

Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran...

Not one more death

No more troops through Shannon

DEMONSTRATE

Saturday 10 November
Central Bank 2pm
March to GPO

Called by Irish Anti War Movement irishantiwar.org

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UNITE TO FIGHT THE HEALTH CUTS

By Sinead Kennedy

The Fianna Fail-PD-Green government has unleashed a wave of cuts on the health service. Less than one hundred days after they returned to government they have put a ban on the recruitment of new staff and ordered the closure of hospital units.

Mary Harney has said that the cutbacks will not affect patient care, but this is a blatant lie.

Here is a list of some of the cutbacks that have already been announced.

In Dublin:

Schoolchildren in Inchicore and Bluebell have been notified that dental operations have been cancelled because the HSE will not replace a dentist who has left the service.

Temple Street Children's Hospital: Parents have been notified that

operations for their children will not go ahead because of the cutbacks.

In Ennis:

The 24 hour A&E unit at the hospital has closed even though half of the 100,000 people in the county live more than an hour away from vital A&E services in the Mid-Western Regional Hospital in Limerick

In Sligo:

30 nurses and 4 consultants at Sligo General Hospital have been let go, even though the government promised there would be no cutbacks before the election. While the cuts were being announced, the HSE was spending €3.5 million on hotel hire to interview another 200 middle managers.

In Galway:

A 24-bed unit for elderly patients is being cut in Galway. The unit was mainly for patients recovering from strokes. This is despite the fact that the Irish Heart Foundation claims that only 3 percent of Irish hospitals have stroke units, compared to 91% in the UK.

Breast Cancer:

Just when it was revealed that there were a series of problems with cancer care services in the private for-profit, Barrington's Hospital in Limerick, 13 hospitals nationally were ordered to immediately stop providing breast cancer care to patients. There is no reason why the Irish people cannot benefit from BOTH 'centres of excellence' and local services for health care maintenance. But not according to

Mary Harney.

Methadone patients in danger:

8,500 methadone patients are in danger following a unilateral HSE decision to reduce the mark-up its pays to community pharmacists. This callous decision means that many pharmacists are no longer providing medicine to people who suffer from a drug addiction.

The Irish health service needs more investment and more bed units. But a small clique of neo-liberals who now control our health service are prepared to run down the public service to impose a US style health system where you need to pay high insurance to get decent medical treatment. This is the real agenda behind the cuts.

100,000 march in US against war

By Marnie Holborow

100,000 people marched across the US on Saturday 27 October against war. Leslie Cagan, National Coordinator of United for Peace and Justice, the protest organisers said, "Today marks another important step in the development of a truly national movement to end the war and occupation in Iraq. "The people of this country want the troops to come home: they want our tax dollars used to meet the needs of our communities, not for war; and they want to make sure there is not a new war against Iran. This movement is strong and will only keep growing." www.unitedforpeace.org

American journalist Seymour Hersh revealed recently in Dublin that 950,000 Iraqis are dead, as many as two million refugees have fled Iraq.

Hersh said the Bush administration already have the

plans to invade Iran drawn up. The CIA has vastly expanded its Iran operations team. Vice President Dick Cheney's is pressing for "surgical strikes" against targets linked to the Revolutionary Guards.

How can it be that after the disaster of Iraq, the US could even consider launching another war? The truth is that the US and its willing partner the UK is in deep military trouble.

Afghanistan has become the most dangerous place for NATO troops. 75% of troop deaths and injuries in the war on terror have occurred within Afghanistan and its neighbouring territories.

For Afghanistan, the death toll has been 12,000. There is no end in sight and faced with humiliation, the NATO campaign in Afghanistan is falling apart.

Israel's recent air strike on northern Syria in September is another desperate attempt to stem the tide of defeat. Israeli

warplanes violated Syrian airspace to drop munitions on a site on the Turkish border, attacks which occurred in close coordination with the White House.

The reasoning was simple: before an attack on Iran could be countenanced, Hizbollah in Lebanon had to be destroyed and Syria at the very least cowed.

In Iraq itself, nobody in Washington or London is saying that it is anything else but a disaster.

The US has zigzagged from support of the Shia-led Maliki government to Sunni insurgents.

In the Anbar province in Western Iraq the US's unashamed whipping up of ethnic tensions has seen 100,000 Shia leaving the region. This is where the war for democracy has led.

Lies have not been the preserve of the Bush administra-

tion. Ahern's government has changed its story at every turn of this war.

First we were told that it was because of our special relationship with the US that Shannon was being used. Then we told that the UN mandate—passed seven months after the invasion—justified our involvement.

Then the Greens came up with the final twist that all future wars would require a Dail mandate—but not this one. Apparently the actual deaths happening now are of less concern to them than their cherished cabinet seats.

November 10th will be important for the anti-war movement to disabuse this government of its shocking complacency.

The majority of the Irish people oppose this war, we need to get our friends, family workplaces on to the streets of Dublin to hold Ahern accountable.



Hollywood's backlash against the war on terror

Ben Dickenson, the author of Hollywood's New Radicalism - Globalisation, War and the Movies, hails the new wave of anti-war films from the US. **Page 11**

The return of scientific racism?

James Watson's belief that black people are less intelligent than white people is the latest example of scientific racism. Viren Swami author of The Missing Arms of Venus de Milo exposes Watson's 'science'. **Page 10**

Turkey, Kurdistan and the US quagmire

Turkey's invasion of northern Iraq and the US targeting of the PKK could touch off an ethnic civil war that could engulf the whole of northern Iraq. **Page 9**

EU Treaty debate

200,000 protested in Lisbon against the new EU treaty. A wave of strikes has swept through France against neo-liberalism and over attacks on pension rights. We look at what the new treaty is actually about. **Page 5**

Naomi Klein's The Shock Doctrine reviewed

Naomi Klein's first book "No Logo" brilliantly showed how multinationals corporations have come to dominate public life. Her latest book looks sure to create an even bigger impact. **Pages 6 & 7**

NI Assembly pushed back on water charges

By Gordon Hewitt, organiser for Communities Against the Water Tax

The recommendations of the NI Assembly Water Review panel are that there will be no charges this year and there will be no new charge next year either. The panel was put in place when the politicians realised that the clearest rumblings would have led to a full scale revolt had they not scrapped the introduction of charges.

The people of Northern Ireland will pay on average somewhere between £127 and £160 for the regional rate, about what we have been paying all along.

So the campaign against the water charges has won the argument: We DO pay for water and have always done. We pay through the regional rate and approximately £109 million from our rates funds the water service. The rest is found via 'charging business' and some from the UK government.

The size and scale of the anti-Water Charges campaign knocked the governments back, both the Assembly and the UK administration. Privatisation has been ruled out in the immediate future. Metering has also been ruled out.

However the review panel has also said it wants to increase rates in the future. In-

stead of charging business they want to hike up the regional rate from 2009/2010. The increased rates will be based on rocketing house prices. Rates were increased by 19% recently. Rising house prices meant that for many people the rise was much more than 19%.

In 2009 the Water Review Panel wants us to pay about £120 more for water. This must be rejected. There is no directive for the service to be self-financing. There is no need for us to pay extra for the PPP's and PFI's which if scrapped would save money. Many of the cost increases in running the service are actually results of government decisions, made because they were trying to fatten up the service for privatisation. People don't have the money to pay this additional charge. The poverty in NI is so substantial that people simply can't afford to pay for what should be an essential service.

However the key point is that the Government already has the money, if it has £100 million a year to spare to fund the war in Iraq and to bail out Northern Rock bank it can afford to pay for essential services like water.

So welcome the rescinding of next years charge but we should also reject and prepare to resist the new charges in 2009.



Campaigners take their protest to London Parliament

North Dublin planning madness

By Alan Kinsella

Plans announced to increase the population of Swords from 40000 to 100000 are an indication of the total lack of proper planning in north Dublin.

Currently Swords has a similar population to Waterford. Added with the proposed metro stop at Lissenhall which has sent land prices soaring. The whole plan will make Swords a city within Dublin city.

The plan if approved will put huge strain on public services in Swords and surrounding areas. Services on the whole (but health services in particular) which are affected by cuts, proper services should be put in place before this development goes any further.

However as has been seen in Balbriggan, public services are an after thought on the developers road making a fortune.

Cork People before Profit

By Pat O'Sullivan



Cork people before profit held a very successful launch meeting in the Metropole Hotel in October.

The meeting was addressed by Richard Boyd Barrett of Dun Laoghaire People Before Profit and Maire Harrington Shell to Sea in Mayo.

The meeting outlined the anger felt at HSE cut-backs, the governments sell of natural resources to Shell in Mayo, and the complicity in the ongoing war in the Middle East through the use of Shannon Airport.

A successful follow up meeting was held, where activists plans to focus on a number of local issues, and build a local People Before Profit group.

Shell Oil greed continues in Donegal



Environmental devastation caused by Shell in Nigeria

Shell's pipeline contractor have never built high pressure pipe

By Donal Mac Fhearrailgh

Rural Planning Services (RPS)—the firm of consultants hired by Shell to come up with an 'acceptable' new pipeline route at Rosport / Bellanaboy do not have the qualifications or background appropriate to high-pressure raw-gas overland pipelines.

Their experience is with low-pressure (50 bar) domestic gas

pipelines not high pressure (300 bar) pipelines as proposed in Mayo. The pipeline would traverse unstable bogland and sandy shoreline—a totally experimental situation—and would inevitably have to pass within a couple of hundred metres of people's houses and under the roads they use daily.

When a natural gas pipeline operating at pressure of just under 47 Bar ruptured near

Carlsbad, New Mexico, USA in August 2000, the resulting explosion killed a family of 12 who were camping over 200 metres away. The Corrib pipeline is potentially 6 times more dangerous.

The proposed refinery at Bellanaboy will be using a cocktail of harmful chemicals to process the raw gas that will be released into the air and local lakes. Inevitably ground water

By Amanda Slevin, MAOR Donegal

According to the Petroleum Affairs Division (PAD) there will be exploratory drilling off the coast of Donegal (block 12) from April'08 onwards. Other exploration licences will come on-stream from 2009/2010.

The Frontier Exploration Licences for Block 12 are held by Shell (50%), ENI (40%) and OMV (10%). Block 12 is off the north west coast of Donegal, beyond Tory Island and Gaoth Dobhair.

After the exploratory drilling the companies can apply for a commercial lease and begin drilling. Depending on the speed of the companies there could be commercial mining for oil or gas off Donegal within a year. As the exploration licences off Donegal were granted before 2007, all commercial

mining will be subject to the 1992 terms and will not include the Profit Resource Tax.

The new profit resource tax (PRT) is a tax of up to 15% on profits for licenses allocated from 1st January 2007. However, the PRT is payable after the PAD calculates the profit ratio (their formula for working out how much tax the companies will pay) and is dependent on the amount invested in developing the field. Like the corporation tax, companies can first offset their costs and may then pay tax on the profits. The PAD has a lower tax for small fields "to encourage development."

Considering that companies can offset the profit resource tax against costs, I would suggest that the Department are going to even greater lengths to cater for the needs of the companies, rather than the people of Ireland.

will be polluted—leaching into nearby Carrowmore Lake, the local drinking water supply.

All this because Shell's shareholders want to save money by having a land-based refinery and the government facilitated them through the purchase of an area of Coillte forestry plantation.

As one campaigner Bob Wilson said, "Those who shout "We must have the gas" and

"We need the jobs" will still get their gas and jobs if the refinery is built at sea.

"If alternative energy sources such as wave power (currently available in Scotland and Portugal) along with development of eco-tourism in this unspoilt and scenic region are also encouraged, there could be many more jobs—and a happier, healthier and safer community and environment".

Possible hazardous waste threat in Ballyogan dump

By Donal Mac Fhearrailgh

The EPA are finally having to take a closer look at what was buried at the Ballyogan Landfill. Nicola Curry, spokesperson for the Ballyogan Environmental Group said in a statement, "A spokesperson for Rural Planning Services, the company sub-contracted to excavate the waste in the landfill, said that waste material had been uncovered 'that shouldn't have been there'. The company were attempting to analyse the material in a bid to decide what to do about it". "We residents are angry

that our calls for a full risk assessment and chemical analysis of what was going to be disturbed during the excavation were rejected out of hand. Instead RPS opted to start the excavation works and deal with anything "unexpected" as they went along."

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council said the waste in the landfill was non-hazardous. But this has now been shown to be false.

Nicola Curry said, "The EPA did not cross check results or information regarding the landfill use in the first decade of its operations. We believe

the EPA was negligent in its approach"

In 2003 allegations of illegal dumping at night were investigated. The directors of a waste company admitted paying the council official £25,000 in return for unrestricted access to the dump to the extent that they were given their own key to the landfill. This is further evidence that Ballyogan dump is full of unclassified waste.

Residents are calling on Minister John Gormley to intervene and have the excavations at the landfill stopped once and for all.



Full risk assessment and chemical analysis needed

Activists in Belfast mobilise for November 10th demo

By Sean Mitchell

The Belfast Anti War Movement is organising a bus to from Belfast to the Irish Anti War Movement demo in Dublin on November 10th. Many have expressed an interest in going to the demo. Members of the SWSS have been signing people up for the bus on Campus at Queens, with 8 signing up on one stall at the student union.

Matthew Collins, Spokesperson for the Belfast Anti War Movement said.

"Although Blair is gone, his successor Gordon Brown has continued to pursue his 'special relationship' with George Bush."

"November 10th is vitally important for all activists in Ireland to say that this murderous war should end, and all troops should be pulled out"

Bus leaves Belfast City Hall 11.00am Saturday November 10th. For more information contact Matt on 07815796312 or Matcollins_22@hotmail.com))

10,000 protest in Limerick over Shannon

by Donal Mac Fhearrailgh

10,000 people marched through Limerick on October 20 to demand action on the Shannon-Heathrow slots.

Chants of "Save our slots" rang out but local FF politicians could not be found.

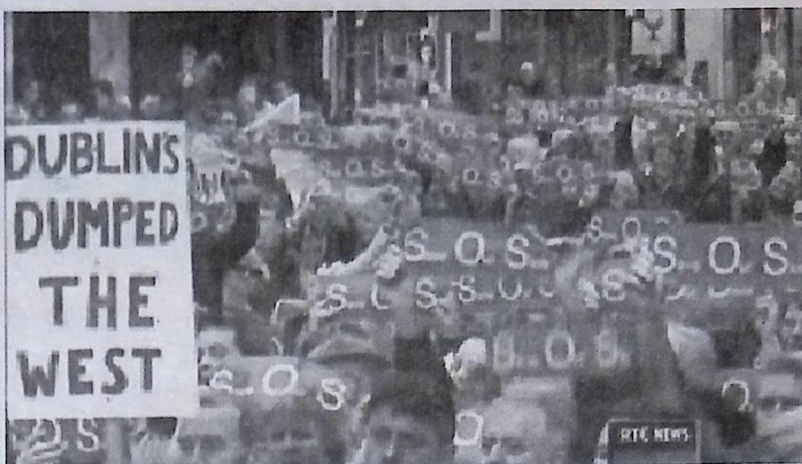
The size of the march shows the strength of feeling over the greed of Aer Lingus.

It has now been revealed that Noel Dempsey and Bertie Ahern knew six weeks in advance about the Aer Lingus decision.

It was all a charade to help Aer Lingus management.

Conor Mahon, spokesperson for the workers in Shannon said.

"The government set up a special action group but its now clear that all they were



Anger over the greed of Aer Lingus

was a justification group for the government.
"This protest has re-en-

gorged our movement".
Anger over Shannon needs to link up with other

opposition groups around hospital and cancer services to kick this government out.

Palestine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran...

Not one more death No more troops through Shannon



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150 attend Galway anti-war conference

by Detta Mc Loughlin

The International Peace Conference in Galway was a considerable success. 150 people attended meetings and documentaries.

An audio linkup with Ibrahim Mousawi, Lebanese journalist, proved hugely successful.

Mousawi explained how Hezbollah developed after the 1982 Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon.

He clarified that Hezbollah is a movement struggling against imperialism, and for social justice.

Dr Mohamed Altawil, Director, Palestine Trauma

Centre for Children, delivered a deeply informative yet narrowing briefing on how the conflict has damaged young lives.

Aitawil said "The conference has increased my hope that one day we will get our freedom".

Patricia McKenna, (Green Party), spoke alongside Sarah O'Rourke, (IAWM), on Ireland's role, opposing the use of Shannon airport by US troops and CIA torture jets.

Fifty people signed-up to Galway Alliance Against War.

GAAW are organising a bus from Galway for the National Anti-War Demonstration in Dublin, Saturday 10th November. Contact: 83cote@icr.com.net

Students take on the academics at Queens.

By Matt Collins

Over 80 people turned out and more were turned away for the public debate between lecturer and student titled "Is Marx relevant today?" in Queens University, Belfast. Cillian Macbride, Politics lecturer argued that Marx's ideas were no longer relevant and that Marx had no care for social justice.

Sean Mitchell from SWSS argued that Marx's ideas were more relevant than ever, with the ever growing gap between rich and poor, poverty and disease in the third world and the millions of lives lost in Bush's war on terror.

It is crucial to understand Marx's ideas and not to get lost in the myths of Marxism that are taught in universities.

He argued that Marx devoted his life to fighting for social justice and that by understanding his ideas we too could fight for a better world.

The meeting was another success in what has been a great year for SWSS at Queens and shows how socialists can take up ideas and debate academics to dispel the myths of Marxism and get to the core of what Marx was really about—changing the world.

People before Profit hold successful Belfast meeting

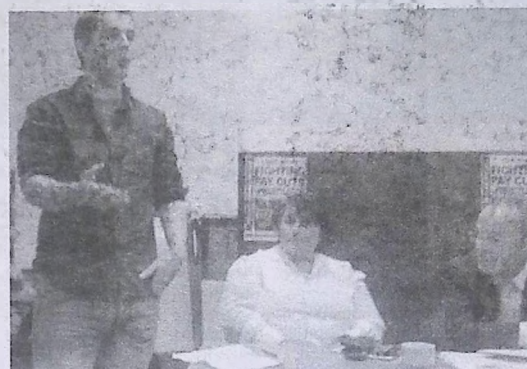
By Sean Mitchell

Around 50 people attended a recent People Before Profit meeting in Belfast City Centre.

The meeting brought together Classroom assistants and postal workers, both of who had taken recent strike action John Corey, General Secretary of NIPSA spoke of the need to defend the public sector which is under severe attack in N.Ireland.

Eamonn McCann also stressed the need to fight against privatisation and defended the recent strike action by Postal Workers and Classroom Assistants.

He argued that People Before Profit could be the organisation that pulls together all of the trade union struggles and the community fight backs against private developers. He closed by saying that all of the fights against privatisation should be coalesced



Sean Mitchell, Jane Scott, John Corey at the meeting

so that we aim our anger at the assembly politicians who are implementing these neo liberal policies.

Sean Mitchell of PBP pointed to the growing contradictions in the assembly and its drive to neo liberalism.

Gormley's incinerator u-turn

By Rory Hearne

The People Before Profit Alliance (Dublin South East) held a protest against Minister for the Environment, John Gormley, attending a pro-incineration conference in Dublin in October. Protestors stood at the entrance of the conference holding signs saying 'no incinerator' and 'Judas Gormley: Community not Incineration'.

Rory Hearne, People Before Profit Alliance and protest organiser said, "It's disgraceful that John Gormley is speaking at this pro-incineration conference. John Gormley was elected in large part due to his opposition to the proposed Poolbeg incinerator yet here he is now, the keynote speaker at a pro-incineration conference".

"This time last year we held a protest at this same conference against the then Environment Minister Dick Roche's attendance.

"John Gormley stood with us at that protest and said in a press release at the time, "The Minister's attendance is yet another demonstration of the enthusiasm with which this Government promotes incineration over more sustainable waste management solutions... This is a gathering of many of the key promoters of incineration in Ireland... The incineration sector know that they can rely on ever increasing volumes of waste for as long

as this government is in power and refuses to seriously address waste prevention and minimization".

An Bord Plenala still has to make a ruling on the Poolbeg Incinerator in the next couple of weeks. It is important the campaign remains alive as there is a possibility a Green Minister could impose an incinerator on his own community.

John Gormley and the Greens are now set to impose an incinerator on the people of Meath and Cork, directly against their party's stated policy. Also this week Bertie Ahern contradicted Gormley by saying that the country will have four incinerators not two as stated by Gormley.

Speaking to the Dail in June 2006 Mr Gormley said incineration was an "unsustainable technology". What has changed since then for the Green Party and Mr Gormley? At what point do the Greens stop disowning their previous principles to stay in power?

The Green Party and John Gormley are in a precarious position. Many of those who helped to elect them on the basis of their principles are watching with a sense of disbelief.

We need to mobilise against Gormley and this government, but it is also vital that People Before Profit becomes a strong alternative for angered Green voters.



Police intimidate protesters at Thorntons Ballyfermot

By Ann Martin

Ballyfermot People before Profit had a very successful protest at Thorntons Waste Recycling depot last month. Throughout the summer we have organised a series of protests at the front gate to highlight that Thornton's are in breach of their Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) license conditions.

The community in the area have suffered plagues of flies, unacceptable levels of dust and foul odours as well as an increase in the number of rats. Both the EPA and Thorntons have received letters of complaint from residents but there has been no abatement in these conditions.

During previous protests there was an occasional police

presence, however on this last protest 8 Gardai including a Garda Superintendent and several squad cars arrived after 30 minutes protesting. They were clearly there at the request of Thornton's with the objective of intimidating the protesters. The protesters continued the picket despite the Gardai and prevented waste lorries entering.

The Garda Superintendent has refused to explain the Garda action in trying to prevent the protesters exercising their rights. As in the Shell to Sea campaign state forces are being used to support private companies against the interests of the local people. People before Profit will continue to protest out side Thorntons until there is a satisfactory resolution to the problem.

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5,000 marched to save A+E in Ennis



3,000 protest cancer cuts in Sligo

by Declan Bree, Sligo

Over three thousand people participated in a rally and protest march in Sligo on Thursday 25th October in opposition to the phasing out of cancer care services at Sligo General Hospital.

Led by the City of Sligo Pipe Band, people from South Don-

egal, North Leitrim and North Roscommon along with a large number of protesters from Sligo, marched in the demonstration from the Institute of Technology to Sligo General Hospital.

Those who spoke warned the HSE and the Minister for Health that they would not tolerate such cutbacks, and if they did not respond, they would take their

protest to Dail Eireann.

Among those who addressed the large crowd were cancer sufferers Ann McGowan from Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, and Lily McMorro of Coolaney, Co. Sligo.

Ms Ann McGowan condemned the Government's proposal to co-locate a private hospital on the grounds

of Sligo General Hospital and she warned politicians that the views of the public would have to be heard.

Ms Lily McMorro said it was nonsense for the HSE to expect those being treated for cancer at Sligo General Hospital to travel to Galway in future, which she said would greatly inconvenience them and their

families.

SIPTU representative Mary Durkin condemned the recent decision to lay off 30 nursing staff in the hospital and called on the Government and the HSE to reinstate the staff.

Consultant surgeon at Sligo General Hospital, Dr Tim O'Hanrahan, criticised the plan to phase out cancer services at

St Micheals campaign calls for national health demo

By Hugh Lewis

40 people attended a Dun Laoghaire Health Services Action Group activists meeting on the future of St. Michaels hospital in early October. Richard Boyd Barrett, People Before Profit, and Jo Tully, vice president of the Irish Nurses Organisation, spoke.

The hospital has come under threat from developer Noel Smyth whose wants to build apartments on the hospital site.

Since May, thousands of signatures have been collected on a petition and an estimated 3 thousand postcards have been sent to the members of the Co. Council.

Last month the council rejected plans for apartments on the hospital car park. This was a victory for people power.

The meeting decided to hold a mass demonstration outside the next Council meeting on December 10th. It was also agreed to link up with other similar campaigns across the country, and to push for a national demonstration to fight the HSE cuts and end the two tier health service.

the hospital. He said also he was concerned by comments made by Minister Mary Harney regarding what cancer services would remain at Sligo hospital.

The President of the Students Union at Sligo I.T. pledged the students' full support for the campaign, and said the North West had taken enough of a battering in lack of facilities.

Save St Lukes campaign wins broad support

By Donal Mac Fhearraigh

70 people attended a public meeting on 25 October organised by patients campaigning to save St Luke's Cancer Hospital in Dublin.

Speaking at the meeting Marie Harford, a current patient said, "it is the power of ordinary people which will save the hospital and we cannot wait around for the politicians to do something"

Ciaran Behan, a relative of a patient in St Luke's said, "St Luke's has consistently been rated one of Ireland's best hospitals. Its ethos and type of care is what the health system should aspire to. If St Luke's is shut the land will inevitably be sold off for development. Ensuring St Luke's stays in Rathgar will ensure the land stays for public health use."

Rory Hearne, local SWP and People before Profit rep, said, "The New St Luke's will be a Public Private Partnership (PPP) in James' and Beaumont hospitals. PPP Hospitals in the UK have been a disaster with staff cuts, fewer beds, and poor management as private companies reap huge profits out of the hospitals. This means less equality in access to care as private companies prioritise

profits". "There wasn't adequate consultation with staff or patients. St Luke's has consistently been rated one of Ireland's best hospitals. It's what the health system should aspire to".

"What will happen to the 22 million raised by The Friends of St Luke's?"

What will happen to the Dubdoc clinic which provides important out of hours care to

local people? Cancer patients face unacceptable delays in diagnosis and treatment. Cancer rates are set to worsen considerably in the future. An upgraded St Luke's with extra surgical support services would help deal with waiting lists and ensure St Luke's long term viability".

Many areas including the midlands will have no centres of excellence under the govern-

ment's cancer strategy. A TD for FG got elected on the basis of her support for St Luke's but is now silent.

The contract is not yet signed to transfer St Luke's. The hospital is still fully operational and expanding. If patients, staff and the public get together and act now then the hospital can be saved.

Contact campaign at 086 152 3542

Conference to lead fight-back against the exploitation of education system

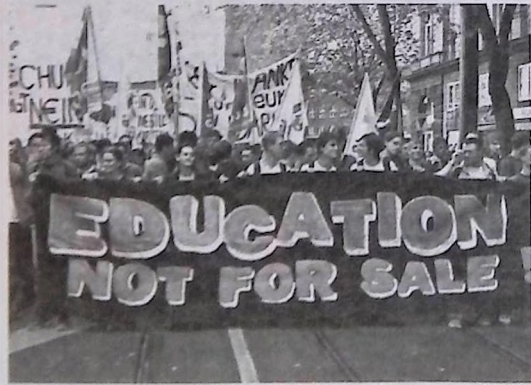
By Niall Smyth

The Campaign for Commercial Free Education and the School of Education in TCD are hosting a conference "Education: whose business is it anyway?" on November 17th in Trinity College Dublin.

Paulo Freire, renowned educationalist, once described education as either an instrument working to integrate to young generations into the logic of the present system and for conformity or that "it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."

With primary schools forced to collect tokens from supermarkets to fund PE and ICT equipment, secondary schools under the management of companies such as Jarvis Plc, the people behind the Potters Bar rail disaster in the UK, and the increasing corporatisation of our universities, it's hard to imagine Freire's liberating, creative vision of our education system.

Speaking to Socialist Worker, Joseph Fogarty a school principal and one of the organisers of the conference said "Advertisers and marketers can have the television, the cinema, the internet and the bus shelters, but they



Fighting the big-business agenda in education

mustn't be allowed to preach their message in the classroom. The education system represents time and space being purchased by the tax payer for the growth and development of our young citizens. It is an opportunity for children and teenagers to think for themselves, free from the pressures and influence of PE spin and advertising images".

With no Physical Education grant from the Department of Education since 2004, primary schools are forced to harass parents to shop at Tesco and Super Valu to collect tokens. Irish

schools collect several millions of these vouchers in a single year, representing huge revenues for the supermarket. For example under the Tesco 'Sports for Schools' scheme, a "Free" captain's armband requires schools to account for 90 vouchers or €90 worth of parents' shopping.

At second level, companies go even further. AIB run a programme called "AIB Build a Bank Challenge" in which transition year students with the "help" of AIB set up a bank on their school premises. AIB then

hold interviews with prospective 'employees' of the school bank on school time and the new 'recruits' tout for business to their friends and the bank operates as a normal commercial bank.

Not surprisingly AIB provide all the materials needed including branded bank slips, notepaper etc all covered with the AIB logo.

A recent publication by the SIPTU Education Branch "Universities or knowledge factories" tackles the issue of the threat to educational values from a growing culture of top-down managerialism and commercialism in the university sector.

"Education: Whose Business is it Anyway?" Is a one-day conference on commercialism in Irish education in Trinity College Dublin on Saturday 17th November 2007.

Conference organiser Joseph Fogarty: 'The teacher in a small rural school who refuses to tout for supermarket vouchers has much in common with the university lecturer who objects to business-style restructuring of their department. We look forward to hearing from people throughout the educational system who value learning above advertising, and societal benefit above profit.'

The conference is supported by the School of Education TCD, IPPN, Irish Heart Foundation, USI and SIPTU Education Branch. It will feature speakers from all areas of Irish education with the keynote address being given by Prof Alex Molnar of Arizona State University. Dr. Molnar is the leading U.S. expert on the commercialism of public education and author of 'School Commercialism: From Democratic Ideal to Market Commodity'.

Those interested in attending the conference should register by visiting www.commercialfreeeducation.com.

Reclaim our Universities-UCD Survey

by E Finnigan

Fears of a corporate takeover of education were highlighted this week in survey regarding the direction of the college. UCD staff and students cited low morale, the use of consultants and an overemphasis on research over quality teaching.

The mid term review of Mr Brady's tenure reinforces belief that intention to make the university a centre of excellence and one of the top research universities in Europe, has severely backfired. Staff responded with a justifiably cynical view that this is a PR exercise rather than a genuine attempt

to improve the quality of education and learning.

This business led model of education, now replicated in Colleges country-wide is representative of a move to develop Ireland's Knowledge Economy, i.e. one manipulated by the market.

Universities have marketed and justified public funding for their activities on the grounds that they serve the public good and trade on their enlightenment as purveyors of the greater good. But, this was just another smoke screen to hide the real agenda which students are quickly realising as they pay for parking facilities, eat unsubsidised food and run a real risk of divesting in their futures.

Most worrying is the position and independence of Universities, once thought to safeguard independent learning but now they must provide outputs for companies regardless of wider societal effects. Corporate funding can mean manipulated data endorsed by our learning centres.

Corporate funding in the US, where the model has been in use since the 70's, helped the tobacco and pharmaceutical industry's efforts to capitalise on vulnerable sections of society.

In UCD last year Diageo, a drinks company, funded research on Alcohol use on Campus while supporting attacks on staff working conditions.



Portuguese workers take to the streets

200,000 protest against neoliberal treaty

By Pedro Prazeres, Portugal

On the 18th October the prime ministers of the EU countries gathered in Lisbon to decide and approve the so called "Lisbon Treaty", a new version of the defunct European constitution.

The workers union CGTP-IN organized a demonstration to show to the authorities that the

workers are against this neoliberal treaty.

Many unions and students associations came to Lisbon to fight back. 3,000 police officers were mobilised to make sure that the summit could go on without any interruption. However over 200,000 people came to the demonstration.

Workers from all over the

country joined to oppose the treaty as well as the government attempts to introduce flexicurity in the labour law. That would mean the bosses could fire anyone at their will.

The unemployment rate in Portugal is at 8%, the highest for many years. Students also joined the march in protest against attempts by the government to

introduce market rules in higher education.

This was the biggest demo in the last 20 years and it was the way to show to the ministers that they can't decide what to do with our lives without consulting the people. This was a warning to show them that the workers are alert and will fight back every time they need.

Vote NO to a militarised Europe



Last year French campaigners beat the EU Constitution, now we must do it again

By Kieran Allen

The vote on the EU Reform Treaty will give the people of Ireland an opportunity to reject miniaturisation and war.

This militarisation of the EU has already begun with the formation of 'battle groups' which were set up after an EU Defence Ministers meeting in 2004. Thirteen of these groups are made up of 1,500 combat soldiers each who are available for immediate duty. Behind each of these troops stands a ratio of seven to nine other troops ready to replace them, giving the EU a Rapid Reaction Force of 156,000 combat soldiers.

They are being trained for theatres of operations that can be up to 6,000 kilometres from the European continent, which conveniently includes the Middle East.

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, the Secretary General of NATO, has revealed their real purpose.

'Battle Groups could be used to go to war. Why did the EU create Battle Groups? It is not just to re-build a country. The Battle Groups are not for building schools. We shouldn't think of the EU as for soft power and NATO for tough power.'

Since the formation of these groups, the pressure to militarise Europe has grown through extensive lobbying by the arms industry.

42 of the world's largest arms producing companies are European and these include the four giants, BAE System (Britain) Thales (France) EADS (Germany France Spain) and Finmeccania (Italy).

Their ideal of a more fervent re-armament programme took a major step forward with the formation of the EU Defence Agency in 2004. The head of this agency is one Javier Solana, the former Secretary General of NATO.

Solana was the author of the European Security Strategy, which is frightening in its open espousal of militarism.

It states, 'We need to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and when necessary robust intervention... To transform our militaries into more flexible, mobile forces and to enable them to address the new threats... With the new threats, the first line of defence will be abroad'

The new EU reform treaty gives official recognition to the EDA and quite explicitly

calls for 'the implementing of any measure for strengthening the industrial and technological base of the defence sector and for improving the effectiveness of military expenditure'.

Put simple, the EU Reform Treaty advocates increases in military spending to satisfy the arms dealers.

The influence of the arms dealers has grown in recent years in official EU committees.

In 2003, the EU Commission agreed to the formation of a 'Group of Personalities' to advise on its 'security research agenda'. This Group of Dr Stangeogloves - as research groups Statewatch called it - included the CEO of Thales, BAE Systems, EADS, Finmeccania.

Not surprising they recommended an increase in military spending and the EU Commission duly obliged.

In 2004, it established a €65 million new budget line for 'Preparatory Action for Security Research'. This, however, is only the start. The GOP group had argued that 'there is no reason why European Security Research should not be funded at a level similar to the US' and suggested a €1.8 billion budget for Europe's 450 million citizens.

The EU Commission once again obliged and launched a European Security Research programme to develop even more military and security technology.

Behind all these manoeuvres is an attempt to build up the EU as a major imperialist power that can take its place in future world conflicts.

The EU reform Treaty will explicitly commit Ireland to this agenda.

Article 27 (3) calls on members states 'to make civilian and military capabilities available.. for a common security and defence policy'.

It further calls on them to 'progressively improve their military capabilities'.

It sets up a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to co-ordinate military tasks.

It explicitly commits Ireland to 'joint disarmament operations' 'military assistance tasks', peacemaking (aka warmaking) and support for military action in 'combating terrorism'

Nothing could be clearer. A vote for the EU reform treaty is a vote to turn 'ploughs into swords' and a union into a imperialist power.

French workers resist a neo-liberal Europe

by Jim Wolfreys, France

France's transport network was brought to a standstill at the end of October as thousands of railway workers came out on strike against president Nicolas Sarkozy's plans to end "exceptional pension schemes".

Over 130 demonstrations were held across the country.

Nearly three quarters of railway workers went on strike—a greater proportion than at the high point of the massive public sector movement of 1995, the last time united all-out action was taken by all railway unions.

As many railway workers noted, this time round the strikes involved people who had refused to take action in 1995.

Agitation from below by local union activists saw the strike go into a second day in many areas—against the wishes of the CGT, the main trade union federation.

French railway workers reach pensionable age after 37.5 years of contributions, against 40 years for most people, but they make higher than average monthly contributions.

They won the right to retire earlier in 1945, when it was envisaged that everyone would be levelled up in line with the railway workers' scheme. Instead, the government now wants everyone to work longer.

The attack on pensions also affects other groups of workers. More than half of gas, electricity and Metro workers followed their unions' call to strike on Thursday 18 October.

In sectors where there was no national call for action—especially education and the civil service—significant action was built from below.



French workers striking

Up to 10 percent of teachers and civil servants joined the strike, along with some private sector workers. A further day of action has been called for November.

Sarkozy is hoping that he can split the movement. The CFTD union, for example, has

made it clear that it is prepared to discuss extending the years of contribution—something the other main federations have rejected as non-negotiable.

The government is already in separate negotiations with an independent train drivers' union which withdrew its orig-

inal call for the strike to go into a second day last week.

Past experience shows that all-out, united and indefinite strikes can win. In 1995 attacks on pensions from Alain Juppé's right wing government were defeated by such tactics.

But in 2003 further attacks were successful because a huge movement to defend pensions was fragmented by a succession of single days of action. As a result, the government was able to split the unions.

As things stand, the CGT is not prepared to call for indefinite action—although dozens of local CGT union branches have defied their leadership and voted for it.

This is the first major confrontation between the unions and Sarkozy. His government has just introduced a measure limiting the right to strike in the public sector. Sarkozy has threatened to call on the army to ensure this law is obeyed.

If the government wins this battle over pensions, it will believe it can go on to raise the average pensionable age for all workers.

The workers' movement can succeed. To do so will require opposing any move to extend the pensionable age for railway workers—and taking action that can win.

As Catherine, a Paris metro worker interviewed by the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire's newspaper Rouge, put it, "There is a big question mark over what happens next. For the movement to be hard, it needs everyone to have the same goal."

"But not all the unions called for a strike on 18 October, and not all reject the reform outright. What happens next will be played out in the mass meetings."

BLACKWATER AND IRAQ: A very private war



Blackwater mercenaries fatally shot 17 Iraqi civilians on September 16

By Vince Pitzer

Readers of this paper are probably well aware of the privatisation dogma, that all non-essential state services are better off run for profit by private companies. But it has always been a socialist axiom that the state claims a monopoly on violence, the justice system, courts, police and military.

But recent years have seen privatisation reach even these areas, particularly in the USA. It started with the US prison system, with private prisons, and as the US prison population topped 1 million, prison workshops and labour were contracted out as cheap labour in the real economy.

A security industry grew and flourished. The same dogma crept into the military as Nir Rosen wrote on mothersjones.com, "In World War II, in Vietnam, the cooks to the bodyguards were all military personnel".

"Washington now spends \$42 billion on 'private intelligence contractors', 70% of the US intelligence budget. When US tanks rolled into Iraq in 2003, according to the Guardian, "they brought with them the largest army of private contractors ever deployed in a war".

There are over 125,000 US-funded contractors in Iraq, not including sub-contractors, on top of the 160,000 US military personnel in Iraq. These contractors do everything from the laundry to guarding top US officials, such as US General Petraeus, the US ambassador in Iraq and visiting congressional delegations. They interrogate prisoners, operate rendition flights and engage in armed combat. About 40,000 work as security contractors or mercenaries in normal language.

Firms such as Blackwater USA, DynCorp, Triple Canopy have literally made a killing. Blackwater operates in 9 countries, has a fleet of over 20 aircraft, including helicopter gunships, and claims to have 20,000 troops ready for action. Firms such as these have taken US Government contracts to build up private armies that now "train or outgun many of the world's national militaries".

According to the Guardian newspaper, Blackwater, a major contractor to Bush's Republicans, has senior executives "J. Collier Black, former head of counter terrorism in the CIA, Robert Butler, former deputy director of operations at the CIA and Joseph Schmitz, former Pentagon Inspector General and an impressive array of other retired military and intelligence".

These firms have attracted ex-elite soldiers from the US, Britain and around the world, who earn on average \$12,000

a month, money that they could never earn in the regular military. An estimated 2-4000 ex South African soldiers and policemen are now in Iraq. These firms are also looking greedily at the UN peace-keeping budget, hoping for a piece of the action.

At the other end contractors make their money like any other business, paying cheap wages and recruiting from poorer countries for work in Afghanistan, Iraq or Latin America. Contractors from Columbia went on strike in Baghdad after being promised \$4,000 a month by Blackwater who only paid them \$1,000. Latin American mercenaries get \$1,000 a month while US or British get \$12,000.

Over 1,000 Fijians now work in Iraq for British company Global Risk Strategies, many have not been paid. As Naomi Klein says in her new book *The Shock Doctrine*, "Much as with so called hollow corporations such as Nike, billions are spent on military technology and design, in rich countries, while the manual labour and sweat work of invasion and occupation is increasingly outsourced to contractors who compete with each other to fill the work order for the lowest price".

"Just as this model breeds rampant abuse in the manufacturing sector—with the big name brands always able to plead ignorance about the actions of their suppliers—so it does in the military, though with stakes that immeasurably higher". The model is the same as used by multi-national corporations that rely on poorly paid workers in developing countries to run their profitable operations.

This system has many advantages. The US and British governments can claim they are reducing troop numbers but fill the gap with security contractors. Over 900 contractors have been killed, 13,000 wounded. As Gene Hallinan wrote on ZNet, "Getting other people to die for you is cheap and politically safe—the body bags and the maimed return to places most Americans and British will never see or think about." Contractors have virtual immunity in Iraq and are accused of using Iraqi vehicles as target practice.

So is any of this new? Colonial powers have always found poor people to fight for them. Since World War II there have been any number of proxy wars, the contrast in Nicaragua being just one example.

True—but this is a stage further, the contracting out of core functions that have always been seen as essential to national governments—CIA-type services, special operations, and secret actions are now being run by private companies. It gives a whole new meaning to market forces.

The Shock Doctrine The rise of disaster

By Pat O'Sullivan

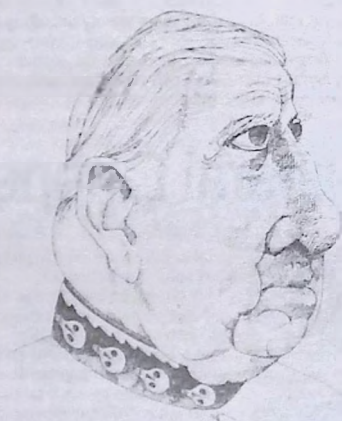
Naomi Klein's first book "No Logo" brilliantly showed how multinational corporations have come to dominate public life. The book became a huge best seller around the world. Published in the aftermath of the huge WTO protests in Seattle in 1999, it made the author the most prominent spokesperson of the anti Capitalist movement.

Her latest book looks sure to create an even bigger impact.

"Disaster Capitalism" is a term she uses to describe how the human shock, devastation and dislocation caused by major crisis, like wars, terrorist attacks and natural disasters, have been exploited by the rich to impose radical Neo-Liberal policies in various regions of the world.

For example in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina, a dislocated population returned to a city that had become a laboratory for right wing ideas. The public school system and public housing had been completely made over to a for-profit system.

A shocking chapter on Sri Lanka shows



Pinochet

how the killer tsunami wave was used to clear the coastline of fishermen, as sections of coast became real estate which were auctioned off to resort developers.

Most dramatically, in 2003 in Iraq, the Shock and Awe of the military campaign was used to impose economic shock therapy, a process which destroyed the economic infrastructure of the country to supposedly turn it into a model free market economy.

Bloody history

However the scope of this book goes far beyond even these horrific exposures. Klein explains that while researching the link between these disasters and superprofits, she discovers that the idea of exploiting crisis and disaster, far from being a recent development, has in fact always been the modus operandi of the neo liberal movement. She argues that "these bold experiments in crisis exploitation were the culmination of three decades of strict adherence to the shock doctrine".

Indeed, an alternative title for this book would be "The secret history of Neo Liberalism".

She demonstrates how the emergence of free market economics as a mainstream ideology has occurred hand in hand with a cocktail of state murder, torture and blackmail.

The Chicago Boys

Klein sets the scene by explaining the origins of the Neo Liberal movement at the Chicago University Economics department in the 1950's. The movement's Pope,

Milton Friedman, preached a philosophy of pure unbridled market capitalism. His mantra should sound familiar. De-regulate obstacles to the accumulation of profit, privatise public services and cutback on social spending. Through US government funding he trained privileged Chilean students. These Chicago boys would return home to spread the Neo Liberal gospel. However, to Friedman's dismay, they proved completely ineffectual. The people of Chile like most of South America was more interested in progressive developmental and even Marxist ideology.

A coup in 1973, organised by the Chilean rich with CIA assistance against the elected Social Democrat president Allende provided Friedman with the chance he had been dreaming of.

As Pinochet murdered trade unionists by the thousands, and filled the torture chambers to terrorise anyone daring to resist, Friedman remained his closest economic adviser. When Pinochet flinched as the economy went pear shaped, Friedman told him to cut further. The policies wrecked the economy, thousands of those who weren't murdered were condemned to what Klein calls the "slow genocide" of desperate poverty.

Spreading the counter revolution

Klein's great strength is her ability to join the dots between seemingly unconnected events over the next 30 years, and in explaining how the New Liberalism impacted the lives of the people living there. As the Chicago boys began to gain influence in various parts of the world, their DNA is seen all over the shock therapy imposed on some of the eras darkest moments.

For example, the right wing coups in Argentina in 1976, which saw 20,000 people disappeared, laid the basis for the imposition of Neo Liberal politics, again with Friedman the closest confidante.

They were close advisers to the regimes in China in 1989 and Boris Yeltsin in 1993.

The currency crisis in Pacific in 1997, the strangling of the ideals of the Freedom Charter in South Africa and Solidarity in Poland, the Balkans war in the 1990's are all covered in insightful detail.

Bringing it all back home.

The most important and controversial aspects of the book are Klein's account of the political transformation in the US and its war with Iraq.

The shock of 9/11 has certainly provided a similar opportunity in the US, what she calls the "Disaster Capitalist Complex".

The Bush's administration was packed with Friedman disciples, Bush, Cheney and the now departed Rumsfeld. She shows how the war on terror has been privatised, with core services like security, military health care, disaster response and even fighting outsourced to mercenaries.

The result is a move towards a "hollow government" whose main purpose is to oversee the privatization of whatever is left of public services.

Iraq

The invasion of Iraq provided the ultimate opportunity for the Neo Liberals, the wiping clean of a state, and what Friedman himself called "nation creating"—in his image of course. Multinational corporations with deep connections with the Bush regime replaced state services, made obscene profits, but delivered on next to nothing. Klein was in Iraq during this period. Her account of the change of mood amongst Iraq's to the US administration, and the rise of the resistance is quite revealing.



Milton Friedman

What is surprising is that she doesn't situate Iraq within the context of a growing imperialist rivalry between the US and its global competitors.

Even the Neo conservatives have come clean about this.

The US economy is in global decline. Unless it imposes its military might now, and asserts its Geo-political dominance in strategic parts of the world, it may lose out to China and others within the next 40 years.

To focus solely on the corporatist agenda is to ignore the weakness of US power, and the potential disaster that a defeat in Iraq would have for them.

Solutions.

Despite the powerful expose of state murder, Klein has explained that she has no problem with capitalism as such, just the extreme form which has emerged over the last 30 years. She argues for a return to the Keynesian, or old fashioned Labour type Government.

However this doesn't explain why this particular form of capitalism has recently emerged, or even why Social Democratic governments like Blair/Brown have been so eager to embrace it.

There has been a steady decline in the average rate of profit for the capitalist class over the last 40 years.

In order to increase their profits, and compete on an international scale, Capitalists are now clawing back many of the benefits that have been won by the working class over the years.

A process sometimes called "accumulation by dispossession".

So the struggle against Neo Liberalism and the Capitalist system are inextricably linked.

Signs of hope.

The book ends on an optimistic note by highlighting how in many parts of the world, particularly in South America where much of it began, Neo Liberalism is on the defensive. The rise of the workers and other grass roots movements in places like Venezuela and Bolivia shows how it can be resisted.

In Europe, as a new EU constitution brings with it the promise of a new wave Neo Liberal attacks, we need to learn from this, in Ireland we need to organise to ensure that the upcoming referendum on the constitution is a disaster for EU capitalists!

The message contained in this powerful and angry book can only help our cause.

Doctrine - Disaster Capitalism



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Naomi Klein

Double or Nothing: Bush Gambling on New War with Iran?



Iran surrounded by permanent US bases

By US socialist Brian Kelly

Bogged down in an unwinnable war in Iraq and increasingly pessimistic about their prospects in Afghanistan, neoconservatives at the heart of the Bush administration seem set on 'going for broke' by launching a 'pre-emptive' war against Iran.

While a US attack of some kind has been widely predicted for more than a year now, the White House seems in recent weeks to have embarked on a dramatic escalation of tensions with Tehran, raising fears that the long-anticipated assault is in its final stages of preparation. Elaborate military plans drawn up over the past summer include not only tactical strikes against Iran's nuclear infrastructure, but a comprehensive assault that would cripple Iran's already weak economy and inflict terror on its civilian population.

On one level, the campaign being driven by Bush and Cheney has all the earmarks of the runup to the Iraq invasion. Bush's remarks last week that his administration would 'defend Europe against the emerging Iranian threat,' or that Iran's acquisition of nuclear capability raised the possibility of "World War III" is reminiscent not only of Cold War lunacy at its worst.

Bush and his allies face a series of problems selling war with Iran, firstly the fact that the entire world is aware that the Iraq invasion was launched on the basis of flagrant lies.

The second major problem is the absence of any pretext for a pre-emptive strike. Whitehouse claims about Iranian intent to develop a nuclear weapons program has been discredited by the head of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohammed El Baradei, has said recently that there is no "clear and present danger" in Iran, and called a cooked-up US Congressional report on Iranian capability "erroneous and misleading". The IAEA earlier described the 'intelligence' on Iranian facilities provided by the US as "almost worthless."

Scepticism over Iran's nuclear ambitions has forced Washington to find a new pretext: Tehran's alleged 'meddling' in the war in Iraq. Over the past six months US commanders have repeatedly charged Iran with infiltrating Revolutionary Guards across the Iraqi border, equipping Shi'ite militants in the South and smuggling in sophisticated IEDs for use against US forces. British intelligence reported earlier this year that it was "far from clear" that Iran had any tangible operations in the Iraq.

Behind the surface of their public arrogance the neocons operate today from a position

of very serious weakness. Dissent over the Iraq strategy within the American ruling class itself, and these tensions feed into calculations for extending the war.

Earlier this year reports circulated that at least a half dozen top generals were prepared to resign if an attack on Iran got the green light. The Bush response has been to concentrate planning and intelligence into narrow circles loyal to the administration and to promote into leadership positions only those (like General David Petraeus) willing to push its line aggressively.

In their hour of need, and in the face of deep and growing opposition among ordinary Americans, the neoconservative project has remained viable only because of support from three key constituencies: the Democratic party establishment in the US itself; Israeli militarists and the powerful Zionist lobby; and the craven actions of the EU in tailoring its Middle East policy to the Bush doctrine.

Having been elected on a wave of antiwar sentiment, the Democratic majority in Congress has failed to mount any serious challenge to Bush, they backed his recent designation of Iran's Revolutionary Guards as a "terrorist organization." If anything, the Democrats, and Hilary Clinton in particular, in election mode seem more than ever determined to prove their imperial credentials.

Israel's belligerence in the region has been reinforced since 9.11. The ties between leading US neocons and the Israeli right are by now well-known. The Democrats' historic commitment to the Zionist state means that any prospects for a public fight over the Bush doctrine are sharply diminished. Democratic Party leaders calculate that, faced with nowhere else to go, liberals uneasy over US foreign policy will fall in behind Hillary when the crunch comes whereas the much more powerful and cohesive Zionists must be placated.

The EU, seen in some quarters as an alternative to US aggression, is more usefully viewed as the 'soft cop' of western imperialism in the region, carrying out a diplomatic role that complements rather than challenges Washington's strategy. This will continue if any conflict develops between Iran and the US.

All of this points to the very real possibility that the pre-emptive war that the Bush administration has been anxious to launch against Iran, but which it has so far been unable to pull off, may become a reality in the weeks or months ahead.

Editorial

Pay hikes for them, health cuts for us

The government has just announced the need to cut public finances because of a slowdown in the economy. Meanwhile Bertie Ahern and other top senior civil servants, gardai, judges and politicians have just been granted enormous pay hikes. Perhaps the mysterious flows of money from businessmen into Ahern's bank accounts has dried up – but don't bet on it.

Ahern is set to receive a pay rise of €38,000 a year, which will bring his annual salary to €310,000. That's a 14% pay rise, while Mary Harney's pay packet increases by 15.5% to €270,000.

Ministers salaries are up 12% to €240,000 and junior ministers also rise by 12% to €165,000. Judges got an increase at 18.1%. Other top civil servants like HSE Chief Executive Brendan Drumm is earning around €360,000 a year plus bonuses of up to 25%. The Dublin City Manager, John Fitzgerald, will receive an increase of 36.2%, both the Garda Ombudsman and Garda Commissioner's annual salaries will rise by 15%.

These are the people who are pushing through the neo-liberal offensive in Ireland. They are being rewarded for their thuggery by the ruling class and being encouraged to increase the pace of attacks.

Who is the review body that gave the pay hikes?

Tony O'Brien – ex IBEC president, chairman C&C Group, John Doherty – IBEC member on Labour Court, Brian Hillery – chairman Independent News and Media, former prof at UCD Grad Business School, Vivienne Jupp – UCD Smurfit Business School board, former global managing partner in Accenture, Peter Malone – chair National Roads Authority, former CEO Jurys Doyle Hotel Group

Meanwhile workers are told they must sign up to productivity and flexibility to get meagre increases barely in line with inflation.

Ahern will be back before the Morris Tribunal another four times. Eamon Dunphy let the cat out of the bag when he reported to the tribunal that businessman Owen O'Callaghan said Ahern 'had been bought'. FF factions are preparing to dump Ahern. We should dump Ahern and his government first.

Susie Long:

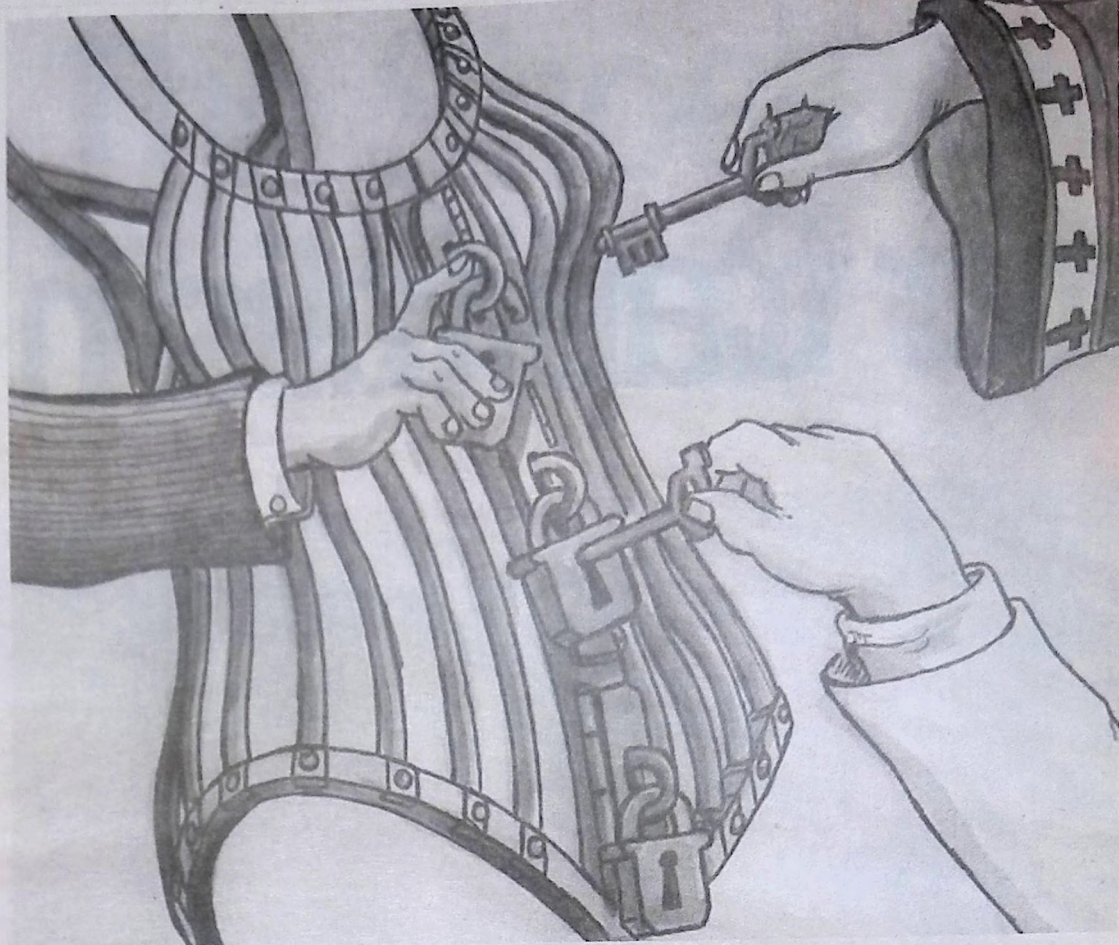
Honour her memory by dismantling inequality

Susie Long was a fighter. She believed a different world was possible and spent her life fighting for it. In her last years she fought the legalised robbery and class discrimination of the Irish health system. She was killed by the Irish health service because she did not have the money to jump the queues and would not have done so even if she had the money.

Irish workers will on average die ten years younger than the middle and upper classes. This is a direct result of poorer access to healthcare.

Susie spoke for millions when she demanded the end of the two-tier health service. Her dignity and anger came to speak for millions who are fighting hospital closures and demanding cancer treatment services are kept where patients can access them. Tens of thousands of people have marched around the country on the issue of health, we need to unite that anger and bring it to the Dail to bring down this government.

The best legacy we can build to Susie's memory is a properly funded public healthcare service accessible to everyone on the basis of need. That can start by having a united national demonstration on health in Dublin during this Dail session.



Will abortion rights be extended to Northern Ireland?

By Goretti Horgan

Since the Agreement in 1998, the constitutional position of NI as part of the UK has been guaranteed: Paisley says for 100 years; Gerry Adams agrees for at least 20. So, why is it that 40 years after the Abortion Act was passed in Britain, women in N. Ireland are not able to end pregnancies on the NHS even if they are pregnant as a result of rape or incest?

New Labour says it won't extend the Act but will leave it to the Stormont Assembly. Yet, abortion is not a devolved issue in Scotland or Wales either—because Scottish politicians look over their shoulders at the Catholic Church every bit as nervously as do Northern ones.

Anyway, leaving abortion to the Assembly is like leaving it to the Dail – it's a recipe for making sure nothing happens. Both the DUP and Sinn Fein have said they oppose extension of the Act.

On 22nd Oct, the Assembly voted to approve a DUP motion calling on the Minister for Health not to issue guidelines to clarify the law on the spurious grounds that it would make

abortion more widely available (they would have ensured that abortion is available to save women's lives, though not in the cases of rape or foetal abnormality).

There are proposals to use Westminster's Human Tissue and Embryology Bill in the next few months to amend the Abortion Act and finally extend it to

Northern Ireland. The response of many in the North will be "about time!" But that's not what the mainstream press will tell you. Coverage of the North tends to concentrate on the sexual dinosaurs of the mainstream local parties.

It's true the overwhelming majority vote for one or other of the confessional parties which seems to best represent 'their' community – because that's all the North's elections are fought on. But that doesn't mean that people live their lives like Paisley or the Pope tell them they should.

More than half (58 percent) of all births in Belfast last year were to unmarried parents, with more than three quarters registering the birth jointly. The fundamentalists, both Protestant and Catholic, tried to mobilise against Civil Partnerships and not only didn't succeed but failed to maintain a credible campaign of protest.

They will try to make an even louder fuss about abortion. But they know that many women in NI already see abortion as an option. They are aware, too, that their success in so far preventing the extension of the Act

has resulted only in preventing poorer women, who cannot afford to travel to England, from ending intolerable pregnancies.

Despite paying the same taxes as women in Britain, women from the North have to raise £700—£1,000 for a private abortion in Britain. Almost 40 women a week leave the North for an abortion. Women from the North are three times more likely than their British counterparts to have an abortion after 20 weeks. This is almost entirely due to difficulties getting the money together. Some will try to cause an abortion themselves. In fact, 11% of NI's GPs say they have seen the results of amateur abortions. Others will despair and kill, or try to kill, themselves.

The issue comes down, not to religion, but to a question of one law for the rich and one for the poor. Forty years after the NHS started providing abortions in Britain, isn't it time that women in NI started to have the same access as their sisters across the water to a full health service? The time has come to get out on the streets and make the voices of the pro-choice majority heard.

Almost 40 women a week leave the North for an abortion.

WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

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.

Join the Socialists

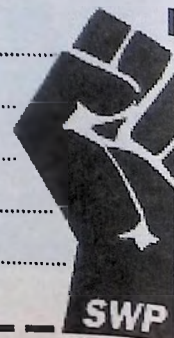
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Turkey, Kurdistan and the US quagmire



Kurdish guerrilla fighter

By Donal Mac Fhearraigh

The US has promised Turkey that it will crush Kurdish rebels who have been fighting for an independent homeland.

Turkey is threatening to invade northern Iraq following a series of armed confrontations along the Iraq-Turkish border with militants belonging to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The fighting is part of a decades old struggle between the Kurdish militants and the Turkish state.

Turkey, which has the second largest military in the NATO military alliance, is

threatening to invade northern Iraq. It has massed up to 100,000 troops on the border.

The PKK's offer of a ceasefire was rejected out of hand.

US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice promised that if Turkey were to hold back the US military will take "quick steps" to crush the PKK rebels.

The US fears that any Turkish military action would undermine their allies among the main Kurdish parties in northern Iraq—the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

Both parties are key sup-

porters of the US occupation.

The 40 million Kurds, who make up a sizeable minorities in Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq have been campaigning for independence since the maps of the Middle east were drawn by Britain and France at the end of the First World War. They form the largest single people in the world without a state of their own.

The Kurdish minority in Turkey faced decades of oppression, with severe punishment if they were caught speaking their language.

The PKK emerged in 1984 during the era of military rule in Turkey. The movement

launched a guerrilla war that resulted in a murderous reaction by the Turkish state—with 40,000 deaths, 4,000 villages destroyed and four million people driven out of their homes.

The organisations continue to enjoy support from among the Kurds in the border region and among the Kurdish majority of south-eastern Turkey.

The latest fighting has touched off a wave of anti-Kurdish attacks across Turkey. Turkey's invasion of northern Iraq and the US targeting of the PKK could touch off an ethnic civil war that could engulf the whole of northern Iraq.



Poland: Neo-liberals beat Catholic right

by Andy Zebrowski, Pracownicza Demokracja (Workers' Democracy Poland)

Donald Tusk's neoliberal Civic Platform won the Polish parliamentary elections last Sunday comprehensively defeating the right-wing populist Law and Justice party of Jaroslaw Kaczynski (his twin brother is the country's president).

The Civic Platform won because they looked like the party most able to beat Kaczynski, whose use of the various policing agencies against his political opponents finally turned people against him.

Only a couple of weeks before the elections it looked as though Kaczynski's party would win easily. But he then badly lost a debate with Donald Tusk.

And a few days before polling an MP from Tusk's party was arrested on corruption charges - a video of her taking a plastic bag full of money was shown on TV. This backfired when it turned out that a special police agent had had a relationship with her for a year and encouraged her to take the bribe. The fact that the election could have turned into a big victory for either party and was determined by one or two incidents in the campaign shows that the parties differ in style but in substance are very similar.

Tusk's Civic Platform is known as the most pro-business, neo-liberal party but most people were not voting for privatisation and cuts. Two years ago Tusk lost both the presidential and parliamentary elections because he was more honest about his politics. This time the image was softened with more talk about the poor and much less about privatisation. Kaczynski's party has been governing for two years which meant it was easy to show that in government it was not so "social". Kaczynski never came close to achieving a realistic start to his promised 3 million new homes in eight years.

According to one magazine there were 16 zloty billionaires in Poland in 2006 and 25 in 2007. The wealth of the richest one hundred Poles increased by 53.7 percent in that one year.

For ordinary people things aren't so rosy. The unemployment rate is falling but is still very high at around 12 percent. It is estimated that some two million people have gone abroad to look for work, mainly to Ireland and Britain.

Kaczynski was also hit by all the parties except his calling for a withdrawal of Poland's 1,000 troops from Iraq. It remains to be seen

whether the new government will leave Iraq—already there is talk of the need to find out what commitments (even informal ones) have been made to the Americans.

The postcommunist social democrats who are as neoliberal as New Labour without having ever won workers' loyalty contested the election in alliance with a liberal party led by some well known former Solidarity leaders in a misnamed bloc called the Left and Democrats (LiD).

The alliance was headed by former president Kwasniewski but in the end managed only 13 percent - roughly the same support won by the postcommunists two years ago. Kwasniewski was shown drunk twice while speaking at big meetings, ruining LiD's chances of becoming Kaczynski's main rival.

The Self Defence farmers' party and the extreme right League of Polish Families (LPR) are out of parliament, failing even to get 2 percent of the vote each. They were damaged by being in coalition with Law and Justice. Kaczynski also courted the far right media which undercut LPR's support.

There have recently been some good examples of resistance to neo-liberal policies.

This summer protesting nurses were roughed up by police. But they forced Kaczynski to negotiate with their leaders who had occupied his office for eight days—despite Kaczynski saying they were criminals and that he would never talk to them. Earlier the government had backed down just before the start of a railway workers strike over the right to early retirement. The occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan are even more unpopular than before and the US anti-missile "shield" due to be located in Poland is opposed by a majority of the population. This opposition needs a political expression.

In the elections the Polish Labour Party (PPP) was the only party genuinely campaigning against neo-liberalism and war. It got one percent of the poll (just over 160 thousand votes)—not much, but 76 percent more than last time. The PPP is based on one trade union and led by its leader which meant it was strong enough to stand in all constituencies. But this is also its weakness—it is too narrow an alternative. It needs to jointly form a broader alliance with other trade union, anti-war, green, left-wing and community organisations and activists.

Such a political alternative based on the resistance to war and anti-worker policies is badly needed.

Pakistan on the brink of civil war

By Shaz Ahmed, International Socialist, Pakistan

The bombs that ripped through the cavalcade returning opposition leader Benazir Bhutto from exile marks a major escalation of the "war on terror" in Pakistan.

Bhutto was protected as she rode in a bomb proof car surrounded by a "human shield" of supporters.

Until now the war waged by the US backed regime of General Musharraf was confined to the tribal areas near the border with Afghanistan.

But this war has become deeply unpopular following mounting losses and defections in the army.

Musharraf, who was becoming increasingly isolated following widespread popular opposition, struck a power sharing deal with Bhutto.

In return she promised to turn the "war on terror" into a "peoples' war" and save his government.

The attack on the procession is the first incident in what appears to be a long and drawn out war that threatens to spill over the whole country.

US tries to tip the balance in Lebanon

By Simon Assaf, Lebanon

A report in Lebanon's al-Safir newspaper revealed that a delegation headed by undersecretary of defense Eric Edelman met with top-ranking Lebanese officials. The US want to establish three military bases, an airforce base and a naval base that will encircle

Hizbullah areas, Palestinian camps and threaten Syria.

In addition the US want to establish radar stations along the Lebanese mountain range and the strategic Beirut to Damour highway.

The US have also requested that the Lebanese army abandon its longstanding neutrality towards the resistance

and Syria, and reassess its relations with Israel.

Since the defeat of Israel in last summer's war on Lebanon, the US has hiked up military aid to the Lebanese army from \$43 million to \$270 million.

Now it has announced this aid will double to \$500 million. Last month the US delivered hundreds

of military vehicles to the Lebanese army as part of a massive airlift of weapons.

The revelations come as the country heads towards a showdown between the opposition—led by Hizbullah and the mainly Christian Free Patriotic Movement—and the US backed ruling coalition over upcoming presidential elections.

Comment

Palestinian peace initiative: Viceroy Blair wailing at the wall?

By Eamonn McCann

Speaking to Tony Blair about Palestine is like talking to the Wall.

In Hebron last month, Blair said he was "really astonished and angry" at an account given by a UN official of the effects of the Wall on the lives of Palestinians.

What is astonishing about his statement is that there were few subjects on which Blair was lobbied so intensively during his last years in Downing Street as Israel's Apartheid Wall. MPs, Amnesty International, aid agencies and a range of NGOs and Palestinian support groups battered incessantly at the doors of Downing Street, calling on Blair to take notice of the effects of the Wall.

His reaction was a stony refusal to acknowledge their pleadings or to demand that Israel tear down a structure which was wholly illegal and was turning the West Bank into a simmering prison.

Now wants us to believe that he's just now discovered the reality of life in the shadow of the Wall—and is "angry" about it!

The real reason he pretends anger is that he's acting as Middle East mediator on behalf of the Quartet—the European Union, the United Nations, Russia and the United States—and was in Hebron to meet representatives of the Fatah administration headed by Mahmoud Abbas.

He wasn't meeting representatives of Hamas which, last year, won a victory over Fatah in a general election. Blair's reaction to the defeat of Abbas' party was to declare that "This is the time for the international community to come behind President Abbas, to help build his authority."



Blair

Now there's a statement to which might we might properly attach the words "astonished" and "angry."

Bob Fisk said at the time of Blair's appointment: "Astonishment is not the word for it. Stupefaction comes to mind...I remain overwhelmed that this vain, deceitful man, this proven liar, a trumped-up lawyer who has the blood of thousands of Arab

men, women and children on his hands is really contemplating being 'our' Middle East envoy."

But there he was, as bold as the brass on the back of his neck, ensconced in plush offices in the American Colony Hotel (I) in east Jerusalem, with a budget of \$8 million a year and a 14-strong team of advisors, "urging compromise on all sides."

It is difficult to see what compromise the Palestinians can reasonably be expected to make on the issue of the Wall.

The Wall snakes for hundreds of kilometres enclosing more than 90 percent of the illegal Jewish settlements on the West Bank. All Palestinian property within 60 metres of the Wall's path is being destroyed or confiscated. At least 10,000 Palestinians will be marooned between the Wall and Israel in a strip designated a "closed military zone."

Virtually all (98 percent) of the illegal settlers will be on the "Israeli" side of the Wall, the swathe of territory effectively annexed.

The area left to Palestinians by this illegal activity will be diced up into tiny Bantustans by roads reserved for Israelis travelling to and from the settlements.

What are the Palestinians supposed to compromise on?

Nor has Blair said a word about the "Jewish National Fund Law," given its first reading in the Knesset in July.

It stipulates that land administered by the Jewish National Fund must be allocated exclusively to Jews.

Most of this land—13 percent of Israel—was taken from Palestinian families now in refugee camps or "internally displaced."

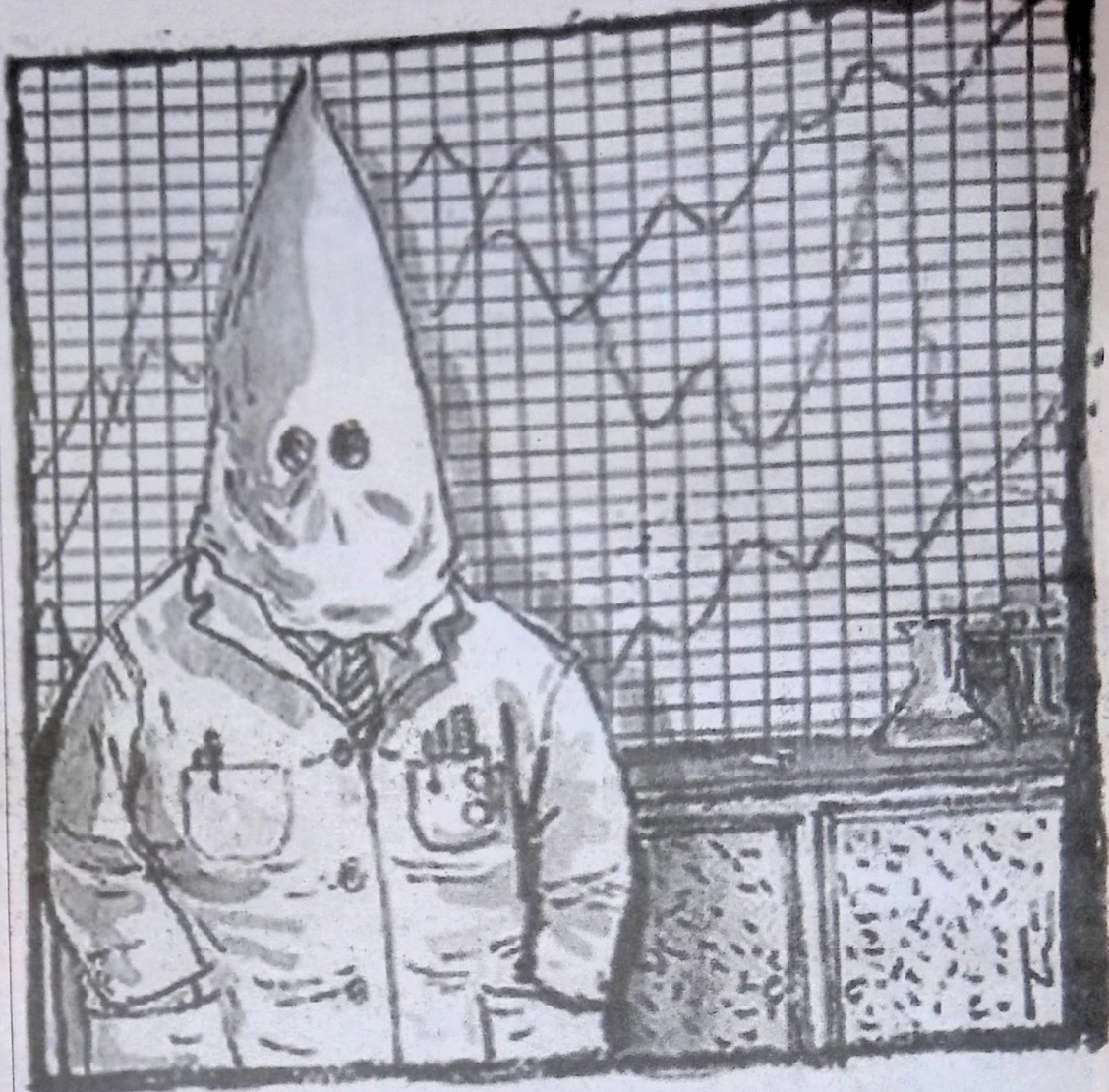
The bill, passed by 64-16, was described as "abominable" by left-wing Jewish MPs from the Meretz-Yachad group, which added that it "shows the real face of the Government (and) risks representing Israel as an apartheid state."

An annex to the bill declares: "Despite whatever is stated in any law, leasing of Jewish National Fund's lands for the purpose of the settlement of Jews on these lands will not be seen as improper discrimination."

Surviving relics of the Alabama State authorities of the 1960s must be kicking themselves they never thought of that one.

"Despite what is stated in any law, making black people travel at the back of the bus will not be seen as improper discrimination..."

How they must regret that they didn't have a mediator who would refuse to talk to anybody black except Uncle Tom and would suggest as a compromise that blacks should be allowed to sit in the middle of the bus.



James Watson's 'scientific' racism is inferior science

by Viren Swami,
a lecturer in psychology at the University of Westminster. He is the author of *The Missing Arms of Venus de Milo*

James Watson's belief that black people are less intelligent than white people is the latest example of scientific racism.

So the hideous but seemingly immortal serpent that is scientific racism has emerged once again.

This time the perpetrator is James Watson, who won the Nobel Prize for his part in the discovery of DNA.

Watson last week parroted the oft-repeated claim that black people are less intelligent than white people.

In Watson's mind, those who believe that all human beings are born equal in intelligence are simply deluded. After all, "people who have to deal with black employees find this not true."

Just to emphasise the point, Watson exhumes the old line about genetic differences in IQ—he says the genes responsible for creating human intelligence will be found in the not too distant future.

Watson is no stranger to controversy.

He has suggested a link between skin colour and sex drive, arguing that black people have stronger libidos.

He also supports genetic screening and engineering on the basis that stupidity is a disease—the bottom 10 percent of people should, Watson believes, be "erased".

His ideas about women are no less anachronistic: "People say it would be terrible if we made all girls pretty. I think it would be great."

Modern racism has always relied on some kind of scientific legitimisation.



James Watson tried to demonstrate that differences in IQ between whites and blacks in the US were a function of black people's inferior genes.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries research on race and intelligence was used to argue that white people were superior to all other races, justifying colonialism and the ill-treatment of "inferior" races.

Contemporary debates about race and intelligence can be traced back to an article by the psychologist Arthur Jensen.

He tried to demonstrate that differences in IQ between whites and blacks in the US were a function of black people's inferior genes.

In 1994, Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray published *The Bell Curve*, in which they suggested that black Americans' poverty could be explained by their "biologically determined" inferior intelligence.

A year ago, Satoshi Kanazawa argued that African countries were poor and suffered from ill-health because their populations are less intelligent than people in the richer West.

Inherent in the argument of black inferiority is the assumption that it is possible to distinguish a "black race", and that this race has inferior genes for intelligence.

But this ignores decades of research suggesting that race is not a meaningful concept and that there is no biological basis for race.

In a recent article, the psychologists Robert Sternberg, Elena Grigorenko and Kenneth Kidd have argued that much of the research on intelligence and race is based on cultural tradition rather than scientific analysis.

Race, they write, fits into no known genetic pattern.

In other words, race is a socially constructed concept, not a biological one, which makes the notion of differences in intelligence between races en-

tirely spurious.

Even if it was accepted that there are distinct biological races, it should be quite clear that there can be no simple correlation between a person's genes and her or his intelligence.

The mistake of Watson, Kanazawa and others is in privileging one aspect of human nature (biology) over another (culture).

Individuals may very well differ in their biological inheritance, but they are also separated by an immense cultural gulf—in the case of Africa, a gulf that originates from centuries of exploitation and discrimination.

Is it really a surprise, then, that people who are educationally, economically and socially deprived will be worse performers on educational tests (including IQ tests designed and validated in the West) than those who are relatively privileged?

The truly remarkable thing, in my mind, is that cross-national differences in IQ are as small as they are.

Watson has defended his previous comments through talk of free speech. His argument suggests that scientists should be able to ask any question irrespective of political outcome.

I do not dispute that scientists should scrutinise popular assumptions and challenge intellectual taboos. But scientists should not be allowed to make use of spurious research to substantiate personal and cultural racism.

Challenging scientific racism, however, will require much more than just a scientific response, important as this is.

It is just as crucial for non-scientists to be aware of these debates and to help fight this racism.

Hollywood's backlash against the 'war on terror'

Ben Dickenson, the author of *Hollywood's New Radicalism - Globalisation, War and the Movies*, hails the new wave of anti-war films from the US.

Paul Haggis, Brian De Palma, Robert Redford, John Cusack - what's the link? Yes, they are all on the Hollywood A-list, but there's another, more political, connection.

Over the next few months they will bring a series of films to our screens that grapple with the consequences of war, and critique US foreign policy.

Haggis is writer and director of *In The Valley Of Eelah*, the story of a man searching for a son who has gone AWOL after serving in Iraq. Haggis sums up the common feeling about the war among a significant minority of Hollywood personalities: "This is not one of our brighter moments in America... We should not have gotten involved."

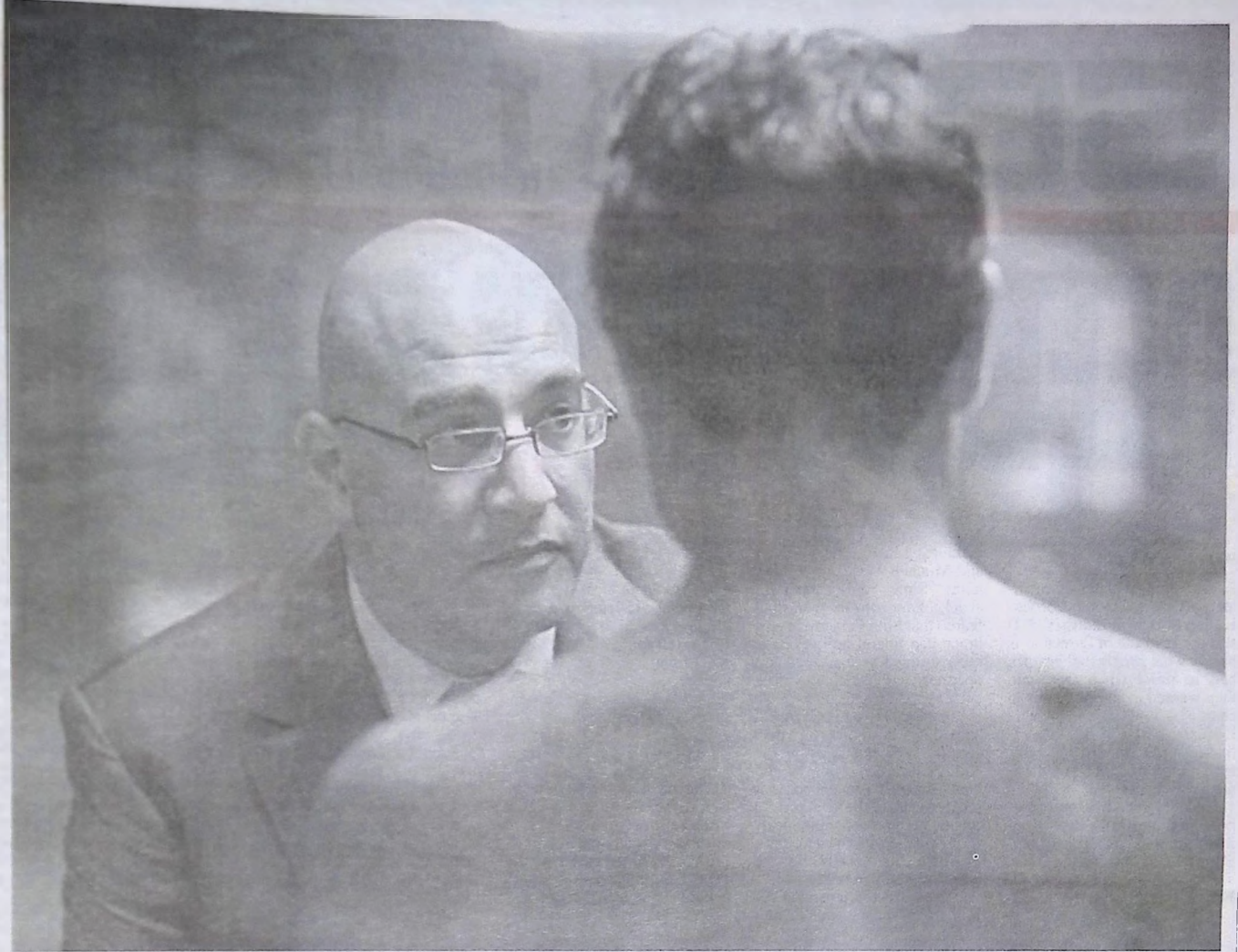
Grace Is Gone, which Cusack stars in and produces, shows a father's patriotism questioned when his wife dies on military duty. Speaking of the Bush administration's attempt to hide the deaths of soldiers in Iraq, Cusack expresses bitter anger: "It's the most brazen, cowardly, egregious political act I'd seen in my lifetime."

Rendition, *Lions For Lambs* and *Redacted* cover similar territory, journeying into war zones in the Middle East. *Lions For Lambs* has the highest profile, premiering at the London Film Festival this month, starring Tom Cruise and Meryl Streep in a tale of Afghan conflict and political misadventure.

Rendition is also likely to secure a high profile. It stars Reese Witherspoon and Jake Gyllenhaal in a tale that exposes the consequences of a Guantanamo-style assault on civil rights.

For those who think these are isolated examples, trace a line through Michael Moore's *Bowling For Columba* (2002), David O Russell's *Soldiers Pay* (2004) and *Syriana* (2006), to the current set of releases. It seems an anti-war genre emerged with the decision to invade Iraq - a genre rooted in activism.

The start of the line can be traced to a Los Angeles celebrity reaction in 2002 organised by radical documentary filmmaker Robert Greenwald (*Outfoxed*, *Uncovered*, *Iraq For Sale*). Some 200 filmmakers prepared arguments against war and launched *Act Up* organisation. Artists



Rendition stars Reese Witherspoon and Jake Gyllenhaal in a tale that exposes the consequences of a Guantanamo-style assault on civil rights.

United. Former Screen Actor's Guild president Ed Asner described the movement that followed as "the most diverse and inspiring of my lifetime".

Hollywood participated through protest, public speeches and media activism, reaching a peak when trying to oust George Bush at the 2004 elections.

After the disappointment of his re-election the focus returned to Iraq, often working with broader coalitions such as United For Peace and Justice (UFPJ).

UFPJ mobilised a 500,000 strong protest earlier this year in Washington. Sean Penn spoke from the stage, saying there would be a price to pay in the 2006 elections if there was no

action against the war: "If they don't stand up and make a resolution as binding as the death toll, we're not going to be behind those politicians."

Tim Robbins carried the argument to television in August, helping popular presenter Bill Maher tear apart the neoconservative writer Stephen Hayes. Robbins made his views plain - "murderers" like Bush should not be allowed to run a global superpower.

This incident offers an insight into the current Hollywood anti-war genre. Films criticising the Vietnam War didn't appear until several years after the conflict, in the late 1970s, but today's genre is intervening in a live debate with a mass audi-

ence.

It would be foolish, however, to treat the current trend without a little caution. Haggis's film only deals with the politics of Iraq obliquely. *Grace Is Gone* forgoes the big political canvas for a personal story. *Rendition* deals with terrorism, but is sentimental with a traditional white American heroine.

We also have *The Kingdom* and *Hurt Locker* (out next year), slick action films set in contemporary war zones that indulge in demonising Muslims.

They are a reminder that Hollywood is run by money hungry media companies, worth \$3 trillion, and action-entertainment always wins over politics in the profit stakes.

On the other hand, Hollywood now makes many films through semi-independent companies such as United Artists, where celebrities decide which films to make. Corporations dictate distribution deals but are reluctant to turn down a potential profit maker.

Provided there is an audience of paying cinemagoers for anti-war films, at least some will be released.

Which brings us to Brian De Palma's *Redacted*. *Redaction* is the form of military censorship that blacks information out of documents.

De Palma seeks to un-redact Iraq: "Pictures are what will stop the war," he says. And these are the most uncomfort-

able pictures. Although fictional, the film feels authentic, told through video journals, mock documentary footage and Al Jazeera style reports. Events build up to the brutal rape of an Iraqi girl, and conclude with a roll call of dead civilians.

Redacted received a five minute standing ovation at the Venice Film Festival. In this welcome anti-war genre it may be exemplary, getting to the heart of the conflict with unequivocal condemnation.

Nevertheless, without the rest of the genre proving there is a politicised audience for such films, *Redaction* might never reach our screens - and for all of this we have the movement itself to thank.

Paintings from Poland: Symbolism to Modern Art (1880-1939)

By Sinead Kennedy

The National Gallery of Ireland is presenting an exhibition of Polish art spanning the period 1880 to 1939. It exhibits consists of more than 70 paintings, largely drawn from the National Museum in Warsaw, many of which have not been seen in Ireland before.

The exhibition focuses on the Symbolist period of the late nineteenth century through to the modernism and abstraction of the inter-war years. Most importantly the intervening period, the so-called 'meeting of two generations', shows that the birth of modern art was an evolutionary not a revolutionary process.

One of the key works in the exhibition is Stanczyk's (1862) by Jan Matejko. It depicts the lonely image of the sad clown, the only figure in the painting to appreciate the impending doom, that the party is over even as it begins.



Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz (1885-1939), *Composition with Five Figures, 1911*
© National Museum in Warsaw. Photo: Piotr Ligier

Matejko produced the painting in 1862 and in the process turned the jester, Stanczyk, into a mythological figure for Poland's historical identity.

Poland at the time was being divided up between Russia, Prussia and Austria and there were several uprisings against the occupying powers. Matejko's use of symbolism allowed him



Leon Chwistek (1884-1944), *Foast, c.1925*
© National Museum in Warsaw. Photo: Piotr Ligier

to explore, in a roundabout way, the political and social issues that dominated late nineteenth-century Polish society.

Poland was reconstituted after the First World War but was then occupied by Germany and Russia during the Second World War and became a communist Eastern Bloc country until 1989.

Poland's turbulent history helps to contextualise some of the imagery in the art of the period - whether it articulates a longing for independence or a desire to embrace an international, borderless notion of art.

The influence of European modernism is also strong in Polish painting and there was in Poland, as in Ireland,

a debate set up between the international style and There is a common perception in Polish and Irish conceptions of modernism that the local conservatism was always in conflict with the more international and cosmopolitan style of modernism. In the work of Henryk Stazewski, one of the key figures of the Polish avant-garde, we see a uniquely Polish take on modernism, revealing how that relationship was in Poland, as in Ireland, much more complicated.

The exhibition understands Polish art in a wider European context and provides a rare opportunity to see some of the most important works of an extraordinarily creative artistic culture in a period of national upheaval.

The exhibition is at the National Gallery, Millenium Wing, Clare Street, Dublin, admission is FREE and it runs until January 27 2008. There is also an excellent audio guide, narrator by actress Fiona Shaw, available.

SICKO by Michael Moore

By Sinead Kennedy

Michael Moore latest film *Sicko* is a must see for every socialist. While the Irish government press forward with their attempts to implement a more privatised form of healthcare, *Sicko* provides a timely reminder of how a decent health care system and big business are fundamentally incompatible with one another.

Moore reveals the grotesque mess that American healthcare was turned into, and how insidiously easy it would be for the same thing to happen to us in Ireland, little by little.

Sicko is a full-force polemic, full of showbiz sentimentality, outrageous stunts and perfectly judged provocations and most importantly it is a film that inspires action.

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DEFEND THE PUBLIC SECTOR

By Garrett Morgan

A draft budget that's immediately welcomed by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the Institute of Directors is hardly what people in the North had in mind when they said they wanted local politicians in charge.

Both the CBI and the IoD enthused that it would "help create a more competitive environment for business"

Indeed, the measures proposed by the DUP's Peter Robinson are a recipe for neo-liberal policies of slashing the public sector and forcing people off benefits and into work.

The enthusiastic endorsement by Martin McGuinness and Mitchell McLaughlin took many Sinn Féin supporters aback.

Even those who had feared that Sinn Féin might embrace neo-liberal policies have been stunned by the speed and openness with which they have done so.

The Executive unanimously agreed this draft budget, which sees the problems faced by the North's economy not as the hangover of 30 years of conflict but the result of the local private sector being "constrained by the influence of the Northern Ireland public sector."

So, the public sector is to be slashed. The hated three percent annual 'efficiency' cuts in public

spending imposed by the Treasury are to continue. "I am determined to take the drive for greater efficiency in public services to a new level," Robinson said, adding that he will announce targets for civil service job cuts over the next three years and force efficiency savings through all departments.

And, where are the public jobs most likely to disappear? Those that have been decentralised will be the first to go. That means even fewer jobs West of the Bann - the poorest part of the North and the part that Sinn Féin had most talked about needing its representation.

It is important to point out

here that, per head of population, NI has the same number of people in public sector jobs as Scotland - mainly because it has a lot of children and people who are ill and disabled.

This should be no surprise. After 30 years of war, most societies take a while to recover. The draft budget is big on decaying the high numbers of 'economically inactive' people and the importance of getting these into employment.

But there is not a single mention of the conflict - which is the main cause of the epidemic of mental ill-health that stops many people in the North from working.

Meanwhile, campaigners

who had hoped to see a change from Unionist misrule and Direct Rule, where all investment seemed to be in the Greater Belfast area, have been disappointed by the absence of any funds to upgrade the Derry-Belfast rail link, or improve things West of the Bann generally.

While there are tens of millions available for Private Finance Initiatives that will leave the North in thrall to private profiteers, the health budget has been left so short that the Dept of Health warns the gap between NHS provision in NI and Britain will grow even further.

The one bit of good news for

workers is the freeze in domestic rates, which have increased by 62% in the past five years. The freeze is to soften the fact that water charges will be added to the rates bill in the coming years.

Over the coming months, the North faces 'a battle a day' to defend the public sector. Cuts in public sector workers mean cuts in public services, however the Executive tries to pretend otherwise. The campaign against the water charges showed how we can win - when Protestants and Catholics, trade unions and community activists stand together and face down the politicians, we have the power to stop their attacks.

Why Post workers should reject the Deal

By Sean Mitchell

Despite solid action by CWU members across the Northern Ireland and Britain, the CWU executive are recommending a deal which fails to match the mood of the picket lines and which falls far short of workers demands.

The 130,000 workers who had spent 8 days on strike wait-ed anxiously for news from the negotiations between the CWU and Royal Mail bosses.

They then had to wait a further week as their own leadership debated the offer, with very little information reaching workers themselves.

The executive eventually accepted the offer with five of the fourteen members voting against.

It wasn't a secret, saying "We now have no agreement that remains our sole, again, in the negotiations that allows us to negotiate on all the major issues we face."

It may be true that Royal Mail failed in their aim of crushing the union, but this is a bad deal.

It fails to match the fighting spirit shown by postal workers and tells many hard won gains away for minor concessions

from management.

Flexibility

Royal Mail wants a workforce, which is "flexible". They want to squeeze every minute out of workers and to eliminate overtime pay.

Royal Mail wants the immediate imposition of the following

Longs and shorts: Existing shift patterns can be permanently ripped up in order to meet the demands of the business.

For example, workers could be told they will now work only seven hours on a Tuesday - instead of the usual eight - but will work nine hours on a Friday. As total weekly hours are not affected, no overtime will be paid.

Variation of hours: Workers can have their duty times varied on a temporary basis by up to 30 minutes on a "swings and roundabouts" basis - a form of flexi time, but on managers' terms.

Bosses can insist on an extra half an hour's work one day, with half an hour returned at some later date. Again, no overtime will be paid.

Pay

Royal Mail Management



On the picket line

has played a clever game in the media.

The figure of 6.9% has been consistently touted as the postal

workers pay increase.

The reality is that the figure is just 5.4% and worse still this is over the period of two years

making it a rise of just 2.66% per year, way below the inflation rate 4.8%.

This makes it a pay cut!

The 6.9 percent figure has been reached by adding a 1.5 percent extra payment. But this is conditional on the implementation of the entire flexibility package, and many offices won't get it.

Pensions

The new deal will do nothing to solve the disgraceful manner in which Royal Mail treats pensions.

The retirement age will be increased to 65 for new workers creating a two-tier workforce. Existing workers will still be able to retire at 60 but will lose thousands of pounds in cuts.

Management insist there will be a consultation, but that the union will be banded by the current changes

Reject the deal

This deal is being put to the membership of the CWU in a national ballot. Members should be organizing to reject this rotten deal. Already rank file CWU activists across the service are gathering to discuss how best to fight it. Workers from other unions should be offering their solidarity and support

This is a fight for the future of the Postal service and the public sector.

Hollywood's backlash against the war on terror. Ben Dickenson, the author of Hollywood's New Radicalism - Globalisation, War and the Movies, leads the new wave of anti-war films from the US. Page 11

The return of scientific racism? James Watson's belief that black people are less intelligent than white people is the latest example of scientific racism. Vivian Swarrd author of The Missing Arms of Venus de Milo exposes Watson's 'science'. Page 10

Turkey, Kurdistan and the US quagmire. Turkey's Invasion of northern Iraq and the US targeting of the PKK could touch off an ethnic civil war that could engulf the whole of northern Iraq. Page 9

EU Treaty debate. 200,000 protested in Lisbon against the new EU treaty. A wave of strikes has swept through France against neo-liberalism and over attacks on pension rights. We look at what the new treaty is actually about. Page 5

Naomi Klein's The Shock Doctrine reviewed. Naomi Kleins first book "No Logo" brilliantly showed how multinational corporations have come to dominate public life. Her latest book looks sure to create an even bigger impact. Pages 6 & 7

1917 Russia in revolution

Chris Bambery introduces a four page Socialist Worker special to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Russian Revolution

THE 1917 Russian revolution ushered in a radical new society. Workers' control of production, land to the people who worked it, an immediate peace with no annexation and the right to self-determination for colonised people.

These were the steps taken within a few hours of the workers, soldiers and sailors taking control of the Russian capital Petrograd, now St Petersburg, on 7 November 1917 (under the calendar used in Russia at the time this date fell in October which is why it is known as the October Revolution).

Those measures were a huge step forward even from the rights we enjoy today. The new Soviet constitution enshrined full and equal voting rights for women. Britain only did this in 1928 and in Switzerland women had to wait until 1971.

Sex between men was made legal as was abortion, while divorce was available on the request of either partner. Divorce only became available for most people in Britain in 1969 and in Ireland in 1995, abortion rights still don't exist.

Church and state were separated—the new state gave no favour to any one religion—yet freedom of worship was guaranteed. That meant, following the principle of self-determination, Muslim schools were free to operate in much of south eastern Soviet Russia.

Today we enjoy very limited forms of political democracy. We can elect politicians every five years but have no control over what the government does—like taking us to war.

Corporations can lay off thousands of workers, interest rates rise and fall, house prices soar beyond the pockets of the majority—and all at the whim of a tiny group of people in boardrooms and corporate headquarters.

The idea that workers might have any control over what they make or the services they provide is not even up for serious discussion.

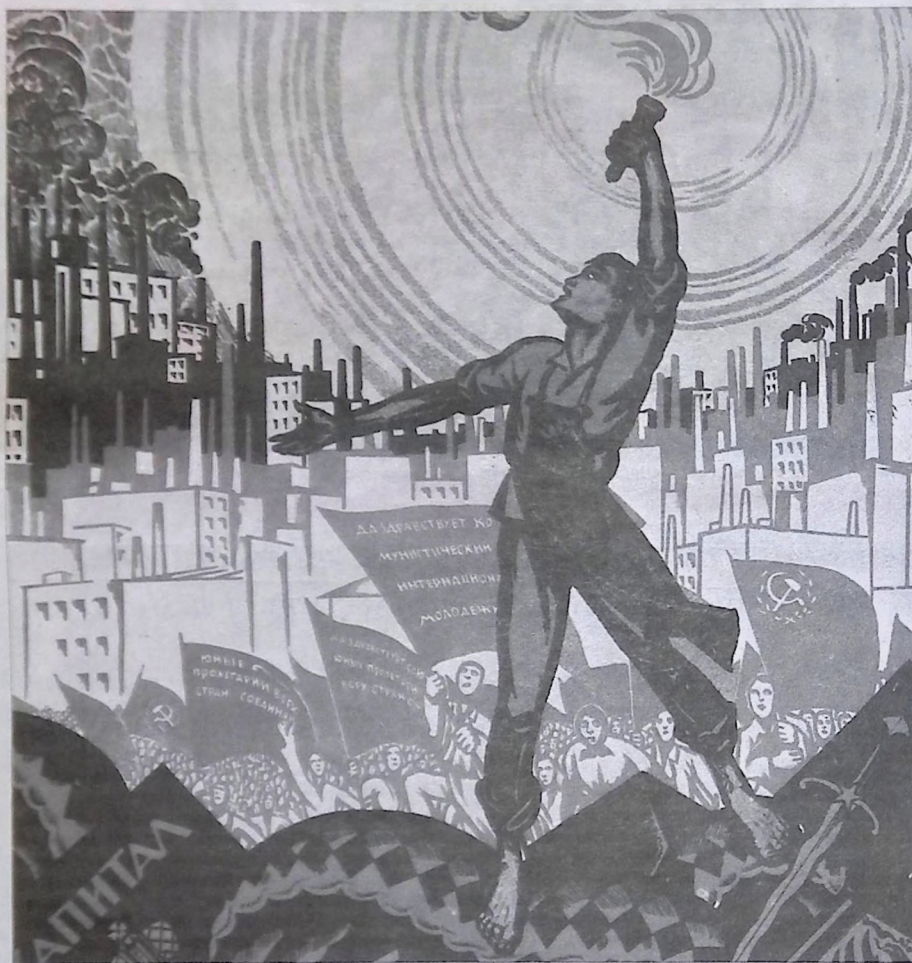
Soviet democracy, by contrast, was based on factory, peasant and neighbourhood councils where mass assemblies elected representatives who could be removed if they did not properly represent those who had elected them.

In Petrograd in June and in October 1917 over 15,000 people were involved in elections to the factory committees and the soviet.

Russian workers had first thrown up soviets to organise the mass strike that boiled over into revolution in 1905. In February 1917 when Russia again erupted into revolution workers spontaneously re-introduced soviets.

The February revolution—sparked by women protesting over food prices—removed the Tsar who ruled Russia. For the next eight months combinations of liberal and centre left parties tried to govern Russia claiming to emulate Western parliamentary democracy.

At first the soviets were dominated by supporters of these ideas—after all parliamentary democracy seemed to promise a huge advance. But these parties did nothing to solve the single



A 1920 poster by Nikolai Kochergin calls for a global revolution

'Soviet democracy was based on factory, peasant and neighbourhood councils'

biggest political issue—Russia's participation in the First World War.

The rank and file of the Petrograd working class demanded radical solutions. In factory after factory throughout the summer of 1917 the Bolsheviks were voted in as majorities in the soviets, including soldiers' soviets where officers had originally dominated.

Membership of the Bolshevik party increased dramatically in 1917—from 10,000 in February to 250,000 in October.

The greatest lie peddled about the October Revolution is that Lenin and the Bolsheviks crept out one night and grabbed power behind the backs of the Russian masses.

We should ask whether a working class which had been at the centre of two revolutions and was the most radical and innovative in Europe would allow anyone to take power behind their backs.

In fact 1917 saw a process of radicalisation from February to October as workers initially hoped those parties promising constitutional democracy would bring peace, give land to the peasants and solve the economic chaos. One by one each of those parties failed that test.

Already in July 1917 the working class of Petrograd had risen in revolt—

an outburst that the Bolsheviks argued against because workers and peasants elsewhere had not yet reached that conclusion.

In August a military coup tried to destroy the revolution. The official government dithered. Workers, often led by Bolsheviks, took the initiative to defeat it.

By October the government that claimed to rule Russia had little or no support. The old elite despised them and wanted revenge. The Russian masses wanted bread, land and peace. This the Bolsheviks promised, adding the way in which this could be achieved: "all power to the soviets".

The Bolshevik party acted under pressure from the masses and at the same time tried to win support for its strategy. It was a constant two way process.

That meant the party ditched some long held policies, for instance land nationalisation—instead giving land to the peasants. The party also had huge, often public debates, over issues including the necessity of making a revolution or over the peace treaty signed with Germany.

Far from creating a dictatorship, the October Revolution was based on mass participation in the decisions of the new society—on a scale we can only imagine today.

Fighting for its life

FROM DAY one the Russian Revolution found itself under attack. On only its second day a counter-revolutionary army advanced on Petrograd.

It was joined by officer cadets who had tried to stop the seizure of power in the city and had then been released on the promise they would not take up arms against the revolution.

Hastily organised militia units prepared to defend the city while the soviets dispatched men and women workers to meet the advancing soldiers and convince them not to fight against the revolution.

The workers' militias defeated the uprising while the counter-revolutionary army advancing on the city began to disintegrate.

On 1 January 1918 the first of a series of assassination attempts was made on Lenin. Before long other Bolshevik leaders would be gunned down. Within weeks of the revolution former officers and generals, financed by the Western powers, formed counter-revolutionary armies in southern Russia and the Ukraine.

The warring Western powers were united in hatred of the revolution. The Bolsheviks opened peace negotiations with the Germans who insisted on keeping all that they had conquered.

When negotiations broke down the Germans advanced further into some of Russia's richest industrial and agricultural territories before Lenin won a huge debate on the need to sign a peace treaty.

Red Guard

Meanwhile British and French forces took control of Archangel, north of Petrograd, where they began organising counter-revolutionary armies. They were the advance guard of an intervention by over dozen different states aimed at destroying the revolution.

Economic difficulties grew in the course of 1918. More and more workers from Petrograd were drawn into the Red Guard units fighting the counter-revolution or into trying to keep things running in the face of mounting shortages.

But there was one great hope. The whole basis of the revolution had been that it would be the prelude to a wider European revolution. In particular Russian workers looked to Germany, the strongest European economy with the strongest working class.

On 7 November 1918 Petrograd celebrated the first anniversary of the revolution with mass carnivals and demonstrations. News arrived that the German navy had mutinied, effectively ending the First World War.

They set up soviets that spread to the factories and cities. The German kaiser fled and power lay in the streets.

For two years revolution gripped Europe—and Lenin and the Bolsheviks gambled on its success. They had been right to see Russia as the first flame in a European conflagration and they cannot be blamed for the failure of the European revolution.

The lack of a party like the Bolsheviks in other European countries, organised and able to lead at the grassroots level, meant that the old labour, socialist and trade union leaders ensured the revolutionary moment was lost.

The global impact

INTERNATIONALISM was at the heart of the 1917 revolution, both as a principle and as a practical necessity. The Bolsheviks believed that the revolution must spread in order to survive.

Workers were sick of the slaughter of the First World War. There was economic turmoil across the globe. The revolution inspired millions to fight for radical change.

In the two years following 1917, there were upheavals across Europe. In 1918 the German empire collapsed and "people's commissars" formed the new government. In Italy there was a wave of struggle known as the Red Years of 1919-1920.

In Bavaria and Hungary rebellions briefly set up soviets. Spanish strikers in Valencia in 1918 renamed streets "Lenin" and "October Revolution". In Britain unrest and strikes broke out in 1919. There were mutinies in the French and British armies.

The ruling class was terrified. In a secret memorandum in March 1919, British prime minister Lloyd George warned his French counterpart, "The whole of Europe is filled with the spirit of revolution."

In 1917 two thirds of the world was still under colonial domination. The revolution was a huge inspiration for those resisting colonialism.

The Bolsheviks were among the first to recognise the importance of liberation struggles and to see those fighting colonialism as a vital part of the international movement.

Republic

The new revolutionary state was the first to recognise the new Irish republic before it won independence from British rule.

The Bolshevik government declared itself for the "equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia" and for the right to independence for those nations formerly enslaved by the empire.

In the years following the revolution this led to the formation of five independent nations outside Russia and some 17 autonomous regions within the federation.

The revolution led to radical currents emerging within national liberation movements and to the formation of new communist parties across the world.

Between 1920 and 1921 new parties were founded in Turkey, Egypt, India, Indonesia and China.

Tens of thousands of Chinese workers and some 250,000 workers from Muslim states within the federation joined the Red Army to help defend the revolution.

The Bolsheviks' internationalism meant they reached out to build and discuss with the international movement, forming the Third International.

In 1920, in the midst of civil war, the Bolsheviks organised a Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, Azerbaijan, attended by over 2,000 delegates from countries across Asia and the Middle East as well as from Europe.

The British attacked a ship carrying delegates from Iran while its warships tried, unsuccessfully, to stop Turkish delegates from reaching the congress.

The early soviet years should remain an inspiration in the global movement against war and neoliberalism today.

Esme Choanara

POWER OF THE N



Protesters gather for political meetings outside the Tsar's palace in Petrograd (now St Petersburg) in 1917. (Right) Revolutionary posters

Revisionist historians claim that all revolutions end in bloodshed and dictatorship. This is a dishonest view of history, argues Mike Haynes

REVOLUTIONS ARE bad things. Or at least the social ones are. Revolutions are fine if they are restricted to political changes at the top. Then only the icing on the cake is changed. As the French revolutionary Babeuf once said, these revolutions take one set of robbers and replace them with another. The real problem is the revolution that threatens the whole robbery process. This is the revolution that makes the issue of control of society and its resources central.

It is then, says one historian, that revolutions are "hijacked". They cease to be self-limiting and become all-consuming, says another. They begin to devour their children, says a third.

This is an enormously comforting doctrine for those at the top of any society. You may not be as strong, as rich, as powerful as us, we may hold your fate in our hands but don't rock the boat. If you do it will end badly for you.

You see our power and wealth, the hold we have over you is what makes both of us free. So best be quiet and knuckle down to working hard to make us richer and stronger still.

This is an old story that conservatives and conservative historians have long told. But in the last two to three decades it has been retold by once progressive historians writing about the "inevitable" failure of the Russian Revolution.

All revolutions fail, they say, and Russia was the biggest failure of all. These so-called revisionists sometimes dress the argument up with new terms but they echo long held themes about the danger of extreme ideas, paranoia, and the frenzy of the mob, psychopaths who come to power and so on.

The message is simple. Don't believe that the world can be any different from what it is. Put your faith in slow reform, be patient.

The real story is rather different. Revolutions are certainly unruly but they are also creative.

Here is Morgan Philips Price, the Guardian correspondent writing of a Russia in chaos in late 1917: "If it were not for the revolutionary councils in the towns, villages and amongst the soldiers in the garrisons, the anarchy would be fifty times worse... Of course, it is plain that the ruling classes in England and their allies, the bourgeoisie here, must in

order to save their class discredit all movements like those which inspire the Russian Revolution."

This is a powerful message to throw back at revisionist history. In a real revolution society polarises. People are tested and they take sides. How this happens affects what comes next.

The Russian Revolution took place in the midst of the bloodiest war there had yet been. It was an attempt to halt that war and overthrow the societies that had created it. But inside and outside Russia the forces that had created that war combined to crush it. The revolution was not driven "off course" by its internal logic but by intervention and civil war.

If the old order in Russia wanted to regain its privileges, outside of Russia the fear was that the revolution might work—that in Lenin's term, every cook might govern. Counter-revolution is always about holding on to privilege and crushing a challenge from below. 1917 saw little bloodshed in Russia. The deaths rose in 1918-1921.

Having already spilled the blood of millions in the First World War governments were happy to support counter-revolution in Russia. Desperate times called for desperate remedies but somehow historians today seem to want to put all the blame on the revolutionaries.

It is easy then to make the degeneration that led to Stalin seem an inevitable unrolling from 1917. It was not. Stalin came to power in the vacuum created both by the failure of the revolution to spread and the way that the society and people who made the revolution were ripped apart in the midst of the "civil" war supported from abroad.

For nearly two decades conservative views that stress that Lenin

led to Stalin have been dominant. Pessimism about all revolution is written through books like Orlando Figes' account of the Russian Revolution, *A People's Tragedy*. It has filtered through into school textbooks and helps to create tomorrow's passive workers.

For a time this may have seemed to make sense when it appeared, briefly, as if history had ended in the 1990s. Lukewarm times needed a lukewarm, history about red-hot events.

But the 90th anniversary of the Russian Revolution is occurring against a different background. The self-satisfaction of ex radicals is being challenged by new generations as neoliberalism fails to deliver on its promises.

Inequality is growing, social mobility is declining and we seem to have endless war. New times are helping re-open old debates but they can do so with new force.

As in 1917 we now look at liberals and their pieties through the smoke of war—in this case Iraq. Their realism has sucked us into this quagmire. We also see how easy it is for the great powers to cause damage, almost casually, as they try to remould the world in their interests.

What inspired people in 1917 was the possibility of a different world. It is their tragedy and ours that they did not succeed. But the greatest tragedy will be if we come to believe that we should not try, for the alternative to revolution is not peace and quiet.

It is a world of great power conflicts, a world where the rich get richer and the poorer simply accept their lot. Another world is desperately needed. Another world is possible and good history can help us get there.

Mike Haynes is the author of *Russia: Class and Power, 1917-2000*

'For decades conservative views that stress that Lenin led to Stalin have been dominant'



THE MASSES

Witnesses to change

"The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historic events. In ordinary times the state, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation, and history is made by specialists in that line of business—kings, ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists.

But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives, and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for a new regime.

Whether this is good or bad we leave to the judgment of moralists. We ourselves will take the facts as they are given by the objective course of development.

The history of a revolution is for us first of all a history of the forcible



Leon Trotsky

entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their own destiny."

Leon Trotsky, from History of the Russian Revolution

"At Smolny [headquarters of the Bolshevik party], just now, a comrade from the executive committee of the soviet was giving a vivid account of her inspection visit to the front line the previous night, and how she had a battery of light artillery urgently moved.

This militant, who now holds an important position of responsibility, used to be a tailoring worker.

Her improvised strategy is probably better than that of a highly trained specialist who sympathises with the enemy."

Victor Serge, from Revolution in Danger, Writings from Russia 1919-1921



Victor Serge

"All Russia was learning to read, and reading—politics, economics, history—because the people wanted to know...

The thirst for education, so long thwarted, burst with the revolution into a frenzy of expression. From Smolny Institute [headquarters of the Bolsheviks] alone, in the first six months, went out every day tons, car-loads, train-loads of literature, saturating the land.

Russia absorbed reading matter like hot sand drinks water, insatiable. And it was not fables, falsified history, diluted religion, and the cheap fiction that corrupts—but social and economic theories, philosophy, the works of Tolstoy, Gogol, and Gorky...

We came down to the front of the 12th Army, back of Riga, where gaunt and bootless men sickened in the mud of desperate trenches; and when they saw us they started up, with their pinched faces and the flesh showing blue through their torn clothing, demanding eagerly, 'Did you bring anything to read?'"

John Reed, from Ten days that Shook the World, Penguin Classics



John Reed

"The revolution has taught me three things:

That in the last analysis the property owning class is loyal only to its property.

That the property owning class will never readily compromise with the working class.

That the masses of the workers are capable not only of great dreams, but that they have in them the power to make dreams come true."

John Reed writing in the US newspaper The Liberator in 1918



Krupskaya (right) with Lenin

"THE STREETS in those days presented a curious spectacle: everywhere people stood about in knots, arguing heatedly and discussing the latest events....

These street meetings were so interesting, that it once took me three hours to walk from Shirokaya Street to the Krzesinska Mansion.

The house in which we lived overlooked a courtyard, and even here, if you opened the window at night, you could hear a heated dispute. A soldier would be sitting there, and he always had an audience—usually some of the cooks, or housemaids from next door, or some young people.

An hour after midnight you could catch snatches of talk—'Bolsheviks, Mensheviks...' At three in the morning 'Miliukov, Bolsheviks....' At five—still the same street-corner-meeting talk, politics, etc.

Petrograd's white nights are always associated in my mind with those all night political disputes."

Nadozhda Krupskaya, from Reminiscences of Lenin

red and Haynes

have been dominant... about all revolution... books like... of the Russian... People's Tragedy... into school texts... to create tomorrow's... us may have searched... it appeared, briefly... ended in the 1940s... needed a historical... ed-hot events... anniversary of the... olution is occurring... real background. The... ion of ex radicals... ed by new generations... n fails to deliver on its...

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Lenin addresses a meeting. The Russian revolutionary leader built a party that combined democracy and unity in action

A party to lead the working class

Lenin's model of a revolutionary party was the key factor in the ability of workers in Russia to take power, writes Judith Orr

FROM RUSSIA in 1905 to the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 the 20th century was an era of revolutions. Yet the Russian Revolution of 1917 was the only one that was successful in putting the working class in power. What was different about the 1917 revolution?

Karl Marx argued that spontaneous resistance is an inevitable product of capitalism. There is an inherent tension in a system where an elite live in fabulous wealth, owning and controlling all political and economic power, while the vast majority of us work long hours for a pittance. But history demonstrates that however inspiring, spontaneity alone is not enough to win.

For a workers' revolution to be successful there also needs to be socialist organisation. Spontaneity and organisation are not opposing forces—they are both essential ingredients of a successful revolution.

In Russia it was the existence of a revolutionary party, the Bolshevik party, which meant that the courageous struggles of workers, soldiers and peasants resulted in a seizure of power.

As Leon Trotsky wrote, the party is the piston that propels the steam of the class struggle forward. The piston alone is powerless, but unchannelled steam could dissipate and lose momentum.

The Bolsheviks were rooted in the most militant layers of Russian society, among workers, soldiers and peasants. They were not separate from the working class.

They had fought alongside their fellow workers, suffered defeats and won victories together and had won respect in the course of leading struggles.

But it wasn't just about being the best activists. They published leaflets, newspapers, pamphlets and books to spread socialist ideas and helped educate workers on everything from the fight against imperialism to women's rights.

The use of the word "bolshy" today in popular language to describe someone who argues and won't accept orders comes from these courageous revolutionaries.

The sort of party organisation the Bolsheviks had is often called "Leninist" after one of its best-known leaders.

Some falsely characterise Leninist parties as having an autocratic leadership that goes around giving orders, which every member has to automatically and mindlessly obey.

This view more aptly describes a party like the Labour Party, which today has no mechanism for the membership to challenge the actions or views of the leadership.

The Labour Party boasts that it is a "broad church". But this means that they have as members both bosses and workers, black people and racists, gay people and homophobes.

A revolutionary party has only

'Some falsely characterise Leninist parties as having an autocratic leadership'

one view on racism—it is simple, racists are not welcome.

A revolutionary party is not a broad church. It is an organisation of the most politically conscious and most militant working class activists. Lenin called this a vanguard party.

The Bolshevik party was highly democratic. Lenin did not impose his views on the party membership.

Minority

On several occasions he found himself in a minority among the leadership of the Bolsheviks and had to argue to win his comrades in the leadership and in the wider party.

But he did not come to any situation with all the answers. He listened to workers' own experiences. His strength as a leader was his ability to learn from the class and to be prepared to change tack.

For example, during the revolution in 1905 workers had organised workers' councils—soviets—for the first time. They were not a Leninist invention but Lenin recognised what an important tool they were.

He foresaw how they had the potential to provide an alternative democratic structure for workers and peasants to organise society, and championed their power in 1917.

One of the key features of a Leninist organisation is its internal democracy—democratic centralism.

After discussion throughout the structures and membership of the party, when a decision is made to act, everyone acts as one and all are accountable.

This is very different to mainstream political parties. Politicians are elected every five years and even if they vote for something the majority of their constituents disagree with, they can't

be recalled during that time.

It is, however, a method that will be familiar to any trade unionist. If the majority vote for a strike then every member, including those who voted against, have to support the strike. Otherwise the only real power that working class people have—the power of the collective—is lost.

The Bolsheviks won a mass membership among workers and peasants solely by demonstrating time after time through their actions that they had the ideas to win.

One worker said at the time, "The Bolsheviks have always said, 'it is not we who will persuade you but life itself'."

Across the globe, millions still face war, famine and exploitation. As revolts against the system break out from Burma to Venezuela the question of what sort of party workers need is more important than ever.

Revolutionaries today are active in everyday work in trade unions and local communities. We are part of every struggle, from the smallest protest to the biggest strike.

We want to be the people who always have practical and concrete ideas for the way forward. We also make the connections between every act of resistance and a wider socialist vision of how the mass of ordinary people can take control of their lives.

Revolutionaries try to give a lead to all those who want to fight for a better world.

For as the US journalist John Reed said of the monumental struggles in Russia during 1917, "The masses of workers are capable not only of great dreams, but they have in them the power to make the dreams come true".

Revolution in words

THE RUSSIAN Revolution is one of the most important events in world history and has inspired many debates, articles and books.

For a short introduction to the leaders and lessons of the Russian Revolution see *A Rebel's Guide to Lenin* by Ian Birchall, *A Rebel's Guide to Trotsky* by Esme Choonara and *Trotsky's Marxism* by Duncan Hallas.

There are several fascinating eyewitness accounts of the revolution. The most important is



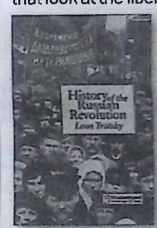
Leon Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*—a literary and historical masterpiece.

The US journalist John Reed witnessed the revolution

and his account, *Ten Days that Shook the World*, gives a real sense of the excitement and mass involvement in the revolution.

The anarchist Victor Serge travelled to Russia where he joined the Bolsheviks and fought to defend the revolution. He wrote many inspiring accounts and novels about the revolution. *Year One of the Revolution* is a gripping account while *Revolution in Danger* gives a sense of why people fought to defend the revolution and what was at stake.

There are a number of books that look at the liberating nature of



the revolution. *Women and the Family* by Leon Trotsky is one of the most impressive collections looking at how to achieve women's liberation. The short collection

On Women's Liberation by the Bolshevik Alexandra Kollontai is also worth reading.

Dan Healy's recent book *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia* brings together new material on sexuality in revolutionary Russia.

Tony Cliff's *State Capitalism in Russia*, written in 1948, is a pathbreaking analysis that argues that Russia under Stalin was a form of capitalism—organised by the state instead of private capitalists. *Lenin's State and Revolution* is a useful guide to a crucial question.

On the importance and methods of Leninism, Marcel Liebman's *Leninism under Lenin* is very good.



Cliff's biography of Lenin is sadly out of print but worth looking out for second hand or borrowing.

Right wing historians have thrown much academic mud

at the legacy of the revolution.

John Rees's *In Defence of October* is a useful, detailed account of the revolution that counters accusations that it was undemocratic or a bloody coup.

Some more recent accounts of the revolution have broken new ground in the history of the revolution. Particularly recommended are Mike Haynes's *Russia: Class and Power, 1917-2000* and Kevin Murphy's *Deutscher prize winning Revolution and Counterrevolution: Class Struggle in a Moscow Metal Factory*.

All books are available from Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop, phone 020 7637 1848. Go to www.bookmarks.uk.com