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Socialist Worker



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Stuffed by McDonalds page 9

DISCONTENT GROWS IN THE RANKS OF THE US ARMY...

'WON'T FIGHT BUSH'S DIRTY WAR'

RESISTANCE TO THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ HAS SPREAD TO THE US ARMY ITSELF, says Simon Assaf



FIRST CAME the letters to local papers from grieving relatives.

Then, in ones and twos, young deserters began to slip across the border to Canada.

Finally the first underground papers appeared among the troops, with reports of discontent in the ranks.

This is not Vietnam in 1971, but the US today. Opposition to the occupation is growing among soldiers and "military families"—working class Americans who see the army as the only route to further education.

Discontent takes the form of small acts of defiance—e-mails back home or anti-war posters on military vehicles—through to units refusing to obey

orders, faking patrols and, in some cases, desertion.

David Sanders, 20, from Arizona, fled to Canada after hearing his unit would be posted to Iraq. He told *Socialist Worker*:

"I was fully against the war. Like many of my comrades I joined up to get an education. Many of the recruits felt unhappy about the war.

"We knew we were being lied to about the reasons they were sending us. We knew it was about oil and money.

"We began to hear how the suicide rate in Iraq was high, and that many soldiers wanted to desert.

"Many soldiers, sailors and pilots are

beginning to feel unhappy about the war, and morale is plummeting—we started feeling like this is the new Vietnam.

"When news came that we were being sent to Iraq, I jumped on a Greyhound bus and fled to Canada."

For David desertion was a hard choice. His father, a Marine for 13 years, refuses to speak to him.

David also faces imprisonment in the notorious Levinworth military prison if Canadian authorities refuse his plea for asylum.

But he knows that he will not fight for Bush's dirty war.

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FIANNA FAIL CARES... FOR ITSELF

FIANNA Fáil attempted to re-brand itself as a 'caring' party during its two day get-together for its 110 member parliamentary party in the luxury Inchydoney Hotel and Spa.

A source told *Socialist Worker* that the minimum cost of hosting such a conference runs to €42,000.

This is enough to buy 30,000 dinners in Focus Ireland's café for homeless people in central Dublin.

Fianna Fáil's love-in with itself took place the same week that figures showed drug addiction on the increase.

An inner city community drug worker told us that 'addiction levels are clearly linked to an increase in relative poverty and lack of amenities and services for young people. €42,000 would easily pay for an outreach worker to assist people stuck in desperate situations to get help.'

PENSIONS COVERAGE DROP

National Pensions Week is supposed to be about encouraging employees to take out pensions.

The Government target is to push up pension coverage of the workforce from 50 percent to 70 percent.

But they do not say what kind of pension they prefer. Nor do they attack employers who are pushing new employees out of existing schemes.

In 2003, the number of workers on a defined benefit scheme fell by a staggering 11 percent. Defined benefit schemes guarantee workers a proportion of their final salary.

Employers are forcing workers onto either private pension schemes or 'defined contribution schemes', which only give back what was invested in stock markets.

Resistance among US troops grows

Iraq veterans speak out against the war



■ Iraq Veterans Against the War on the move

THOMAS Barton is a former organiser for Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the force behind Travelling Soldier.

This new paper directed at discontented soldiers in the US army is inspired by *Broken Arrow*, the anti-war soldiers' paper in Vietnam.

Thomas says that the kind of discontent that began to build among troops in Vietnam is beginning to appear again today: "It's not that what happened could happen

again.

"What happened before is happening again, right in front of our eyes, at a higher level of awareness and organisation."

Other Vietnam veterans have reopened the "underground railway", spiriting war resisters across the border to Canada.

In July a group of soldiers formed Iraq Veterans Against the War—modelling itself on the 15,000-strong Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

The soldiers have called on their comrades

to speak out against the occupation.

The US military brass fear the "Vietnam syndrome" is returning to haunt them. Opposition to that war began among serving soldiers and spread to working class communities.

Killing

By 1975, on the eve of the US defeat in Vietnam, over 30,000 soldiers had deserted to Canada, and the biggest killer of US army officers was their own men.

Opposition among the troops in Iraq has not

reached the levels of the Vietnam War, but growing unease over the war is feeding into wider discontent back home.

Dante Zappala, a high school teacher, wrote to the *Los Angeles Times* after hearing that his brother was killed in Baghdad:

"I've had countless people tell me my brother is a hero and died defending our freedom.

"In a country that promotes the virtues of the free market, he died for the benefit of the war profiteers and for very little benefit to himself."

'You killed some civilians, and you're gonna have to live with it, partner'

A FOUNDER of the Iraqi Veterans Against the War, Jimmy Massey, described the group he set up. He told the *Smoky Mountain News* that the war "was like turning a bunch of pitbulls loose on a cage full of rabbits.

"One minute you're passing out candy to a little kid, and ten minutes later you're opening fire on a vehicle with women and children. And the Iraqis saw that, they saw the evil side to Americans. And we set ourselves up for failure from the beginning."

For Massey, a sergeant in the Marines with 13 years service, the wanton killing in Iraq was too much to bear. He went to his superior and demanded he be discharged.

Denounced

"I told him, 'Thank you sergeant major, I don't want your money anymore. I don't want your benefits. You killed some civilians, and you're gonna have to live with it, partner, and I'm gonna tell the truth.'"

Opposition to the war is also feeding into anger at the Democrats ahead of the elections. *Travelling Soldier* denounced presidential hopeful John Kerry as a "killer in chief wannabe who wants to send more troops".

The paper told soldiers, "Every moment spent campaigning for Kerry is a moment wasted on what doesn't work.

"Every moment spent trying to build the anti-war movement to put a fire under the feet of politicians from BOTH parties is one spent on what works.

After years of under-investment in infrastructure:

Water charges won't bring an improved service

AS THE debate hots up about the threatened introduction of water charges to the North, details are emerging of years of under-investment by the British government in Northern Ireland's infrastructure.

As the floods in Derry, Belfast and elsewhere showed, the water and sewerage system badly needs upgrading.

There are parts of Northern Ireland where raw sewerage is being pumped into the sea.

This clear need for upgrading is being used by some environmental-

ists as an argument in favour of water charges. But we've been paying for water for decades and the government has not been using that money to modernise the system.

Upgrade

For example, in England, Margaret Thatcher's government gave the Water Service £6.6bn to upgrade the infrastructure before privatisation. The North has had no such "Green Dowry".

Water Service trade unions estimate that a similar level of investment on a pro-rata basis for the size of population in Northern Ireland would

amount to £345million.

This would provide most of the money needed for modernisation, without any water charges, just an annual rates increase of less than £30.

The situation with rail is very similar. In the course of the campaign to save the rail link between Belfast and Derry, it was discovered that the subsidy in NI per passenger mile travelled by rail is only 5.3p.

This compares with 22.1p for ScotRail, 35.8p for Cardiff Valleys Network and 41.5p for Merseyrail.

Yet people in the North pay the same level of tax

as in England, Scotland or Wales.

What have the mainstream parties, especially those who say they stand with the oppressed, been

doing for the last ten years?

The taxpayer provides them with huge resources to employ researchers, advisors and other staff.

Why have they not been highlighting these economic injustices and putting them top of the agenda in talks about devolution?

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Thousands to gather for ESF

2004 european social forum

ACTIVISTS from all over Europe will gather in London from 14 to 17 October for the third European Social Forum.

Up to 400 are expected to attend from Ireland, including delegates from the anti-war movement, the unions, the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, and the Anti-Bin Tax campaign.

It is an enormous event. There are over 900 meetings and cultural events, including a free concert with the Asian Dub Foundation. Last year, 40,000 people turned up in Paris. There may be even more in London.

People come to the ESF because they care about war, Genetically Modified food, racism, privatisation and many other causes. Then they all go to each other's meetings. They network, make links, make a common cause.

They come away with a feeling that they are part of one movement – that it's all connected.

On the final day of the event, there is an Assembly of the Social Movements which will decide on co-ordinated actions for the next year.

There are proposals to call a day of action against the new EU constitution; to visit workplaces for a unionisation drive; to close down the G8 meeting in Scotland in July 2005.

But above all the forum gives activists a real, practical sense that 'Another world is possible'.

Today there are many workers who know that Social Partnership is a fraud that has weakened the unions. But they don't really believe there is an alternative to the demands of the market. So they often worry that if they don't accept one deal, a worse one will be offered.

The European Social Forum helps to change that. It gives a vision that will infuse struggles in the coming year with a new sense of determination.

Not everyone can go to London for four days. But if we organise quickly, we can send many people who will report back.

Another Europe is Possible is the Irish organisation which is mobilising for the London event.

They have printed sponsorship forms for individuals to raise financial support from workmates and friends. They are printing thousands of leaflets and posters so people hear about it.

They will be organising a space at the ESF where delegates from Ireland can meet, relax, discuss and find out what is happening.

■ **To get all the information you need, contact them on 087 6490261 or visit their web site at www.freewebs.com/anotheruropeispossible**

Register early:

■ **You register for the ESF by paying £30 (waged) or £20 (unwaged) online at www.fse-esf.org or by sending a cheque to ESF c/o T+G, 218 Green Lanes, London N4 2HB.**

■ **If you register before the end of this month, you get a free travel pass for London, courtesy of the Greater London Council.**



■ **Come to the ESF in London in October**

Why we are going to the ESF



Niall Smyth, primary school teacher

There is an attempt to turn education into a commodity to be bought and sold rather than something which is the right of all people. This will see the increased marginalisation of a huge section of society from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Previous ESF meetings have led to great events such as the global anti-war demonstrations on February 15th last year. I think the ESF offers us all the opportunity to learn from others across Europe about the need to defend education as a public service — provided as a right, not as a privilege to those who can afford it.

In turn I feel that with our own experience of fighting the drive to privatise primary

teacher training in the guise of Hibernia, we can have something important to contribute to the debate at the ESF in London. I personally am really looking forward to it!



Sinéad Ní Bhroin, Secretary Irish Anti-War Movement

For me there are two primary reasons why the European Social Forum is the most important European global justice gathering for all those committed to creating a better world.

Firstly, by bringing thousands of people together from all over the world, facilitating debate via seminars and workshops, and bringing home exciting initiatives, the ESF enables us to create a consistent approach throughout Europe in our fight against the neo-liberal agen-

da.

The rapid growth of the European anti-war movement can be directly attributed to the first ESF gathering in Florence.

From the historic mass demonstrations of February 15th to the fall of the Spanish Government of Aznar and the disastrous local elections results for the UK Government where over 400 council seats were lost, we have seen how a co-ordinated alternative to war, and indeed racism and social injustice, can make very real long-term changes to the world we live in.

Secondly, it is an invaluable opportunity to create an internationalist vision of the alternative world we want. Far too often we can become a little parochial in our approach. We get caught up in the micro arguments that at times beset the movements here at home.

By being part of an international event such as the ESF focuses the mind in a very inspirational and exciting way on what is actually important, i.e. that we all collectively work together to make another world possible.

Brendan Archibold, MANDATE official involved Dunnes Stores anti-apartheid boycott

My first participation in the European Social Forum involves a con-



tribution to the debate on the relevance of the anti-apartheid boycott campaign to the Palestinian struggle.

The boycott tactic is often raised in the context of Israeli goods and hopefully the debate will be advanced somewhat during the ESF.

In addition to the debate on the boycott question, attendance at the ESF provides an opportunity to meet with anti-war and anti-globalisation groups from around the world.

My own union took a very strong anti-war stance at its conference in April of this year, demonstrating yet again that the position taken by trade unionists at grass roots level is often much more progressive than that taken by the establishment figures in trade union circles.

Eamonn McCann

Is this man an honest broker?



■ Jonathan Powell

IT'S generally accepted the Provos and the Paisleyites don't trust one another an inch. How could it be otherwise, given what they represent and after the last 30 years? Thus the splurge of articles explaining the need to "build trust" if any secure deal is to be done.

Strange that nobody makes much of the untrustworthy nature of another leading figure at the Leeds Castle talks—Blair's personal envoy, Downing Street chief of staff Jonathan Powell.

Powell talking about the need for all sides to renounce violence is like Dr. Harold Shipman delivering a lecture on care of the elderly.

On September 19th 2002, as Blair fine-tuned the lies he was using to lure Britain into war with Iraq, Powell became alarmed that the intelligence information wasn't helpful. He e-mailed intelligence chief John Scarlett:

"I think the statement on page 19 that 'Saddam is prepared to use chemical and biological weapons if he believes his regime is under threat' is a bit of a problem.

"It backs up the argument that there is no CBW (chemical and biological weapons) threat and we will only create one if we attack him. I think you should redraft the para." Which Scarlett duly did.

Powell was admitting that the truth was the opposite of the case Blair was making. So he wanted the reverse of the truth. This is a man plainly willing to lie to precipitate the misery and death that war inevitably brings.

What does it say about those gathered in the leafy luxury of Leeds Castle that not one is prepared to throw this fact back in Powell's teeth? Or even to make reference to it in interviews or public statements on progress, if any, in the discussions?

What's revealed here is that all the Northern parties accept that the conflict they are discussing is primarily between "the two communities."

If a memo were unearthed quoting Peter Robinson suggesting that lies be told to persuade Unionist people of the case for violence, wouldn't the Nationalist parties be shouting their anger on every news bulletin for a month? As Unionists would if Martin McGuinness were shown to have engaged in the same sort of manoeuvre.

But once it's accepted that the British are, essentially, standing above and between "the two communities," their involvement in violence elsewhere becomes irrelevant to the issue.

It's a far cry from the days when Nationalists—"Republicans" most shrilly of all—would regularly insist that their conflict was decidedly not with the Unionists but with Britain.

The untrustworthy character of Britain in other eras and parts of the world would be cited. Once the perfidious British were ejected or persuaded to depart, ran the theory, Unionists and Nationalists could get down to doing a deal.

The relevance of the British to a deal with Irish Nationalism has now been turned on its head. Just a couple of days before the decampment to Kent, Sinn Fein chairman Mitchel McLaughlin publicly suggested that if the talks come to nothing, Britain should form "an alliance" with Nationalists to reach a settlement above the Unionists' heads.

No essential contradiction, then, between the British ruling class and the interests represented by Sinn Fein.

Just as socialists have been arguing for years.

OECD urges payment for education

THE Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has launched its report into Higher Education amid much fanfare. Once again it has called for fees to be introduced.

The OECD is by no means a neutral body that carefully considered the evidence.

It works alongside the IMF and the World Bank to push policies associated with the Washington Consensus. These call for tax cutting, a reduced role for the state and more privatisation. The renowned French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu once called the OECD

'an armed extension' of neo-liberal economics.

It works under the auspices of World Trade Organisation rules which seek to turn education into a commodity which can be traded.

The neo-liberal ideal is to have private companies tendering to provide educational services to student 'customers'. Charging fees is an essential part of the strategy of turning education into a profitable commodity.

The privately-owned

Dublin Business School was recently taken over by Kaplan, a large US education provider. They are hoping to expand in Ireland as the education market opens up.

The OECD team for the report included former Australian Education Minister John Hawkins who introduced fees in the late eighties. He subsequently left politics for a career in business.



■ Protesting against student fees

Fees: An attack on poorer students

THE OECD claims that fees would allow the Government to target resources to help poorer students. But it is not true.

In Australia the numbers of low income students in medicine and law has fallen by 38 percent.

In New Zealand, student fees rose sharply in the 1990s.

A 2001 report showed that students from the richest schools were five times more likely to attend university than students from poorer backgrounds.

The report also found that women took

twice as long to repay student loans as men — mainly because they earned less.

Decreased

In Canada, a study of five Ontario medical schools showed that the proportion of students from families who had less than \$40,000 dol-

lars decreased by a third after fees were introduced.

The OECD's 'concern' for poorer students is an attempt to present the reintroduction of fees as socially progressive.

Neo-liberal initiatives are always characterised in this way.

Standing together against racism



■ South Belfast Anti racist Network protest

By MARK HEWITT
South Belfast ARN
(personal capacity)

OVER 150 people protested in South Belfast against the ongoing campaign of racism in the area.

Called by the South Belfast Anti-Racism Network, protestors faced down pouring rain to spell out the need to confront the rise

in racism.

Throughout the summer there have been regular assaults on people from the minority ethnic community.

A number of families and individuals have had to flee the area. Particularly horrific was the attack on the Hossain family in July—two petrol bombs were thrown at their house as the mother, father and 5 year old daughter slept. There have been around 20 attacks on the Hossains.

Across Northern Ireland there has been a 100 percent rise in recorded racist attacks.

Between April 2002 and April 2003 there were 226 attacks reported. Last year for the same period the figure was 453.

The South Belfast ARN also criticised the police for making matters worse.

The PSNI issued a press statement claiming that they had intelligence regarding increased attacks in the run up to the

anniversary of September 11.

The local ARN pointed out that their warning was so vague as to help create a climate of fear and that this was coming from a force who had made just 8 prosecutions in the past year for race hatred crime.

The ARN has promised to deepen its campaign in the coming months.

■ The South Belfast ARN can be contacted at www.arnni.tk.

PHOTO: GRÁINNE CLOSE

AFTER BESLAN:

What future for Chechnya?



By SÍOFRA NÍ
CHONGHAILE

THE harrowing images of tiny corpses and grief-stricken relatives in North Ossetia have enraged and nauseated the world.

Three years after 9/11, the Beslan events have forced many to ask whether the cause of Chechen freedom is now poisoned beyond salvation.

For this was no symbolic attack on capital and empire. This was the deliberate targeting of children.

Yet in the flurry of condemnation, not one world leader asked about the 42,000 Chechen children killed by Russian soldiers.

The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, blamed the massacre on 'Islamic terrorists'. He was trying to hide the fact that Russian soldiers have murdered, raped and tortured thousands of Chechens.

Chechen leaders such as Aslan Maskhadov, have been swept aside by the sheer scale of the Putin's brutality.

Meanwhile Islamic Chechen resistance, headed by Shamil Basayev, has splintered with some groups pulled towards increasingly savage methods to promote their cause.

Some of these groups were involved in Beslan.

But the roots of these terrible events lie in Russia's dirty war.

Chechnya: Russia's Dirty War

NORTH Ossetia, where the siege took place, is a tiny Caucasus republic which has become a Russian military outpost. After the USSR fell, the Kremlin poured weapons into the republic. In 1992, it had the highest quantity of arms per head of population in the world. It was from North Ossetia that Russian tanks rolled into Chechnya in December 1994.

This was the first of two very brutal

wars on the Chechen people in the past decade.

Half the Chechen population has either died — an estimated 250,000 people — or disappeared (figures unavailable), while a further 200,000 have been displaced to refugee camps in neighbouring Ingushetia.

During the first war, Chechen villages were carpet-bombed with poison gas, causing widespread nervous disease. In the second war, 230 out of 424 Chechen villages were completely destroyed. Aerial and artillery bombing of Chechen industrial sites has left background radiation more than 800 times the permissible level.

Land mines, often shaped like toys, are strewn across the countryside and continue to kill and maim children.

The thousands of Russian soldiers occupying Chechnya inflict a daily regime of terror. According to *Human Rights Watch* and *Amnesty International*, an average 109 extra-judicial executions happen each month and 49 mass burial sites, many close to Russian military installations, have recently been uncovered.

Following the 2002 election of a pro-Russian president, Ingushetia began closing its camps and sending refugees back into war zones. When Chechens refused to leave, food rations and gas supplies to the camps were cut.

There are still some 106,000 Chechen refugees in Ingushetia. The fear now is that Putin's nationalist rhetoric will whip up a pogrom against them.

From Stalin to Putin

THE Chechen people's history has been one of utter tragedy. In 1944, Stalin accused them of being pro-Nazi and deported the entire population.

Men, women and children were loaded into cattle wagons and deported to the freezing wasteland of Kazakhstan. Some 140,000 perished on the journey.

Stalin wanted to ensure that no trace of Chechen culture remained. Russian colonists took over Chechen homes and jobs. The headstones of Chechen graves

were used to pave streets.

But the Chechens fought back and from the late 1950s they began to trickle back to their homeland.

As the nations of Eastern Europe broke away from Russian rule after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, an uprising in Grozny overthrew a puppet regime.

Ever since, Moscow has been trying to suppress the Chechen people. Putin, a former KGB colonel, climbed to power originally by presenting himself as a strong man who could reduce Grozny to rubble.

Today, the children of Beslan have reaped the terrible fruits of this awful history.

Full-Spectrum Dominance

With 1,500 oil wells and three giant processing centres, oil revenue goes a long way towards explaining Russia's wars in Chechnya.

Grozny was second only to Baku as the biggest oil town in the Russian Empire. The wider Caspian region holds an estimated 110 billion barrels of oil, just slightly less than Iraq's 113 billion.

But old-style Russian chauvinism is also a factor. Condemning the Beslan attackers as "enemies who wanted to tear parts off Russia", Putin knows that references to 'Mother Russia' can still draw votes from people who are dissatisfied with his neo-liberal economic policies.

Meanwhile the Western powers have stayed quiet about Putin because they see him as their ally in the 'War on Terror'.

Further reading: www.kavkaz.org.uk and *"The Great Game: Blood & Oil in Central Asia"* by Lutz Kleveman, *Atlantic Books, 2003*

A history of occupation and resistance



1857 After 29 years of resistance, Chechnya is incorporated into the Russian Empire.

1921 Following the Bolshevik Revolution, a Mountainous Autonomous Republic of Chechnya is created.

1929 Stalin's troops crush Chechen revolt against forced 'collectivisation'.

1937 14,000 Chechens killed during Stalinist purge. Executions trigger another rebellion, also brutally crushed.

1944 Falsely accused of collaborating with German troops, 478,479 people, including entire Chechen and Ingush populations, are deported to Kazakhstan. 150,000 die during first 4 years.

1957 Camp break-outs and prison strikes force the Kremlin to return exiled Chechens. By this stage, Moscow has given Ingush region of Prigorodny to the Christian population of North Ossetia, its only ally in the region.

1991 USSR collapses. Chechen independence declared.

1994 40,000 Russian troops invade Chechnya. Shelling of Grozny begins. 27,000 civilians killed.

1997 Russian forces withdraw. Over 100,000 Chechens killed.

1999 Guerilla attacks by Chechens in Dagestan give pretext for second invasion. Chechen resistance, led by Aslan Maskhadov, flees into the mountains and starts guerrilla war.

2001 On September 11, Vladimir Putin becomes first head of state to sympathise with Bush. Chechen rebels now reclassified as 'Islamic terrorists'.

2002 Dubrovka theatre siege. Rather than negotiate, Russian authorities kill 129 hostages by gassing the theatre.

2003 Results of referendum on unity with Russia widely disputed. Three hours after polls open half the population has already voted!

2004 On August 29, amidst allegations of voter intimidation, electoral fraud and persecution of opponents, Kremlin stooge Alu Alkhanov takes 75% of the vote in the Chechen presidential election, vowing not to negotiate with Chechen 'separatists'.

2004 September Beslan school tragedy. Putin announces that war has been declared on Russia.

THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCAM

'AFFORDABLE housing' is the Government's response to the housing crisis that stalks the Celtic Tiger.

The Minister with responsibility for Housing and Social Renewal, Noel Ahern, explained the idea of 'affordable housing': 'For example, houses currently selling at around €280,000 could sell for €220,000'.

He had little to say to people who could not raise that tidy sum.

In 1999, the Planning and Development Act required builders to transfer 20 percent of their developments to the local authorities for 'social or affordable housing'. There was also a 'withering clause' in the legislation. Planning permission would lapse after two years, pressurising owners to sell for building land immediately.

These were minor adjustments. According to a recent paper by two leading academic researchers on housing, Michael Punch and PJ Drudy, the government's overall strategy was to run down the stock of local authority housing and to rely on 'market forces' to solve the problem.

Speculation

Public housing provision dropped from 33 percent of all residences in 1975 to a mere 8 percent today.

The result has been a splurge of speculation. The average price of a new house in Dublin jumped from €81,493 in 1994 to €295,158 in 2003. Housing became an 'investment activity' that had little to do with human need. Many houses were bought as second houses to be rented out. Between 1998 and 2001, Ireland recorded the highest rent increases in the EU.

The profits of land speculators and building companies grew fantastically. But it was never enough.



■ Cranes and building sites across Dublin testify to a building boom, but the housing crisis only worsens

The Construction Industry Federation lobbied hard for the removal of the '20 percent social and affordable clause'.

They claimed that house buyers wanted to live in 'segregated private schemes' and did not want corpora-

tion tenants as their neighbours. In 2002, they succeeded, which was not surprising because Fianna Fáil is funded by big builders.

From then on, builders could simply make a cash settlement with local authorities rather than allocat-

ing 20 percent for social or affordable housing. And the 'withering clause' in the Planning Act was also dropped, allowing speculation to resume at its former pace.

It was a starker reminder of who really runs the country.

The chickens come home to roost

TODAY the full extent of the fraud of affordable housing has been revealed, but not before yet another scam has been perpetrated on Irish workers.

The recent partnership deal to limit wages increases contained an important trade off. In return for low pay rises, the government promised to build 10,000 affordable houses.

SIPTU President, Des Geraghty, told his members that it was one of the proudest achievements of his life.

■ Yet the *Irish Times* has now revealed that a mere 163 'affordable houses' were built last year.

It is an incredible scandal. Yet the Government's 'solution' is to sell off even more public land. 300 acres of State land in Dublin, Kildare and Meath is being handed over to the building industry so that they can increase the number of affordable houses. It includes land beside St. Ita's Psychiatric Hospital in Portrane, North County Dublin, which had previously been used by patients.

Michael Punch sums up what is wrong:

'An alternative policy would prioritise equal access to housing and sustainable development. There would be a robust non-profit making sector — run either by the State or voluntary agencies. Land must be taken out of the equation as a commodity. This could be done either by nationalisation, by a land tax on speculative profits, or by the compulsory purchase of land at agricultural prices.'

■ Michael Punch and PJ Drudy's paper on housing can be viewed at <http://www.tascnet.ie/showlist.asp> (Select 'Events' from the Menu.)

The rich want poor people's land

'IT'S A disaster for the people of St Michael's Estate and Inchicore'. This was Brendan Kenny, Dublin City Council's Assistant Manager commenting on RTE after city councillors voted down a public-private partnership plan for the area.

It was a spin taken up by RTE. But Rita Fagan, a community worker in the area, gave the real story.

'In 1999, the people of St Michael's area expressed their preference to tear the flats down because the drugs problem had gotten out of hand. A task force was set up with the City Council and it was agreed that a new development would be built in three phases. The people were to have a real say in its design.

'Phase 1 went off fine. Fifty

social housing units were built in Goldenbridge and another 50 units were built for senior citizens. Three blocks on the estate were knocked down and people moved to new houses.

'In Phase 2, we agreed that there would be 170 social housing units, 80 affordable houses and 70 private houses. We worked closely with the architects on the designs again.

'But our plan was rejected by Martin Cullen's Department of the Environment because they wanted to introduce a new policy of public-private partnerships.

'We hoped the City Council might stand with us and resist this change, but they did a U-turn.

'They got in a team of architects to draw up a new plan behind our backs.

'A huge tract of public land was



■ Rita Fagan: 'We are fighting'

to be handed over to private builders who would be required to build only 80 social housing units. Instead, there would be 220 afford-

able houses and 550 private units.

Tower blocks of private apartments would surround a small number of corporation houses.

'We got a campaign going and soon gathered 3,000 signatures from the area. Then we called a big meeting in July and between 170 and 200 people came. The new plan was rejected unanimously.

Then one of the City Councillors put down a resolution to oppose the new public-private plan. Her resolution was passed unanimously.

'The City Council officials should now go back to the original plan we agreed with them. They are morally obliged to come back and negotiate with us. People in this area should not be left waiting in uncertainty,' says Rita. She sums up what is happening with development in Dublin recently:

'When poor people live on land that becomes rich, the rich people want them moved out. They don't care if they are displaced to areas where there are no social supports.

'It does not matter to those people what happens to us. They just want everything. They want to get rid of working class communities and our culture.

'But we are not having it. There is now a Tenants First movement that will fight for the interests of corporation tenants. Public housing should be provided as a right.

'We are making the links between the local and the global. Some of us may go to the European Social Forum. Many have gone on the anti-war marches.

'We are fighting. We are not going to go down easily.'

STOP THESE DEPORTATIONS

CELINA Codorean sat her Leaving Certificate this summer. She got 455 points and was set to study at Trinity College Dublin.

But Celina has been told that she will not be allowed to pursue her studies. The reason? She was born in Romania.

Her sister, Antonia, spoke to *Socialist Worker* about her family's experiences.

'My sister, mother and step-father arrived from Romania in January 1997. I was then 11 and my sister Celina nine. Two years later our application for asylum was turned down. We immediately applied for "leave to remain".'

'Romania is now a distant memory for me and my sister. This is my home. Our parents said, 'Don't worry it will be all right'. So we settled down to school in Old Bawn Community School, Tallaght, made new friends and studied for our Leaving Certificate. We have both qualified to study at Trinity College, but we cannot start unless our application is approved. This is our home yet we could be thrown out at any time.'

Contrary to popular myth propagated by the tabloids, most immigrants are not 'scroungers' but are looking to build a new life, to work and to bring up their families. Asylum seekers often have highly marketable skills but are refused permission to work.

Antonia points out how debilitating the rules are. 'Our family has been forced to depend on Social Welfare. But my parents want to work. My mother is qualified in hotel management and my step-father is a computer and sound

By **KEVIN WINGFIELD**

engineer. He has worked for four years as a volunteer for a local community radio station in Tallaght and we feel ourselves part of the community.'

Despite the fact that Antonia and her family have become respected members of their community, this counts for nothing as far as the immigration authorities are concerned.

'We have had great support from the community, our neighbours and our school. My parents' application for naturalisation has been turned down in a photocopied letter which said that "the Minister has examined your case and has denied you the right to remain in the country". The letter was dated a year earlier.'

'After nearly eight years we still have had no response to our application for "leave to remain".'

'The effect on my family has been very painful. We're all a ball of stress. During these years my sister was very upset, crying all the time and never going out, just studying. I can't sleep. My parents are on anti-depressants. This is breaking my heart. I sometimes think I'm at a dead end.'



■ Escaping oppression to be faced with 'Fortress Europe'

Deported Mother Separated from Baby

IN AUGUST, 25 Nigerians, along with three Irish-born children, were deported on a special chartered airplane.

Angel Aduba was one of those deported, but her 19-month-old son remains, being looked after by friends.

In the frantic last minutes before she was bundled on the special midnight flight, accompanied by 40 Gardaí from the National Immigration Bureau, she was separated from her child (whether by choice or coercion is not clear).

Deportees normally have their mobile phones confiscated and are not allowed to

take personal possessions. Gardaí launched an investigation to track down Angel's Irish-born child, Somtom.

The whole case brings up a glaring contradiction in Irish law. Somtom Aduba is an Irish citizen who cannot take care of himself.

Yet a recent Supreme Court judgement gave

Justice Minister Michael McDowell the right to deport his mother even though the Irish Constitution is supposed to cherish the family.

Which other Irish citizens are legally deprived of access to their parents? It is a form of gross discrimination.

Give Immigrants an Amnesty

IT'S important that the Government reconsider its deportation policy and consider granting an amnesty to asylum seekers who were in the country before the referendum.

Deportation is expensive as most are done with chartered flights.

At present, 11,000 people are facing deportation to different countries of origin. If it goes ahead, it's going to swallow up a huge sum of tax payers' money. It may be argued that tax payers are already sacrificing enough to maintain them in camps, hostels, and



By **GLADSTONE OGBONNA** of the *African Social Forum*

houses but this is because they are not allowed to work.

If work permits were issued to asylum seekers it would certainly reduce their burden on tax payers.

Another reason why an amnesty should be considered is the safety and welfare of deportees in their country of origin. Investigations have shown that most deportees were detained and

physically tortured on return to their country of origin.

A typical case in point is Kemi and her daughter who were deported to Nigeria some time this year. They were detained at the infamous 'kirikiri prison' and their family were made to pay some money before they were released.

In 2002, my friend's two-year old son fainted on their third day of a visit to Nigeria.

He was resuscitated by placing him in cold water. The cause was the failure of electric power supply to the fan in the room. This is a situation

which many deported children will face.

Besides, the standard of living in a country where GDP per capita is \$31,000 is hugely different from one where it is only \$915.

Misinformation

Spotlighting Nigeria in this write-up is important because over fifty percent of deportees were Nigerians, including the number awaiting deportation.

The political, economic and social situations in Nigeria are far from being normal. Therefore declaring Nigeria as 'safe' is a

gross miscalculation based on misinformation.

Since 1999, a lot of reforms have been made but none of them has impacted positively on the lives of many Nigerians. Police killed more than 483 innocent citizens in 2002—a number far higher than those killed by armed robbers.

Three years after the killing of the Minister for Justice and the Attorney General of the federation, his killers are still at large. The only prime suspect is now a Senator in the National Assembly.

Recently, the Trade Union (Amendment) Bill sponsored by the

President was passed making it illegal for workers to go on strike. Under the legislation, workers who strike will face a six-month prison sentence.

This is the situation that culminated in the exodus of many Nigerians.

An amnesty for asylum seekers has proved beneficial to all the countries that have granted one. Countries like Great Britain and the United States have benefited from the open and positive contribution of immigrants.

We should do the same here.



Ché

An Icon of Resistance

In recent years the image of Ché Guevara has again come to the forefront of radical politics worldwide, writes DAVID LYNCH.

*In his new book *Ché Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*, MIKE GONZALEZ addresses the resurgence of interest in Ché and explores his role in the Cuban Revolution. While paying homage to the inspiring example of Guevara and his comrades, Gonzalez also critically assesses his approach to making a revolution.*

Mike Gonzalez took time out from a recent book tour in Ireland to speak to Socialist Worker.

Why the renewed interest in Ché Guevara, the man, the myth and his politics?

He has been taken up by a new generation. People are wearing him as a badge and on T-shirts and since the protests in Seattle in 1999, his image has been carried on all the major anti-capitalist demonstrations across the globe.

And the question that has to be asked is: Why is the image of this man, who died over 30 years ago, back again for the first time since the Sixties?

I was talking to Canadian Radio today and they asked me: Isn't it all just a pop fashion statement?

And of course there is something of that in it. Madonna has used the image of Ché.

And Ricky Gervais is using the image to advertise his new stand-up comedy shows.

But for many more people that have been involved in the movement since Seattle, Ché is very much a political image. From South America to New York his image has been carried by people who are inspired by his revolutionary life and his revolutionary ideas.

It is my sense that this movement has adopted his image for these political reasons.

Is there a difference in how Ché's image is seen now compared to the 1960s?

That is a complex question. There are certain common features in how Ché was viewed by radicals in the Sixties and the movement now.

However I think what is interesting now is that Guevara, who believed that a small core group of revolutionaries could make a revolution independent of the masses, is now a symbol of the fight by a genuinely mass movement across the globe.

What can the anti-capitalist and anti-war movement take from Ché's legacy?

We can take his constant, fundamental anti-imperialism that he held to until he died.

The vision and hope that he also held that there could be a different sort of world from the capitalist one that he fought against. He believed that another world was possible. We might have difficulties and differences with



■ 160 came to Mike Gonzalez speak in Dublin on Ché Guevara and the Cuban revolution in September and many in other cities

his belief in *foco* theory or the role of guerrilla forces in creating that society, but his vision of a different, fairer society is one that holds.

His views on guerrilla warfare and other things mean that there are limitations to his politics. These were to have an impact on left-wing politics after he died. But I think it is important to have a critical look at these points in his theory.

I think it is fair to look at him in a critical light while praising the points in his politics and life story that socialists must celebrate. That is a central theme in my book.

What do you think of the new Walter Salles film, *Motorcycle Diaries*?

Although I would have some difficulties with one or two points, I think it showed how two young people reacted to the unequal world around them. I think it showed how this affected his political views in a fantastic way really. I think it is good that this film shows Ché not as the pop image but a real life figure that has influence on the movement in the new millennium.

Is Ché viewed differently in the 'Third World' and the 'First'?

I do not think so. I heard a wonderful story today that sort of sums up how he is seen and used politically in Latin America. In Bolivia at the moment you can go on 'Ché Tours' that bring tourists around the areas that Guevara and his fellow guerrillas drilled.

But we should remember that Ché completely failed to build a guerrilla movement in Bolivia, and his theory that a small core of committed activists could bring about socialism without the active participation of the working masses was wrong.

But at the same time that these tours are taking place, 500 miles away the Bolivian poor have recently fought against water privatisation through mass actions and mass activity.

They carry the image of Ché as a fighter against the inequality in the system. They are not living out his theory of *foco* guerrilla war; they are showing how mass action can really change things.

My book is addressed towards people like that who are involved in a mass movement who respect Ché as a great symbol of resistance against capitalism but at the same time are ready to address some of the weaknesses in his political theory.

■ *Ché Guevara and the Cuban Revolution* by Mike Gonzalez is published by Bookmarks and available from Socialist Worker Books at €12.

Who was Ché Guevara?

Ernesto 'Ché' Guevara was born in 1928 in Argentina. As a young medical student he set out on a motorcycle to travel around South America.

The poverty and oppression he saw and the impact of imperialism aroused his political awareness.

In 1954 Ché saw the US government and US multinational United Fruit Company organise an armed coup against land reform in Guatemala. He escaped to Mexico and met Fidel Castro, who was planning a revolution in Cuba. In November 1956, 82 guerrillas landed in Cuba but only 18 survived.

Castro and Guevara escaped and built a guerrilla army in the Cuban mountains. Within two years, in January 1959, the Batista regime collapsed and the columns of revolutionaries marched down from the mountains and entered Havana.

The Cuban Revolution represented a huge blow to the US. It inspired millions with the hope that they could fight poverty and oppression. The US government put in place an economic blockade preventing trade with

Cuba that has lasted 40 years and has caused massive hardship.

Cuba entered a close economic relationship with Russia but it soon became clear that the USSR saw Cuba as a pawn against the USA. Ché increasingly saw that it was necessary to spread the revolution to the rest of Latin America and beyond if imperialism was to be broken.

Ché was uneasy with the compromises of Fidel Castro and withdrew from the government. In April 1965 Ché assembled a small group of Cuban guerrillas and went to the Congo. He believed he could lead a revolution there. But after four months they were finally forced to flee across Lake Tanganyika.

The last few months of his life were spent in Bolivia. Ché attempted to create a guerrilla army, but sick and exhausted he was encircled and captured by government forces.

Guevara was murdered in the village of Camiri while CIA officers were in attendance as witnesses so they could report to their bosses back in Washington that Ché Guevara was really dead.

cinema

Stuffed by McDonalds

By DR JULIET BRESSON

IF THERE ever was a need to understand why the current generation of teenagers is suffering from obesity and diabetes, watching 'Super Size Me' will answer most of your questions.

Super Size Me is a tongue-in-cheek documentary about obesity in America. In its defence against obesity law suits, Mc Donalds claimed that its food is healthy, if eaten in appropriate quantities.

So, Morgan Spurlock decided to investigate, and filmed himself eating nothing but a three-meal-a-day Mc Diet, in combination with reducing his level of daily exercise to that of the average American.

His rules for the diet are to eat only food served in Mc Donalds, to eat everything on the menu at least once, and, if he is asked, to 'Super Size' his meal.

Within a month, Spurlock has gained two stone in weight, has become impotent, depressed, lethargic, and suffers nausea, stomach pains, and an acutely inflamed liver.

I went to see this movie in New York, the city which possibly contains a more cultured, health conscious, and educated slice of American pie. The cinema was almost empty. But the queues in Mc Donalds are long.

Spurlock addresses this very problem in America by interviewing teachers, nutritionists, food scientists, lawyers and ordinary Americans on the street.

Advertising

He discovers that the tiny amount of government spending on positive health messages, versus the gigantic advertising and promotional budgets of fast food companies mean that Americans haven't got a chance against the scourge of obesity and diabetes.

Spurlock does not delve any deeper than this, into the dirty politics of junk food and diabetes - his film is a charming and provocative but very personal experience.

Many critics of this film feel that the question of personal choice over restaurant food is not addressed - nobody is forcing you to eat McDonalds just because you are an American.

But all American processed food is particularly noxious because it contains large amounts of High Fructose Corn

Syrup—a very high calorie sugar which makes food very sweet, looks shiny and golden, it is absorbed straight to the liver causing a rapid fat-storing response.

Corn Syrup is used in virtually all American foods because during the Nixon years, food companies from Coca Cola to McDonalds struck deals with American farmers to find a world market for their corn supplies.

Political deals were also done with Indonesia and Malaysia to import a very dense, high calorie Palm Oil, in exchange for those countries opening up their markets to America. Palm oil has a long shelf life in bakery products and fried foods. It is cheap and much more fattening and heart-attack making than butter or soy.

The long-term health consequences of Nixon's trade deals took second place to their global political and economic importance. Fast food and convenience foods became cheaper, larger, tastier, and more and more fattening.

Americans also now need to work harder, longer hours away from home, and therefore eat more and more convenience foods rather than home cooked meals.

You don't need to be a rocket scientist to see why Irish kids are getting fat. Watch the Golden Arches go up, the buckets of golden cinema popcorn go down, and remember that being closer to Boston than Berlin, in the words of one fat lady, is a political decision - not a health one.



■ Morgan Spurlock tucks in

music

The return of ... THE CLASH



■ The Clash in the 1980s

By GORDON HEWITT

I CAN remember ringing my friends and getting them over to my house to listen to the record. It was part of an awakening.

The Clash's "London Calling", released 25 years ago this month, fuses rock, reggae, ska, rockabilly, pop and dancehall, but that's not what makes it a brilliant record.

It is the fusion of all these musical styles with politics. Fighting back, not letting the system grind you down, the Spanish civil war, alienation and the inability of drugs to provide a solution to it, consumerism and calls to revolution. The message is as generous as the mix of musical styles.

The album seemed to come at the end of a struggle. Punk had emerged out of the despair of the years of the mid-seventies, where the rise in struggle of the early seventies had led to a Labour government, which then proceeded to cut welfare, public services and force wages down.

Unemployment was growing rapidly, a recession was on the way and the Nazis were on the rise getting over 100,000 votes in London.

"No Future" summed up what most young people felt. Punk was the fusion of all that anger into a rough, rudimenta-

ry and rugged musical form.

But there was a mixed message. There was a fight going on for the minds of young people and punk reflected the battle of ideas. Some punks flirted with Swastika's. Some made glib comments about the Tories. Some said politics didn't matter; it was just about having fun.

Record companies tried to buy off some of the new bands and silence others. This is where The Clash mattered, and particularly Joe Strummer.

Anti-Racist

After taking part in the riot at the end of that summer's Notting Hill Carnival, the lead singer proudly announced:

"I think people ought to know that we're anti-fascist, we're anti-violence, we're anti-racist and we're pro-creative. We're against ignorance." Joe Strummer wrote "White Riot" about fighting back against oppression.

They played the Rock Against Racism carnival in 1978, a performance with an intensity and commitment few bands could match.

After London Calling the next record was called Sandinista. I can remember Joe Strummer being interviewed on television saying "Imagine people in America going in to our record shop and buying a record with Sandinista on the

cover, while their government is funding a war against people in Nicaragua." As he said this his face beamed with satisfaction.

Strummer's last gig was to

play in support of striking fire-fighters.

The legacy he leaves is that The Clash is far more influential than almost any other band of that period.

PICK OF THE THEATRE FESTIVAL

The Dublin Theatre festival starts in the last week of September. Here are a few recommendations:

Fringe Festival

■ *Master Harold and The Boys*- anti-apartheid drama originally banned in South Africa Tue 21st-Sat 2 Oct The Helix

■ *Searching for The Enemy*- uses multi-media techniques to imagine a future totalitarian society. Tue 21st Oct- Sat 2nd Oct. Project Space Upstairs.

■ *1+1=1 or How to avoid war*: a clown and an artist explore theme of co-operation Wed 22nd Sep to Sun 26th. Liberty Hall

■ *Bleeding The System*- parody from anti-capitalist theatre unit Spacecraft. Tue 21st to Sat 25th SFX

■ *The night Just Before the Forest*- an immigrant rages against society's hypocrisy. Tue 21st to Sat 25th Arthouse Basement

■ *El Silence*- examines indifference to the suffering of war victims. Tue 5th -Sat 9th Oct New Theatre

■ *Ay Carmela*- drama set during the Spanish civil War- Tue 5th -Sat 9th Oct New Theatre

Dublin Theatre Festival

■ *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme*- anti war drama from one of Ireland's best playwrights Sept 27th, Oct 2nd & 4th Abbey Theatre

■ *James X*- harrowing tale of state sponsored child abuse inspirationally performed by Gerard Mannix Flynn. A must see. Sept 29th - Oct 3rd Liberty Hall



Capitalism 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

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy. To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based on 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.

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

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!

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. We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc. We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

Cullen's plan to build incinerators opposed

MINISTER for the Environment, Martin Cullen, plans to build ten major incinerators to deal with Ireland's waste.

Business interests complain that waste disposal is more than three times as expensive in Ireland as it is elsewhere in the EU.

But they show little concern for the people whose health will be affected because they live nearby. On Saturday 4 September, anti-incinerator groups from all over Ireland protested in Dublin. About 150 people took part.

Roma Fulton from CHASE is campaigning against the building of a national incineration facility for toxic waste in Ringaskiddy, Cork.

'They want to burn 100,000 tons of toxic waste and they will be applying for a licence to burn another

100,000 tons of municipal waste.

'30,000 people voiced their objections to this scheme. Cork Council opposed it. The chief planning inspector outlined 14 objections.

'Yet An Bord Pleannala gave the go ahead on the grounds of national policy. Is this democracy?'

Dr Phillip Michael, a general practitioner, was on the march carrying a banner for the Irish Doctors Environmental Association.

'Incinerators put dioxins and traces of metals such as mercury, cadmium and lead into the atmosphere. In the US, health authorities have advised people not to eat fish from the Great Lakes because of mercury poisoning.

'Incineration should be very much a last resort. We should be looking at waste



■ Incinerators put dioxins, mercury, cadmium and lead into the atmosphere

reduction instead.' Will St Leger summed up the mood: 'The Environmental

Protection Agency is not the guardian of the Irish environment. It is the mothers, fathers,

brothers and sisters of people who keep an eye out for the quality of our environment.'

THE ALTERNATIVE TO INCINERATION

INCINERATION is a threat to human health and the environment, and a waste of valuable resources. Ireland needs to develop a genuine recycling infrastructure and implement waste schemes based on maximizing recycling and composting rather than burning our rubbish.

Clean production must be enforced by law so that the end waste product or recyclable resource is taken into account at the start of the design or production process.

In this way, waste that cannot be re-used or recycled is avoided. In other words, if it's not recyclable then it's illegal for manufacturers to use.

Waste should also be recognised as a resource out of which a recycling industry can develop, providing thousands of jobs.

In North Carolina, where waste incineration is banned, recycling has seen more than 10,000 jobs created. The residual waste left over after intensive recycling, composting and reduction would still need to be land filled, but on an ever-decreasing scale as clean production is enforced.

Non-burn alternatives are in use in many cities. Melbourne achieved an 85% diversion from landfill and is aiming for a zero waste target by 2010. Galway City achieved a 56% diversion within 8 months thanks to community awareness and responsibility.

And New Zealand, a country with a similar agricultural base and infrastructure to Ireland, has banned all incinerators and adopted zero waste as a national policy, aiming for the elimination of waste production by 2020. Nothing — other than Government apathy and corporate greed — stops us from doing the same.

—Aidan O'Halloran, spokesperson for the Anti-Incinerator Alliance, a community-run group based in Waterford City and South Kilkenny

Save Our Seafront protest march

TWO hundred and fifty people turned up in Dun Laoghaire for a lively protest march over public baths.

Barbara explained why she was on the march.

'The public baths in Dun Laoghaire were built by the Victorians as a public amenity. But they were let go to rack and ruin and the council now wants to sell them off. We want them restored as an outdoor swimming pool.'

Simon Kelly and his mother had made their own banners.

'It used to be just 80 cents to go into the pool. It was somewhere to go, to meet friends and have fun. We want it back.'

Tara Maddellis sees the issue as part of a bigger fight about the future of Dun Laoghaire.

'If you walk from the near side of Monkstown to Dun Laoghaire, you



■ Dun Laoghaire protest over the Baths

cannot see the sea anymore.

'All you can see is apartments with little Tyke toys on the balconies.'

'I am a single parent and I have as much right to enjoy the amenities out here as much as property

developers.'

The battle over the swimming baths is linked to the future of Carlisle pier.

Hand-over

Nicola Sarroft, the secretary of the local cam-

paign, explains:

'We came together as group of residents who are against the commercialisation of public space.'

'Our campaign has already stopped the council going ahead with one plan to hand over the seafront to developers.'

'But despite their pledge to consult us in the future, they did not come back to us.'

'Instead they just staged an exhibition on new plans. This is why we are marching again.'

Local SWP representative Richard Boyd Barrett sees the battle as part of a wider fight against privatisation.

'This is all about people power resisting corporate control of our lives. Whether it is on waste disposal or on public amenities the authorities want to privatise everything. But they are getting a resistance they did not bargain for.'

TUI vote for action on music school

THE Teachers Union of Ireland have voted to take industrial action at the Waterford Institute of Technology for the first time in the college's history.

The unanimous vote for a one-day strike was taken following the college's decision to increase the fees for the WIT Music School by 20 percent and freeze new admissions to the school.

Up to 32 music teachers would be under threat if the college were permitted to make these changes.

Over 400 teachers will take part in the strike.

The college originally planned to close the school completely, but a concerted campaign by the Waterford Music School Action Group and the TUI forced the college into a humiliating back-down, with the school opening for the new semester on September 6th last.

Initially it was believed that the decision was made for financial reasons, and that funding had been re-assigned within the college.

Following pressure from the action group and the TUI, it was discovered that there had been no cut in funding and the decision was taken in order to force the privatisation of the school.

The WMSAG comprised of students, parents and teachers have refused to accept the fee increase and pupils have returned to the school at last years fees.

The fee increase was widely condemned as being

an obvious attempt to raise fees so high that parents would have to pull their children out of the school, thereby justifying the closure of the school and redundancies.

The attempt to force the music school into private hands is part of the creeping privatisation of the education system, a process that sees the incremental jettisoning of various services and departments within the education system and the surreptitious infiltration of multi-national corporations.

Another factor in the attempted closure of the school, was the fact that several music teachers were approaching 5 years service in the college and, under new legislation, would have to be made permanent.

The TUI has promised further action if the college attempts to make any teacher redundant.

TUI Waterford Colleges Branch Secretary, Colm Long said that the vote for industrial action was unanimous and that the meeting to discuss the strike was the best attended in the history of the college.

A lecturer at the college told the Socialist Worker: "By trying to force this through, the Board of Management at the college have wrecked years of good relations with the staff and damaged the college publicly."

There is no way we will accept any redundancies, and we won't let the music school slip into privatisation. —ROY HASSEY

Out Now

Lenin's State and Revolution is one of the most subversive books ever written. It tackles the prevailing idea that the state stands above society and represents the common good.

It roots its argument for revolution in the fact that even a parliamentary democracy is a form of concentrated class rule. When the elections are over, there is quite simply 'one law for the rich and another for the rest'. We live in a society where there is a 'dictatorship of the bourgeoisie', according to Lenin.

Lenin has been demonised as a tyrant who paved the way for Stalin. But even the most cursory reading of State and Revolution shows he wanted a much more profound form of democracy.

This abridged edition aims to make the arguments of State and Revolution even more accessible to modern activists.

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STATE AND REVOLUTION



V.I. Lenin

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NIPSA executive suspends action

By NIPSA
ACTIVIST

THE decision by the NIPSA Civil Service Executive to suspend the industrial action campaign has disappointed and angered many civil servants.

40 percent of those members consulted were prepared to take all-out indefinite strike action with 51% against.

What the figures conceal, though, is the willingness of even those who voted against all out strike action to support an escalation of the dispute.

It has been clear throughout the three-week consultation period that while there has been hesitation in many areas about an indefinite strike, there has been clear support for the continuation of the campaign.

There were huge votes for more action in some important areas.

For example the workers consulted in the Child Support Agency and in benefit offices (Social Security Agency) voted overwhelmingly for all-out action, despite the fact that the majority of low-paid and young members work in these areas.

In fact workers in the Department of Social Development, delivered two



■ Each day of strike action, the overtime ban, selective strikes and unofficial walkouts has seen huge support

thirds of all the votes in favour of all-out strike.

After 9-months of the dispute this clearly shows the determination of civil servants to fight for real pay rises.

Actually right throughout the industrial action campaign it is the rank and file members who have delivered.

Each day of strike action, the overtime ban, selective strikes and unofficial walkouts, there has been huge support by the large majority of members.

Workers have been harassed, bullied and in the CSA and DEL, suspended. Despite this, the willingness to strike to win is still there.

The real weakness, evident right throughout the dispute, has been from the leadership.

From the beginning they believed that they could punch through New Labour's pay ceiling with one-day strikes here and there, or by taking small groups of workers on longer strike.

Sidelines

This left the overwhelming majority of members sitting on the sidelines acting as nothing more than cheerleaders or fundraisers.

It was clear to many activists that when the

Executive announced the ballot for all-out action that what they really wanted was exit strategy. Their actions since then have only proved to reinforce this opinion.

As one activist told *Socialist Worker*, "The executive have done nothing but let us down."

"Even after they announced their recommendation for all-out strike I have seen only two Executive members actively campaigning for support for their own strategy!"

There is real anger at the suspension of the dispute and the acceptance of a rotten deal.

Many workers are worried that this will give management

the green light to impose more draconian procedures and push through more privatisation. Victory would also have pushed the government back on issues such as water charges.

The task now is to harness the bitterness of NIPSA members into action.

We need to strengthen the rank and file organisation within the union, and get rid of the dead wood on the Executive who have squandered a great opportunity to take on low pay.

There will be many more struggles against this government. We want to make sure we are in a position to win them.

BLINDCRAFT:

More broken promises

IT was announced early this week that Blindcraft factory is to close with the loss of thirty five jobs.

All the employees are shocked to learn that their livelihood is being taken away from them.

To these people, working for Blindcraft is not 'just a job', it gives them dignity and pride in a world where disability is ignored by the majority.

Socialist Worker spoke to Paula Dorrington who has worked in French Chair Caning for the past eigh-

teen years.

According to Paula, the problems started eleven years ago when the company moved from their shop in Rathmines to the factory in Inchicore.

Facilities in Inchicore are limited. It does not include a showroom for customers to browse.

Because of its location, one needs the use of a car to get there.

The company has failed to employ the services of a marketing department to boost sales. In this age of Information Technology, Blindcraft does not even have a website!

All these problems

combined have led to poor sales performance. Since its re-location, not one blind person has been employed.

For Paula and her husband Gus (an employee of twenty seven years) feel this is the first real attack on them.

Mortgage

Like most workers in this country, they have a mortgage, they pay their tax and PRSI, they pay their bin taxes and working for Blindcraft is the reason to get up in the morning.

Blindcraft workers are unique among workers with disabilities.

They have fought quite bitterly in some instances to secure full legal status and remuneration for their work.

In 1994 they went on strike for equal pay with the sighted employees in Blindcraft and are now paid the same level of the general operative grades within the health board structure.

It is this uniqueness that sets Blindcraft workers apart from workers with disabilities.

Thousands of visually impaired workers are employed in sheltered workshops without any legal status or employee rights.

They can be fired at

will and are paid very poorly for their valuable work.

Four years ago, a code of practice was promised to them to identify their rights but this has yet to materialise.

It is with this in mind, that Blindcraft workers feel they have been targeted.

Precedent

Blindcraft workers have set a precedent of equal rights for other disabled workers in this State.

With Blindcraft workers out of sight, other disabled workers cannot fight for their equal pay and equal rights.

The workers are feeling vulnerable, angry and very frustrated at the uncertainty surrounding the company.

They have invited the Health Minister, Micheal Martin to have a meeting with them but he has simply ignored their requests.

He made two promises to them a number of years ago.

Firstly, he would not close Blindcraft; and secondly there would be a full consultation with them about any future changes in the company.

The Blindcraft workers are not going quietly – they may be blind but they will not be silenced.

Socialist Worker

inside:

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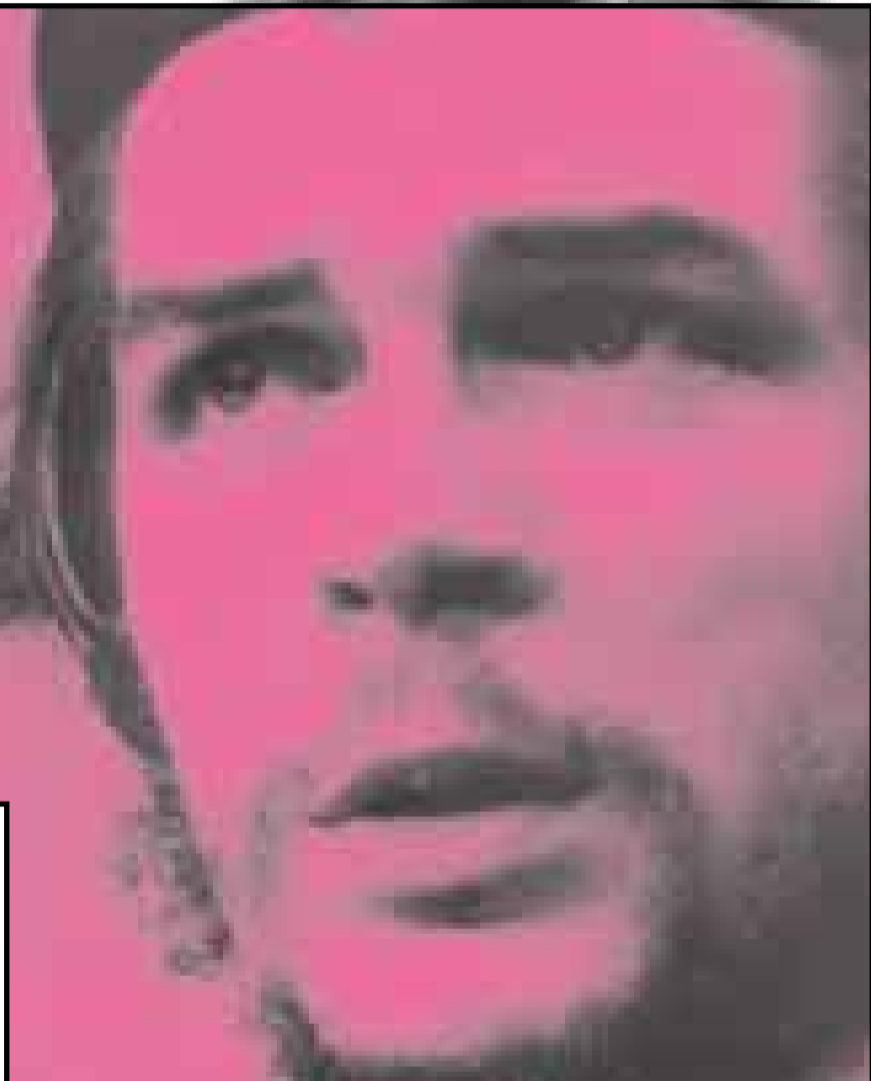
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We can Chénge the world



CHE GUEVARA is an inspiration to millions because he was a revolutionary who wanted to change the world.

He did not believe that our rulers were so powerful that they could not be beaten.

When the US army was trying to crush the Vietnamese people with napalm bombs, Che said we needed 'one, two three Vietnams' to defeat US imperialism.

The Vietnamese should not be left fight alone.

His wanted a world, which the big corporations did not dominate. He saw how they subverted democracy when the

US government staged a coup in Guatemala to defend the interests of the United Fruit company.

At the time the Secretary of State and the head of the CIA were on the board of United Fruit.

Today, you can substitute the name Halliburton for United Fruit.

Dick Cheney, the former Chief Executive of Halliburton is US President.

His government fought a war to get control of oil for Halliburton and other US corporations.

Yet the people of Iraq—just like the Vietnamese—are resisting.

The US army has already lost control of towns like

Falluja and Samara, which are in guerrilla hands.

Che's method was to construct a small guerrilla army to fight the US killing machine. But we don't have to do that today.

There is a huge global movement that will fight war and corporate globalisation. Through 'people power' and militancy, we can win.

We can change a world where three billionaires own more than the whole population of sub-Saharan Africa.

Or where everything from education to health services is becoming a commodity that is just for sale.

But we need to organise, to act and to be revolutionary.



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