure of a garage.

The mechanics are members of SIPTU (EX-AGEMOU), but the union was not consulted before the sudden closure was announced.

Their plan to picket out other groups of Telecom workers resulted in an improved redeployment offer. This was being put to ballot as we went to press.

Socialist Worker

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IT'S THE RANCHERS THAT ARE THE REAL SPONGERS

We all need 9%

GET YOUR PAY CLAIM IN NOW

WORKERS ARE moving to get their share of the Celtic Tiger. In an enormous majority, 98 per cent of firefighters have voted to strike for a 9 per cent pay increase.

Nurses are also threatening action to win additional increases.

One union, the CPSU which represents low paid civil servants, has called a special conference to discuss pulling out of Partnership 2000. (See report on Page 11)

The mood for a pay revolt is spreading - and it is no wonder. Accommodation costs have gone through the roof and many find

they can barely meet their rent or mortgage payments.

Rents in Dublin have shot up by 25 per cent this year alone as landlords cash in on the boom.

Yet these costs are not even included in the official figures for inflation.

Conned

We are being conned into believing that prices are not rising as fast as they actually are.

Partnership 2000 was a foolish deal which tied the hands of workers while allowing the employers cream off super-profits.

It was negotiated by union officials who

put their desire for a soft life above the interests of their members.

Now is the time to break through P2000's pay limits. With labour shortages in key sectors of the economy, workers now have tremendous power.

If we wait around much longer we could be facing a recession when the Celtic Tiger goes bust. Then the bosses will be sticking the boot in, looking for wage cuts.

This is why every trade union activist should now to follow the lead of the firefighters. This right wing government must be told that if there was 9 per cent available for the Gardai - it should be there for the rest of us.

THE BIG farmers have grabbed the major share of EU subsidies to Irish agriculture.

New figures from the EU Court of Auditors show that 70 per cent of the £12.5 billion subsidies to arable crops goes to just 10 per cent of farmers.

The top ten beef farmers got £1.5 million between them while the top ten tillage farmers got £1.7 million.

Three big farmers in Ireland are in receipt of a staggering £780,000 from the EU.

EU subsidies are not given out on the basis of need or poverty. Instead those with the largest amount of land or produce get the biggest grants.

The Irish Farmers Association have tried to hide the class divisions between farmers.

Subsidies

They call for Family Income Supplement for poorer farmers but will not give up the subsidies for the big farmers.

The big farmers have enormous political influence.

Politicians like Fine Gael's John Bruton and FF's Ned O Keefe are drawn from this class and advance their interests ruthlessly. Bruton's government, for example, slashed inheritance tax on big farms.

The huge subsidies the ranchers get from the EU show that they are the real spongers in Irish society - not impoverished refugees or social welfare recipients that FF politicians continually attack.

Meanwhile, the recession in Asia and Russia is creating more problems for the Common Agriculture Policy.

This crazy policy subsidies EU farmers to produce more expensive food.

The global recession has brought a collapse of agricultural prices.

This now means that an extra £800 million a year will have to be found to keep up the price of food.

Unless something is done, it will be PAYE workers across Europe who are asked to pay up.