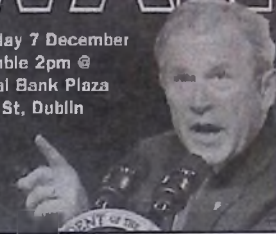


Socialist Worker

(01) 8722682 <http://www.swp.ie> swp@clubi.ie

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism €1.00 / £0.70p

Irish Anti War Movement
March to US Embassy
STOP BUSH'S
WAR
 Saturday 7 December
 Assemble 2pm @
 Central Bank Plaza
 Dame St, Dublin



ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT
DON'T
ATTACK
IRAQ
 Info 07700 353 016 swp@clubi.ie



Belfast
DEMONSTRATE
7 DECEMBER 2pm
 Art College Square

Put up Corporation Tax

FIGHTBACK
AGAINST
MCCREEVY'S
WAR ON
THE POOR



UNIONS SHOULD CALL A 24-HOUR
STRIKE AGAINST THE CUTS

Garda scandal

Corrupt to the core

THE allegations coming to light about Garda corruption are astounding.

There have been allegations of planting drugs and explosives, framing witnesses and even of murder.

For instance in one series of allegations, Gardaí Kevin Lennon and Noel McMahon have denied the allegations of perjury, stitch-ups and bogus arms finds.

Supt Lennon said several C77 confidential Garda bulletins recorded their informant Adrienne McGlinchey as being reliable. But all of her claims about their alleged misbehaviour and corruption were not true they say.

Lennon said he was never "plastered drunk" in McGlinchey's flat, nor was he ever in her flat or drunk in Garda stations or Garda cars. He recalled seeing McGlinchey drunk in Detective McMahon's house, but she was not 'fired' into a Garda car nor had he used obscene language about her. Lennon said he had never planted fertiliser in her flat in Buncrana, nor was he aware of drugs being planted in the Point Inn.

Noel McMahon confirmed they had travelled with their informant to Rosnowlagh, scene of the disputed arms find, but denied they went there to plant explosives.



FRANK McBrearty Jnr was arrested for the murder of cattle dealer Richie Barron.

McBrearty Jnr was taken in a Garda patrol car to Letterkenny station for questioning about the death of the Raphoe man seven weeks earlier. He claimed that he was punched and abused on the way to the station.

As he was led down a corridor to the interrogation room in Letterkenny, Detective Inspector John McGinley was then said to have turned to four strange Gardaí saying to them "When you get him into the room... give it to him".

Four officers from the National Bureau of Criminal Investigation in Dublin were Detective Sergeant John Melody, Detective Garda John Fitzpatrick,

Detective Sergeant Gerard McGrath and Detective Sergeant Eamon O'Grady.

He alleges that Melody repeatedly kicked him, that Fitzpatrick was pulling at his hair and his ear and both were telling him: "Come on, admit you're a murderer, you're a murderer, you're a murderer."

He complained that the interrogators showed him post-mortem pictures of the dead man, and spoke to him about Mountjoy Prison, telling him that he was going down for 20 years and that his cousin Mark McConnell—one of 14 family members arrested in connection with the case—was going down for 15.

He claimed that Melody then told him: "Do us a favour, Frank. When you go down to the cell for your dinner, hang yourself, because if you don't hang yourself, they'll shag you in

Mountjoy."

Curiously, the only part of the statement that McBrearty jnr signed was one side of a page which contains "no mention whatsoever of the death of Richard Barron". The incriminating statement on the other side of the page is not signed or initialled.

The mystery is compounded by the fact that the Gardaí released McBrearty without charge.

Another Gardaí claimed that on the night of McBrearty's arrest, she witnessed Det Insp John McGinley writing on a half sheet drew her attention to the signature of McBrearty jnr on this sheet and asked her: "Is that a good likeness?"

It has since emerged that the only witness statements that Gardaí used to justify their suspicions about McBrearty jnr were pro-

duced by well-known informants, who now admit in statements given to the tribunal that they made up the stories. The informants alleged that Garda John O'Dowd and Det Sgt John White asked them to fabricate evidence against the McBrearty family.

The McBrearty family was also the subject of more than 300 charges under licensing and traffic laws—compared to five summonses over the previous 20 years. All of these were withdrawn without explanation by the DPP's office in 2000.

The state is refusing to pay for lawyers to represent the McBrearty family at the Morris Tribunal.

A fair cop?

MICHAEL Finn is the Garda responsible for investigating allegations of criminal activity by the Gardaí in Donegal.

Finn was accused of serious assault in the case of Nicky Kelly.

In his initial evidence at his first trial Kelly gave evidence about how Finn grabbed him by the

hair and smashed face into lockers.

A chair was placed on Kelly's hand and Finn sat on it, he verbally and physically abused Kelly for hours into the run up to Kelly making a false confession.

After reaching heights of superintendent Finn retired to become the independent investigator into Garda corruption in Donegal.



Connell's cover-up of Payne

IT IS worth remembering that the first act of Desmond Connell when he was appointed Archbishop of Dublin was to give convicted Paeophile Fr Payne (now released) a £30,000 loan to make an out of court settlement.

Connell later denied paying out any compensation in case other claims against the Catholic Church would come flooding in.

the open.

★ The Catholics church has over E10 billion worth of property in Dublin alone. As well as the plush residences like the Bishops palace in Drumcondra it owns huge tracks of land. According to one estate

agent the total value of Church property throughout Ireland is the equivalent to the National Debt.

Yet the Church continues to fight against paying compensation to the thousands of people who suffered abuse by priest and the religious orders.

Horse trading

NOT everyone is being told by the government to tighten their belts.

A 30-year-old measure brought in by Charlie Haughey means that multi-millionaires have earned untold wealth from stallions.

Haughey was Minister for Finance in 1969, and also a stud owner himself, at the time when this nice little earner was let out of the stalls.

Since then, fees earned from stallions at stud are exempt from tax, which means that breeders in the golden circle are raking in millions every year and do not have to pay one cent to the Revenue Commissioners.

Although it's difficult to be categorical about how much Haughey's largess to

the horsey set is worth, it has been estimated that the State loses out to the tune of about E100 million a year.

According to sources within the industry it is worth between E300 million and E400 million a year. Put another way, if the tax-free status of the bloodstock industry was reined-in, and the standard rate of 21 percent tax slapped on the revenue, it would fund almost 1,000 extra hospital beds.

How many people could afford to splash out E3 million on their daughter's wedding? Haughey's mate John Magnier could afford to do so earlier this year.

The horsey set don't even have to declare how much money they make from the horse trade never mind pay tax on it!

Council ignored warnings of uranium in water

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has claimed it told Wicklow County Council of uranium 238 contamination of a public water supply in Baltinglass more than a month before the council shut down the supply.

The EPA said that it told the council the levels of uranium were in excess of World Health Organisation guidelines on October 9th. The EPA advised the council that the situation should not be allowed to continue.

Those affected by the

contaminated water—including a district hospital—are concerned that during a number of council meetings, including one which discussed water quality problems in Arklow, no mention was made of the contamination in Baltinglass.

Infected

The infected well has now been closed.

The bodies that warned of the danger to the Wicklow water the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland and the Environmental Protection Agency have both had their budgets slashed by McCreavy.

Labour ignores Colombia 3

JAMES Monaghan, Niall Connolly and Martin McCauley are at present imprisoned in Colombia and expect to go to trial next month.

It is expected to last for six months. Their continued safety, the abuse of their human rights and the statement by their Colombian lawyers that they can not receive a fair trial due to political interference in Colombia and the US

The 'Free the Colombia 3 Campaign' had organised for a cross party delegation to visit Colombia. But the TDs seemed to get cold feet. The Labour Party made a decision to take its member, Joe Costello off the delegation and pressured others to do the same. FF's John Curran and FG Senator Paul Bradford pulled out as well

Dublin North Central Independent TD Mr Finian McGrath, a member of the delegation, said he was "desperately disappointed. I am particularly disappointed by Labour's actions." He would not be "hullied off the pitch".

BRING THEM HOME THE COLOMBIA 3 INFORMATION NIGHT ON COLOMBIA SPEAKERS Andy Higginbottom of the Colombian Solidarity Campaign and Liam Craig Best of the Colombian Peace Association. Sunday 24th November 2002 at 8pm in the Liberty Hall Centre Dublin. Tickets for the event are E10

Plenty of money for racism

THE deportation of 12 illegal immigrants by private jet cost the State in excess of E150,000.

A group of 31 Gardaí from the Garda National Bureau of Immigration accompanied the 11 men and one woman on the six-hour flight to Nigeria.

This was the biggest

group of immigrants so far to be deported by private jet.

It is also the third time this year that a private plane has been chartered by the Government to send illegal immigrants home.

In March, six people were deported to Nigeria after they had gone on hunger strike in Mountjoy prison.

Those six people were

arrested on their arrival in Nigeria and jailed in Kiri-Kiri maximum-security prison near Lagos.

Deported

One had been very ill at the time of his deportation because of a hunger strike in Ireland and has spent several weeks on a life support machine in hospi-

tal with severe liver and kidney damage.

According to the refugee council about 50 people a month were being deported from Ireland.

Meanwhile the minister for dawn raids Michael McDowell has cut the funding of the Citizen Traveller project after their advertisements criticised the government for anti-traveller racism.

UN acts as fig leaf to cover war drive

"IRELAND SUPPORTS this new Resolution because it offers the most likely means of achieving the three goals we set ourselves, namely, to obtain Iraq's compliance with its disarmament obligations, to avoid a military conflict, and to preserve the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security." So said minister Brian Cowen on the U.N. resolution on Iraq.

It is a lie, in reality the Irish government has done its bit to help bring the world closer to war by deciding to vote with the rest of the United Nations Security Council to back Bush's war drive.

"Senior British and US officials say that both George Bush and Tony Blair privately regard war against Saddam as inevitable," reports the UK Observer.

Excuse

Strip away the diplomatic language and the UN vote was a death sentence for thousands of men, women and children in Iraq.

The UN resolution gives an excuse to the US to start war whenever it wants.

It is full of "trip-wires" which Saddam Hussein can be deemed at any moment to have failed on, and therefore open Iraq to a fire-storm.

It allows the US to decide if Iraq has opposed the resolution. It lets the Security Council discuss breaches of the resolution, but even while those discussions are proceeding the US can still attack Iraq.

"Surrender your country or get bombed" is the real message to Iraqi leaders from Bush and Blair.

15 February: Protest across Europe!

AN "ASSEMBLY of social movements" met at the end of the European Social Forum in Florence. It agreed the following statement:

"To all citizens of Europe! Together we can stop this war! We are fighting for social rights and social justice, for democracy and against all forms of oppression.

Respect

We stand for a world of diversity, freedom and mutual respect. We believe this war, whether it has UN backing or not, will be a catastrophe for the people of Iraq—already suffering because of the embargo and Saddam Hussein's regime—and for people across the Middle East.

It should be opposed by every-

Bombing is already under way under the cover of enforcing the "no-fly" zones over Iraq.

The number of US and British air strikes on Iraq has increased tenfold in the last six months.

The Irish governments opening of airports to the US military makes them complicit in the carnage.

Opposition

Amid the horror at the war drive there is one hope—the growing anti-war movement. The million-strong demonstration in Florence is the latest sign of the vast opposition to what Bush and Blair are doing.

On 15 February there will be an anti-war day across Europe (see statement below). It is now up to all of us to hurl ourselves into trying to stop this war.

We need to pull out all the stops to build protests on December 7th in Belfast and Dublin.

Thieves and beggars

THE U.S. and Britain used bullying and bribery to bend the United Nations to their will. This supposed instrument of world government and peace is a 'thieves' and beggars' kitchen'.

The countries on the UN Security Council were all aware of the fate of Yemen, which opposed the US in 1990 before the first Gulf War.

The US slashed a crucial aid package worth \$70 million, and Saudi Arabia expelled thousands of Yemeni workers. So Syria, which had been thought certain to vote against the resolution, backed the war motion.

UP TO a million people marched against war through the Italian city of Florence on Saturday November 9. All day they arrived to swell the city to two or three times its normal population. The march was a dense, colourful and energetic show of total opposition to any attack by Bush and Blair on Iraq. Coming the day after the United Nations Security Council vote, it sent the defiant message that millions will take action against war.



It had been offered the possibility of a deal for the return of the Golan Heights, seized from Syria by Israel in 1967.

Syria was told that if it did not back the US then it would be declared a "terror state" and might be next in line for the fire-storm. Mauritius, a tiny island off the coast of Africa with a population of 1.5 million, also came under incredible pressure.

It gets aid under the US African Growth and Opportunity Act. This stipulates that the money stops if "the recipient engages in activities contrary to US foreign policy interests".

It is "back Bush or starve". With more powerful countries like Russia and France the talks was less of threat and more of a cynical carve-up of oil and export contracts.

Irish Anti War Movement

March to US Embassy

STOP BUSH'S WAR

Saturday 7 December
Assemble 2pm @
Central Bank Plaza
Dame St, Dublin

US MILITARY OUT OF SHANNON
Web: Irishantiwar.org Tel: 087 632 9511

ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

DON'T ATTACK IRAQ

Info 07900 353 816 nowar_belfast@hotmail.com

DEMONSTRATE 7 DECEMBER 2pm
Art College Square

McCreevy declares war on the poor

"WE MUST cut our cloth according to our means," said the Minister Charlie McCreevy as he slashed public services across the board.

"I can't believe what they're doing to the health service. Every one knows about waiting lists that haven't been shortened and people lying on trolleys. My little one had her tonsils and adenoids done recently.

"I was surprised they didn't keep her in and sure enough that night she started bleeding and had to go back.

Outrage

"They're just rushing people in and out. Its very dangerous but bad and all as it is now these cuts will make it worse," one outraged mother told *Socialist Worker*.

Some of government attacks are plain spiteful, for instance increasing the threshold for the drugs refund scheme for the second time in four months, means patients requiring significant amounts of pre-

'CE schemes gave me the chance to get back into the workforce. As a lone parent I needed flexibility and I didn't have much confidence. It was a great opportunity and helped lots of us to feel part of the outside world again.'

■ Former Participant in CE schemes

scription drugs each month will have to pay more.

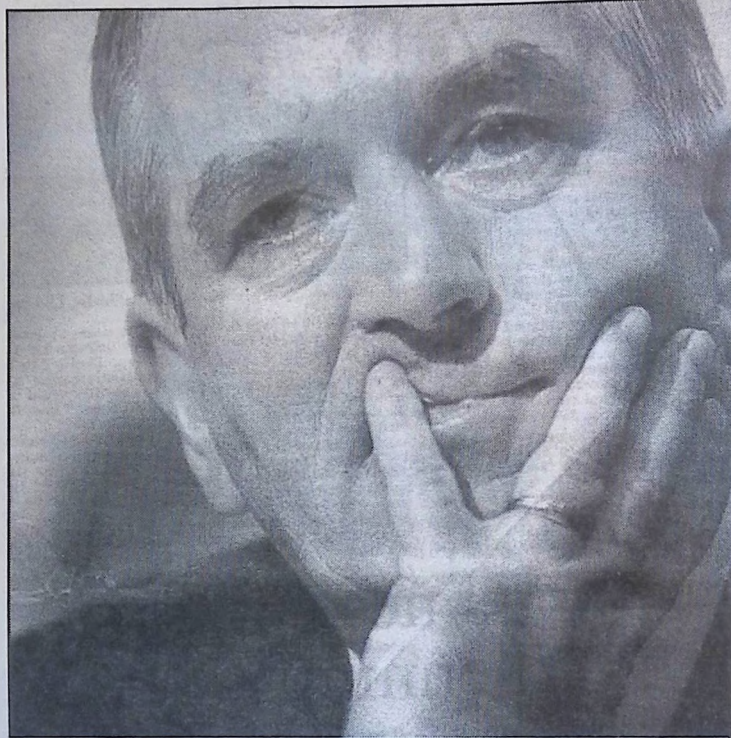
The first-time home-buyers' grant has been abolished, meaning more hardship in housing and more profits for property speculators.

The increase in the numbers eligible for medical cards has been postponed.

Local authority charges are also going to be increased. Child Benefit is to be frozen.

Higher hospital bed charges will almost certainly translate into increases in medical insurance premiums.

The December 4th Budget may introduce further "stealth taxes", possibly through increasing the tax



bands at a rate slower than the pace of inflation.

The cuts in health budget will mean hospital bed closing

Repairs and extensions to existing schools many promised during the elec-

tion campaign by individual Fianna Fáil TDs—all are now on hold.

Public transport users are to face an immediate increase in fares on the State-owned CIE compa-

nies, approval of a 9 per cent

rise by the Minister for Transport, Brennan.

They even cut money for disposing of BSE infected carcasses.

This vicious neo-liberal government is on the offensive it needs to be stopped.

Health

Despite a claimed increase of 6 per cent, in real terms health services in 2003 will receive less money than this year because health inflation is running at 10 per cent.

Health boards have struggled to stay within budget in 2002—and in some instances sacked staff go to achieve this—bed closures and job cuts are inevitable.

Some 200,000 people just above the eligibility limit for a medical card have seen free medical care snatched from them.

Costs

They must now face increased costs for occupying a private bed in a public hospital and will also have to dig deeper every time they have a prescription filled.

The as-yet unspecified higher threshold for the drug refund scheme

comes on foot of a double digit increase announced last August.

An expansion of radiotherapy services in 2003 appears to have disappeared also. As have breast cancer screening program for outside of Leinster.

The cuts are a scalpel driven straight through the heart of health service.

'THE EFFECTS of the CE cutbacks will filter right down to all the community. With fewer caretakers, youth assistants etc, community resource centres will be badly hit and in turn will not be able to offer as many facilities, clubs and programmes to their communities.'

■ Community worker, working in south of Dublin

Housing

Cuts in the Environment Department mean the first-time buyers' house grant is abolished.

Social housing funding is to be cut by one-fifth, raising serious doubt about a promised 15,000 social housing units each year.

Spending on local authority housing will be cut by 5 percent despite waiting lists soaring by 23 percent in three years.

Local authority and social housing programmes were cut by 5 percent. Fire and

emergency expenditure fell by 4 percent.

The Government also unveiled cuts in water and sewerage services and funding for both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland, the two frontline agencies in water contamination and pollution.

Urban regeneration funding has been cut by a massive 59 percent and there is to be a 17 percent cut in grants for the Heritage Council.

The cash reduction for housing came on the same day the Department of the Environment disclosed that the number of people waiting for council houses has soared by 23.5 percent in the past three years.

'THE government is asking us to implement a new curriculum with new subjects like science that require lots of resources. Now they are cutting funding, it's awful hypocrisy. All their promises on school buildings will be broken too. They shouldn't be allowed to get a way with it'

■ Teacher in Dublin primary school

Donal McManus executive director of the Irish Council for Social Housing said it would lead to fewer houses for people in need and dependent on the state and voluntary associations for help.

Education

McCREEVY HAS cutback everything from primary school libraries and computers to prestigious university

research projects.

A 4 percent cut in school building funds which means dozens of new schools promised to replace rat-infested and crumbling buildings will not be delivered.

A 24 percent cut in capital funding for universities, and a 33 percent cut in capital projects in the institutes of technology;

Information technology programmes in schools have been cut by 60 percent.

There is a 10 percent cut at second-level.

The cutbacks in capital supports at primary level means many new schools will not be built and urgent repair work to others—which was promised before the election—could be delayed.

Where there is to be new work it is to be done under the dodgy Public Private partnership letting business into our schools and colleges.

we think...

Call a 24-hour general strike

AHERN, defends the cut last night, saying: "We had to be realistic about what could be afforded in the light of the downturn in the international economy"

But the cuts are only for the poor. The majority of the Irish rich hide their money in offshore accounts like the Ansbacher scam or like Tony O'Reilly or Denis O'Brien they claim to live abroad to avoid paying any tax.

They don't even need the public services that FF are slashing.

Proportion

Of the small proportion of the Irish rich who bother to pay any tax shell out less than the rest of us.

Some 92 percent those who earn over £300,000 annually pay less than the higher rate of

tax. A quarter of them pay tax of 20 percent or less.

There is plenty of money in the corporate boardrooms to pay for public services, for instance the Bank of Ireland made over E600 million profit in the first half of this year.

The government has ruled out putting income tax for the rich. They have pushed ahead with lowering corporation tax to 12.5 percent.

Instead the government are even talking about not paying out the pitiful rises from the benchmarking report.

We are told by McCreevy that there has to be cuts in health and education, yet simply increasing corporation tax by 1 percent would wipe out the government deficit.

Our union leaders need to stop being scared of the bosses and talking about partnership and instead start to call action.

We need to build a campaign to force the union leaders to call 24-hour stoppages against the government and the bosses.

Injustice

The Department of Justice budget goes up from E1.58 billion to E1.7 billion, an increase of 7 percent. Strangely the Irish Secret service budget has gone up by 85 percent! This is even though the government claims it doesn't exist.

The allocation to the Garda Síochána goes up from E919 million to E938 million.

However the allocation to the Legal Aid Board and the grant to

the voluntary Free Legal Advice Centres and Legal aid to asylum-seekers is also cut.

Organisations representing the disabled lose out too, with a reduction of 44 percent in the allocation for the Status of People with Disabilities.

Equality monitoring and consultative committees, each lose 48 percent, and the Anti-Racism Awareness Campaign, loses 63 percent.

The Equality Authority and the Equality Tribunal also have their allocations cut by 5 and 4 percent.

'THE GOVERNMENT is asking us to implement a new curriculum with new subjects like science that require lots of resources.

'Now they are cutting funding... its awful hypocrisy. All their promises on school buildings will be broken too. They shouldn't be allowed to get a way with it.'

■ Teacher in Dublin primary school

Blair has money for bombs, but not to save lives

PAY THE FIREFIGHTERS



FIREFIGHTERS AND Emergency Control Room staff in Britain and Northern Ireland were on the picket lines for 48 hours from 6pm on 13th November after the government's "Independent" Pay Review offered them a derisory 11 percent pay rise over 2 years (just 4 percent for this year).

Disgraceful

The rise was tied to "modernisation" in a disgraceful attempt by the government to portray the firefighters as unwilling

to embrace change. But it is the firefighters who have been pushing the government over the past few years to provide the resources to improve the service.

Despite the best efforts of Tony Blair and the media to turn the public against them it was clear that the public were right behind the strike.

As Blair described the strike as "unjustified and dangerous" motorists hooted their car horns in support when passing picket lines.

In response to allegations that the strike would put public safety at risk FBU General Secretary Andy Gilchrist said, "Firefighters are the ultimate humanitarians".

Socialist Worker joined firefighters on the picket lines in Belfast and Derry. Although the firefighters were clearly angry at having

to walk out they were determined to emphasise that they had no other choice.

Having already postponed three strikes in order to facilitate more negotiations it was clear that the Bain report was the last straw.

As David, a firefighter at Belfast's Central Fire station said, "The Bain Review was nothing more than two fingers shoved in front of our face.

"A 4 percent pay offer is ridiculous, specially considering that Bain got himself a 50 percent pay increase last year bringing his salary up to £150,000, and he is telling us that we can't have £30,000."

The government's spin machine is now in full swing with Blair claiming that, "No government in the world faced with an inflation level of 2 percent would even consider a 40 percent pay rise

for any public sector workers".

But as another fire fighter at the central station told *Socialist Worker*, "it is ridiculous for Tony Blair to say that the money isn't there for decent pay for us.

Spending

"He spends £1.5 million every year for every trident submarine. It's obvious to me, the money is there, it's just Blair insists on spending it on taking lives not saving them."

However it is also clear that Blair is ready for a major confrontation with the firefighters.

Just as a victory for the firefighters will be a confidence boost for other public service workers such as teachers, nurses, civil servants and council workers, Blair wants to make an example out of the firefighters.

He knows they are the most united union in Britain, he believes that if he crushes

them then he can go on to crush the growing pay revolt.

That is why it is essential that other workers in the public sector support the firefighters. Solidarity will be the vehicle that can deliver a real victory.

Draconian

If Blair sends in the troops to cross picket lines in order to commandeer fire engines, or enforces any kind of draconian legislation then trade union activists must be prepared to stand four-square with the firefighters.

This means arguing in every workplace for workers to join the pickets, collecting money from other workers or, as has been done by the RMT train drivers union, using health and safety issues to walk out during the strikes, thus putting more pressure on the government and giving confidence to firefighters on the ground.

The firefighters campaign is a beacon for all those workers who are on poverty pay.

FBU Regional Chair for Northern Ireland, Jim Quinn, told *Socialist Worker*, "The Firefighters and Emergency Control Room Staff have proved their determination to achieve fair pay, they have faced down the government and the rhetoric of it's spin doctors and shown up their hypocrisy. We have proved that we are caring people.

"We won't be bullied or blackmailed and we will see this through for an end to poverty pay. Firefighters are disgusted to learn that George Bain, the head of the governments pay review, earns at least £150,000 for his main job, this does not include what he earns for his non-executive posts.

"He is no better than a

Canadian carpet-bagger who preys upon those on poverty pay. This week he tried to prey on those he perceives as weak.

"We will show him that he has a fight on his hands, that he is faced with the might of the Fire Brigades Union."

The fire-fighters have stood up to the government but there will be more rhetoric and more propaganda from the government to counter.

The government will try and divide them and isolate

them, we must unite behind them and build on the strength of last weeks strike in order to be even stronger when the first 8 day strike is due to begin on the 22nd November.

As Ruth Winters, president of the FBU told *Socialist Worker* after a rally in Belfast "Across the country fire fighters and control staff have been out solid. We've attended rallies up and down the country and they have all been electric

"One thing is clear from travelling around, these guys are out to win fair pay."



RED WATCH is the latest rank and file newspaper made by members of the Fire Brigades Union.

Throughout the strike *Red Watch* is producing a regular strike bulletin with reports from up and down the country.

If you want to get the latest edition of red watch for your fire station or to send reports for other FBU members to read then phone 07973 521 594 or email redwatch_fbu@hotmail.com



Socialist Worker £3,000 printer appeal

OVER THE last year, *Socialist Worker* has made a significant contribution in the North.

We have helped organise resistance to the neo-liberal agenda, poverty and sectarian violence that pervades the North, and the war, racism, environmental destruction and misery that per-

vades the planet.

In the last twelve months, we have printed tens of thousands of leaflets, petitions and posters to help support these struggles.

We want to buy a printer that will mean that activists can roll

out thousands of leaflets at a moment's notice for workers on strike, or the threatened closure of a hospital etc.

Your donations are crucial in helping us to build solidarity with those fighting back.

We are appealing to all our supporters to help us reach our target of £3000.

YOU CAN make a donation by cheque or postal order to SWP, PO Box 143, Mallusk, Newtownabbey or phone 07901 916 156 (0044 7901 916 156)

Protesters disrupt Israeli dance performance

OVER 100 pro-Palestinian protesters braved atrocious weather recently to protest outside the Waterfront Hall in Belfast.

The protest was at the decision by the Belfast Festival at Queens to invite the Israeli Yossi Youngman Dance Company which had been sponsored by the Israeli government to perform at the venue as part of the festival.

Despite a heavy security presence from the PSNI/RUC throughout, the

protest succeeded in persuading some ticket holders to turn away at the door.

And even though the festival organisers had given out free tickets there were less people inside the 2,000 capacity auditorium than outside.

Prominent

The protesters included members of the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, the Socialist Workers Party and Ogra Sinn Fein as well as trade unionists. A Unison banner was prominent at the protest.

One of the protesters

involved, Davy, told *Socialist Worker*, "The protest was inspiring.

"It was great to see such an array of groups and trade unions represented despite the dreadful weather.

"The fact that some people spoke to us and then refused to go in made it all worthwhile."

Among those opposed to the decision to allow the Israeli Dance Company to perform was well known comedian Jeremy Hardy who witnessed for himself the brutal methods that the Israeli government use to persecute Palestinians while on a recent trip to Palestine as a volunteer with the Inter-

national Solidarity Movement.

Other artists performing at the festival, including John Hegley, also supported the protest.

Successful

Many of those present agreed that their next step should now be to get involved in the Irish Anti War Movement and it is hoped that the spirit of this successful protest can be taken on to the streets of Belfast when the Anti War Movement holds its demonstration on December 7th.

European Social Forum Report .. European Social

1 million march

UP TO a million people marched against war through the Italian city of Florence.

All day they arrived to swell the city to two or three times its normal size.

The march was a dense, colourful and energetic show of total opposition to any attack by Bush and Blair on Iraq.

Defiant

Coming the day after the United Nations Security Council vote, it sent the defiant message that millions will take action against war.

The march was made up of teenagers and 90 year olds, trade unionists, debt campaigners and political parties, people from all over Italy and delegations from other countries who came after

attending the European Social Forum.

The march was both intensely serious in its political message and an exuberant carnival.

There were thousands of anti-war banners and placards with slogans such as "Stop global war", "Peace not war", "Don't attack Iraq", and "Bush, Blair, Berlusconi are murderers".

But there were also wider slogans: "People before profit", "For a just and equal Europe", "Anti-capitalist", "F**k capitalism, f**k imperialism" and, very popular, "One solution, revolution".

The start time for the march had to be brought forward three hours in an effort to clear space for the hundreds of thousands pouring onto the streets.

By early evening, hours after the first marchers had come to the end of the demonstration, great swathes of trade unionists were just starting

off. Many local people clapped and cheered the marchers. From balconies throughout the city they hung banners reading "Peace" or "Down with the war" in Italian.

In one road an old man with tears in his eyes held an umbrella with a message written on it in Italian and English, reading, "Thank you children".

Bonds

Few marchers reached the end of the route without feeling intensely emotional about the power of the day and the bonds it had created between generations of activists.

Huge contingents of workers filled big sections of the march. The march was led by a contingent of Fiat car workers who are fighting redundancies.

Further back came tens of thou-

sands from the Cobas unions, from smaller union groups, and then the massive 100,000 CGIL contingent, including thousands of FIOM metal workers.

Roberto Teramo, a trade unionist from Rome, told *Socialist Worker*, "I am proud to be here again to march alongside the young people.

"We are all against the war, a war that will help only the rich. Today is an inspiration. Now I feel that we should try to strike against the war."

Felicita Galimberti, a student from Turin, said, "I feel angry that the war is coming and happy that so many people are against it.

"We are the majority! They have no right to take us to war. Today Florence was our city and our streets, not Berlusconi's or Bush's."

Florence came to a halt against the war. We must work to do the same in Belfast and Dublin on



Opposition to war shaped the Forum

OPPOSITION TO war on Iraq dominated many of the debates and discussions in Florence. Thousands of people crammed into meetings and forums determined to build a united, strong, mass anti-war movement. An overwhelming majority agreed with a call to turn 15 February into a united Europe-wide day of protest.

The aim will be to bring every European capital to a halt through mass demonstrations and protests against the war.

Susan George, spoke about how we now face a "new moment in the world,

where the world's largest and most powerful nation, a megapower, has changed its grand strategy".

She spoke about how the Bush administration has a strategy which "is far more offensive. It is about establishing its empire, setting up new military bases around the world."

Domination

"After Iraq", Susan George argued, "the US wants a presence in many places around the world. It wants to create a world empire based on economic domination."

Throughout the debates in Florence ran a huge determination to turn the anti-capitalist movement into a movement, which also opposes war and imperialism.

Michael Albert from the US summed up that feeling,

saying, "The US war on Iraq is about them inflicting the military wing of globalisation. If you are against war in Iraq then you are against corporate globalisation. If you are against corporate globalisation then you are against capitalism."

Lindsey German, convenor of the Stop the War Coalition in Britain, paid tribute to the recent 200,000-strong demonstrations against war in the US. But she also warned, "We have a harder job in the future. No one should be in any doubt that success for George Bush in the US mid-term elections means that the US will go to war."

Lindsey argued that the anti-war movement in Britain was so strong because it had taken "a clear stand on the question of imperialism. We understood that this was a war for oil and for US power. We refused to take the view

that the Taliban or Saddam Hussein are equal enemies with US and British imperialism. We saw that it is the US which has the monopoly on weapons of mass destruction. And we saw that our main enemy is our enemy at home."

The discussions around the war involved activists from many countries. Vietnam veteran Dave Baylock spoke about how US troops had joined the anti-war movement in the late 1960s, and how that had been part of dealing a blow to US imperialism.

Cheered

Lidia Menapace, a veteran peace campaigner from Italy, was cheered when she argued for a militant campaign to kick out US military bases. Maria Styllou from Greece agreed, arguing, "We have important military bases in Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, and we are coordinating anti-war resistance. Our slogan is 'Close the bases. Open the borders.'"

She also argued, "After Florence the anti-war movement needs to build connections with the workers' movement."

"In Greece the government is attacking workers, refusing to increase pensions or salaries because of financing the war. We are calling for no money for bombs. Give us the money so we can have a decent life.

Refusing

We need to go into our factories, schools and colleges and make these connections, use the power we have where we can organise, and be strong to build a movement with the power to stop the war and win our world back."

There was also some debate about the role of the

United Nations (UN). Ariel Denis from the French coalition of associations against war in Iraq said that the choice facing us is "more power to the US or more power to the UN".

Hans Abrahamsson from the Swedish section of the ATTAC argued that we need to work inside "new arenas". He said we cannot ignore institutions like the UN—rather, we need "confrontational dialogue" inside them.

Kieran Allen from the Irish Anti-War Movement was warmly applauded when he warned that we could not rely on the UN or European leaders to oppose Bush.

Manuela from Spain said, "Our slogan should be 'No war at any price, with or without the UN.' 'If war is wrong then it is always wrong. We should build a mass movement to oppose this war and all wars.'"

OVER 3,000 people packed out a meeting on

Latin America's global crisis and social resistance. There were cheers at the start of the meeting when the coordinator saluted Lula's victory in the Brazilian elections.

The highlight of the meeting was when Estela Carlotto from Argentina spoke. She spoke movingly about how her daughter was one of the 30,000 people who had "disappeared" in 1967 under the dictatorship that then ruled Argentina.

Impose

"The dictatorship ran the state through terrorism. They used force to impose their economic programme," she said.

"They imposed a system of systematic robbery, of poverty for the people and of fear. That was 25 years ago and we are still fighting for justice." She also condemned the current government in

IS Tende

THE International Socialist Tendency, which the SWP is part of, took a full part in the ESF and the anti-war demonstration.

Over 1,000 IST members were at the forum. They came from Ireland, Britain, Greece, Poland, Spain, France, Germany, Denmark and other countries. Each

Argentina: "Today in Argentina 60 percent of people are poor. Yet this is a country of wheat, of meat, of very rich land, minerals and all sorts of wealth. We tell politicians this is not acceptable, this poverty, unemployment."

A huge step forward

The meetings were just one part of the forum.

All the time there were people sitting literature, holding small unofficial discussions or showing their videos.

In a giant hall you could walk round two floors of stalls put together by hundreds of unions, political parties, campaigns and movements.

The forum was a daily rolling 12-hour protest meeting, a popular university, and a place to discuss and make friends. It was an artistic space and somewhere to talk for hours

about everything. The first day was big. The second was almost twice as big.

Tens of thousands of young people poured in. Whole classes in local schools were empty. Some villages had to virtually close.

Focus

The forum became a magnet for everyone who wants change. It was a focus for all those who are sickened by the war drive, who hate inequality and poverty, and who identify with the forum's slogan: "Another Europe is possible. Another world is possible."

The forum was a huge step forward for

the movement that burst into view at the anti World Trade Organisation protests in Seattle at the end of 1999 and developed in Genoa in June 2001.

The pace and extent of the change is so great that perhaps after Florence we should talk of a new movement, a new European left which is offering a potential that has not existed for years.

The forum met with the world in the shadow of war. It offered a cry against all the horrors of capitalism, but also pointed towards the battles that will be necessary to do away with those horrors.

A new cycle of mob

GLOBALISE Resistance organised a meeting on anti-capitalism which brought together some of the different views on how the movement can win and what it is aiming to achieve.

Luca Casarini from the Italian Disobbedienti movement said, "The new cycle of global struggle represents a desire for revolution, for an end to the slavery imposed by capitalism. We now face a state of permanent war.

This reflects the way the system functions. Capitalism has always used wars to dominate markets.

Attacking

"Now the system achieves stability by attacking civilians in every locality. We should build days of active disobedience against those who wage war.

"We must not get trapped between two problems of the same nature—Bush and Bin Laden. They are the same

thing—fundamentalists. One is for the market—the other is for intervention in the stock exchange through massacres. We must choose our own way."

Alex Callinicos from Globalise Resistance said, "Here we are making the future. We get a vision of the kind of democracy and self governing economy we want from meetings like this.

"Who would have said three years ago that 40,000 people would gather to talk about transforming the world from top to bottom? The movement has taught us lessons. Here are four key

had wo to get b ESF frc and oth ments. They big cor By the demon Saturda they ha best ex their liv had do buildin alist r

ment." She a all brothe the good is that w struggle strength people a

ones: (1) need opn ness, sel debate. (2) central iss a perman system. (3) paralysed

"Inste tries, we mass anti have to g experienc war. (3) temptatio the lesson say that the netwo needed."

ean Social

Social Forum Report .. European S

Against war



A triumph for the movement

THE EUROPEAN Social Forum (ESF) in Florence, Italy, vastly exceeded even the most optimistic predictions.

It did not just succeed—it was a political triumph. Around 60,000 people took part in the three days of meetings leading up to the anti-war demonstration.

Over 150 people went from Ireland.

The Irish Global Resistance contingent was a lively presence in the forum and on the anti-war march.

People came from every continent, and from 105 countries.

There were students and trade unionists, unemployed people and pensioners, activists and campaigners. No wonder the thought of it terrified the right.

The Italian state, headed by Silvio Berlusconi, tried to stop the forum.

There were threats to ban it, and then dire rumours about how vandals and anarchists were coming to burn Florence down.

All of this intimidation came to nothing. Berlusconi had to back off because of the groundswell of support for the forum and the trade union backing for it.

The vast majority of Florence's inhabitants enthusiastically welcomed the forum.

On Saturday's anti-war demonstration local people lined the roads to applaud the protesters, sing socialist songs with them, take up their chants, and hand out food, wine and water.

The forum organised huge meetings on every subject.

On one morning you could go to big rallies—between 500 and 5,000 strong—on globalisation and the alternatives, food production, "no justice, no peace", the emergence of the far right across Europe, in defence of people denied rights, or on how to take back control of the media and culture.

One on the threat posed to us all by the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) was so huge that it had to be held twice in the same session—and then there were so many still wanting to hear it that it had to be held again.

Of course not everyone agreed about what was said or said the same things.

There were sharp arguments about whether you can work inside the present system or have to smash it.

"Seven of us from the Canals Community went to Florence. We wanted to meet other communities and professionals to see their experiences around regeneration.

We organised a workshop that discussed the issues and got to see a drug rehabilitation drop-in centre.

While they have their own problems with cut-backs in Italy at the moment they are ahead of us because these centres are actually working alongside services. Its one of the main things we need...a wide range of services so that we can really socially regenerate areas.

The anti war march was the highlight though, that whole experience of being with so many people who wanted the same thing."

Dorothy a regeneration worker from Fatima Mansions

"We have had a very big victory in Florence. We have shown the world the true face of our movement. We are democratic, diverse, peaceful. The future is on our side."

WALDEN BELLO, Philippines activist

"I am one of the founders of the association of victims of 11 September, and this will not be a war in their names. I am here because my brother was murdered that day. We need more marches against war."

COLLEEN KELLY, sister of 11 September victim

"This event has been an inspiration for me. There are tens of thousands of people, from all kinds of backgrounds, united in our determination to understand the capitalistic system and how we can fight it.

I've met people from around the world, from Latin America, Colombia, Brazil, and even from the United States.

I have been to massive forums on neo-liberalism, on the war, on privatisation, on women, on everything."

SERENA SALELIA, Florence

IS Tendency

HE International Socialist Tendency, which the SWP is part of, took a full part in the ESF and the anti-war demonstration. Over 1,000 IST members were at the forum. They came from Ireland, Britain, Greece, Spain, France, Germany, Denmark and other countries. Each

UNION WITH THE UNIONS?

THOUSANDS OF trade unionists came to the European Social Forum. Their numbers reflected the rise in workers' struggle in much of Europe.

French trade unionist Annick Coupz argued, "Neo-liberalism is a political choice. We have to say that redistributing wealth is possible in our own countries and across the planet." But a speaker from the European TUC was booed when she said, "We need a social market economy," and praised the idea of "partnership" with employers, and said that

the European Union could be a counterweight to globalisation.

Piero Bernocchi from the Cobas union in Italy replied to her: "There is still a basic conflict between capital and labour. Far from employers becoming more pleasant all the time, it is getting worse. The traditional left parties and union leaders who call for

'partnership' are letting companies get away with these attacks."

There was shock around the hall when Marco Bersani from the ATTAC group in Italy said, "There will always be a difficulty in bringing together workers and the anti-globalisation movement because anti-globalisation militants are active in their

time off at work." There were shouts of, "We are workers and activists!" Despite this bad start, Bersani went on to call for deeper unity between movements and unions to fight privatisation, defend immigrants and stop war. The audience applauded when he described Bush's foreign policy as being "to create a murderous pile of bones".

of mobilisations

fundamentalists. for the market—er is for interven—the stock exchange h massacres. We choose our own... Callinicos from Resistance said, we are making the democracy and self economy we from meetings like... would have said ears ago that 40,000 would gather to talk transforming the from top to bottom? movement has taught us Here are four key

(1) Democracy—we need openness, inclusiveness, self organisation and debate. (2) War—this is a central issue because there is a permanent war drive in the system. This issue has not paralysed our movements. She also stressed, "We are all brothers and sisters. One of the good sides of globalisation is that we have globalised the struggle. The power and strength lies in the hands of the people and we must use it."

"The high points of the movement such as Seattle, Genoa, Porto Alegre and Barcelona saw the coming together of anti-capitalist networks and the organised working class. The future of the movement is bringing these together in a permanent way. "As Rosa Luxemburg said, 'The chains of capitalism can be broken only where they are forged.' (4) Revolution—this was a word wiped off the political agenda in the 1980s. We were told the best we could hope for was years of liberal capitalism. Now it is coming back on the agenda. Self emancipation and the power

'We are making the future' SIX THOUSAND people packed into a huge hangar-like room 150 yards long for a debate on relations between parties and the movement.

Bernard Cassen from ATTAC, the movement against financial speculation, said it was "born out of the disillusion with the failure of political parties and unions to deliver the ecological and social policies people want.

Dominated

"It is vital that it is not a political party or the tool of one or more parties. We have members from many parties—we would lose most if one party dominated our thinking."

An MP for the German Greens argued, "Social movements are the real engine of social change. Any social movement that

stays in government too long becomes part of the establishment.

"The German Greens were completely wrong to support war against Serbia and Afghanistan."

Olivier Besancenot, who won more than a million votes as the presidential candidate of the French Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, said, "Social movements, trade unionists and young people especially have all learned to mistrust parties. Who is to blame for this? For the traditional parties, the social movements and the trade unions were little toys for their use or, at worst, punch-bags. "It was a great step forwards when those trade unionists learned they could struggle against their own party in government. Our struggle should be to pull together the anti-capitalist left wing, to create a left wing of the left wing, open to the ecological, revolutionary, Marxist, feminist and libertarian traditions."

Chris Nineham from Globalise Resistance in Britain insisted, "There is a difference between move-

ments and parties. The Stop the War Coalition in Britain has brought together environmentalists, anti-capitalists, socialists, trade unionists, many Muslims and pacifists. Its one simple aim is stopping the war. "As we increasingly challenge the powerful, they will try to block us. "All the issues debated at the ESF are connected. We are not involved in a series of separate campaigns but against a total system.

today being reborn in the proper places—the streets. "Some people said this movement would last for just a short time. They hoped the state violence of Genoa would derail it. But this movement was wiser than the movement of my own generation of the 1960s. "It did not get drawn into a spiral of violence and repression. Parties that want to relate to the movement have heavy responsibilities. "They can take part on the condition that they have no concept of being a vanguard. The movements and parties are together, though different. No party or union should call struggle on its own, unless it is forced to by the failure of other forces to act."

Crucial

"Political parties can play a crucial role in this, but not those who talk radical to get votes and then make peace with the powerful. The parties I want to see are revolutionary ones that try to unite the struggles in order to confront the whole system."

The biggest applause at the meeting undoubtedly went to Fausto Bertinotti from the Italian Communist Refoundation party: "Che Guevara wrote that 'politics is a lasting passion'. Politics, real politics, is

means. What does a vote mean to a peasant in Zambia if his choices from the IMF are to starve or accept GM foods?

"We have enormous responsibilities in Europe. We are at the centre of capitalism. We can affect what happens in workplaces. We can affect markets through boycotts. It is not, as some think, that the movement generates questions and the party provides the answers. We should work for the widest possible unity."

Mamie Holborow of the Irish Socialist Workers Party and Chris Bamberg of the British Socialist Workers Party were warmly applauded when they spoke from the floor. They stressed the need for debate in the movement on issues like the involvement of women and on the question of political power. They insisted that revolutionary parties have an important part to play in these.

Crucial

Applauded

There can be no compromise with the banks, financial institutions and multinationals. We want to question what democracy

Ian Birchall writes on Russia 1917



WORKERS AND soldiers demonstrating in Petrograd in 1917, One banner reads, "Down with the old world"

It was revolution

THIS YEAR is the 85th anniversary of one of the most important and uplifting events of the 20th century. But you wouldn't know that from any of the papers or TV. The revolution in Russia in 1917 is an event hated by people who defend the system we live in. That's because the mass of people took their lives into their own hands. Historians who are hostile claim it was a conspiracy by a small bunch of revolutionaries called the Bolsheviks.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The social crisis which existed at that time meant working people could not go on in the same way.

People who a few years earlier would have turned their backs scornfully on someone selling a Bolshevik newspaper now began to realise something different.

To meet the basic demands of the people-food for workers in the towns, handing over the land to the peasants, an immediate end to war-



Revolutionary leader Lenin

there was going to have to be a revolution.

The months of growing revolt came to a head early on the morning of 7 November (25 October in the old calendar) Groups of workers, sometimes accompanied by sailors who had gone over to the revolution, occupied railway stations, power stations, ammunition dumps, banks, telephone exchanges and printshops throughout Petrograd. Even those in the front line of defending the old system were overcome by the popular revolt.

An American journalist, Albert Rhys Williams, described the reaction of the troops whose job was to stop any rebellion.

They were called the White Guards. "They fling away caps, belts and swords. Insignia of honour now become badges of shame and death," said Williams. "An officer coming upon a greasy blouse hanging on a peg becomes a maniac with joy.

"A captain finding the apron of a cook puts it on, plunges his arms in flour and, already white from terror, becomes the whitest White Guard in all Russia." The only place that held out against the revolution was the Winter Palace, the residence of the former Tsar.

It lasted until the day's end. The people had to threaten it with cannon before it too surrendered.

There was more prolonged fighting in Moscow, but the whole country was soon in the hands of the revolutionaries.

The day following the Petrograd rising the revolutionary Vladimir Lenin addressed a congress with delegates from the workers' committees that had been set up in Russia. They were called soviets.

The American journalist John Reed described the "thundering wave of cheers" that greeted this leader "dressed in shabby clothes, his trousers much too long for him. Unimpressive, to be the idol of a mob, loved and revered as perhaps few leaders in history have been."

News of the revolution spread rapidly. There was no television to convey the images of workers' power.

The world's press invented lies and distortions, with the honourable exception of a few honest and courageous journalists like John Reed. But the message got through.

Harry McShane, a militant engineering worker in Glasgow, recalled: "When Lenin called for 'all power to the soviets', it meant that they had discovered a system of working class self government through which the old crowd could be completely destroyed. We began now to realise what was meant by revolution. We had only known working class revolt. Now we could talk about working class power."

AT THE start of 1917 Russia had been at war for two and a half years. The corrupt and incompetent government of the Tsar (emperor) could no longer cope with the pressures of fighting against countries that were more economically developed.

The army was demoralised, the civilian population hungry and angry. Sweeping change was inevitable. In February a series of strikes broke out. At this point the ordinary workers were far ahead of the organised revolutionaries.

A group of women textile workers struck in Petrograd, although the local Bolshevik committee advised them not to. Leon Trotsky, a leading revolutionary, noted that the women were much bolder than the men.

As the strikes turned into a popular rising, the Tsar fled. A new Provisional Government was set up, which thought the answer to Russia's problems was Western-style parliamentary democracy. But workers knew that parliamentary debates would not put bread in their stomachs.

They set up soviets-committees of workers' delegates. In the larger factories workers' committees challenged the power of the managers.

In effect there were now two governments. One claimed to run the country through the channels of the old administration, while the other asserted its control over the workplaces and the streets. This situation was what Marxists have referred to as "dual power".

Having just made one revolution,

workers did not expect to have to make another one.

To begin with they turned to the more moderate socialist parties, which promised to put pressure on the new Provisional Government.

But the new rulers could not satisfy the basic demands of the people. The whole structure of society continued to disintegrate. During the year no less than two million soldiers deserted from the army. Whole units left at a time, storming trains, climbing on the roofs and relieving themselves through the ventilators onto the rich in the compartments below.

They took back a new revolutionary spirit into the villages. Local landowners' houses were attacked and destroyed. The question was, who would run society? It was a growing battle between the old landowners and factory bosses, with the forces of the state behind them, and the mass of angry workers.

In some factories workers would simply dump the manager in a wheelbarrow and push him out of the gate.

When right wing army officers tried to stage a coup, workers resisted. Railway employees diverted trains carrying those soldiers and helped to sabotage the coup attempt.

There were three main socialist parties at that time. The most militant of them, the Bolshevik Party, emerged as the dominant one.

At the beginning of the year it had around 4,000 members-by the end, perhaps a quarter of a million.

Nobody knew the exact figures. Its members had more important things to do than keep membership lists!

In one city the party grew from ten members to 5,000. By July the Bolsheviks had 41 papers and journals. Yet they were under constant persecution, with arrests and imprisonment of leading members.

There was no danger that people were joining to advance their own careers. The Bolsheviks were not a tight-knit group who all jumped when Lenin told them to.

Lenin had to fight hard to persuade the party's leadership, the central committee, that it was possible to start preparing to take power. These were not discussions behind closed doors.

On the streets workers were reading Lenin's pamphlet Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?

Lenin was no infallible dictator. He too got things wrong and had to be corrected by his comrades.

To begin with he wanted to call the insurrection in the name of the party. It would have been a disaster, as many workers and soldiers still did not identify themselves with the Bolsheviks.

It took Trotsky to persuade him that the rising must be called in the name of the soviets, which represented the different currents of the workers' movement.

The Bolsheviks were happy to work with other political groups which shared their main objectives. There were four anarchists on the Military Revolutionary Committee, which organised the insurrection in Petrograd.

But when the Provisional Government made plans in October to try to liquidise the threat posed by the growing revolutionary movement, the value of a centralised party that could respond rapidly and coordinate action proved itself. The Provisional Government collapsed within hours. Its leader, Kerensky, took to his heels.

In the early 1960s he could be seen in the bar of the Oxford University Union, lamenting a wasted life. The revolution was an inspiration to working people all over the world. The Western powers hastened to end the First World War so that they could turn on their common enemy.

Over a dozen foreign armies invaded Russia and joined up with reactionaries inside Russia in a civil war.

Germany, a major industrial power at the time, had looked ripe for revolution between 1919 and 1923.

But the Communist Party, set up after the revolution in Russia, lacked the experience, political skill and determination of the Bolsheviks. The revolution in Germany was aborted. Eventually one of the Bolshevik leaders who had played a most undistinguished role in 1917, Stalin, rose to the top.

He put most of his former comrades to death, and established a brutal, corrupt regime, which dragged the very name of communism into the mud. But for those who continue to believe in genuine workers' power and socialism, October 1917 remains a model of what a revolution looks like. However short the triumph, it was an example of when millions of ordinary working people took control of their own lives.

David Ervine's murky waters

by KEVIN WINGFIELD

IN 1965 Northern Ireland Prime Minister Terence O'Neill and Southern Taoiseach Sean Lemass had begun a series of negotiations aimed at greater co-operation between the governments of the two states.

O'Neill was aware that the "Protestant state for a Protestant people" that Craigavon had boasted of no longer suited the needs of modern, multi-national capitalism.

Ian Paisley began stomping the province berating a sell-out to "Rome rule and Popery". Elements within the Unionist Party also saw in O'Neill's policy a threat to the ideology of Protestant supremacy that had kept them in power. These elements organised secret talks to set up the UVF.

Misfortune

Within weeks, wound up by these respectable politicians UVF leader Gusto Spence went out on a killing spree. Any 'Taig' would do.

And it was Peter Ward's misfortune to be working in a bar in Belfast and to be a Catholic. Spence was sentenced to life for his murder with a recommendation that he serve at least 20 years.

David Ervine, like Spence, came from a working class Protestant Belfast family. His father was a Labour man, his mother a Paisleyite. At first non-political, as the sectarian polarisation deepened, Ervine was drawn into the UVF. Imprisoned for making bombs, Ervine joined Spence and others in the UVF contingent in Long Kesh.

In prison Spence became aware that he had been used by the bourgeois politicians—the fur coat brigade of Unionism. He was searching for an alternative, "more political" loyalism instead of just killing Catholics at the behest of various Unionist party factions.

Ervine, became involved in the formation of the Progressive Unionist Party whose father figure was Gusto Spence.

The PUP has been prepared to talk left, speaking of how Protestants in the Shankill Road have been manipulated and let down by the Unionist mandarins.

It has insisted that the distinct interests of Protestant working class people be brought forward. But it has never broken out of the straight jacket of the sectarian politics of unionism.

Ervine used his time in prison to study and equip himself with the education working class people of his generation—whether Catholic or Protestant—were deprived of.

He is one of the most articulate and media friendly spokespersons of loyalism. Peace Process supremo Senator George Mitchell was moved to remark, "There is not a more impressive politician in Northern Ireland than David Ervine".

He is never short of a flowery sound-bite for the television crews, but working out what his poetically ambiguous statements actually mean is another matter.

This reflects the fatal ambiguity at the heart of PUP politics. It is not possible to consistently defend the interests of working class people from the standpoint of "loyalism".

Loyalty

Loyalty to the crown, a united front of fur coat Unionists and a re-born Protestant Labourism is in reality a defence of British imperialism, and the capitalist interests the institutions of the British state represent.

Support for these institutions falsely dressed up as "Protestant culture" or "pride in Britishness" does not serve the interests of Protestant (or any) workers.

It encourages Protestant workers to look to Protestant bosses and their British backers as allies rather than encouraging the political independence of workers from their exploiters.

You can't ride two horses at once. It is necessary to choose between class politics that rejects any alliance with capitalist interests and fights for working class unity against the bosses.

The alternative is a capitulation to communalist politics which leaves the bulk of working class people imprisoned in institutions and ideologies divided along sectarian lines. When push comes to shove one of the horses must lead.

Commenting on *Irish Times* coverage of sectarian violence in the North earlier this year PUP Deputy Leader David Rose complained it was one-sided and pandered to Catholic "victimhood". He wrote, "The Holy Cross primary school protest was a symptom of green imperialism. If nationalists in Ardoyne were not seeking lebensraum in the Glenbryn District, the protest would not have happened."

That sectarian bile is where the "working class" loyalism Ervine represents leads. Ervine's biographer, Henry Sinnerton is a teacher in David Ervine's old school. His obvious sympathy for his subject has led him to write a sanitised and superficial book.

David Ervine, *Uncharted Waters*, Henry Sinnerton, Brandon E24.99

Gunning for Bush

by PAUL McCARTHY

HAVING TOPPED the bestseller list with *Stupid White Men*, Michael Moore has come straight out with another kicking for corporate America, the documentary film, *Bowling for Columbine*.

It is mainly about gun death in the US, but manages to include Bush, Clinton, K-Mart, Fox and every other bad guy.

Dropped

The film opens with a fact, that April 20, 1999, the day of the massacre at Columbine High School in Denver, was the same day that the US Air Force dropped its heaviest payload of explosives in Kosovo.

Moore's point is that basically it's the same violence. The students at Columbine live in the same town as Lockheed Martin, the world's largest weapons manufacturer. The US Air Force's Strategic Command Centre—the guys with their fingers on the button—is just a few miles away.

Negligent

Predictably, in the wake of the massacre, the usual suspects were blamed—negligent parents and rock n'roll, this time the goth rocker, Marilyn Manson.

Manson was due to play in Denver that month, but voluntarily cancelled his performance as a mark of respect. Unlike the National Rifle Association, who held a mass rally in Colorado just ten days after the massacre, with president,



Moore shows how politicians and the media have whipped up a climate of fear

Charlton Heston waving a gun in the air, yelling 'Out of My Cold Dead Hand', to the cheers of the assembled gun-nuts and racists protesting against the black mayor of Denver, who told them to stay away.

When Moore caught up with Heston in his LA mansion, 'Moses' said that the reason he thought there was so much violent crime in America was because of the different 'ethnicities'.

This is at the heart of the problem of gun death in America. Canada, a country of 30 million people has 7 million guns but less than 200 gun murders a year.

The US has over 11,000. Moore shows how politicians and the media have whipped up such a climate of fear that Americans are now spending more on guns and security than

at any time in the last 100 years, despite the fact that the crime rate has actually declined by 20% since the 1970's.

At the same time, there is now far more coverage of violent crime in the news than ever before.

And this is always played over an undercurrent of racism. Every night, the same story—a young, black male from the inner city robs an off licence and shoots the clerk, is chased by the police, beaten and handcuffed for the cameras.

As Moore and several experts pointed out, the black population is far less likely to own weapons than white America.

In Moore's home town, Flint, Michigan, all the schools that have confiscated weapons from students on a regular basis have been in the white

suburbs, not the black inner city.

There's a vicious symmetry to capitalism. The youngest ever gun killer in America was a six-year old black boy in Flint who found a gun in his uncle's house, brought it to school and shot a fellow first-grade girl.

Evicted

The reason he was at his uncle's house alone was that his mother was being evicted, despite working two jobs, having been thrown off welfare by one of Clinton's 'reforms'.

One of these jobs was for a diner owned by Dick Clarke, friend and ally of Charlton Heston.

The firm who ran the privatised welfare service in Michigan... Lockheed Martin.

Traditional vision of revolt

By KIERAN ALLEN

Aisling Garr - Bitter Vision is an unusual CD. It evokes memories of many songs learnt at school or, more accurately, stuffed down our throats. But it twists, changes and breathes life back into them.

This is traditional music at its best—sung in a jazz idiom by Melanie O Reilly and accompanied by wonderful guitar work from Sean O Nuallain.

Rebellion

It also brings out the politics of rebellion and connects it with the struggles that are going on today.

There is a great rendition of Glory O to the Bold Fenian



Men, for example. Peadar Karney, a socialist and Brendan Behan's uncle, wrote the song.

The notes to the CD remind us that the Fenians were hated in both London and Rome and belonged to a secular republican revolutionary tradition.

There are a whole series of

new and old songs, ranging from the 'West Clare Railway' to 'Laudate Dominum', which are dedicated to the two mothers of the singers.

The sleeve notes tell us that they were driven out of their jobs in the 1940s because of the sexism of the Irish state.

Some key events, we are told, are "the 1932 Eucharistic Congress, the ban on nightly dancing in the 1930s, the inarticulate transition from west to east of the Shannon, the experience many women had of excessive childbirth and disempowerment".

If you want to hear songs that evoke this sadness but also uncover the old notes of rebellion, then this is a marvelous CD.

Fight

But more than that, original songs such as Delphi—about 600 starving people walking from Louisburgh to Doo Lough in 'Black 47'—make you angry and want to fight.

The song which was inspired by John Pilger's book, *Hidden Agenda* is about Irish history—but it is also about the vandalism of global capitalism today.

A great piece of music.

The present system has led to huge inequalities of wealth. The greed for profit is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet. A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

REVOLUTION

That cannot be done on a gradual piecemeal basis. Socialists can use parliament to expose this system but fundamental social change will not come through parliament.

The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy. They all ensure there is one law for the rich and another for the rest.

To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based much greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth. Bush's "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance. We oppose this war and see imperialism as the greatest enemy of peace.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression. This divides and weakens 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.

FOR AN END TO RACISM

We fight to end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry. We oppose immigration controls which are always racist. Asylum seekers and refugees should have full rights of citizenship, including the right to work. We oppose deportations.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

The Good Friday Agreement brought an end to armed struggle but it also institutionalised sectarianism by settling Catholic and Protestant communities in competition with each other for under-resourced services. The communal politicians from Sinn Fein to the DUP push policies of privatisation — while building a political base from the competition between 'both communities'

We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Blair government. Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction.' We want to see an Irish workers republic where all workers gain. Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

OUR WORLD IS NOT FOR SALE

We oppose the sell-offs of public services to private interests. We fight for direct labour. We want properly-funded, publicly run services democratically controlled from below. We participate in the wider anti-capitalist movement.

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. We oppose Social Partnership agreements which restrict wages while letting profits thrive. We fight for 100 percent trade unionism, free collective bargaining and fighting trade unions controlled by the rank and file.

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

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. We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc.

Anti-war action

Cork Anti War Protest

Around 150 people joined a lively protest against the war called by the Cork Peace Alliance in the city in mid November.

The crowd, which included a lot of young people and school students, marched around the city giving out leaflets and chanting slogans. At the front a coffin was carried proclaiming the death of Irish neutrality.

Later in the afternoon around 40 people crowded into a report back meeting from participants in the European Social Forum in Florence.

Organised by Cork Globalise Resistance, a number of people gave word sketches of the discussions and events at the ESF.

All described the impressive million-strong anti war demonstration which took place during the ESF and the

meeting agreed to organise a bus to the Irish Anti War Movement National Demonstration to the US Embassy on Saturday December 7th. Anti War

Finglas

A BROAD based local action group of the Irish Anti War Movement was set to meet in Finglas as Socialist Worker went to press.

Local anti war activists from a variety of political backgrounds organised a inaugural meeting in Finglas Village for November

Ballymun

ANTI WAR activists in Ballymun organised a video showing of the John Pilger's recent film on Palestine. Ballymun Against the War is affiliated to the Irish Anti War Movement and has made a good showing at recent protests in Dublin and Shannon.

activists took posters and leaflets for the Demo to put up around the city. **Details of Cork Globalise Resistance and the Bus: 086-3894712**

21st.

Previously a number of school students in the area got together to form School Students Against the War and have produced a leaflet to distribute in schools in the area.

To contact the Finglas group contact Kevin (086-3074060) or John (087-6804009)

After the screening a speaker from the Palestine Solidarity Campaign introduced discussion.

The meeting also heard from a local resident who had been on the Florence monster demonstration a week earlier. The meeting organised the distribution of leaflets and posters for the National Demonstration on December 7th.

To contact Ballymun Against War Telephone Mick on 086-3616159

CIE

Fightback against privatisation

SEAMUS Brennan's recent announcement on the future of CIE will have horrendous consequences for all CIE workers and their families.

After years of threats and rumours, his plans amount to a full Thatcherite attack on jobs and conditions.

All talk of Partnership and future discussions is meaningless, if accepted this plan spells the death knell for a unionised, secure public transport service.

For Dublin Bus drivers the plan means the following:

From 2004, up to 25% of routes will up for tender, any company, from private Irish operators to multinational firms like Stagecoach or Arriva, can apply for a licence to operate these routes. (Some may already have interests in Ireland, as can be seen with the Connex/Luas).

If Dublin Bus lose a route the minister suggested that drivers and other workers would go with the route i.e. now work on hire to Bartons, AMC, or Stage-

coach!! Pay, conditions, sick scheme, and holiday entitlements go out the window. But this is just the start: over the following three years all routes would go the same way.

And as Dublin Bus loses routes, the workers will get crucified.

Jobs will be constantly under threat, with the company demanding more flexibility and efficiencies from drivers.

Compete

They will argue that workers must compete with the private non-union sector by having the same working conditions as other private firms.

In London this Competitive Tendering system has been in for over a decade and has destroyed the livelihoods of London bus drivers. Despite all Brennan's statements this system has nothing to do with improving transport services.

Its all about attacking unionised jobs and helping private operators make profits on the backs of workers. All divers must now unite fully behind their unions when they say that there will be no negotia-

tions on Brennan's plans. Workers must say with one voice; NO to the break up of CIE, NO to privatisation, NO competitive tendering of jobs in ANY CIE Company. This Government must learn that it faces a fight unlike any other.

The unions must call EGMs (Emergency General Meetings) of all members throughout the country immediately to explain what's at stake. We then need a show of strength, to begin, a day of protest across all three companies, and a national march to Dail Eireann as a taste for Brennan of what's to come if he tries to proceed with these plans.

This march must be organised sooner than later. Drivers should lobby their reps and insist that action is taken NOW.

We have remained quiet for too long as this Government made its plans to carve up our jobs.

We must act now, not only to defend our livelihoods but to defend the future of public transport in Ireland.

We cannot allow the disasters of Thatcherite policies that we saw in Britain happen here. We should learn from their mistakes and start the fight NOW.

Industrial roundup

★ **400 Royal Liver Assurance workers voted by almost 95% in favour of industrial action, beginning on December 6th. The workers are fighting a management decision to attack their pension scheme in the company.**

★ **Bank of Ireland looks set to outsource (or cut) 600 IT jobs. Most of the staff involved are based in Cabinteely, Co Dublin, but some work in the city centre and others in Glencormac, Co Wicklow. In the first half of the year the Bank of Ireland profits rose 9.7% to E602m.**

★ **On Thursday 21st November SIPTU**

taxi drivers will withdraw their services between 1pm and 4pm and drive en masse from the Phoenix Park to the Dail to protest at the government's failure to address a range of issues that are causing grave concern to many drivers. Some taxi drivers have experienced great hardship since deregulation when the value of their plates eroded overnight. They want their erosion of income and high insurance costs dealt with by government.

★ **Management at the HB plant in Rathfarnham announced its closure with the loss of 180 jobs earlier this**

month. Workers, who are currently implementing a rationalisation programme demanded by management last year, are enraged. They are refusing to accept the decision and have pledged to fight to save their jobs.

★ **Nurses at Our Lady's Hospital in Cashel, county Tipperary are escalating their work to rule which has been in place since October 14th. Inadequate staffing levels have forced nurses to take the action. A management proposal to "solve" the situation by closing the children's ward and reallocating staff was rejected by the nurses.**

★ **Thirty psychiatric nurses at Tralee general Hospital are taking action over staffing and safety levels. Nurses have already held two hour stoppages to demand more staff, personal alarms and proper**


admission procedures for high dependency patients. Management have refused to deal with these issues and full day stoppages are planned for the coming weeks.

★ **INO members in St. Vincents Hospital radiol-**

ogy unit in Dublin are refusing to provide an on call service. Management have broken an agreement that would have seen parity of pay and conditions with nurses in the National Liver transplant programme being granted.

Join the SWP. Subscribe to Socialist Worker

6 month subscription E12.00



Name

Address

Phone

Email

Join the SWP more info

Make cheques or Postal Orders payable to Socialist Worker. Return to: SWP, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

IFI

Workers fighting for justice

IFI WORKERS are continuing their campaign for a decent redundancy package.

In mid November workers from all three plants travelled to Dublin, many with their families, to protest outside the Dail and Mary Harney's office.

Local politicians have had their clinics bombarded and everywhere a politician shows up so too do IFI workers.

According to one worker things will soon come to a head.

"There is a meeting with the Department and ICI due to take place.

"If they do not meet our demands there will be confrontation.

Ammonia

"The company needs to get its stocks out at this stage.

"The ammonia will cause a safety issue while prices for urea are high on the market at the moment.

"However we won't allow movement or contractors in. We will chain ourselves to the railings, block the gates, whatever it takes.

"The workforce is 100 percent behind this. Nothing will leave the site until this is settled.

"They can try injunctions and the force of the law but we're adamant to a man on this. We have to see it through"

Another worker explained how anger is growing as more information about the closure is being unearthed.

"Its now clear that the decision to close Marino Point was taken in August 2001.

"The Irish government sat on this information, squandered money and ensured there was no proper wind down.

"At that stage bonds could have been bought to secure the pensions, instead we are now in a situation where we have to fight for our pensions.

"It will take about E30 million to bail the pension fund out at this stage.

"The investment in new replacement vessels and boilers, at huge expensive in the last while, was a complete waste of tax payers money and is a complete mystery given the plans to shut down anyway.

"I'm sure more information will come to light about this in the future".

Workers are demanding money for the pension fund and a decent redundancy package.

So far no money has been received by those who have been laid off.

A E5,000 interim payment was accompanied by a detailed legal document which workers have refused to sign, while at the moment a package of

just 2 to 2.5 weeks per year of service is on the table.

A worker in the Cork plant told *Socialist Worker*, "The media have put a spin on this.

"The figure of E50,000 severance has been bandied about but this is very far from the truth.

"There may be a small number of workers with 25 years working behind them who could get this



but it is well short of what most workers will see."

IFI workers will continue to fight until they get justice.

The rest of the trade union movement should

An Post

Unions need to unite to resist attacks

THE IRISH Postmasters Union (IPU) is due to escalate its industrial action, ongoing since last August, and withdraw mail services over the coming weeks.

Post masters and mistresses are on contract with An Post but they say that allowances for early morning work as well as general rates of pay for the functions they carry out are inadequate.

While many also run shops and newsagents from their premises the average salary from the post office service is E18,000 per year with some receiving as little as

E6,000.

An Post staff became embroiled in the dispute as postal delivery workers are now being asked to sort the mail in their own homes.

Workers in Tramore held a sit in as they are unhappy with this development.

At present the CWU is not supporting the IPU action and officials are voicing fears that jobs will be lost by An Post workers as a result of it.

However this division is really only playing into the hands of An Post management who are spoiling for a fight across the postal service.

A voluntary redundan-

cy package and changes in work practices are already being pushed in Dublin. Divisions will only be exploited to management's advantage and at this stage every victory against management will benefit An Post workers and make it easier to resist more general attacks on jobs, pay and conditions.

Dun Laoghaire

Protest to save sea front

OVER 50 people took to the streets of Dun Laoghaire to protest against the sell-off of the sea-front.

After public protest the council had backed down and promised to reopen Dun Laoghaire Baths.

However, they want to hand it over to private developers instead of developing it as a fully public amenity.

Pushing

Now they are also pushing to re-zone the Carlisle Pier in the Dun Laoghaire Harbour to allow for luxury apartments and a hotel to be built.

The protest showed that baths and the harbour area are the property of the people.

They need to be developed to provide badly needed public amenities not as a playground for the wealthy.

Protesters were demanding that Carlisle Pier should be used as the site for the National Maritime Museum and other harbour related amenities.

Contact Richard Boyd Barrett Tel: 087 632 9511

NIPSA

After election organise rank and file!

WITH ALL the ballots counted the new General Secretary in the North's largest union will be John Corey.

However his credibility was dealt an embarrassing blow when the opposing candidate, Socialist Party activist Carmel Gates, who stood under a "Time for Change" banner gained 40 percent of the vote with 4,700 members voting for a fighting union leader on a workers wage.

Result

This was the first time that an election was held to fill the union's highest office and the result will send a clear message to the union bureaucracy that change is indeed demanded.

"Time for Change" already control the union's General Coun-

cil and although the General Secretary post has a great deal of influence, the activists involved in campaigning for Carmel are under no illusion that we would have a fighting union by winning this election.

However such elections are a useful instrument for gauging the feelings of the rank and file.

Now the challenge for "Time for Change" is to build a base amongst these workers.

As we have seen with the firefighters dispute union leaders can come under great pressure to fold in the face of relentless pressure from the government and conservative elements

in the trade union movement such as the TUC.

The strength of feeling however amongst rank and file firefighters meant that the union leadership were forced to go ahead with the strike.

That is because it is these workers who are on the bread line, not the union leadership.

Firefighters on the ground organised lobbies at the pay talks and crucially they were able to network and express their views through a rank and file newsletter *Red Watch*.

Elected

This serves to com-

bat the isolation felt by workers who have a leadership elected to 'act on their behalf' but are socially and economically closer to the employers than to their members.

Pressure

The rank and file organisation of the firefighters means that there is more pressure on the union leadership from below than from above, i.e. the government and the trade union bureaucracy.

This gave confidence to the union leadership to call a strike because they new the support was there to carry it through.

Activists in "Time for Change" must now turn their attention to building such organisation and they can do this by using the contacts built up while campaigning in the election.

That would mean that the positive result in the election is turned into a well-organised network amongst the rank and file members of NIPSA providing a pole of attraction for those who feel that they cannot fight through the leadership.

It is crucial that the emphasis is now on building "Time for Change", and that this is given priority over fighting in elections.

Health board



THE CLEANERS formerly employed by Belgrove Cleaning Services have forced their former employers to give them a pay out of E8,000.

Pickets on the new company, Direct Cleaning

Services (set up immediately after BCS "folded"), led last week to a meeting with management and an offer of E1,000 was turned into E8,000.

Picketing

Workers are currently

picketing the Eastern Health Board HQ at Dr. Steevens Hospital.

The women deserve their jobs back and the EHB should deliver on this.

Throughout the dispute the cleaners got support from other SIPTU hospital workers and

local people attended a fundraiser organised by the Ballyfermot branch of *Socialist Worker* where E850 was raised. Donations would be welcomed as the fight to win their jobs back continues. Forward them to Brid Smith 087 9090166, or SIPTU c/o Liberty Hall

Globalise Resistance

AROUND the country Globalise Resistance is organising a series of report back meetings from the European Social Forum.

At a report back meeting in Dublin some 100 people packed a room in Liberty hall.

Injustice

Nicola Coleman was sponsored by her union, the CPSU, to travel to Florence "I learned about all

the injustice there is in the world and about all the powers given to the multinational corporations who don't give a damn about ordinary people.

"I went to a conference on the General Agreement on Trade in Services and I think the implications of GATS is frightening.

"It will basically make it illegal to invest in public services.

"There are about 160 areas included

ranging from health and education to libraries and broadcasting, and they intend to remove all barriers to trade in them all.

"For me the large trade union presence on the Saturday demonstration was very important."

Extraordinary

Aidan McKeown a member of FEASTA said "It was an extraordinary event.

"So much was

happening on so many fronts, people were asking questions about everything.

"It was a young people's occasion but there was a huge age range too.

"For me GATS was the most important thing in terms of political education.

"The GATS is proceeding without any popular consent and is being kept from political view with all our information gleaned from leaks.

"It is being pushed

by European multinationals and incredibly the negotiations will be infinite.

"This means that anything can be brought into GATS at any time and it is essentially irreversible".

Deirdre de Burca Green Party councillor, was also in Florence:

"I think we were demonstrating opposition to all aspects of neo-liberalism including war, and there was a real sense of the possibil-

ities of the movement.

"It created a critical space where people could come together and there is a real sense of power to be gained from people getting together and sharing ideas."

To find out about other report-back meetings in your area or to get involved with Globalise Resistance ring 087 903228 or email globalise_resistance@yahoo.com

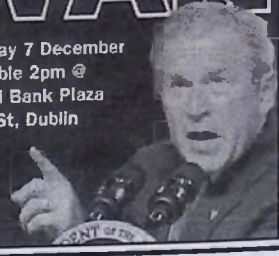
Socialist Worker

(01) 8722682 <http://www.swp.ie> swp@clubi.ie

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

€1.00 / £0.70p

Irish Anti War Movement
March to US Embassy
STOP BUSH'S WAR
 Saturday 7 December
 Assemble 2pm @
 Central Bank Plaza
 Dame St, Dublin



ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT
DON'T ATTACK IRAQ
 Info 07000 353 816 www.belfast@hotmail.com
BELFAST DEMONSTRATE
7 DECEMBER 2pm
 Art College Square



Blair and Bain's 'offer' is an insult

FIREFIGHTERS DESERVE MORE



"WHAT A bloody insult."

That's how Matt Lee, chair of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in Derbyshire, described the "interim findings" of the sham inquiry set up by the government into firefighters' and control room operators' pay.

Anger swept the fire service as 55,000 FBU members discovered that the Bain inquiry is insisting on a worse deal than the one they have already rejected.

Sir George Bain's offer is 4 percent this year.

That is the same as the employers' offer of three months ago. This time it is conditional on firefighters accepting attacks on working conditions and the level of fire cover.

The media claims the offer is worth 11 percent in one go.

That comes from adding in a pay rise of 7 percent which will be introduced in 12 months time. Even after this, firefighters would still be on £23,900 a year—less than the police.

Yet Bain, who is on many times that much, claims that firefighters are well paid.

FBU leaders have bent over backwards to find a compromise—even suspending three strikes and provoking opposition from many of their members.

The proposals from Bain, which have the backing of the government, by contrast are provocative and hard faced.

He even rejects calls for a new pay formula, which the employers had conceded in negotiations.

FBU general secretary Andy Gilchrist says, "We are beginning to suspect that those in the dark corners of Downing Street are deliberately trying to provoke a strikes."

He's absolutely right.

The government has forced this confrontation with the firefighters with the aim of frightening every group of workers from fighting back.

A victory for the FBU will be a step forward for every other group.

That's why everyone should get behind the firefighters.

■ For more on the Firefighters turn to page 5