

# Socialist Worker

## inside

Standing up to the sectarians: Communities under siege in Belfast

page 5

**SEVILLE:** Marches and strikes for a Europe of People before Profit.  
**NICE TREATY:** Why No meant No  
 —pages 6-7

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## As the EU attack immigrants...

# The real scroungers are in the Dail



McDowell and Ahern, whipping up racism

**ACROSS Europe right-wing politicians are scapegoating refugees. At the recent EU summit they pushed through a EU police force,**

EU Justice Ministers have agreed a number of measures to stop immigrants getting into Europe including tighter coopera-

tion between border police.

They even want to use EU trade agreements to pressurise countries to take back illegal immigrants.

McDowell has argued along with the rest of the European right that the best way to stop racism is to stop immigrants coming in.

This is nonsense racism is increased by politicians

hyping up immigration—immigration controls don't stop racism they cause it.

McDowell's statements and the Seville summit should be a warning.

### Rights

In Denmark welfare benefits for asylum seekers have been slashed by 50 percent, the waiting time for permanent

residence has been extended to seven years, asylum seekers are barred from marrying, as well as denied rights to family reunion.

In addition, Danish law now forbids anyone from entering Denmark with a spouse from outside the EU if they are under 24.

That is what Fianna Fail and the PDs want for Ireland, not just because they are racists but because it fits with their

pushing of a right wing neo-liberal military Europe.

Ahern called those opposing the Nice treaty whingers.

In fact standing up to EU racism is about standing up and fighting for a open Europe that puts people before profit.

That means taking on to the racism of the right and saying refugees are welcome here!

■ *The myths about refugees exposed: turn to page eight.*

# WE SAY: REFUGEES ARE WELCOME HERE!

# Haider = Hitler, Ryanair = Aryanair

**MICHAEL O'Leary, the union busting boss of Ryanair, has found a true soul-mate.**

Jorg Haider, Austria's leading Nazi politician, was set to host a press conference in London on Thursday 27th June to promote Ryanair's service from London to Klagenfurt in Austria.

Haider is an unrepentant Nazi. He describes Hitler's concentration camps as "punishment camps", calls the Waffen-SS "decent people" and praises Hitler's policies as "orderly". He is regularly seen consorting with violent neo-Nazi thugs and has refused to condemn terrorist attacks against Jews and Roma in Austria.



O'Leary

itself from Haider. A spokesperson for the Ryanair has said that "politics doesn't make any difference to

Ryanair". It's Chief Executive, Michael O'Leary has met personally with Haider and recently praised him at a press conference in Dublin.

O'Leary has spearheaded the aggressive anti union stance of the airline, sacking baggage loaders who attempted to unionise two years ago.

When Jane O'Keeffe was declared the millionth passenger on Ryanair she was promised free flights for life after she agreed to a publicity spot. Soon Ryanair simply refused to honour its promise. Even the High Court judge Mr Justice Peter Kelly was forced to declare Michael O'Leary, had been hostile, aggressive and bullying towards Jane O'Keeffe.

She was awarded € 67,500 damages.

A confidential report from a British safety body of air traffic controllers alleged that Ryanair pilots were pressurised to compromise safety by ignoring instructions of air traffic controllers and approaching runways too quickly in order to keep up with cost-cutting schedules.

A week earlier O'Reilly and the Ryan family made € 47 million in a share deal. This brings to € 175 million the Nazi loving bully has made from shares in the airline.

The Anti Nazi League in Ireland organised a picket of Ryanair's offices on Conyngham Road in Dublin on Thursday 27th June at 5.30pm.

## New government—same golden circle

**SO JUST how do you decide on a whether someone is worthy of the high office of cabinet minister?**

**Talent? Number of brown envelopes?**

**Well actually, it is if Dermot Desmond wants you there.**

**Joe Walsh's re-appointment as Agriculture Minister came after support from leading business figures including the flam-**

**boyant financier and tax exile Dermot Desmond, successfully lobbied Ahern.**

**Friends**

**Bloodstock breeder friend of Charlie Haughey John Magnier, as well as Philip Lynch and Denis Brosnan, the chief executives of the publicly quoted food companies, IAWS and the Kerry Group were all involved.**

★ **WHAT'S THE secret to a peaceful night's sleep?**

The answer, apparently, is be a socialist.

A new study by the medical journal *Dreaming* has found that people with right wing views and who vote for right wing politicians have more nightmares than those on the left.

By contrast, the dreams of people on the left show them to be creative, progressive, imaginative, and social animals confident in their own abilities.

Report author Dr Kelly Bulkeley said, "One way to read these findings would be that the dreams of the people on the political right reveal them to be insecure, anxious, conflict-ridden and emotionally repressed.

"When they are not terrified of imaginary threats they cling to the comforts of the status quo.

"They seek a kind of power through their political views that they lack within their deeper selves."

"People on the left had fewer nightmares and more dreams in which they had power," says the report.

"They had a greater frequency of good fortunes and bizarre elements in their dreams. Female lefts had an especially high frequency of good fortunes."

## Civil Liberties under attack

# Locked up for supporting Palestinians

by a US socialist

**AHMED Bensouda, a member of the anti-authoritarian Collective Unity and Struggle in the US, was detained by the FBI on Thursday 30 May.**

Ahmed is 22 years old.

He's active in Palestine solidarity work and has participated in anti-racist campaigns.

We have no idea of the reason for Ahmed's detention.

Ahmed is a United Arab Emirates citizen. He is in the US legally and all of his papers are in good order.

So it is unclear on what grounds Ahmed is being threatened with deportation, or if it's even the real reason for his detention.

Demonstrations have taken place demanding

the immediate release of Ahmed Bensouda and the 2,000 people detained in the US without cause.

**For more information go to [www.ucimc.org](http://www.ucimc.org)**

★ **WHAT'S GEORGE W Bush got to hide? He's locking up his own citizens without trial now.**

Abdullah al-Muhajir is a US citizen. He was arrested a month ago.

Now he has been declared an "enemy combatant" and can be detained indefinitely.

Newspapers repeat claims by the US government that he was involved in a plot to bomb the US.

Where is the evidence? No one has seen it, and they won't get to see it, as the US is refusing to put al-Muhajir on trial.

Where is even the pretence of a fair trial or "due legal process" we are told is one of the pillars of "Western democracy"?

Even the US government doesn't claim al-Muhajir actually did anything, merely that he talked of doing it.

Not one of the people held by the US in its "war on terror" has yet been convicted after a trial.

Many still rot without charge in cages in the US Camp X-Ray at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

Meanwhile those who are a real threat to the world roam free—George W Bush plots to bomb Iraq.



# Activist cases dismissed Scrap the Public Order Act

**The court cases against Rowan Dempsey, Indy-media journalist and Donal Mac Fhearraigh of the Socialist Workers Party have been dismissed.**

Rowan was arrested at an anti privatisation protest at the Burlington Hotel last October. Rowan was accused of obstructing an arrest by blocking a guarda.

Rowan was the Indy-

media video journalist covering the protest. His case was dismissed because the police evidence contradicted itself and because Rowan's video footage showed that he could not possibly have assaulted the guard in question.

**Prove**

Despite this the judge saw fit to lecture Rowan for over half an hour on the merits of the police.

The case against

Donal Mac Fhearraigh was also dismissed because the police failed to prove the charges.

Donal was arrested on an anti war demonstration outside the US embassy last October for trying to march peacefully from the US to the British embassy.

He was charged with section 6 of the Public Order Act. This section refers to behaviour that could lead to a breach of the peace. The Gardai failed to show what exact behaviour of Donal's could be construed as breaching the peace.

He had not originally been charged with blocking traffic and as such the charge was dismissed.

The other charges brought by the police were too vague and wide ranging to enable a defence to be organised.

He had been charged with sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 OR 9 of the public order Act.

The possible permutations were to numerous to enable a defendant to organise a defence.

This along with the fact that the statements from the gardai were shown to have similarities above that of coincidence resulted in the case

being dismissed.

The last year has seen a concerted attempt by the police and the state to break the anti capitalist movement through repression.

In particular they have targeted the SWP as the main driving force inside the movement.

Most of the elected executive of the party have been arrested on demonstrations in the last year.

**Repression**

But the repression has failed and in recent weeks has backfired on them.

The other activists arrested at the Burlington demonstration are up in court on the 10th July.

★ **Globalise Resistance has called for a big demonstration outside Court 50, in the Old Richmond Hospital, North Brunswick St at 10am on that day to highlight the cases.**

**There is also a rally calling for the scrapping of the Public Order Act at the Central Bank on Saturday July 6 at 3pm.**

# Our team didn't make the World Cup

**THE PLAYERS in this team didn't get a mention in the coverage of the World Cup being held in South Korea.**

Trade unions have produced this photomontage to highlight the repression of their members in South Korea.

Twelve of the trade unionists pictured are now in prison and four are wanted for arrest.

They are just 16 of around 30 trade unionists targeted by the Korean government's violence and

repression.

These people are being treated like criminals for trying to form trade unions in their workplaces and seeking to protect workers' rights.

**Targetted**

Some campaigners have been targeted for taking part in peaceful demonstrations. Korean trade unionists have been criminalised for trying to organise in well known multinational companies like the car maker Daewoo. For more information visit [www.global-unions.org/korea2002](http://www.global-unions.org/korea2002)



what we think

# The two faces of Europe

THE EU summit in Seville in Spain showed the two different faces of Europe.

Seville was an opportunity for some empty promises on neutrality so that Ahern can push through another referendum on the Nice treaty.

But the main push of the summit was for Ahern and other European leaders to force through even tougher legislation to victimise those seeking refuge from war and famine.

### Blame

The EU leaders want us to blame foreigners, those who look different and those in need of refuge, for the decay of living standards.

While they are ganging up on desperate asylum seekers, they are also attacking workers.

Just as they are depriving refugees of shelter and safety, they are depriving our public services of funds.

### Scared

They want a Fortress Europe—on the outside desperate refugees, on the inside low paid workers permanently scared of losing their jobs and of being thrown into destitution.

But Seville also saw a festival of resistance.

As the European leaders gathered, Spanish workers took part in a general strike against attacks on unemployment benefits and workers' rights.

This was just two days



PART OF Trade Union demonstration in Seville

after a successful general strike swept across Greece against the government's attempt at pension "reform".

Just two weeks before 200,000 marched through Seville in protest at government attacks.

Seville also saw anti-capitalist conferences on immi-

gration and Palestine, and demonstrations against insecurity at work and a Europe of capital.

Only three months ago there was a demonstration of 500,000 people against a Europe of capital and war in Barcelona, and a three million strong demonstration and general strike in Italy.

### Terrified

This is the other face of Europe- the face of workers' unity and international solidarity.

This Europe of protests and strikes is exactly what the Europe's right wing governments are terrified of. They, and their friends, are right to be.

For more on Seville and Nice turn to pages 6-7

## MAKE THE BOSSES PAY UP

**"WE ARE heading into a lot of pressure on public pay. Charlie McCreevy is talking tough," according to one Fianna Fail spin doctor.**

You can always tell when the issue of pay for workers is on the agenda because of the inevitable appearance of respected economists appearing all over the media explaining how the economy can't afford pay increases.

So through June the esteemed ERSI warned of wage rises ruining everything—as did the Central Bank.

As always it is workers are to be blamed for the economy.

### Curb

The government says it has two choices at the moment: increase taxation or sharply curb public spending growth.

Since taxing the rich is out of the question for Fianna Fail, "It's clear what has to be done. Public spending at the present rate just has to stop," claims the government.

Benchmarking was devised to hold off pay rises for a few years.

### Disappointment

Publication of the Public Service Benchmarking Body (PSBB) report is sure to be a disappointment for many and a spur to action for thousands of trade unionists.

Nurses and teachers have both put price tags of 30 per cent on the acceptability of any pay awards from the PSBB, but the Government has only provided for increases averaging no more than 14 per cent.

Benchmarking is not just a question of letting the search for profit loose on our services but it is also about taking the private sector—notoriously precarious and hostile to union rights—as the model for all our

jobs.

Benchmarking is all part of what the PDs euphemistically refer to as plans to "restructure the State's portfolio of commercial assets"—privatisation.

Across Europe, benchmarking is the preferred method for pushing the neo-liberal agenda into working conditions.

### Embraced

Tragically, the ICTU rushed in, totally and uncritically embraced benchmarking.

Joe O'Toole claimed benchmarking would be a ATM machine for low-paid public sector workers.

The benchmarking report will be the chickens coming home to roost.

Now there is going to be a fight to get money out of the government and the unions need to get organised to lead that fight.



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# news of the world

France

# Why the right won French election

**THE RIGHT** will have around 400 seats in the new parliament, while the Socialist Party (equivalent of the Labour Party) and its allies will have around 175.

These latest results show the real problem is that the Socialist Party has alienated many of the people who swept it into office in 1997.

The far left was not able to stand in the second round of the parliamentary elections. But the Socialist Party could not generate enough enthusiasm to beat the parties supporting the corrupt Jacques Chirac.

**The Socialist Party's pathetic slogan "Don't give the centre-right too much power" sums up its weak challenge.**

France has not suddenly swung to the right, but millions of people are bitter and angry with the equivalent of the Labour Party, and will not back it. Analysis of the first round of the parliamentary elections shows that the parties of the previous governing coalition (Socialist Party, Communist Party and Greens) won only 40 percent of the categories "employe et ouvrier" (workers of all sorts, supervisors and foremen).

The abstentions in the second round, were a record 40 percent—the highest since this form of government was introduced in 1958.

**Almost half of the "worker" category abstained in the first round, along with 53 percent of students.**

Around 58 percent of people aged 18 to 24 and 54 percent of the 25 to 34 age group did not vote.

The right wing are celebrating now. But their big

**'Millions are bitter with the equivalent of the Labour Party'**

majority in parliament is likely to unleash a period of class conflict. This could mean a rerun of the mid-1990s. In 1993 the right, with 472 seats, won an even bigger majority in parliament than now. The Socialist Party was totally humiliated. Two years later Jacques Chirac was elected president.

With control of both presidency and parliament, the right launched big assaults on pensions and working conditions (called the Juppe plan). The attacks led to the biggest public sector strikes since 1968. In October 1995 five million stopped work for the day. And in December ten million struck and protested for two days a week over a period of three weeks.

## Fear

The strikes and massive demonstrations sent fear through every government in Europe. Chirac and the right had to retreat in disorder. The election of a socialist government a year later was the result. Now Chirac and his allies will try again. The bosses' MEDEF organisation is pushing for an offensive against workers.

History rarely repeats itself exactly. But the French

## Peru: revolt against privatisation



**HUGE PROTESTS** have swept through Peru's second city of Arequipa and nearby Tacna against the privatisation of two state electricity companies in the South American country. The government declared a state of emergency after three days of anti-government demonstrations. It moved soldiers into Arequipa, who killed a protester. Belgian company Tractebel has bought the two companies.

working class has not been defeated over the last seven years. The last two years have seen a rising number of strikes.

A revival of struggle is the best way to thwart Chirac's agenda. It is also the best response to the divisions and scapegoating pushed by Le Pen and the Nazis.

The mass demonstrations against Le Pen in

recent weeks showed the potential for real change in France. But the Socialist Party could not offer a focus for such a movement.

Le Pen's National Front has won no seats in parliament.

The parties of the extreme left, LCR and LO, won 740,000 votes in the first round of the parliamentary elections.

Although this was less

than in the presidential poll a few weeks earlier, it is still a very good figure, and more than in 1997.

It would have been higher if LO had agreed to the LCR proposal for united candidates.

French workers now need a united socialist and anti-capitalist party that will build for the most militant response possible to the right's attacks.

Uruguay

## Biggest general strike for 15 years

by JAVIER CARLES

**THE BIGGEST** general strike for 15 years in Argentina's neighbour Uruguay, in South America, took place this month.

There was an almost total stoppage by public sector workers, and a very strong response in private industry.

It was the fourth general strike against the policies of Jorge Batlle's government. All the schools and universities were closed, as well as the state enterprises (energy, telephone and oil). Banks and finance houses closed completely. Public transport was very limited, and health services only did emergencies.

During the strike several demonstrations and meetings took place in the capital, Montevideo, and other important cities. Unions, the

students' federation, housing cooperatives and neighbourhood organisations all took part.

Some streets of the city were closed with pickets. There were "caceroleadas" (banging saucepans) in some neighbourhoods, and in Las Piedras city hundreds demonstrated in front of a government MP's house. In the evening hundreds more made a "caceroleada" in front of the presidential residence.

This strike is the workers' and students' response to the economic crisis. Some people say that the current crisis is the sharpest for 100 years. For the first time in history the country's total production has fallen for four years in a row.

Officially 16 percent of workers are unemployed. But the reality is much worse. The right is trying to scare workers by warning of a "breakdown" in society. But for the moment the workers' confidence and fighting spirit are increasing.

Zimbabwe

## Socialists are beaten and jailed

**MORE THAN 70** people were arrested and beaten in Harare, Zimbabwe, this month. They were taking part in a peaceful commemoration of the Soweto anti-apartheid uprising in South Africa in 1976.

Socialist MP Munyaradzi Gwisai, who is due to speak at Marxism 2002 in London, was singled out for special treatment by the riot police. He was severely beaten and needed urgent medical treatment.

The 70 were held in appalling conditions, in cramped and overcrowded cells without food or water.

Many of those arrested were members or supporters of the International Socialist Organisation of Zimbabwe.

One of those who took part in the protest writes, "It was the day of the African child, a com-

memoration in honour of the students who were massacred by the apartheid regime. The Movement for Democratic Change [the opposition to President Mugabe] had organised a youth rally. The MDC leaders did not show up because the governing party had threatened to crush the rally.

Hundreds of youths gathered. When we began to make speeches the riot police descended on us and started attacking people, throwing tear-gas everywhere.

Gwisai tried to reason with the police as a leader of the demo, but they wouldn't even listen to him. Instead they thrashed him severely."

● Send messages of support. E-mail [isozim@hotmail.com](mailto:isozim@hotmail.com)

● Donations to the International Socialist Organisation can be sent to First Direct Bank, 40 Wakefield Road, Leeds, LS98 1FO. Account name John Page, sort code 40-47-78, account number 11185489.

## French Socialist Party betrayed its supporters

**SOME PRETEND** the Socialist Party lost because it is not "modern" (business friendly) enough. The real problem is that the Socialist Party and its allies have betrayed workers.

The profits of large firms rose by 36 percent last year, while for most people life has got much harder.

Unemployment, which fell

slightly in the early years under the Socialist-led government, has now begun to rise again.

Most of the 1.5 million new jobs created during the last government are in the category of "precarious" employment—short term, contract and temporary work.

According to official figures 2.2 million people in France, almost a tenth of those able to work, hold such

jobs.

A significant section of people in full time work, or with several part time jobs, do not earn enough to afford even a basic life.

Some 17 percent of youth between 20 and 25 years of age are officially out of work. In the working class suburbs of Paris youth unemployment stands at up to 50 percent. The government was forced to bring in a law limiting the

working week to 35 hours.

But the way it was introduced became an excuse for bosses to demand increased "flexibility". "Working hours" no longer include work breaks, changing and washing time.

Workers can be employed up to 13 hours a day six days a week. This has also driven down wages, because the employers are no longer required to pay overtime.



# Mass protests at EU summit in Seville, Spain

## Nice Treaty—No meanT No

**THERE WAS much hue and cry in the mainstream media about the protocols agreed at Seville to "aid" the passing of the Nice Treaty in Ireland.**

The day after the first Nice Treaty was defeated *Socialist Worker* wrote:

"The government will need a pretext to hold a second referendum." This is what the learned Professor Bridg Laffan said.

The pretext will probably be a woolly protocol that mentions Irish neutrality. But this little gesture will not be good enough.

### Gesture

The Irish referendum was the only mass plebiscite on Nice. It was a vote not just about Ireland—but about the future of the EU itself.

Even if Irish neutrality is mentioned in an extra protocol, it will not change the fact that a Rapid Reaction Force has been set up.

**The government can be defeated if they try a second referendum. That is the message should go out clearly: Scrap the Nice Treaty now."**

The statement still holds—the protocols from Seville are literally meaningless. For them to have any value the Treaty would have to be renegotiated, which the EU government refused to do. It is a three-card trick to help the Irish government get the Treaty passed.

The establishment is already pushing hard to get the treaty through.

*But it is worth remembering that the treaty that was defeated last year has not changed on e b it. We should throw it out again.*

Last time all the main parties linked up with leaders of the unions, big business and farmers to call for a Yes vote. But they were beaten. Our rulers may see the EU as the

home of progress and civilisation. They see it as a growing military power—one that could quickly use its Rapid Reaction Force to fight "resource wars". EU pressure is the excuse used by Irish politicians for privatisation and public spending cuts.

And it is increasingly run on the most undemocratic means with power concentrated in elite politicians from the bigger states.

### The militarisation of Europe

**THE BRUSSELS bureaucracy has created a 60,000 Rapid Reaction Force, which is capable of operating up to 4,000 kilometres away from the continent in Africa and the Middle East.**

The Nice Treaty gives the legal ratification to this force.

It established a "Political and Security Committee to monitor the international situation in areas covered by the common foreign and security policy"

It states that this committee should take "political control and strategic direction of crisis management operations"

This is also why they are promoting a European arms industry. The Nice Treaty calls explicitly for "co-operation between EU

states in the field of armaments". They want "common user requirements" so that all EU countries increase their military budgets.

Despite the Nice vote the Irish army has been buying supplies to integrate into a EU army.

### Joined

Ireland has already joined NATO's Partnership for Peace, EU Security and Foreign Policy and the EU's Rapid Reaction Force.

The new protocol on neutrality claimed Irish troops would need a UN Security Council mandate, and government approval before being part of any European action. But the fact that Irish troops have been trained by US troops to go to Afghanistan later this summer, shows how shallow that promise is.

## A Europe for profit not people

**"IT'S JUST about enlargement. We want to give the people of Eastern Europe the same chance that we had."**

This is the message that all the main parties promote about the Nice Treaty. But they are hiding the real implications of the treaty.

Ireland has no need to vote on the treaty again.

### Rushing

The political establishment are rushing through the vote.

Enlargement could happen even without the Nice Treaty. And the provisions of the Nice Treaty will take effect even if no Eastern European country joins the EU.

According to EU Commission President Romano Prodi "Legally, ratification of the Nice Treaty is not necessary for enlargement. It's without any problem up to 20 members, and those beyond 20 members have only to put in the accession agreement some notes of change, some clause. But legally, it's not necessary from this specific point of view, enlargement is possible without Nice."

The same governments who pretend they care for the people of Eastern Europe operate a fortress Europe policy to keep out migrants.

They spent the Seville summit discussing how to increase broader controls and scapegoat refugees even further.

The only enlargement the EU wants is one that gives the multi-nationals a free hand to scour Eastern Europe for cheap labour.

Article 133 of the Nice Treaty is a direct result of lobbying by corporate interests grouped around the European Round Table of Industrialists.

This organises 47 European based multi-nationals such as Nestle, Renault and ICI.

It calls for "the achievement of uniformity in measures of liberalisation". This is code for more privatisation. The multi-nationals want to use the cut-backs in public spending to grab as many public services as possible so that they become new sources of profits.

Tá naiste Mary Harney has made an impassioned plea to business to take the campaign for a Yes vote on the Nice Treaty to the shop floor.

### Stressed

Harney said it was "very important that the business community become involved in the campaign" for a Yes vote to Nice. The Tá naiste stressed it was not just a question of business lobby groups making the case for a Yes vote. She said she would like to see the case being made by employers to employees "at company level".

Unfortunately last time round the ICTU, without consulting its members called for a Yes vote. Hopefully they will this time stand up to the government and argue against a treaty that can only be part of an attack on workers rights.

**WHILE RIGHT wing governments across Europe try to force through attacks on workers' conditions, privatisation and a clampdown on rights for asylum seekers, huge numbers of people are standing up to oppose them. The most recent manifestation of this anti-capitalist movement was the general strike in Spain in June and the protests at the EU summit in Seville which followed.**

**COLM BRYCE was among the Globalise Resistance contingent from Ireland and sent this eye witness report.**

### THE Seville protests were a turning point for the anti-capitalist movement.

The day before the Summit was due to open, Spanish trade unions called a general strike in protest at harsh new employment laws. The strike was massive success, with well over 1.5 million people marching in cities across Spain.

In Seville, the start of the EU Summit was delayed by half a day because of the general strike.

The trade unions also backed two days of protests and meetings during the summit itself called by the Seville Social Forum entitled "Against a Europe of Capital and War".

Jordi, from Barcelona, is a member of *Socialist Workers'* sister organisation in Spain, *En Luchade* spoke about the significance of the general strike.

"After the massive 500,000-strong demonstration in Barcelona in March, against the EU

preparatory summit, the trade union leaders decided to call the strike on the day before the Seville summit.

"Trade unions are quite weak in Spain. Maybe 15 per cent of people are members, maybe less. Very few young workers are in trade unions. But the marches on Thursday were enormous.

"They had the feeling of the anti-capitalist movement, very young and vibrant. For years trade union marches in Spain were like going to a funeral. Things are changing very fast.

### Attacked

"The strike was against the new employment laws. We now have the right-wing Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar. He won an absolute majority at the last election and has cut taxes on the rich and attacked workers' conditions.

"Spain had six to eight years of economic boom, and Aznar claimed credit for that. But the boom is over now, and so many workers are finding they have no rights at work, they have no security of employment and Aznar has very quickly lost any credit he might have had."

The new laws are about forcing the unemployed to take any job or lose any benefits. Aznar, along with Tony Blair and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi are at the forefront of demanding more "labour flexibility" in the European Union.

That means more attacks on workers' job security, p e n -

### Roy from Waterford Globalise Resistance travelled with the Irish delegation:

**"SHORTLY after we arrived in Seville we made contact with the British, Spanish and Greek comrades who had arrived earlier in the day.**

"On the journey from Malaga to Seville, every wall was covered with the words *HUERTA GENERAL AL 20 JUNI* [General Strike 20th June]. The ground was covered with leaflets urging everyone to observe the strike. The strike began at 12.00 Wednesday night so the Globalise Resistance contingent went back into the city and made joined in with several of the pickets.

"The most crucial picket was the transport workers. The government

has hoped to keep the public transport system going at 40 per cent capacity. But at the main bus station in the city pickets began at 5.00 am and every transport worker observed the general strike.

"From 12.00 am Wednesday night to 12.00am Thursday night the entire city and the entire country shut down. There were no buses or taxis on the streets, every shop, bar, post office, chemist was shut.

"Over the entire country an average of 84 percent of workers struck, in Barcelona the figure was as high as 94percent.

"Thursday morning saw the first demonstration of the week with a huge trade union march in the city to celebrate the general strike.

"100,000 took to the centre of Seville to march past the centre where the EU summit will be held today and

tomorrow. It was the most colourful, most vibrant demonstration I have ever seen, even more so than Genoa. "Every single person had a flag representing their union or organisation. Samba bands were playing on the march and street theatre kept the protestors entertained.

### Dominated

"The march in Seville was dominated by the UCT and the CCOO (trade union of the Communist Party), the CGT (anarcho-syndicalists) had their own, much smaller march elsewhere.

"At that platform at the end of the march, one of the leading trade unionists in Spain called for a Europe wide general strike later on in the year if the resolutions from this weeks EU sum-

mit are as right wing as expected.

"In Barcelona, 600,000 marched with the support of the CGT, half a million marched in Madrid were they were baton charged by police.

"Spain has one of the weakest and most right wing trade union movements in Europe with only 12 percent membership.

"Despite this a hugely successful general strike was called to coincide with an EU summit, such is the ferocity of the attacks on workers right instigated by Aznar and supported by his partner Blair.

"Earlier in the afternoon we attended the protest against international financial institutions, which was extremely colourful and loud with a lot of street theatre and bands playing. The police presence was noticeably higher today with the streets lined with police vans."

## RACISM BEHIND EU IMMIGRATION POLICY

**THE EU Summit was dominated by the issue of immigration, with Blair and Aznar demanding a tougher policy towards refugees and asylum seekers.**

During the Seville summit, 300 refugees from Africa, who have been working as farm labourers in Spain for up to three years, staged an occupation and a hunger strike to demand that they be made legal.

Jesus, from Cordoba explained, "Every year,

2,000 people are drowned trying to swim from Africa to Spain.

"They are refugees. 2,000! It makes me ashamed of Andalusia just to think about.

"And at the same time, thousands of people are coming here from other parts of Europe to retire in the sun.

"Corporate globalisation demands that money be allowed to move anywhere it wants. People should be able to do the same. It is pure hypocrisy and racism.

"That is why the anti-capitalist movement has to also take up the cause of the refugees."

## We can win again

MUCH OF the opposition to Nice will be made on a nationalist basis.

But what is really needed are clear socialist arguments about militarism, opposition to the "war on terrorism" and the neo-liberal agenda that lies at the heart of the EU.

That can happen far more effectively if the far left pool their resources and mount a credible united socialist campaign. Such an alliance would be far greater than the sum of the parts.

We face a right wing government who are about to embark on an ambitious privatisation programme to complete

the neo-liberal agenda. To shore up their political base, they will stoop to the worst forms of racism as their pledge to hasten deportations indicates.

If opposition to this government is left in the hands of the nationalist forces of Sinn Fein, it will go nowhere.

There needs to be a serious socialist bloc campaigning against the Nice treaty. This is not just likely to provide a better chance of defeating the referendum but also be part of tackling this right-wing government as they try to push through the neo-liberal agenda of their European allies.



# As McDowell plays the race card, we say...

# Refugees are welcome here!

**THE LIBERAL veneer of the Progressive Democrats slipped within minutes of entering the government. The Minister for Justice immediately started playing the race card at a junket with fellow EU big wigs.**

McDowell committed himself to a clampdown on immigration and, speaking in Luxembourg following a meeting of EU justice and home affairs ministers, declared that failing to tackle illegal immigration would fuel racism.

## Ridiculous

The Irish Refugee Council described the comments as "ridiculous".

"The kind of language being used is rhetoric about the need to fight illegal immigration—however, the message going out is, we are being swamped.

"In 1999 the Government committed itself to the right to seek asylum, in practice and in theory. What it has done since is use every possible avenue to prevent individuals seeking asylum.

"All individual actions being taken to close borders are indiscriminate and there are no legal avenues for people fleeing persecution to enter the EU."

In fact there are fewer refugees coming into the EU in 1992 there were 675,000 applications for asylum across the EU but by 2001 it had fallen to 384,000. And in the first four months this year it was down again, at 83,000.

Corrupt and desperate politicians, along with the right wing media, have created hysteria over the immigration.

That hysteria leads to violence on the streets. So after a stream of scare stories about Nigerian women filling hospitals there were a series of attacks on pregnant Nigerian women.

This is the latest in a disturbing rise in racist attacks in Dublin, that led to the murder of Chinese student Zhao Liu Tao in January

Vasile Cozma, a 24 year old Romanian construction worker, was brutally attacked in Dublin. A group of up to 15 racist thugs set upon Vasile and his friend as they walked home. Vasile received a 7 inch gash on his face from a knife, while a group of men who shouted racist taunts at him and another Romanian man.

After being attacked, Vasile had to wait for 10 hours in the Mater Hospital in Dublin before being treated.

That is the reality of our run down health service for Irish and immigrant alike.

The health service is in a state of collapse not because of refugees but because the government refuse to fund it.

## Refuse

The desperate housing crisis is not the fault of immigrants but because politicians in the pocket of developers won't build decent public housing.

The same politicians who want to scapegoat refugees are the same bribe-taking politicians who refuse to fund our public services. There is plenty of money to fund services—look at the millions in offshore accounts and tax scams.

Tony O'Reilly, the richest man in Ireland, uses his Independent Group newspapers to argue that refugees are scroungers, yet he lives in the Bahamas in order to avoid paying tax.



**REFUGEES risk their lives to try to get a better life**

## Exploding the myths

**FAR FROM a flood the number of refugees seeking asylum is tiny. In 1995 just over 1,000 applications for asylum were made. Since then the numbers have increased by between 1,000 and 2,000 per year.**

The highest number of applications ever was made in the year 2000, when 10,938 people sought asylum. It fell to 9,325 the following year and so far this year just 4,200 people have made applications.

This constitutes a minute proportion of the 12 million refugees who exist worldwide according to the UNHCR.

■ Just 8 percent of applicants for refugee status in Ireland are successful. 75 percent of all asylum appeals fail.

Serious concerns have been raised by many legal

experts at the nature of the questioning that applicants undergo and the high number of cases that are judged to be "manifestly unfounded".

Sometimes the questions that applicants fall down on border on the bizarre.

One person was asked the distance from the Ukraine to Cherbourg and their inability to supply the correct answer was adjudged to cast doubt on the veracity of their case!

■ Asylum seekers do not get hundreds of euros per week in social welfare allowances. They do not get free cars, houses or money to party.

■ Instead all asylum seekers who arrived in Ireland since April 1 2000 are in receipt of what's known as "direct provision" from the state.

This means that they are housed in "centres" with lots of other refugees and they have all their food provided for them.

■ They receive reduced allowances under the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme of

€ 19.05 per adult per week and € 9.52 per child out of which they have to meet all their other needs.

Outside of this they are entitled to a medical card and access to legal services.

They can, like any social welfare recipient, seek money under the Exceptional Needs Payments scheme.

■ A recent report on direct provision centres in Cork found them to be overcrowded, the quality of food provided was poor and there was a lack of play and homework space for children.

■ Asylum seekers have their dignity and freedom stripped from them.

Quite rightly no Irish social welfare recipient would endure this treatment and no homeless person should be expected to swap life on the street for a life of near imprisonment.

■ Asylum seekers who arrived prior to direct provision are entitled to the same social welfare rights as any Irish citizen and have access to rent allowance.

They do not receive any additional monies beyond the rate that is set by government each year in the budget.

■ Newly arrived asylum seekers are assigned to one of three Reception Centres in Dublin: Parnell West Hotel, Kilmacud House or Baleskin.

■ There are two overflow centres at Gardiner Place and North Frederick Street. They are required to reside at these centres for 8 to 14 days prior to dispersal.

While in the reception centre asylum seekers are issued ID cards, offered access to voluntary health screening and receive Supplementary Welfare Payments.

■ The policy of dispersal began on the 20th of November 1999. By December 31 2001, 11,490 asylum seekers had been dispersed around the country.

■ There are currently 72 accommodation centres in 24 counties. Asylum seekers have no choice and no say over where they end up.

■ Asylum seekers are not allowed access to full time

## Who is Michael McDowell?

**MICHAEL MCDOWELL prides himself on being the most right wing member of a right wing party.**

Attorney General in the last government, during the election campaign McDowell described the public sector, and all those who work in it, as a "portfolio of assets".

He sees workers as commodities to be bought and sold whenever deemed appropriate.

McDowell was responsible for introducing the appalling and repressive Public Order Act which is routinely abused by the

Gardai to target protestors and strikers on picket lines.

As Attorney General he drafted the defeated abortion referendum which if passed would have overturned the X-case and could imprison any woman who sought an abortion or anyone who aided them for 12 years.

McDowell has said the immigration issue being "sorted" is related to getting Nice passed, somehow implying it is asylum seekers fault that the Irish people rejected the treaty!

He is currently making moves to help form the Irish branch of the EU border police.

education and do not have the right to work.

However anyone who applied for asylum on or before the 26 July 1999 and is still awaiting a decision on their application is allowed to take up employment.

All across the country intelligent, highly qualified, skilled and hard working people are being forced into welfare dependency when they are only too willing to work.

If asylum seekers are "costing the country

money" we only have the government to blame for it.

Asylum seekers are not eligible for local authority housing. They are not accepted on local authority housing lists and not a single asylum seeker has got a house from a local council.

■ Only after passing all the rigorous interviews and having against all the odds had their reasons for fleeing their home country accepted as legitimate, can an application succeed.

■ Those who are successful in their asylum applica-

tion are granted refugee status and receive the same entitlements as Irish citizens—but encounter the same problems.

■ About 2,000 refugees are still living in hostels or emergency B&Bs with another 500 to 600 in centres around the country because they can find no accommodation in either the social housing or private rented sectors.

■ Only one third of local authorities have made any provision for refugees in their housing strategies.

# Eamonn McCann

## What murder probe will miss

**THE DEMANDS for a public inquiry into the killing of Pat Finucane should be supported by all socialists.**

The more light than can be shone into the murderous world of the State's security and intelligence agencies the more clearly will the nature of State itself be revealed. But any assumption that the full truth of the Finucane murder can be found by means of a public inquiry is misplaced.

The most obvious precedent is the Saville Tribunal, which adjourned on June 20th for the summer after 224 days of hearings during which 550 witnesses were heard. What's become clear over the course of this unfinished marathon is that the Inquiry lacks the capacity to compel the production of precisely the kind of evidence which lies at the heart of the Finucane affair.

### Thwarted

The Tribunal has repeatedly been found wanting or been thwarted in efforts to discover what role intelligence information passed on by MI5 played in the planning of Bloody Sunday and the cover-up which followed. On May 27th last, Saville ruled that the MI5 agent code-named Infliction—who says he heard Martin McGuinness admit firing the first shot on Bloody Sunday—need not give evidence or be subjected to cross-examination. This followed a private meeting in London four days earlier between the three judges of the Tribunal and MI5 officers.

Whatever information or arguments MI5 imparted to the Tribunal has been kept secret. Lawyers for the families cannot object to the ruling because they don't know the basis on which it was made.

However, Infliction's "handlers" are scheduled to testify and are to insist on his credibility. But MI5 has demanded that this evidence be given behind closed doors. Moreover, MI5 wants the right to vet and edit the transcript of the evidence before it is released. Saville hasn't ruled on this application yet. But, going on precedent, there is no doubt that a rejection of the demand would be appealed to the High Court which, precedent again suggests, would find in MI5's favour.

### Secrecy

This is what has happened in relation to the soldiers' anonymity and in allowing them to testify in London rather than in Derry. Decisions made by Saville on other matters affecting the military and security establishments' desire for secrecy appear to have anticipated being overruled by the High Court. Saville may have allowed RUC witnesses to be screened, for example, because he knew that if he didn't the High Court would reverse his decision.

The result has been that considerations of "national security" and the safety of security personnel and agents and informers have routinely taken precedence over the imperative for an open inquiry.

This factor would loom larger in a Finucane inquiry than it has in relation to Bloody Sunday. The activity of intelligence agencies is relevant to Bloody Sunday: as far as Finucane is concerned, it's what the inquiry would be about.

Demands for an inquiry into the Finucane murder have increased in volume since the Panorama programmes. Many campaigners have pushed for a more powerful and independent investigation than Saville's. The practical problem is that no legal or constitutional mechanism exists for such an inquiry. The more important political problem is that the State will not under any circumstances allow an independent public examination of the workings of its own secret security agencies.

The Special Branch and FRU operators who procured the murder of Pat Finucane and many others were acting on behalf of the State against its perceived enemies. Every capitalist society employs such agencies to defend itself against threat from its "own" citizens. The State, in the end, will stand by them.

We should push for an inquiry, for all possible information to be brought into the light of day. But the fundamental lesson to be learned has to do with the nature of the State in any capitalist society and the necessity in the pursuit of justice to work for its overthrow.

book

# Class struggle in your video store

by **MATTHEW  
COOKSON**

**HARLAN COUNTY War is a brilliant new film just out on video. It is drama based on the year-long strike of 180 miners in Kentucky in the US in 1973.**

The miners work long hours in dangerous conditions. The miners and their families live in small houses without running water.

The film opens with the death of two young miners after the collapse of a shaft. Holly Hunter plays Ruby Kincaid, a miner's wife, whose husband, Silas, is trying to build the union. The mine company believes it owns its workers and does not allow a union. The evening after the shaft collapses one of the company's hirelings calls round at Ruby's to intimidate her husband back to work.

When a radical union organiser comes to town the miners' anger turns into an all-out strike in demand of a union contract. Ruby originally stands aloof from the strike because the union, when it was controlled by corrupt right wingers, had allowed her mother to die. But as the strike becomes more bitter and violent a judge rules that the miners can only have three men on the picket line at one time.

Ruby then takes it upon herself to organise the women to replace the men. The women, who



had previously run the miners' homes and looked after the children, become the driving force of the strike.

They begin to challenge all the ideas about their role that both they and the men accepted, as they lie down in the road in front of scab trucks and are arrested by the police. Silas's attitude to Ruby and their children is also

fundamentally changed by the strike.

Harlan County War is a fabulous film about solidarity and working class struggle. It is only available on video and can be a difficult film to get hold of, but video rental firm Blockbuster has some in stock. It is worth joining Blockbuster just to see this film.

film

## Get caught in this web

**FILMS BASED on comics are not always successful. But this summer's blockbuster, Spider-Man, is not at all bad.**

The original comic superheroes were Superman and Batman.

Their adventures in the 1940s laid down rules that dominated the industry for the next 20 years.

Both characters existed in their own self-contained universe, Metropolis and Gotham City, instead of New York.

Their only concerns were, would Batman stop the Joker and would Superman beat Brainiac? In 1962 Spider-Man arrived to overturn the rules.

His creators, Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, tried to portray a more realistic superhero.

Their creation, Peter Parker, is a shy, bullied teenager who is given spider-like powers in an accident.

His first response is to try and make money by going into show business.

Popular for the first time in his life, Parker becomes arrogant and that leads to personal tragedy.

Torn by guilt, Parker becomes a vigilante trying to do good.

The Spider-Man comic became a best seller.

It was a soap opera in which Peter Parker had to fight money, work, family and relationship problems as much as exotic super-villains.

### Thread

Fans could identify with a character who travelled by bus and worried about the rent, and the comic remains one of the industry's leaders today.

Sam Raimi's film stays true to Spider-Man's basic premise as the "everyman" superhero.

At the same time it looks really good, with state of the art computer generated effects.

It's first and foremost an action film, but there's also a nice anti-corporate thread that runs through it.

—JAMES DEAN

book

## GRIPPING READ OF A BESIEGED CITY

**THE SIEGE, by Helen Dunmore, is a novel set in the winter-long blockade of Leningrad in Russia by Nazi forces during the Second World War.**

It has just come out in paperback. It follows the story of a young woman, Anna.

Her mother died in childbirth. Now Anna works in a nursery, and cares for her five year old brother and ageing father.

He was a writer whose work was considered "too pessimistic" to be allowed publication by the Stalinist regime. The family live in fear of denunciation and sudden disappearances.

Leningraders are used to food shortages and queues, but once the city is cut off no more supplies can get through. Rations are constantly

cut, and people seek nutrition from any available resource.

The novel shows an official, Pavlov, doing "impossible arithmetic". How long will supplies last among the three and a half million population?

An out of favour actress joins Anna's family, along with her lover Andrei. Their relationships develop and shift during extreme circumstances.

Dunmore vividly describes the experiences of malnutrition and hunger. Every day is a battle against hunger and cold, to collect the rations and survive.

Dunmore's previous novels, like *Burning Bright* and *Talking to the Dead*, explored inner anguish and pain. This novel goes further, and is a gripping read.

—ANGELA STAPLEFORD



## where we stand

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 here.

news & reports/politics/industry/the unions (01) 8722682 /fax (01) 872 3838 e-mail swp@clubi.ie / www.swp.ie

PHONE REPORTS ABOUT STRIKES/LOCAL CAMPAIGNS/PROTESTS

# Taking to the streets over the drugs crisis ... Fighting for a future

**ON JUNE 19 hundreds of people involved in drugs projects protested outside the Dail to highlight the continuing drugs crisis and to demand that the government provide adequate funding to ensure that the crisis can be tackled.**

No one knows the true figure but there are estimates of over 13,000 drug users in Dublin. Cork, Galway and Limerick also have big drug problems while towns like Athlone, Arklow and Portlaoise have seen a huge increase in heroin use in the last ten years.

Despite some investment things have not improved enough.

● 5,000 people in Dublin are currently on waiting lists for methadone

● the number of places available in detox units is completely inadequate

● only 9 out of 45 drug treatment centres in Dublin have

crèches, making it difficult for women in particular to attend

Now Mary Harney, through her cutbacks in Community Employment schemes, is cutting off an important opportunity for drug users to try and rebuild their lives.

Communities hit by drugs need large scale investment in treatment, health, housing, education and the provision of suitable job opportunities if the problem is to be seriously tackled.

## Investment

John, a community drugs worker on the demonstration, told *Socialist Worker*, "Overall there is a fear that drugs weren't on the election agenda and that there may well be attempts to cut back because of the downturn in the economy."

"The issue of partnership is also something we feel very strongly about because there is a real power imbalance in our relationship with the state and many of the agencies and bodies we liaise with"

The National Drugs Strategy was put in place five years ago and Drugs Task Forces have been set

up in some of the areas worst affected by the drugs crisis.

It has meant that funding has been available to support community responses to the problem, to employ drugs workers, to provide information and more access to treatment.

However as John points out, "There is huge uncertainty as to how sustainable these task forces are. The criteria around funding at the moment are complicated and the bureaucratic mechanisms are cumbersome and slow."

"A lot of work goes into accessing funding. If a project is accepted it will get one year's funding and operate on a pilot basis. The National Drugs Strategy does an evaluation and if everything is okay the project is then mainstreamed."

## Uncertain

"Realistically though even when mainstreamed the future is uncertain and you can never feel safe about how long the project will be allowed to run for. You might only get another year's funding."

"We believe that things are tightening up in relation to fund-



**THE THREAT to project funding means many drug users won't get help they need.**

ing. It's in anticipation of attempts to cut back that we have taken to the streets."

The Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign, who were the main

organisers of the demonstration, will be organising more protests in the coming months to force the drugs problem to the top of the political agenda.

## FÁS: No money for training—but plenty for managers

**FÁS IS reducing the number of training places for marginal groups, while boosting the number of top management posts.**

Dublin community groups say the state training and employment agency is curtailing the number of training places for deprived groups, including travellers.

### Appointed

An additional nine directors are to be appointed to Fás on an annual salary of €62,500, adding a further €618,750 to yearly payroll costs.

Community groups say that a "quiet dismantling of

projects" is under way, reducing training opportunities for marginal groups, especially those without a Junior Certificate qualification.

Fás had already halted the recruitment of community project trainee workers and assistant coordinators, according to the National Community Training Action Group (NCTAG).

Geraldine O'Driscoll of North Wall Women's Centre said that "a strategic and business plan for Fás has been prepared involving the paring down of funding to groups working in the community".

The cutbacks in trainee posts followed an announcement by Fás last month that 4,000 community employment places would be cut.

## SIPTU call general strike?

**MANY UNION members will only have come across Noel Dowling of SIPTU from his frequent appearances on RTE explaining why the SIPTU leadership couldn't support strikes.**

However it transpires Dowling was being misrepresented by the media. In the somewhat more discreet pages of Industrial Relations News he has argued that SIPTU workers should resort to general strike tactics if employers refuse to negotiate a new national agreement.

He says unions should opt for "progressive, incremental industrial action"

leading to weeklong stoppages if necessary to secure national pay increases.

Dowling argues that, rather than simply returning to free collective bargaining, where unions negotiate with employers at local level, if talks on a national agreement fail it would be more effective to apply industrial muscle across the board.

"Why should trade unions allow the employers dictate the agenda by walking away from the negotiating table at a time of their choosing?" he asks. "It seems illogical to me that when employers acting collectively at national level refuse to negotiate, the trade union response is to revert to our smallest, perhaps weakest, bargaining units."

"National bargaining is not the sole property of the bosses or trade union hierarchies—workers should be

encouraged to take control of their own destiny.

"A national collective response to the employers, in the tradition of Connolly and Larkin, could be effectively deployed through progressive, incremental stages of action: two-hour, half-day, day- and week-long stoppages."

One could see Dowling's remarks as the opening round in his campaign to become general secretary of SIPTU.

However *Socialist Worker* would like to take him at his word.

While we believe any successful strategy has to involve the mobilisation of the rank and file rather than run from the expense account supplied offices of Liberty Hall, we look forward to comrade Dowling setting the date for the General Strike.

## SWP activist meetings—all welcome

□ ATHLONE: Contact 01-872 2682 for details

□ BRAY: Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm contact 01 872 2682

□ BELFAST CENTRAL: Meets Tuesdays at 8pm in White's Tavern

□ BELFAST SOUTH: Meets 7pm Tuesdays in Peter Froggatt Centre, Queen's

□ BELFAST WEST: ring for details 07771 781 958

□ BELFAST QUEENS UNIVERSITY: Wednesdays 4pm, Peter Froggatt Centre

□ CLONAKILTY: Phone (01) 8722682 for details

□ CORK: Meets Mondays at 8pm in

Telecom Eireann Club, MacCurtain St

□ DERRY: Thursdays at 8pm in Foyle Friend Centre, 32 Great James St.

□ DROGHEDA: Meets Wednesdays 8:00pm Contact 01-872 2682 for details

□ DUNDALK: Meets Wednesdays 8pm phone 01-8722682 for details

□ DUN LAOGHAIRE: Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the Christian Institute

□ DUBLIN ARTANE / FAIRVIEW: Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Smyths of Fairview

□ DUBLIN BALLYFERMOT: Meets

Tues 8:30pm in Ruby Finigans Pub

□ DUBLIN CABRA: Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Aughrim St Parish Hall, 13 Prussia St

□ DUBLIN CENTRAL: Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in The Vietnamese Centre, Hardwick St.

□ DUBLIN DUNDRUM: Meets Tuesdays contact for details

□ DUBLIN FINGLAS/BALLYMUN: Phone Kevin on for details

□ DUBLIN RATHMINES: Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm downstairs J O'Connells (Pub) Sth. Richmond Street Dublin 2.

□ DUBLIN RIALTO: Meets every Wednesday at 8:30pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR

□ DUBLIN SOUTH CITY: Meets at 8.30pm every Tuesday upstairs Bowes (pub) Fleet Street Dublin 2

□ DUBLIN TALLAGHT: Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Jobstown Community Centre

□ DUBLIN DCU: Meets 2 pm Thursdays in CGO2

□ DUBLIN TCD: Meets Wednesdays at 1pm contact for details

□ DUBLIN UCD: meets Wednesdays 1pm contact for details

□ ENNISKILLEN: Phone 01-872 2682 for details

□ GALWAY: Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Taylors Bar, Dominick St (backroom)

□ LIMERICK: Phone 01-872 2682 for details

□ LEIXLIP/MAYNOOTH: contact for details

□ SLIGO: Phone for details

□ TRALEE: Phone for details

□ WATERFORD: Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

## Pensions

## Fight to keep the link to wages

**RETIRED public sector workers are awaiting the publication of the benchmarking report with a fair amount of concern.**

They expect that it may be yet one more in a long line of reports dating from the mid 1990s that will seek to break the link between pay and pensions. Margaret Thatcher did just this in Britain plunging thousands of pensioners into poverty. But it is not just retired workers who should be worried because it will ultimately affect all of us.

Parity has meant, up until now, that any pay increase directly transferred to pensions. In other words if those currently in the workforce got a 10 percent pay increase, retired workers also saw their pensions rise by 10 percent.

According to Peter, who is involved in the Retired Public Servants Association, the Programme for Competitiveness and Work, a previous social partnership agreement, proposed the breaking of pension parity and it was only as a result of large demonstrations by pensioners

that parity was defended.

Since then however there has been a sustained attack on parity.

The widespread regrading and renaming of posts that has taken place in all areas of the public sector has had huge implications for pensioners.

If jobs with new names win pay awards, pensioners who did not hold these named posts do not get increases despite the fact that they may have done similar tasks and held similar responsibilities.

## Report

The Fitzpatrick Report to the Taoiseach on Public Service Pay (1998) proposed the introduction of performance related pay to the public sector (at four levels: national, sectoral, local and individual).

If pay increases are based on productivity they cannot transfer to people who are not demonstrating that extra productivity.

It becomes what's known as non-core or non-pensionable pay. This is the government's agenda for the future

and will almost certainly figure in the benchmarking report.

We saw the first payment of this kind in April when workers received a once off, non pensionable 1 percent increase that the trade union movement agreed under the renegotiated PPF in compensation for soaring inflation. It was a dangerous precedent to set.

The final element in the story so far is the report of the Public Service Commission on Pensions which was published last year.

This proposes a complete overhaul of the way pensions operate and completely dismantles the principle of maintaining parity with pay.

Peter explained to Socialist Worker that under the new system all public sector pensioners would receive an increase based on a public service index—this would be calculated across the public sector and include all low paid and casualised grades.

In real terms it would mean that if serving nurses were awarded a 20 percent pay rise but the average pay increase across the public sector was only 7 percent, retired nurses would only receive a 7 percent increase

in their pensions.

The report also proposes that all future pension increases be paid out of an investment fund. The unreliability of these funds in recent years is well known and it is obviously an extremely dangerous proposal to make.

Despite calls for more early retirement schemes the report also recommended that people should continue in work until the age of 65.

Members of the Retired Public Servants Association held a demonstration outside the Dail during the election to highlight the issue of pensions.

They are proposing large demonstrations in the autumn. As Peter says "This is all part of the agenda to cut back in the public sector".

This issue should be raised by trade unionists in branches all over the country and should be an important criterion for judging what's on offer from benchmarking.

## IMPACT

SUPPORT workers across the country are balloting for action in support of standardising payments across all areas of work.

The result of the ballot of IMPACT workers is expect-

## Incineration

## Fight the poison plants

**THE Government's plans for widescale incineration are facing a possible set-back in the South East.**

This follows the refusal of Waterford County Council to ratify the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South-East.

The plan, would mean 34 percent of waste being incinerated over the next twenty years.

But pressure for below prompted a number of councillors to vote against the plan and it was defeated by 11 votes to 10.

Six local authorities must pass the strategy for it to be implemented. Waterford City Council and Kilkenny and Carlow County Councils have voted for the plan. South Tipperary County Council was set to vote at the end of June and Wexford County Council will decide in July.

However, under a change in late June.

IMPACT clerical/admin workers have balloted for strike action over increasing attempts by management to stop filling vacancies by promotion of staff.

in the law introduced by the former Minister for the Environment, Noel Dempsey, City and County managers have the authority to overthrow the vote of a council and implement the plan regardless of councillors opposition.

The incinerator, would be run under Private-Public Partnership. The private company running the facility must receive 150,000 tonnes of waste each year in order to be viable.

## Profits

If they do not receive this quota, the company will be subsidised with tax-payers' money to guarantee profits. This is the first step in the government's plans to completely privatise waste management under the General Agreement for Trades and Services.

The history of incineration is a legacy of growing dioxin levels in the environment. Although supporters of incineration claim that they can control dioxin emission, they cannot stop it entering the food chain. For

every three tonnes of waste burnt, one tonne of toxic ash is produced. In Europe this is put into the deepest mines in an attempt to keep it from the food chain.

According to the American Environment Protection Agency, exposure to dioxin poses cancer risks and health concerns with possible damage to the immune and reproductive systems. Incidence of cancer in Ireland has risen from 25% to 33% with predictions it will rise to 40% over the next decade. This will mean four out of every ten people in the country dying from cancer. Carcinogenic dioxins from waste incineration are ten times more likely to give you cancer.

People living within a five-mile radius of a waste incinerator in Texas were found to be twice as likely to have respiratory diseases as those living further away from the incinerator. In the area of one waste incinerator in South Wales, infant mortality rates are 12 per 1000 births, the same level as Belarus following Chernobyl.



### Campaigners in Galway marked Global Anti Incineration Day with a protest in the city.

Protests took place in over 50 countries around the world. At the Galway protest Aine Suttle, Secretary of Galway for Safe Environment spoke at the demonstration.

She said that in Ireland the Waste Management Act allows for the creation of an environmental fund but that a clause in the act included incineration as one of the areas available for funding.

This means money earmarked for the environment fund can go towards incineration.

## Mangate Cash &amp; Carry

AFTER FIVE weeks on strike, the ten MANDATE members at Mangate Cash and Carry in Galway have won their dispute over low pay.

The strikers received

great support from delivery staff and customers who refused to cross the picket line.

The picket stayed solid forcing management to agree a 7½ percent pay rise.

## Central Bank

**The union representing cleaning staff at the Central Bank in Dublin lifted proposed industrial action against the bank in order to go to the Labour Court.**

More than 30 part-time cleaning staff, working in Dame Street and Sandycove, are involved in a dispute with Central Bank management about pension entitlements.

The women, some of whom are aged over 70, voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action, although strike notice had yet to be served on the Bank.

All employees in the

Central Bank, with the exception of the cleaning staff, retire at 65 and are covered by a pension scheme.

The bank offered the cleaners the option to join the existing pension scheme but they declined as their low income meant they would not qualify for benefits. The cleaners with more than 10 years service are paid € 8.26 per hour.

SIPTU is seeking to have a lump sum payment linked to years of service, with a maximum payment in the region of € 38,000.

Management had so far offered € 1,300, an offer described by the workers as "derisory".

## Bray Sea Front

BRAY TOWN Council are to unveil their plan to completely change forever the historic and well-loved setting of the sea front on June 24th.

They have already tried once before but failed because the people objected.

Bray town council have already privatised the refuse services.

By selling off the sea

front into private developer's hands, the council will not have any responsibility for the area and can do away with workers' jobs on the seafront, as they did with the refuse department.

Local Socialist Worker activists are starting up the fight to defend the sea front. more details ring: 087 911 7526

## Mounttown Resource Centre

**RESIDENTS IN Mounttown flats, one of the most deprived council estates in Dun Laoghaire, have been campaigning for a new Resource Centre as part of the redevelopment of their area.**

The current Resource Centre provides an essential service for childcare and after school study classes.

Alison who works in the resource centre told *Socialist Worker*, "The building of the new centre has been held up because central government and Jim McDaid—through the national lottery—refused to sanction the funding necessary".

The resource centre has already secured 20 percent of the necessary funding locally. "This resource centre is something our community

deserves," according to Alison. "If the individual government departments had to supply the crèche, playschool or homework projects it would cost much more than the cost of a new resource centre."

"During the election we went up to Donegal and put a picket on McDaid's election headquarters in Millford."

"We cornered him while he was on the campaign trail and made him promise on video to give the € 439,000 needed from lottery funds to help complete the resource centre. We are now pushing for that commitment to be given in writing."

"Central government have now also committed € 1.2 million to the project."

"We will keep fighting until we get the resources our community deserves."

## CIE

**PERMANENT way workers on the railways have deferred industrial action due to be taken from June 24 and will attend the Labour Court for talks.**

According to one worker "Irish Rail have broken an agreement made two years ago by failing to fill almost 200 permanent vacancies."

"Temporary workers who currently fill the positions were not being given a fair deal". This is in keeping with the trend across the public sector to casualise jobs.

Rail workers will now await the outcome of talks and will be balloted again on any deal that emerges.

## United Distillers &amp; Vintners

SOME 180 production workers belonging to the SIPTU took strike action at the United Distillers and Vintners plant on the Nangor Road in Dublin. UDV is owned by the multinational Diageo.

SIPTU clerical workers have supported the strike which is the result of a two-year dispute over overtime payments.

The Nangor Road plant is the only source of the 50 million bottles of Bailey's shipped around the world each year. But Diageo are pressing ahead with a stg£64 million new plant in Belfast.

## Teachers

THE government says it can't afford to give the teachers a decent pay rise.

But yet it has no problem throwing a huge € 17.8 million to unqualified supervisors who have been in schools since the beginning of March.

## Million

Even the government's own costings have been exceeded by € 6 million.

This shows that the government didn't even realise the amount of unpaid substitution and supervision work that secondary school teachers were doing day in day out in schools.

## Housing

## Dun Laoghaire

**SOME THIRTY people attended the launch meeting of the Dun Laoghaire Housing Action Group.**

There are 2,500 people on the housing list in Dun Laoghaire.

The meeting heard from people who were forced to live for months in bed and breakfast accommodation. Others had to live with their young children in emergency hostels before the council would even consider housing them.

It was agreed to protest at the council's launch of the draft development plan for Dun Laoghaire. In the plan the council plans to build only 77 new local authority houses.

Future activities include a major public meeting where the council officials are invited to face the music on the housing crisis and

The appalling situation whereby stand-in scab supervisors are earning more than € 600 per week is an insult to all those teachers who earn far less than this.

It should be clear to every trade unionist by now that the government's confrontation with the ASTI goes far beyond the issue of pay and is about trying to decimate a union that dared to challenge the con job that is social partnership.

On the supervision and substitution issue the TUI, the other secondary teachers union, accepted an improved offer of € 37 an

hour and a supposed firm guarantee on making the payments pensionable.

Ironically the INTO (primary school teachers union), who were given appalling leadership by their union and urged to accept the earlier € 34 an hour non pensionable deal, will benefit from the stance taken by their colleagues in the TUI.

Interestingly the INTO magazine Eolas that went into primary school staff rooms in late June fails to mention once that it was the TUI who forced the government's hand by refusing to accept the initial offer.

## Bray Housing

**On Tuesday 25th June, 2002 at 8pm a Public meeting to demand affordable housing for all takes place in the Royal Hotel, Main Street, Bray, Co. Wicklow**

There is a major housing crisis across the country as tens of thousands of individuals and families are without the basic right to have a home.

Young people, often mothers with families, are forced to live in overcrowded conditions in their parent's homes.

Landlords are exploiting the housing crisis by hiking-up rents to unaffordable

Smyth's Pub, Dun Laoghaire.

For more details contact Richard Boyd Barrett on 087 632 9511

# Socialist Worker

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## inside

Eamonn  
McCann

On State  
collusion in  
the Finucane  
murder  
— page 9

Eye-witness reports of  
the EU summit protests  
in Seville — pages 6&7

Standing up to the  
sectarian thugs  
— page 5

Solidarity price € 2.00

# Reinstate the Belfast Airport staff now!

# SACKED FOR STRIKING AGAINST LOW-PAY

**TWENTY-FOUR workers have been sacked from their jobs at Belfast City Airport for striking against poverty wages.**

The workers balloted by 97 percent for strike action. The first day of action was on 14th May. They sought and received confirmation from Transport and General Workers Union officials that the strike was official. However on the second day of the action the same officials issued a repudiation notice to the employers and the two shop stewards, Gordon McNeill and Madan Gupta, designating the strike illegal.

The employers were over the moon and used the repudiation notice to sack the two shop stewards and another 22 of the striking workers. Some of the sacked workers had been at the airport for decades.

The company at the heart of the dispute is International Consultants on Targeted Security (ICTS) won a three-year contract for security within the terminal at Belfast International Airport in November 2000.

The company was founded in 1982 by a select group of Israeli business people, including Israeli military commanding officers and veterans of Israeli intelligence and security agencies.

Instead of going quietly the workers have decided to fight against what they see as a gross injustice. The two sacked shop stewards had a reputation for fighting hard for decent treatment of the workers.

Since their sacking other workers have reported that working hours have risen from 39 to 45 a week.

The twenty-four sacked workers have therefore started a campaign to fight for reinstatement. Other workers in the airport have pledged their support to the campaign. Trade unionists in other unions have passed motions supporting them and have taken them around workplaces to gather support.

They know that if they don't win it will be easier for N.I. bosses to intimidate and threaten other workers who are fighting for better pay and conditions.

Send messages of support to Gordon McNeill 25 Summerfield St Ballymena BT43 7DP or phone 07719574338