

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

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**The West has no answer in Zaire**—PAGE EIGHT

**What sort of party do we need?**—PAGE SEVEN

## As militant strikes rock France...

# Let's do it the French way



**50,000 lorry drivers brought France to a stop in a magnificent display of militancy. They showed what a national transport strike could really achieve.**

They wanted decent wage rises and an early retirement scheme that allowed them to retire at 55.

On top of that they insisted that a European agreement to limit the working week to 48 hours be implemented.

When the lorry owners would not concede to their demands, the workers threatened sympathy strikes from the rail and taxi drivers union.

This is not the first time that French workers have shown that the way to win is to go all-out and spread the action.

Last December 5 million French workers went on a series of national strikes to defend their rights to a de-

cent pension and proper social welfare.

They destroyed the plans of a newly elected right wing government that wanted to copy Margaret Thatcher.

### Refusing

These strikes have proved that all the talk about the working class being a spent force is pure nonsense.

Many Irish workers have already begun to watch the French events with interest.

At the moment the CIE management are refusing to give a small wage increase and are trying to ram through a 'viability plan' that will destroy jobs.

As result workers in the National Rail and

Busworkers Union have voted by a staggering 97% to come out on strike on December 6th.

The strikes in France shows what could be achieved here.

A national transport strike that closed down the bus and rail service would send Michael Lowry and this government reeling.

If the three wings of CIE stuck together and ignored 'all the normal rules of procedure for solving disputes' they would show that they really mean business.

Think of the sheer paralysis the government would be in.

If nurses who are presently been denied a decent pay rise by Ruairi Quinn join such a revolt, the government would not know where to turn.

All of this can happen if the rank and file of the unions starting dictating strategy..

For too long the union leaders have been recommending moderation and sacrifice.

The French workers have shown there is a different way.

Maybe it is time we all learnt some French lessons.

The most important one of all is that solidarity and militancy gets results.

## CRUMLIN MULTI DENOMINATIONAL SCHOOL

# "The issue is choice in education"

**THIRTY THREE children in a working class suburb of Dublin could be about to make history.**

Their primary school, Crumlin Multi-Denominational could be the first to be evicted in the history of the state if the church and government get their way.

But parents and staff have pledged to fight to keep their school open and they've been joined by others who believe non-sectarian education to be a right.

### Forced

The school is being forced to leave its premises by Zoe property developers, the company that owns the building.

The school has appealed to the Department of Education to help it find an alternative premises but the department has done nothing.

Crumlin Multi-denominational serves a working class area with high levels of un-



employment.

"The issue is choice in education" says Tom Conaghty, the principal.

"If you have money you can get premises, but what do you do in a situation where you don't have money or resources? Crumlin is an area without financial or political influence and we're not in a position to buy property."

There are fourteen multi-denominational schools in the country. They are all over subscribed, while traditional religious schools have seen falling numbers.

### Survey

A recent INTO survey found that 56 percent of members wanted a non-religious ethos in schools.

Yet taxpayers' money is being used to prop up a sectarian education system.

Building grants of around eighty per cent are given to religious orders while non-religious schools are discriminated against.

"The state doesn't have an education system, the church

# Albert puts on the poor mouth

**Gay Byrne fawned over Albert Reynolds on *The Late Late Show* after the former Taoiseach returned from the libel trial in London.**



Albert Reynolds

insurance. Under this scam, meat companies could claim insurance payouts if the country to which they were exporting failed to pay for their beef.

Reynolds claimed in July 1994 to have been 'totally vindicated' by the findings of the Beef Tribunal. His Press Secretary Sean Duignan stuck together two quotes which actually appeared 30 pages apart in Justice Hamilton's report.

In reality Justice Hamilton sustained the allegations that Reynolds had confined export credit cover to Goodman and Hibernia and had issued huge amounts of cover to non-Irish beef.

Albert Reynolds has had an extraordinary relationship with the media throughout his political career.

In 1973 he bought the *Longford News* which once carried no less than 52 photographs of Reynolds in a single issue.

In the past five years he has won at least £150,000 in damages from at least five actions against newspapers and broadcasting organisations.

No working class person could ever have this level of influence where the media is concerned.

does", says Alan Walker whose nine year old daughter attends the Crumlin school.

"The state just gives out money and then pays lip service to pluralism in education. The fundamental issue is who controls education in this country."

Crumlin school was told to leave their current premises last July, but they didn't.

They were told again in October but they stayed put because they've nowhere else to go.

### Moved

The school has been forced to move premises four times in as many years.

The Department of Education will only fund a premises if enrolment grows.

But parents point out that it is impossible to grow when you don't even know if you'll have a roof over your head.

The school has appealed to the Department to lease them state owned property which is lying empty but their pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

The parents and teachers of multi-denominational schools across the country say they'll fight to save the school.

"No government is going to take the church on", says Tom, "but someone has to".

We were treated to an image of 'poor Uncle Albert', the latest victim of British injustice, after the English court awarded him only one penny damages despite successfully suing the *Sunday Times*.

Socialists took a simple attitude of 'a plague on both your houses' when the former Fianna Fail leader took on the might of Rupert Murdoch's media empire.

Murdoch's papers, most notoriously *The Sun*, have always been to the fore in attacking working class people and whipping up racism.

But Reynolds was the politician who made sure that the beef baron Larry Goodman got the lion's share of export credit in-

## inside the system

# Special deal for Fine Gael businessmen

**WHO SAYS that a Fine Gael dominated government cannot look after its supporters?**

A deal has been struck between Esat Digifone and the Garda to give the mobile phone company access to their telecommunications network throughout the country.

That way they will be able to fulfil Michael Lowry's

ambition of allowing Esat to compete with the state company, Eircell.

One of the main shareholders in Esat Digifone is Denis O'Brien. O'Brien is known as a prominent backer of the Fine Gael party and has made donations to its election candidates.

His company

won the contract for a rival mobile phone network by paying £15 million for the license.

Afterwards several commentators described the price as 'excessively low'.

Meanwhile it is by no means clear that mobile phone base stations are safe for people who live near them.

So far there are no health regula-

tions governing their use.

The World Health Organisation has initiated an international project to assess the effects of electric and mag-

netic fields. But the results are not expected for five years.

Meanwhile lots of profits will have flown to Fine Gael's rich friends.

## Howlin cuts the crap

**ENVIRONMENT Minister Brendan Howlin has announced a crackdown on dog owners who fail to clean up their pets' faeces in public places.**

Gardai will have the power to impose 'on-the-spot' fines ('spot', geddit?) as part of Howlin's new Litter Pollution Bill. However, police dogs are exempt from the new laws and can crap wherever they like.

## Tories to tag ten year olds

**Just when you thought the Tories could stoop no lower, they have now announced plans to electronically tag offenders as young as ten.**

Pilot schemes for the electronic tagging of offenders aged 16 and upwards have been in place since July 1995, despite the failure of a previous scheme in 1989.

The Tories are whipping up law and order hysteria to cling on to power.

But instead of blaming Tory poli-

cies for creating the conditions that lead to crime, Tony Blair's New Labour are apeing John Major's 'moral crusade'.

By the way do you know which political genius dreamed up the idea of electronic tagging?

It was Judge Jack Love in New Mexico who said he got his inspiration from a Spiderman comic!

## PRIVATISED CANVASSING

**HAVE Democratic Left reached the final stage of disintegration? It looks like it in De Rossa's own constituency in Finglas. Having joined the 'lock em up brigade' De Rossa arrived in his**

constituency with 5,000 leaflets calling for a YES vote in the bail referendum.

But he could get no member to give them out. Instead De Rossa who now claims he never was a Marxist went

straight to his new friends in private enterprise. He had to hire a company to give out his leaflets. Money seems to be no problem when you are backing up the rich.

# Fianna Fail backs bosses on 48 hour limit

**FIANNA FAIL and the British Tories have come out against a measure to bring in a 48 hour limit on the working week.**

The bosses and right wing parties in Europe are up in arms over a modest proposal from the EU commission.

### Claim

The employers' organisation IBEC has made the usual claim that it will lead to the loss of jobs.

Fianna Fail and the British Tories have both denounced the measure for adding to labour costs. According to Mary O'Rourke, Ireland should get an 'opt out' to protect 'competitiveness'.

But in reality, the measure is terribly weak.

□ The directive is sup-

posed to be voluntary. This means that employers can pressurise workers to agree to work more than 48 hours.

□ Groups like junior doctors who work up to 80 hours are excluded.

□ The measure only refers to average hours worked over a four month

period. No wonder the British TUC have argued that there is a 'high risk' that the measure will be 'of no practical benefit to workers'.

Yet even these little token gestures are too much for the millionaire backers of Fianna Fail.

## Child labour scandal

**The ICTU has linked up with UNICEF in a campaign against child labour.**

A quarter of all children in developing countries work for a living, according to Maura Quinn of UNICEF. She told the campaign launch that poverty leads to children being sent out to work.

### Multinationals

Wealthy sports multinationals like Nike and Reebok are among those who have gained from child labour in poorer countries. But the ICTU should also fight against the exploitation of fifteen year olds who work late hours in lounges and take-aways here in Ireland.

## what we think

# Are the Franciscans more left-wing than Spring and De Rossa?

**"THE PROPOSED change in the law will work against the interests of some of the most vulnerable people in our society including persons out of home, drug users and persons unable to afford good legal advice".**

So argued the Franciscan Social Justice Initiative which has the support of the wider Franciscan Order of the Catholic Church.

It is a perfectly accurate prediction of the effects of a YES vote in the bail referendum.

Irish justice already operates on rigid class lines. 80% of the inmates of Irish prisons already come from the unemployed.

No beef baron or building boss who breached safety laws has ever been sent to jail.

Once the gardai are given power to intern the innocent, they will again go after the working class and the poor.

In making these simple points, the Franciscan Order sound far more radical than Spring and De Rossa. It is a stark reminder of just how much Labour and Democratic Left have shifted to the right.

These reformist parties are now entering a major period of crisis.

### Votes

They have won votes from workers—but they use their positions in the Dáil to minister to the needs of the rich.

This is already producing divisions in their ranks. During the bail referendum, the Labour Party in Cork split down the middle on the issue. Democratic Left had to turn to private companies to help organise their campaign for a YES vote.

The real issue now is whether there is a serious left wing force that can challenge these betrayals.

The radicalism of Church spokespersons will always be limited.

Some may be able to appreciate how the poor are victims of the system but rarely do they understand that workers have the power to destroy a system based on greed and violence.

And while they might criticise aspects of government policy, orders like the Franciscans will be loath to tackle the privileged position of the Church hierarchy or the oppression it has helped to foist on Irish society.

This is why the vacuum that is being created by the sell-outs of Labour and Democratic Left should be filled by a strong socialist party that is willing to tackle the roots of capitalism.

At the moment there is an historic opportunity to build this type of socialist alternative. But the vacuum will not last forever. It is time to move.



Anti water charge demonstration last month

## Water charges: Is this the end?

PRESS reports indicate that the Coalition is planning to abolish service charges in its next budget.

The Residential Property Tax is also to be abolished in order to keep Fine Gael's rich friends happy.

In local council chambers around the country, establishment politicians are already trying to pretend that they were responsible for removing the charges.

Many of these councils are due to set their estimates in the next few weeks.

In some areas Fianna Fail, Labour and Democrat Left councillors are talking about voting against the charges because of the rumours that Quinn will abolish them anyway.

The real reason why the

water charges have run into difficulty is because of the mass resistance on the ground. Recently the South Dublin and Fingal councils tried to break the non-payment campaign by bringing hundreds of people up before the courts.

### Strategy

The councils wanted orders for disconnections and for the recovery of debt owed by non-payers.

But their strategy backfired badly after hundreds of residents turned up to protest at the courts.

The scale of the resistance has frightened the establishment.

As a result, the judge hearing the case threw out the ar-

gument from the council and even awarded expenses to people who had to attend the court.

Although Quinn will make a big fanfare over abolishing the service charges, no credit should go to Labour and Democratic Left. For the last two years they brazenly tore up their election promises and voted for the charges.

The political establishment have been shaken on this issue because people stuck together and refused to be frightened by their threats.

If community based resistance can work on this issue, think what more can be done if the industrial strength of workers is used to hit back at their attacks.

The Coalition is proposing to bring in a new road tax as its alternative to the service charges. But this again represents a form of double taxation that will mainly penalise working people.

### Finance

The real solution to local authority finance lies in making the rich pay more taxes.

They have benefited from tax amnesties in the past and enjoy some of the lowest rates of tax on profits in Europe.

Each year it is estimated that over £1,000 million is handed out to Irish industry in grants and tax breaks.

A fraction of that money could cover all the finance raised by service charges.

## DUP bigots who feed off poverty

IAN Paisley Junior is trying to carve out a name for himself through the most disgusting sectarianism.

For the past nine weeks he has helped organise pickets outside Our Lady's Catholic Church in Harryville near Ballymena.

When these were lifted he turned up in Dunloy to back an Orange march through a mainly Catholic village.

When the march was stopped, Paisley Junior denounced the 'scum' and promised 'dire consequences' for the area.

This chilling statement carried more of a threat when elements of the DUP were working closely with loyalist assassins.

But even today, it shows the degree to which Paisley will go to whip up sectarian fear.

At their 25 anniversary conference a month ago, the DUP made great play of their concerns for the economic deprivations that Protestant workers are facing today.

They even denounced the JSA and attacked the alliance between the Tories and the Official Unionist Party.

### Scapegoat

But like extreme right wing parties in other countries their aim is to turn the anger of Protestant workers against a scapegoat.

As always it is supposed to be the 'republican conspiracy' that is trampling on the rights of Protestants.

What an absolute tragedy it is then that union leaders were willing to welcome Paisley Senior onto a hospital workers' picket in Listlum recently (see Page 4).

Wherever it appears the message of the Paisleys needs to be confronted—not appeased.

Despite his new concern about the poverty of Protestant workers, Paisley must be exposed as an enemy of workers precisely because he tries to block the type of class unity that can tackle these problems.

Getting across this message will require the building of a strong socialist force throughout the North.

## Charity and colonialism

JOHN O'SHEA, the director of the aid agency GOAL, is once again campaigning for Western troops to be sent to Africa.

He claims that his only concern is the 'helpless refugees who nobody else seems to care about'.

How such refugees are to be helped by heavily armed racist French Paratroopers has never been explained.

You might think that an aid agency would be campaign-

ing for more food or equipment to purify water instead of armed soldiers.

### Backing

But O'Shea has always had a record of backing Western imperialism in the area. During the Somalia crisis of 1992-93 he was the most bullish in support of sending in the US army to 'sort out' the warring clans.

Although they are not al-

ways consistent, other aid agencies like Trocaire and Oxfam have at least tried to come to terms with the role of Western imperialism in Africa.

Well they might. In the past Christian missionaries came in behind the colonial powers and attempted to get the 'natives' to respect the great white culture of the West.

Although O'Shea may claim to be apolitical and motivated only by humanitar-

ian concerns, his strategy is reminiscent of the 'black babies' approach to charity whereby Africans were treated in a patronising manner.

### Imperialism

This time around, however, any charity that is linked to Western imperialism could eventually find itself standing over more bloodshed and misery in the area.

# NORTHERN IRELAND HOSPITAL WORKERS

## Standing together to fight low pay

**SUPPORT** workers at five Northern Ireland hospitals returned to work on Monday morning 25th November with their dispute unresolved, after a magnificent two-week strike against low pay and the effects of privatisation.

Picket lines were set up at Lagan Valley in Lisburn, Downe and Downshire in Downpatrick, Tyrone County in Omagh and Erne in Eniskillen.

Over 400 workers—cleaners, porters, canteen staff and telephonists—struck when the private contractor Compass tried to force them to sign new contracts, which cut weekend overtime rates.

This means a huge pay cut for the mainly low paid workers, who rely on weekend "enhancements" to make up their pay.

Jane, a catering assistant at Lagan Valley Hospital is typical. She has worked at the hospital part-time for 13 years.

"I get £39.41 for a 15 hour week, including Saturdays and Sundays.

"I'm a widow and the money helps me pay for essentials like heat—Compass have already cut things back to make more profits.

"Now they want to take it from our sweat."

### Transferred

Compass won the contract a year ago. Since then it has employed new workers on lower pay and conditions.

A porter at Lagan Valley in Lisburn explains, "We are now on three rates of pay. £3.18 an hour for those employed since May. £3.29 for those employed from January and £3.78 for those who transferred from Compass a year ago. I look around the rest room and see 14 men, all doing the same shifts, the same hours and getting three different rates of pay."

In response to the strike, Compass launched a massive scabbing operation, flying in dozens of workers from Scotland and England.

The scabs were put up in the £75 a room Aldergrove Airport Hotel in Belfast and paid £4 a hour for 24 hours no matter how long they worked.

Compass also tried to bribe telephonists to break the strike, offering them £50



## Catholics and Protestant united

The strikers are proud that their action united Protestants and Catholics.

Dessa Cuibert, a worker at Lagan Valley hospital says, "We are a mixed Catholic and Protestant workforce. That is never a problem. It doesn't enter into things at all. Shop stewards here are both Catholic and Protestant. No one would go to a Catholic or a Protestant steward in particular. If they have a problem workers just go to the nearest."

Gary, a nurse at Eniskillen from a Protestant background, was on the picket line in his dinner hour to show support for the strikers, standing alongside another nurse from a Catholic back-

ground.

"People often grow up in different areas and go to different schools. But as soon as you start work in the health service that all goes because it's a mixed workforce," he says.

"You work with everyone. I know I've got to support this because, if they get away with it, it will be other groups next, whatever your religion."

### Bigoted

However, the community orientation of the strike gave bigoted MPs like Ian Paisley a chance to claim they were on the workers' side.

Paisley visited the picket lines at Lisburn, a mainly Protestant town,

and UNISON leaders encouraged the crowd to give him a round of applause when he turned up for five minutes at the rally last Friday in Belfast.

Paisley has nothing to offer the strikers. Along with other Unionist MPs he has kept the Tories in office as they pushed through privatisation of the hospitals and the public service. Now he promises to "raise questions in the European parliament."

During the summer marching season, Paisley deliberately whipped up sectarian divisions in order to rebuild his support as a Unionist hardliner. This works against exactly the sort of unity that is needed to win the fight

against low pay and privatisation.

Paisley only visited Lisburn. He did not approach the pickets in Downpatrick, a mainly Catholic area.

But the same sorts of problems were evident elsewhere.

### Threats

Local republicans in Downpatrick issued death threats against scabs, claiming that they had forced the scabs to move to another hotel.

But the scabs continued to work in the hospitals and the idea of military threats pointed away from the sort of united mass action which could have stopped the strike-breaking.

The unity of Protestant and Catholic during the strike gives a glimpse of how a lasting peace could be built in Northern Ireland. Class is the main divide both North and South of the border in Ireland.

Workers have nothing to gain from maintaining loyalty to either of the two rotten states that have been set up in this country.

What is needed more than ever is socialist organisation which rejects both sectarian politicians and the dead end of republicanism.

It has to encourage a united working class action that offers a real alternative to low pay, government cutbacks and unemployment.

## Escalation needed to win!

UNISON has been paying workers strike pay and says it will call workers out again if Compass refuses to budge.

However, the determination of the strikers has not been tied to an effective strategy to win the dispute. Faced with the threat of injunctions, the UNISON leaders backed away from any attempt to use picketing to stop the scabbing operation.

Mass pickets involving UNISON members at other hospitals and delegations from local workplaces could have defied the anti-union laws and hampered the scabbing operation.

### Support

Compass workers employed at Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry, who are being paid £3.20 an hour, should have been called out in support.

Instead, the union directed the campaign into community rallies, emphasising the support of church groups, MPs and local councillors.

The massive power of UNISON, with over a million members throughout Britain has not been mobilised.

A representative from UNISON national office at the Friday rally only talked vaguely about a boycott campaign of Compass owned businesses.

UNISON members at Glasgow's Stobhill hospital successfully stopped Compass from recruiting scabs.

This example should have been spread to every other hospital where Compass operates.

Yet at a rally in Downpatrick on 16 November, supporters including UNISON delegations from Marseilles, Luton, Glasgow and Edinburgh were described by UNISON officials as "outsiders" and directed to march at the back.

The fight with Compass is far from over. The new contracts, which give Compass the power to change any condition of employment with four weeks' notice remain on the table.

There is every chance that workers will have to strike again to win.

COMPASS want to isolate the dispute to the five hospitals in Northern Ireland and wear the strikers down or intimidate them into submission.

It is vital that the workers escalate the dispute and mobilise the solidarity action that can stop Compass in its tracks.

## STOP PRESS

AS Socialist Worker went to press we heard that a worker at the Lagan Valley hospital had been suspended.

Also Brian Ferguson, the UNISON Branch Secretary at the Lagan Valley hospital has been called to a disciplinary hearing.

Workers were due to vote on action as we went to press.

Hospital workers will clearly have to respond strongly to these attempts at victimisation.

a week on top of normal pay.

In a tremendous display of solidarity, they refused the bribe and joined their fellow UNISON members on the picket lines.

### Boycotted

Nurses boycotted the hospital canteens and sent food to the picket lines.

The Down Lisburn and Sperrin Lakeland Trust managements, who had promised workers their conditions would be protected when they were employed

by Compass, bent rules on hygiene and food standards to allow Compass to ride out the strike.

By the second week Compass were refusing to negotiate with UNISON.

It is clear that Compass are determined to break the strike and the union in the hospitals.

If they get away with attacking conditions in Northern Ireland they will try the same in hospitals all over Britain.

Compass applied for injunctions against UNISON,

using the Tory anti-union laws to limit picket lines to six people at Lisburn and Downpatrick.

They also served writs on eight UNISON activists, threatening to charge them with intimidation if they appeared on picket lines.

Despite all the threats, the strikers remained united and determined.

At a joint rally in Belfast on the last Friday of the strike, they vowed to take immediate action if anyone was victimised as a result of the strike.

## PROTESTS IN FRANCE

# Lorry blockade sends Tory rulers into panic

FRENCH LORRY drivers stepped up their blockade on Monday after negotiations headed by a government appointed mediator failed to produce a deal.

British press and TV focused on the inconvenience caused to British drivers and tourists by the blockade and strikes.

They were less keen to highlight the fact that the dispute is hitting French bosses hard, winning huge popular support and sending France's Tory government into a panic.

The lorry drivers are fighting for less working hours, higher wages and earlier retirement after bosses failed to honour an agreement made following a similar fight four years ago.

The blockades of key roads and junctions were beginning to have an enormous impact at the start of the week. Some 70 percent of all goods in France are moved by lorry.

### Warned

Fuel supplies in many areas were running low, though fuel for hospitals and heating was being allowed through, and raw materials and components supplies for industry were dwindling.

Car firm Peugeot had to lay off workers at its giant Sochaux plant last week and warned of more layoffs this week if the blockades continued. Renault also warned of possible layoffs.

The French drivers are fighting against the kind of appalling conditions and hours many suffer.

Jacky, a lorry driver shop steward in the CFDT union coordinating a blockade in south west France, said, "Two square metres in that cab, that's my whole life. I'm married to my lorry for six days a week."

Jean Claude, a 52 year old driver, complains of the back pain and aching arms many drivers suffer. After 32 years on the job he says, "I can't keep doing this for another ten years."

On many blockades French drivers are doing col-

**"These strikes have won popular support"**

lections to ensure trapped foreign drivers are looked after.

"The support from ordinary people is extraordinary," said a British lorry driver trapped in a blockade outside Caen, in Normandy.

At the Caen blockade the French drivers laid on a barbecue for everyone. Local firefighters have supplied coffee and a local supermarket has been donating bread.

Similar reports have come from around the country and some foreign drivers trapped in the blockade have been joining in the fight.

Juan, a Spanish driver, explained, "Whether we are French, Spanish, Italian we have the same problems. We are treated like dogs everywhere. If the French government has to give in we'll all benefit in other countries too."

### Wider

The popular support the drivers are winning is rooted in wider discontent against France's Tory government which erupted in a wave of revolt last December.

Since then unemployment has risen to new record levels and the government is planning more savage welfare and job cuts.

Prime minister Alain Juppé has achieved the in-

## EX-YUGOSLAVIA



UP TO 100,000 demonstrators marched in Croatia (above) and tens of thousands took to the streets in Serbia's capital, Belgrade (left)



## Serbia and Croatia rocked by protest

ANTI-government demonstrations in both Serbia and Croatia have reached a scale not seen since the outbreak of war in former Yugoslavia in 1991.

The marches in both states show how much ordinary people detest their rulers and how wrong it is to think that everyone lines up behind their respective governments in the region.

In Serbia demonstrators packed the streets on seven successive days in protest at blatant election rigging by the government of Slobodan Milosevic.

A week ago 30,000 workers, students and unemployed marched in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, led by the anti-government coalition Zajedno ("Together").

Last weekend the protests grew even larger after the government annulled an opposition victory in the Belgrade local elections.

On Monday 100,000 demonstrated.

One opposition leader said, "All citizens are becoming aware that the regime in Serbia cannot be changed by elections and can only be changed in other ways—by uprisings, strikes, violence."

The Serbian government calls itself socialist but it has nothing in common with real socialism. It is a combination of the Communists who ran Yugoslavia before the 1991 war and the profiteers who made fortunes during the fighting.

### Peace

It was entrenched in power by the US sponsored peace agreement last year.

Recent strikes by bus workers, taxi drivers and others against oppressive laws and non-payment of wages have won wide support.

Unfortunately the "Together" coalition offers no way forward and is headed by ultra-nationalists.

The potential for unity among ordinary people against their rulers was shown by protests in Croatia at the same time as the Serbian marches.

Up to 100,000 people marched in the capital, Zagreb, against the government's attempts to close

down a popular radio station which is critical of the regime.

One diplomat told reporters, "A quarter of the total Zagreb electorate took part in the protest. We really are talking about 'people power' here."

Croatia's president Franjo Tudjman heads one of the most right wing governments in Europe.

A protester in Zagreb said, "Tudjman offers us no democracy and no freedom—and our living conditions are getting worse. We are still living in a war state with a war economy and a war discipline. The war is against us."

The demonstrations have been led by young people, many of them students, but they have also gained backing from war invalids and some workers.

Discontent is also growing in Bosnia where unemployment has now reached almost 65 percent.

But, as people in the region turn against their leaders, the US is pouring in arms to prop up the regimes.

A US ship carrying £60 million of American weapons docked last week.

The supplies can only lead to more tensions. Already the Croat-Muslim federation's rulers are threatening renewed war for more territory.

The potential for workers' alternative to austerity and war has been shown by the recent demonstrations. It is needed urgently.

## NEW SOCIALIST REVIEW

"THE FIGHT by the capitalists to force workers to put in longer hours is as old as capitalism itself—and so is resistance to it."

●Lindsey German on "The time bandits"

### PLUS

● Is there a socialist morality? ● Blood money—the horror in Zaire ● Ramsay MacDonald—the man who turned his back on Labour ● Reviews, columns and much more

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credible by being even more unpopular today than during last year's strikes.

Discontent has simmered barely beneath the surface in recent months—and over one million public sector workers struck a few weeks ago.

Since then there has been a rash of smaller but significant protests involving arms work-

ers, bank workers, airline and transport workers, gas and electricity workers and others.

The French government is desperately trying to persuade lorry bosses and union leaders to cobble together a deal.

The government is terrified the action could detonate wider social revolt.

As one lorry driver warned this week, "Things could really explode if the bosses and government don't back down."

## Nazis fail

IN THE second round of voting in council elections in the town of Dreux, west of Paris, on Sunday, the Nazi National Front failed to take control of the town hall.

The Socialist Party candidates withdrew and with the Communist Party called on people to vote for the Tories.

The Tories won with 60 percent and the Nazis got 40 percent. Some hail this as the way to stop the National Front. This is wrong.

It has done nothing to build opposition to break the Nazis. A town which was formerly a Socialist Party stronghold now has a council made up entirely of Tories and Nazis.

## IN BRIEF

**GREECE:** Public and private sector workers were set to hold a 24 hour general strike in Greece this Thursday.

For the first time since 1991 the public and private sector union federations have called joint action.

The strike is against the planned austerity budget proposed by the ruling PASOK party (like Britain's Labour Party) in the lead up to joining the

single European currency.

**ITALY:** Over 150,000 engineers demonstrated in the Italian capital, Rome, on Friday of last week as engineering unions representing 1.7 million workers held their second one day strike over pay.

Union leaders have called a strike for 13 December among transport and industrial workers in support of the engineers.

## Why the multinationals can be beaten

A RASH of strikes and walkouts by thousands of car workers recently brought General Motors in the United States and Canada to a standstill.

Workers were fighting "outsourcing"—one of the latest vogue ideas in manufacturing, and an idea which knocks many of today's fashionable notions about the globalisation of the world economy on the head.

The basic principle of outsourcing is very simple and it is common in the car industry.

Rather than produce all the elements of a car, the manufacturers buy in component parts from outside suppliers.

So brakes may come from one firm and windscreen wipers from another.

They are made by workers with different employers, pay and conditions from the workers who assemble the cars.

In the 1970s most American components plants were wholly owned subsidiaries of the big manufacturers.

Today, of the "big three" car makers in the US, 70 percent of GM's parts production is "in house", at Ford 50 percent and at Chrysler only 30 percent.

Now car manufacturers are taking outsourcing a step further.

Rather than ship in thousands of parts a day, they are setting up new factories where the car maker and the component suppliers work side by side.

In France Mercedes Benz is building a new plant with ten different companies making parts within the main plant or at its own facilities on an industrial park alongside.

In Mexico Volkswagen is building a similar new bus and truck plant.

This is not a new idea. These methods were pioneered by Toyota as part of "just in time" production.

As the *Financial Times* says, "What distinguishes the new breed of factories, however, is that components suppliers actually make their products and, to a greater or lesser extent, fit them to vehicles on site."

Outsourcing has obvious benefits for the bosses.

It is used to attack union organisation and workers' pay.

In the US three quarters of workers in components plants are not unionised and their pay is half that of mainstream car workers.

This has the knock on effect of depressing the pay of all workers in the industry.

It also allows employers to prevent "secondary" action by arguing that the workers who make brakes or windscreen wipers are part of a different company.

But outsourcing is also about lowering other costs.

Greater outsourcing

by SAM ASHMAN

and closer collaboration with local components suppliers cuts down how much multinational car firms need to invest in plant and in workers.

But reality is very different to the idea of the world as a global assembly line that the popular image of globalisation would suggest.

Those who talk about globalisation give the impression that multinational corporations move their capital to wherever labour costs are cheapest—a process which the state and workers are incapable of resisting.

But greater outsourcing can actually lead to the concentration of production in certain areas, not its globalisation.

### Slashed

Take the example of Ford UK's plans for its two major British plants—Halewood on Merseyside and Dagenham in Essex.

Ford bosses have repeatedly slashed jobs, increased productivity and threatened to close one or other of the plants.

But despite this Ford bosses announced plans earlier this year for both Halewood and Dagenham involving the investment of millions.

At Halewood they plan a "wrap around factory" where components suppliers will set up shop on an industrial park next to the Ford works.

Such moves involve the loss of 1,000 jobs at Halewood but, nonetheless, they show multinationals cannot simply move at will.

They need an educated, skilled workforce and easy access to markets.

This is one reason why Japanese firms invest in Britain, so they are near the European market.

Multinationals also need a politically stable climate, so why abandon already established factories, machinery and offices that offer this?

Indeed, despite management's best efforts, workers' power is actually increased by these trends, not diminished.

The workers who make the individual components have tremendous power.

That is why 3,000 workers making brake parts could paralyse GM across all of North America and why Ford workers in Britain can stop all the firm's European operations in a matter of days.

Workers' power is a feature of the present and the future, not just the past—whatever the globalisation theorists may say.

# Drugs crisis: Blame the government not the victims

OVER THE last year 24 people have died as a result of drug addiction in the Summerhill area of Dublin's north inner city.

In the south inner city, it is estimated that 1,000 inject heroin while another 500 smoke it.

Areas like the Fatima Mansions, Dolphin's Barn and Oliver Bond house have all become names that are linked to Dublin's spiralling drugs crisis.

These areas have been abandoned by successive governments.

They have given more money in tax breaks for the exclusive apartments in the city centre than to the working class people who are forced to live in huge run down flat complexes.

In the Dublin's south inner city, which has one of the highest rates of drug abuse, there is an unemployment rate of 80%.

Two thirds of families depend solely on social welfare for their incomes. 50% of young people leave school at fifteen with just 5% in education by the age of 19.

Living somewhere like this, with little chance of a decent life, heroin offers some escape.

Yet politicians refuse to recognise this link between poverty and drug addiction.

Instead they have flooded the areas with police and try to build up a law and order hysteria.

But years of neglect by the state has meant that most of the areas with the worst drugs problems have practically no facilities for kids growing up.

In Gallanstown in west Dublin, for example, there is no primary school. There isn't even a bus

service to take kids to school. If they are lucky there might be a few sports pitches.

### Run-down

What few facilities there are, are appallingly rundown due to the refusal to put any money into them over the years.

The whole situation is something that is summed up in the fate

of the Iveagh Baths. Sited in the heart of Dublin's inner city, the baths were closed down and then sold by Dublin corporation.

Now they are being opened again as a private swimming pool that will cater for those with money to buy the exclusive apartments that have sprung up nearby.

While the government has aban-

doned these areas, they have also failed to provide decent treatment facilities for addicts.

### Services

There are only 2,600 places on treatment programmes for the 10,000 addicts in Dublin.

This means that some people may have to wait up to two years to get on a programme.

Those who can't get methadone

by ROISIN CRONIN

## EVICCTIONS AND MORE PO

OVER THE last six months people from drug ravaged communities throughout Dublin have been marching on the streets demanding a solution to the drugs crisis.

But the anti-drugs movement has taken a turn to the right recently.

Along with the call for more treatment, facilities and resources to be put into the areas, there have also been calls for tougher Garda action.

But more police has brought more harassment.

Gardai are now regularly stopping young working class people and searching them on the spot.

Even the anti-drugs campaigners have been subject to this type of harassment.

Hundreds have had to march on the Garda station on Fitzgibbon Street after three activists were detained under the Offences against the State act.

The anti-drugs campaign has also fol-

lowed the tactics of the Concerned Parents Against Drugs movement in the 80's, with marches on the homes of people they believe to be pushers.

It has become a regular occurrence for hundreds of local residents to march on people's houses.

People are called outside to face spotlights and chants of protestors.

### Threats

They are generally given a few days, but sometimes only 24 hours to get out.

One march featured on TV recently showed one family being told: "If you don't get out peacefully you'll get out the other way"

Threats and intimidation have found their ultimate expression in the in-

creased vigilante activity over the last few months.

One of the most shocking examples of vigilantism, carried out by a very small minority of the movement, was the murder in Dolphin's Barn of Josie Dwyer, an addict who was dying of AIDS.

He was also a small time dealer who sold drugs to feed his habit.

Some elements in the anti-drugs campaign see nothing wrong with these tactics.

They claim that evictions and beatings work because it means picking those who are the source of the problem—pushers.

But a "pushers out" strategy won't do anything to tackle the reason why people need to take drugs in the first place.

In fact the whole strategy means deflecting anger from the failure of politicians to provide any kind of help for a

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# What do socialists say?

## What sort of socialist party do we need?

**SOCIALIST leadership is fundamentally different from the leadership in present society—it is also essential.**

Capitalist leadership is exercised over working people from outside the working class.

Socialist leadership is exercised by workers within the working class.

This column deals with the revolutionary party.

Socialist leadership of the working class can be provided only by a party, not by prominent, charismatic individuals.

Such individual leaders do sometimes arise but they have two fatal weaknesses.

First, they are not part of a collective and so are easily blown off course or, worse, bought off by the pressures and inducements of capitalist society.

Second, they lack the roots in the working class to mobilise action in a co-ordinated way.

Precisely because socialist leadership has to come from the working class it must be organised in a party.

The aim of the revolutionary party is to draw together in a common organisation all those workers who want to fight for socialism and who lead their fellow workers.

The mass revolutionary party, which has yet to be built, would have a branch in every major workplace, housing estate and working class community.

It would be able to respond to every ruling class attack with concerted solidarity.

It would argue for and deliver working class action on political questions from police brutality to Nazi provocations and unjust wars.

Socialist leadership is not just about economic struggles and political campaigns. It also involves fighting an ideological struggle.

In capitalist society the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class, and that class has many ways of imposing its view of the

the revolutionary party for scabs or people who spread ruling class prejudices.

Leadership also exists within the revolutionary party.

The party elects its leaders—those it considers most able and clear sighted.

The relationship between leaders and led is like that between the party and the working class.

Leadership carries no privilege and no job security, but an obligation to point the way forward.

The principle of democratic centralism applies to the party as a whole and especially to its leaders.

**In a reformist party like Labour, leaders and TDs regularly ignore party policy or make it up as they go along.**

In a revolutionary socialist party individual leaders are strictly bound by the collective party policy.

This is a powerful weapon against leaders selling out or compromising principles.

Membership of the party is voluntary so mechanical orders play a minimal role. In the end the only real discipline is the self discipline that comes from members' political understanding of the need for organisation and unity in struggle.

The aim of the party is to turn every member into a leader of their fellow workers.

The existence of a mass revolutionary party would make an enormous difference to the struggle. In the long run it will make the difference between socialism and barbarism.

Such a party does not yet exist. It has to be built and is being built. That is what *Socialist Worker* and the SWP are all about, and that is why we urge all socialists who want to fight for a better society to join us now.

### Debate

For this the party is essential. It is only through collective discussion that socialists can arm themselves with the arguments to combat the ruling class.

The organisational form of the revolutionary party derives from the tasks it faces in the class struggle. It must combine democracy and centralism.

**Democracy is essential because without it the party becomes detached from the working class. Members feed into the party the experience and concerns of workers on the ground through democratic debate.**

This enables the party to collectively assess the state of the struggle and how it should respond.

Centralism, the unified implementation of party policy, is essential because unity in action is the cornerstone of all working class struggle and because the revolutionary party is the combat organisation of the working class.

Unlike reformist parties that are essentially just concerned with elections, there can be no place in

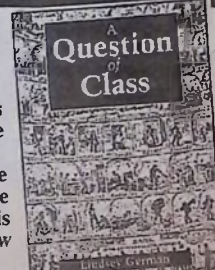
— JOHN MOLYNEUX

## A Question of Class

**WE ARE told that class divisions are a thing of the past—that we are moving towards a "classless society".**

This book demolishes the myths and shows that inequality and class divisions are as fundamental today as they have ever been.

Lindsey German is the editor of the monthly *Socialist Review* published by the Socialist Workers Party in Britain. She is also author of *Sex, Class and Socialism*, now in its second edition.



£3.50

Available from SWP branch bookstalls or from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8. Tel (01) 872 2682 Add 60p for post.



## A mother speaks out

**MY SON started off smoking heroin. He just got more and more into it when he had no job or anything going for him.**

Things were really bad for him and he went for help to a treatment centre run by the Health Board.

But they told him they could do nothing for him unless he was injecting heroin. So he went off and started injecting, just to be able to get the treatment.

I had to help him out a lot. It was very rough but once

he got onto a programme and got the support and counselling he needed he was able to get through and detox.

He's on the straight and narrow now and putting his life back together.

### Needed

Now that he has a job he has so much to look forward to. I think that this is what is needed for young people.

They have to have something to look forward to for themselves.

There are so many young

people in Dublin who need help but they can't get it. And they need work to make themselves feel useful.

If everybody keeps telling them that they are useless they believe it and end up with no self-respect.

The problem won't be sorted out by vigilantes. People march on other people's houses because they don't know what else to do about it. They're frustrated. But it won't solve anything.

They could have marched on my home years ago but that would have made it worse for all of us. I would have done anything for my son to get off gear. But the problem is the lack of treatment facilities and the social conditions that drug abusers have to live in.

The Government should be tackling unemployment and poverty instead of giving us more jails and more gardai. Give us jobs. Give us the treatment we need for our kids.

will try to buy methadone on the black market. Means getting money from the street just the same as feeding in habit. If they go to prison, there is no treatment available for addicts. In a recent case a judge was told that one addict had only been on methadone for seven days. The government, talking about spending 40 million on prisons, has no decent services to help addicts escape from the night-rug addiction.

## POLICE BRING NO SOLUTION

for a better life for thousands of young people all over the city.

Its quite a shift from where the anti drugs campaign began.

Twelve months ago the Inner City Organisations Network (ICON) helped organise a march to the Dail calling for decent treatment facilities and for more resources.

### Suspected

But now the main figures in ICON, along with Sinn Fein and TD's like Tony Gregory are leading the anti drugs movement in the marches on suspected pushers homes.

They call for evictions and "estate management" in cooperation with the Corporation and for more action from the Gardai.

Sinn Fein as well as calling for "direct action against drug dealers", have called for a coordinated attack on drugs

Gerry Adams recently launched Sinn Fein's drugs policy which called for an alliance of communities with Gardai to fight Drugs.

The same approach is taken by independent TD Tony Gregory.

He recently appeared on television saying that working class people would welcome the Gardai into their area, and that their help is need to stamp out drug addiction.

Gregory has even supported the government on the bail referendum.

Increased Garda powers will be used most directly against his own constituents in the inner city.

At the moment 80% of people who go to jail are from the unemployed.

The referendum on bail also allows the police to almost automatically deny bail to people who have a "substance abuse".

This amounts to criminalising rather than treating people who have a drug

addiction.

The tragedy is that the past experience shows that calls for more community policing and evictions will do nothing for the thousands of addicts in this city.

### Desperate

There are thousands of people living in Dublin who are desperate for a solution to the drugs problem. They don't want to see yet another generation of heroin addicts.

They've shown that they want something done and that they're willing to take action themselves.

But getting pushers out will only move the problem on to another area.

Instead we have to demand resources to provide some kind of alternative for young people, and an end to the scandalous failure to provide adequate treatment.

## AS TROOPS PREPARE TO GO TO RWANDA....

# The West has no answer in Zaire

**IF THE WESTERN powers send troops to Zaire it will be a disaster like the 1992-3 intervention in Somalia.**

The Canadians, presented as the 'boy scouts of international peace-keeping' are set to lead the contingent.

But they were exposed as some of the most racist and murderous outfits in Somalia.

Canadian paratroopers greeted the mission to Somalia as an "opportunity to kill niggers".

Canadian troops were found guilty of torturing a Somali boy to death while a large group of their colleagues did nothing. A Canadian minister said his forces had "filled all Canadians with shame".

France, the keenest supporter of the UN intervention, has a disgusting record.

France still has six military bases in Africa and has thousands of troops ready for action, years after the end of the Cold War. They are there to defend tyrants from their own subjects.

Zaire's President Mobutu is presently in France, 6,000 miles away from his country, and a million miles away

from the poverty his people endure. He is recovering from an operation in a £6 million villa on the Riviera.

In 1977 Mobutu was saved from a rebellion by a French airlift of troops. The next year 1,200 French paratroopers came to his aid.

Even now he is described by Chirac as "the man best able to represent Zaire".

France also armed and encouraged the old Hutu regime in Rwanda which was responsible for genocide against Tutsis. Despite economic chaos in the early 1990s, the Rwandan army grew from 5,000 to 30,000 with French help.

If the Western powers were really serious about saving lives in Africa they would immediately cancel all African debt.

African governments paid out £100 billion to Western banks and governments to service debts between 1983 and 1994. This is bleeding Africa dry and keeping millions of people across the continent in poverty.

But they will do none of these things because they still are colonial powers who want to keep Africa in servitude.



## Conflicts stoked up by imperialism

**The conflicts in Central Africa have their roots in the terrible poverty which capitalism has visited on the region. 40 percent of Africa's population are chronically undernourished because of the way it has been bled dry by colonialism, the Western banks and the multi-nationals.**

The poverty has been made worse by the collapse of prices for coffee and many other cash crops in the 1980s. Many countries adopted IMF Structural Adjustment Programmes in exchange for aid and credit.

This has meant massive cutbacks in public spending and further attacks on the standard of living for ordinary Africans.

### Tension

Just like the former Yugoslavia, the African ruling classes have whipped up ethnic tension in order to deflect anger from collapsing economies to save their skins.

Zaire is a good example. In debt to the tune of \$9 billion and with a staggering inflation rate of 23,733 percent in 1995, the right wing Prime Minister Mobutu tried to scapegoat the people from the Tutsi group in the east of the country to divert attention from the massive crisis engulfing the economy.

Aided by the defeated Hutu army in the Rwanda civil war of 1994, Mobutu's army have killed thousands of Zairian Tutsis, known as Banyamulenge, since last summer.

But these attacks backfired when the rebels fought back and destroyed Mobutu's demoralised army which has not even been paid for months.

In the Western press there has been a widespread acceptance that the carnage we are witnessing in central Africa is the result of inexplicable ethnic rivalry between tribal peoples.

The real roots of the conflict however lie in the bloody record of colonialism in Africa.

In the late 1800s five European powers grabbed much of Africa with no regard for the wishes of local people.

The motive was military strategy and economic gain for the European ruling classes.

They used a policy of divide and rule to bolster up their rule and to seize on any divisions and differences and tried to magnify and politicise them.

There's no better example of this than the division between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda.

The division between these two groups was originally based on wealth and ethnicity.

In the old kingdom of Rwanda, which was well established by the 17th century, a Tutsi dominated hierarchy within the clans controlled access to land and animals. Hutu peasants gave up unpaid labour in exchange for land and animals.

### Separate

There were no separate "tribes" with separate languages and cultural customs or even "tribal" territories. Hutus could become Tutsis by acquiring more wealth.

Successive colonial powers, namely Germany and Belgium, magnified and politicised the existing divisions out of all recognition.

In the 1930s, Belgium tried to base the differences on racial characteristics but they found it was impossible.

They did however make the divisions between Hutu and Tutsi legally fixed and inflexible and proceeded to

co-opt Tutsis (though only a minority of them) into the colonial administration and to police the new order. Hutu resistance was brutally suppressed and many fled to Uganda.

### Stability

In the next 20 years however things changed. The Belgian colonial authorities lost faith in the ability of Tutsis to maintain stability and deliver the type of regime they wanted.

As a result they switched sides and backed the Hutu revolt against the Tutsi aristocracy.

This characterises colonial rule right across Africa.

One group is cynically played off against another, the sole purpose being to protect the interests and profits of the colonial power, often with horrific consequences for the people on the ground.

The role that the French have played in recent times in backing and maintaining the Hutu government in Rwanda at all costs illustrates the point most clearly.

The French provided arms and military personnel to the Hutu army that massacred much of the population in the civil war.

And it wasn't just the French. Evidence has now been found in deserted refugee camps in Zaire that a British company, Mil-Tec, was also selling arms to the former Rwanda government, during and after the genocide.

They continued to supply arms after the UN arms embargo was imposed in May 1994.

Zaire shares the same history of abuse and colonialism.

Previously known as the Congo it was seized by King Leopold II of Belgium in 1884.

The Congo was a very important

source of rubber which was in high demand at the time and therefore made huge profits for the king.

The money used to build royal parks and buildings in Brussels, while the population of the Congo was subjected to the most horrible exploitation.

In 1960 the Congo declared its independence from Belgium.

However, this did not mean the end of Western interference in its affairs.

### Defend

The US got UN troops to kidnap and kill Patrice Lumumba the nationalist leader.

Mobutu, the current leader, was installed to defend Western interests and impose stability in the region.

He was a useful bulwark against the Soviet Union's influence in Africa and was given arms and other assistance as he required it.

He was generously rewarded in dollars when he allowed Zaire to be used as a base for US-sponsored raids against Angola.

A blind eye was turned to the human rights abuses and corruption that characterised his rule. In a country rich in copper, diamonds and other minerals, the vast majority of the population are totally impoverished while Mobutu has a personal fortune estimated at anywhere between £1 billion and £7 billion in Swiss bank accounts.

Millions of pounds for example have been spent on transforming his native village into a city. He has built a huge palace for himself, along with a casino and extensive ornamental gardens.

An airport has been built too with a runway large enough to cater for the Concorde that he leases from Air France to take his family shopping in Europe.

## IS THERE A SOLUTION?

**THE GREATEST hope for Africa lies in the glimpses of solidarity and unity that were seen between ordinary people even at the height of the war.**

**Whether it's peasants on the Zaire-Burundi border offering food and water to refugee or workers in Kinshasa standing up against the looting of Tutsi property.**

**Despite the intimidation and the pressure to hate**

**people from different backgrounds it's clear that some Africans want to unite.**

**The future of Africa lies in the fight by ordinary Africans, and in particular workers against the local and international rich.**

**The huge public sector strikes in Zimbabwe in the last couple of months show the potential that is there for a working class alternative in Africa.**



## book

# Reading in the Dark

**Sometimes it seems impertinent to bring politics into it right off.**

Impertinent not in the sense of being cheeky but in the sense of not being pertinent.

Seamus Deane uses words here with tough precision to suffuse his novel with beauty. As in considering the work of Van Morrison, or Blake, you first let the music lift your spirits high, to reach an apt vantage point for making prosaic assessment.

"Lying in the filtered green light of the high fern-stalks that shook slightly above our heads, we listened to the sharp birdsong of the hillside... Fire was what I loved to hear of and to see. The bonfires were lit at the foot of the sloping parallel streets, against the stone wall above the Park, the night sky reddened around the rising furls of black tyre-smoke that exploded every so often in high soprano bursts of paraffined flames... The bulldozers came first, lifting and lowering their streaming jaws in the lamplight as they shunted the barricades aside... He was the soldier's father, His son, George, had been shot, he was told, at our doorstep. He wondered if anyone had seen what had happened."

## Language

If you love language let the word clusters burst slowly, and savour the taste as long as it lingers.

This book was so long in the writing it had become almost a joke. Deane's novel-did it really exist? Or was it just a figment of his own imagination?

It's 232 pages, can be read easily at a single sitting, but with so much left behind in computer limbo he says he has to flick through the pages himself now to recall which bits are in and which out.

Once published, the complaint was it wasn't a figment of his imagination at all, but a chronological, episodic account of his own growing up in the Bogside.

It's a mere memoir, sniffed the *Irish Times*. Don't these Booker people understand anything, putting it up for a prize intended for prestigious fiction?

It is all true, right enough. The names of the streets and his brothers and sisters, the family history and neighbourhood incidents, the births and deaths and the dark secret lurking at the margin of every page.

But the flat facts are irradiated by a singular ima-

gination so they shiver with meanings you've never suspected.

The Deanes lived round the corner from us. Frank, the father, worked as one of two electrician's mates at the British navy base on the Foyle, my own father being the other. They used to walk to work together in the morning.

Seamus was a couple of years ahead of me at St Columb's College, which we both reached on account of the 11-plus. Ordinary people, inner family relationships shaped by private, unremarkable experiences, public events passing by, never intruding to decisive effect. Not as you could tell.

## Escapades

He tells of comings and goings, of adventurous escapades, dances and excursions to Donegal, run of the mill run-ins with the cops, the death from tuberculosis of his aunt Ena, puzzlement and rumour about his uncle Liam, who may have gone to Chicago and died in a fire, the day-to-day tensions and ebb and flow of emotion in the household, as in any household, the sour traces of an old family feud.

It's written in short chapters, mostly just a couple of pages, like an old movie which fades to black at the end of each scene. There's no explosive drama, no narrative drive towards climactic denouement, no obvious political dilemma through the resolution of which personal contradictions are resolved.

## Onwards

But it's evident from the first page onwards that public life, unacknowledged, has infiltrated the nooks and crannies of the private family domain, affecting the emotional coloration of every exchange, dictating hesitations, commanding silences, limiting freedom of expression even in the silent exchange of a glance. The deepest secrets are of things known to everyone.

It's an intense and gentle, meticulously crafted straightforward story of a working class family full of love and the sense of love lost to the world. It's precisely of its time and place, shot through with politics and shimmering dark intimation. The Irish novel of the year, certainly, and well worth any socialist's time reading.

*Reading in the Dark*  
Seamus Deane  
Cape £13.99

EAMONN McCANN

## film



Grimely in Trouble

# Bold, brassy and full of gentle humour

## pamphlet

## Arguments to inspire the fight from below

**TIME AND TIME again we are told that while society needs change it is impossible to fundamentally alter it. Instead it is argued that you need a small amount of power to bring a small amount of change.**

The argument from Democratic Left and the Labour party after the last election was that if we go into government then we can do some good.

The failure of this strategy makes the re-issue of Hal Draper's pamphlet *The Two Souls of Socialism* especially relevant.

Written in the sixties by an American Marxist, the pamphlet has a simple but important aim.

To reclaim the socialist tradition away from career politicians and bureaucrats, and to place the idea of self emancipation at the centre of socialist ideas.

Draper argues that there are two traditions of Socialism: "*Socialism from above and that of Socialism from below*". He brilliantly and scathingly outlines the history of Socialism from above, as reformer after reformer has made peace with the system and merely ending up holding what they were out to change.

He contrasts the failure of 'socialism from above' with the tradition of Marx.

Marx argued that through the process of struggle people collectively possess the power not just to gain victories over their rulers but to liberate themselves and society.

He emphasised that real democracy is central to socialism. The involvement of people, making decisions about their own life means them taking control of the forces that affect them.

## Activity

The idea that mass activity produces more than committee room meetings in the Dail, is not something mainstream politicians would agree with. But the collective action of the Dunnes strikers did more for low paid workers than anything Labour or DL have achieved in government.

Draper's pamphlet is a brilliantly written defence of the real marxist tradition and the possibility of ordinary people fundamentally changing the world for the better. Or as Draper himself puts it:

"Since the beginning of society there have been no end of theories 'proving' that tyranny is inevitable and that freedom and democracy is impossible... The only way of proving them false is in the struggle itself. That struggle from below has never been stopped by theories from above, and it has changed the world time and time again."

"To choose any of the forms of Socialism from above is to look back to the old world, to the old crap. To choose Socialism from below is to affirm the beginning of a new world."

—Simon Basketter

*The Two souls of Socialism* by Hal Draper is available from SW Books Po box 1648 Dublin 6. price £2+75p+p.p.

## Books for Christmas

For those moments over Christmas when you are sick to death of the television, Socialist Worker recommends some books to get you through the holiday.

First the Michael Collins movie has raised interest and arguments about the formation of the Irish state, a new book by Conor Kostick *Revolution in Ireland 1917-1923*. Recovers the lost history of the role of the working class in the struggle for independence.

This year has been sixty years since the Spanish civil war. George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* is a stirring account of Orwell's

time fighting for the militias against fascism. BB2 have been showing an Adaptation of Ian Banks novel *The Crow road*, as well as reading that novel his other books are worth a look in particular *Complicity*.

The Nigerian novelist Ben Okri's latest novel *Dangerous Love* is a powerful novel that has a less mystical and poetic style than his previous books and perhaps the better for it.

Finally the newly reissued Hal Draper's *Two Souls of Socialism* is definitely something to give to those friends who aren't convinced of the viability of Socialism.

**BRASSED OFF** is a black comedy that focuses on the fictitious mining community of Grimley.

This is a film on the side of the working class, made by people who believe that workers' lives are a legitimate subject for a cinema audience.

The film is set against the battle over the 1992 pit closure programme. Grimley is under threat. And if the colliery goes down, so would its famous brass band.

*Brassed Off* centres around the lives and aspirations of the miners who play in the local colliery band.

## Warmth

The film is well crafted, portraying with warmth and a gentle humour the plight of the stricken community.

There are some strong performances, especially Stephen Tompkinson (of *Drop The Dead Donkey* fame). He plays a miner torn apart by crippling debts and lured by management dangling redundancy pay.

The film successfully uses comedy to highlight the desperation that is often a part of working class life.

At the same time there are scenes in the film which are genuinely moving.

*Brassed Off* shows characters with a passionate hatred of the Tories combined with a bitterness hanging over from the miners' strike of 1984-85.

In one scene, the band conductor gives a moving speech which denounces the destruction the Tories have wrought on mining communities. The film ends with simple statistics showing that 140 pits closed and a quarter of a million people lost their jobs because of Margaret Thatcher's policies.

## Sentimental

At points the humour becomes overly sentimental.

And when one character says accusingly, "If we were seals or whales you'd be up in arms," this forgets the anger that exploded around the pit closure programme and the hundreds of thousands who did march.

The film has been touted as having the "feelgood" factor and, while it is good to see a film about this topic, I wasn't sure whether to feel good or angry.

But the music is great. Even if you're not a brass band fan you can't help being stirred by the performances of the real Grimethorpe Colliery Band.

—Gino Kenny

**where we stand**

Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

**FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM**  
The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system. The courts, army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion. To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

**FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:**  
The SWP welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class. We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

**FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION**  
We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We stand for free contraception and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry. We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

**FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:**  
Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army. Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class. Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states. We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

**FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:**  
Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it. We support the leaders when they fight but oppose them when they betray workers. We stand for independent rank and file action.

**FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:**  
To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWP aims to build such a party in Ireland.

# NURSES: It's high time to strike

**THE COALITION plans for public sector pay restraint has been sent reeling by the decision of nurses to reject a £50 million package.**

INO members, who represent the majority of nurses, voted by 3 to 2 against the deal.

In two other smaller unions, SIPTU and PNA, there was a slight majority for acceptance but overall the Nursing Alliance has voted against.

This is the third time that nurses have said No to the government.

Finance Minister Quinn has claimed that the nurses have committed a "gross error of judgement" in their vote.

But on the last two times he also said there was no more money in the kitty and then found over £10 million.

The nurses turned down the deal for a number of reasons.

One was because those at the lower end of the scale—of between one and eight years service—got no real increases.

One staff nurse who works at a Dublin hospice told *Socialist Worker*, "All the nurses in my job are working flat out.

"I don't see why I should be getting an increase and they are not. "What's sauce for the

goose is sauce for the gander".

Nurses are also angry because the increases were not indexed linked for pension purposes.

"A lot of psychiatric nurses have family members who are retired. Up to now increases have always gone on the pensions. It is a disgrace that they did not this time" one PNA member said.

## Insult

The real insult came with the fact that student nurses are still due to drop over a £1,000 when they come onto the job.

On top of all these issues, however, is a deep seated resentment at the way that nurses are treated and the way their work is valued.

As the staff nurse put it, "I am working sometimes nearly 80 hours a week because the health board won't take on extra staff. You see young nurses coming out of the Mater and half of them have to go to Australia or Saudi Arabia.

"We need more nurses in this country—and on decent pay!"



**The union leaders who have to be watched**

**IF THE nurses struck, they would get massive support.**

The magazine *Industrial Relations News* has noted that "the government would be very sensitive to strike action by nurses, especially in the midst of talks on a follow on deal to replace the PCW and an inevitable general election next year".

They are in a powerful position to win their claims. But the behaviour of their union leaders show that they will again drag their feet rather than organise the action.

In the next few weeks, nurses in the INO should press their union leaders: ■ To name an immediate date for all-out strike action:

Ballots for action can be organised immediately and there should be no delay in the count. Rumours that it would take until mid-January to count the vote should be seen as a stalling tactic. ■ To press a claim which will benefit all nurses.

They should be told not to come back until they have won substantial increases for the lower grades, stopped the pay cuts for young nurses and brought in a decent pension scheme that gave INO nurses the right to retire at 55 the same as their colleagues in the psychiatric service.

## Pay the nurses— not the consultants

**IF QUINN's plan had worked out, the nurses would have signed up to deal and then the much delayed Buckley report into consultants pay would have been announced.**

But all his plans have come unstuck. It has now been revealed that consultants have managed to win themselves a staggering £15,000 a year pay increase.

The elite of the medical profession have been

lobbying behind closed doors for this increase over the last few years.

### Private

No one has ever told them that 'they were making a gross error'.

Yet consultants are already raking in huge sums from both the government and private practice.

One doctor told *Socialist Worker*:

"The consultants are already grossly over paid. They get about

£60,000 a year from the state but then many have huge private practices on top of that.

"I reckon that some of them are earning a quarter of a million a year.

"They have put in a claim for a 50% increase and have been lobbying intensively since.

"You can be sure that this government will give them hefty increases and then tell the nurses that there is nothing for them."

## News from SWP branches

# Target: 70 new members by New Year

**A RECENT meeting of the SWP National Committee has set itself the target of recruiting 70 new members by the New Year.**

At the moment socialists have been presented with a window of opportunity.

Our best recruiting sergeant is Dick Spring who has shown that the Labour Party is more inter-

ested in serving the rich rather than looking after those who voted for them.

### Interests

Thousands are now looking for a real alternative that will fight for workers interests.

But the window of opportunity will not last forever. Right wing forces are trying to step into the vacuum.

The law and order hysteria has been deliberately whipped up to divert anger away from the government and the rich.

Now Labour TDs like Roisin Shortall are trying to scapegoat single parents for creating the 'delinquents' of the future.

The bail referendum showed exactly why SWP needs to transform itself into a much bigger force. During the referendum,

SWP canvassing teams toured estates to counter the government propaganda. But we were still not big enough to shift the overall mood.

In the North, SWP members moved quickly on the hospitals dispute.

Hospital workers from as far away as Luton in Britain travelled to Downpatrick to join a demonstration in support of the workers.

The response they got showed that there is a real mood for class unity that conflicts with the sectarian bigotry that the likes of Paisley tries to stoke up.

Over the last fortnight, 15 people have joined the SWP. Now the challenge is on to increase the pace of recruitment to build a serious alternative. All members should:

■ Display the new recruitment poster on street sales and ask people to join.

■ Ensure that they are met within four days of giving in their name.

■ Arrange meetings with buyers of the paper to encourage them to join the growing alternative to Labour in the South and sectarian politics in the North.

## Socialist Workers Party Limerick Branch

**Inaugural Meeting**  
**Why we need a socialist alternative—the politics of the SWP**  
**Tuesday 3rd December 8.00pm**  
**Costello's Tavern, Dominick St**

## SWP branch meetings

**BELFAST**  
Meets every Wed at 8pm Central Hall Rosemary St.

**CORK**  
Meets every Tues at 8pm in Dennehy's Pub, Cornmarket St.

**DERRY**  
Meets every Tues in Badgers Bar at 8pm

**DUN LAOGHAIRE**  
Meets every Tues at 8pm in Smyths Pub.

**DUNDALK**  
Meets every Weds at 1pm in Dundalk RTC

**ENSKILLEN**  
Meets every fortnight Contact national address for details

**GALWAY**  
Meets every Thursday at 6pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square

**LIMERICK**  
Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Costello's Tavern, Dominick St

**MAYNOOTH**  
Contact 8722682 for details

**WATERFORD**  
Meets every Thurs at 8pm in ATGWU Hall, Keyser St.

**DUBLIN NORTH-WEST**  
Meets every Tues at 8.30pm in The Old Brogue, Dorset St.

**DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK**  
Meets every Thurs at 8.00pm Contact 8722682 for details

**DUBLIN DRINAGH**  
Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Black Forge (formerly the Bentley), Drinagh Rd

**DUBLIN NORTH-CENTRAL**  
Meets every Wed at 8.30pm in Conways, Parnell St.

**DUBLIN RATHMINES**  
Meets every Wed at 8pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond St

**DUBLIN SOUTH-CENTRAL**  
Meets every Thurs at 8pm in the Trinity Inn, Pearse St.

**DUBLIN TALLAGHT/ONDALKIN**  
Meets Tues Tallaght Welfare Society, Tallaght Village.

★ There are Socialist Worker members in: **COLERAINE; LURGAN; CAVAN; DONEGAL; NAAS; KILKENNY; DUNDALK; ATHLONE; DROGHEDA.** If you would like to get in touch, contact our national office at (01) 872 2682, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

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# CIE: Build the action to defeat the plans

**CIE workers are set to shut down the entire public transport system on December 6th.**

This follows the refusal of the three CIE companies to pay 2.5% due under the Programme for Competitiveness and Work.

One Bus Eireann driver told *Socialist Worker*: "The cost of living increase was due in October but the company insists its payment is linked to agreement on their cost-cutting 'Viability Plans'."

The Viability Plans in the three CIE companies—Bus Eireann, Iarnrod Eireann and Dublin Bus—are attacks on wages and conditions for CIE workers.

A Bus Eireann worker said: "They want us to lose overtime earnings and work with complete flexibility. A driver could be told to sweep up the bus depot when not driving. We have no intention of accepting these conditions."

Within Dublin Bus and Iarnrod Eireann rank and file workers have been organising rank and file resistance to the plans through leafleting and taking up petitions.

A Dublin Bus driver told *Socialist Worker*: "There is enormous strength of feeling on the ground. The Busworkers Action Group has collected over 400 signatures so far calling for all out strike action across CIE if any section of workers is attacked."

Another said: "NBRU members have voted 97 per cent for strike action and SIPTU bus workers won't cross the picket line on December 6th. There won't be a bus or train moving."

This anger has already

made CIE senior managers think again. The viability plans were originally to be rushed in this year. In Bus Eireann management intended to impose the plan during October.

## Delayed

All three companies have now delayed implementation until 31st March 1997.

This shows that management can be beaten. What is needed now is to escalate the action from a one day dispute to all out action.

A good stoppage and victory on the 2.5% could be an important springboard for fighting the viability plans.

## Courts will not help workers

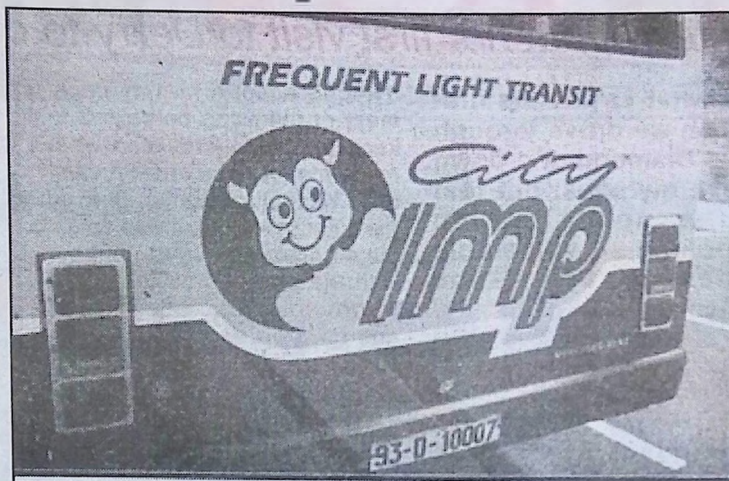
**The decision of the NBRU leaders to take CIE to the High Court has proved a fiasco.**

The union took Bus Eireann to court over the viability plan, claiming that the terms of the creation of the three companies a decade ago made it illegal for the company to vary the workers' conditions of service without agreement.

## Expensive

Not surprisingly the High Court judge—who probably has never travelled in a bus in his life—decided in favour of the company.

The expensive action only served to waste time which should have been



## STOP THROWING SHAPES AND ORGANISE ACTION!

**AS CIE workers face into their greatest confrontation, the two main unions seem to be going in different directions.**

SIPTU officials claim that the NBRU only balloted on one-day action because they were afraid union funds would not sustain a longer strike.

NBRU leaders point out that although SIPTU is balloting on all-out action on the 2.5% increase it probably will not be ready to call action by December 6th.

But the real issue is why don't they get together and organise one

all-out national strike.

More seriously, there are rumours circulating that the contracting out of services and the employment of new workers on worse conditions are items the unions will eventually concede.

Instead of these rivalries, the union leaders should be making it plain that they will accept no attacks on their members' conditions or those of new workers.

Rank and file union members should build the pressure on their leaders so there is no eleventh hour sell-out.

spent organising resistance.

The law and the courts serve the interests of the rich and powerful and

never favour working class people.

The courts have now shown what side they are on. Union leaders should

not be allowed to use the threat of the Industrial Relations Act or court action to prevent them sanctioning all-out action.

## PROFS & PORTERS ON PICKET LINE

**UNIVERSITIES throughout the North closed down on November 19th to reject the Tory market driven assault on higher education.**

Students joined staff on the picket line for the first time at two of the main universities. In Queen's, 40 students occupied the administration building while 200 people packed into a mass meeting to hear union speakers promise further action.

A striking professor told *Socialist Worker*: "The action was extremely solid and picked up on wide-spread and deep resentment. This strike isn't just about wages, it's about education in general."

Student union leaders expressed their disgust at a university management which has cut £30,000 from the union's budget while spending the same amount mowing the lawn for graduation.

## Scabbing

In Britain, the story was similar. 1,500 marched in Oxford and Manchester while at London's LSE 50 students stormed a lecture to prevent the lecturer scabbing. The potential exists for a mass campaign of resistance to the Tories market madness.

One problem, however, was the lack of mobilisation of students. While the actions of the staff was magnificent, only a small fraction of the student population turned out. This was not inevitable.

The 98% vote for strike action showed the deep anger that exists against the Tories. The fact that a spontaneous occupation took place shows that future actions could be massive if they were built for seriously.

What is needed now is for students and staff to put pressure on their leaders to step up the action.

# Corpo workers vote to reject productivity deal

**GENERAL workers in Dublin Corporation have voted by a massive majority to reject the latest pay offer for productivity.**

Dublin Corporation management have been attempting to push through drastic changes in work practices in exchange for a 6.7% rise in pay.

Workers in the Cleansing Department have been offered well above this - 14.1% to the bin lorry drivers. The Corpo want to take 12 bin lorries off the road and the re-

maining 36 to pick up their work.

This is a tactic to try to split the workforce and set the most powerful group - the binmen and sweepers - against the rest of the general workers.

But the changes will have a huge impact on all general workers jobs and conditions.

## Privatise

Drivers and helpers for housing maintenance, public lighting and the waterworks will be done

away with.

This will mean those left working in these areas doing the jobs of sometimes 2 or 3 workers.

The rejection of the deal has meant that it is now the subject of Labour Court talks.

But as one shop steward put it, "This is part of the Corpo trying to privatise the whole operation.

And if the likes of Mary Hamey ever gets in it will be definitely privatised."

Even if the Labour Court manages to come up with a compromise on this issue, it is likely to be

rejected.

Workers in the Corporation are angry at the attacks on their jobs over the last few years. This time workers should maintain unity and stop any attempts to divide one group away from another.

Some areas of the services are already contracted out to private firms on a large scale.

A vote for strike action will put these workers in a very powerful position to smash the Government's agenda to privatise yet another area of the public sector.

## FLATS TENANTS BLOCK ROAD IN WATER PROTEST

**OVER 40 tenants in the Mountain View Court Flats in Summerhill have had to block one of Dublin's main roadways with huge refuse bins in protest at not having water for a week.**

"We are being treated as second class citizens here and we have been given nothing but abuse by the Corporation," said Daniel Gaffney, vice chair of the tenants committee.

The water went off at midnight on

Wednesday night and the people were left without a supply for days on end.

They were deprived of toilet and cooking facilities.

## Rising Damp

They were also left without heat in bitter cold weather.

Bedrooms in the flats have been rendered unusable due to rising damp.

"The corporation are quick enough to come around for their

rent but they have done nothing when we have to live without water" said Angela Byrne.

The Mountain View Flats complex has been the scene of major anti-drugs protests.

At one stage the Gardai who arrived in the area baton charged local people.

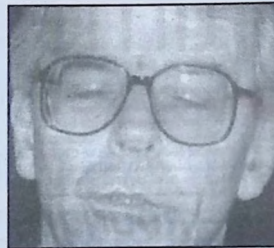
When people have to take to the streets to demand water, it shows the type of contempt that they have to face from this terrible government.

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 40p

**Inside:**  
**N.I. HOSPITAL WORKERS FIGHT LOW PAY**—PAGE FOUR

# Major risks return to war to hang on to power



**ONCE AGAIN, hopes of a renewed IRA ceasefire seem likely to perish in order to keep John Major and his hated Tory government hanging on to power.**

Major has refused to respond positively to a joint Adams-Hume document outlining the kind of assurances from the British gov-

ernment which would secure a new ceasefire.

The "assurances" asked for are simple—immediate entry of Sinn Fein to talks, no letting decommissioning stand in the way and some sign of movement on the prisoners.

Every opinion poll in the North shows the overwhelming majority of people would

have no problem with these very modest demands.

### Majority

Yet, after he met Major to discuss the Adams-Hume proposals, David Trimble was able to assure the waiting press that they would not be met.

The Tories are likely to

lose their majority of one at the forthcoming Wirral by-election, so Trimble won in the number games at Westminster.

Neither Trimble nor Paisley want another ceasefire. Their position in Northern Ireland depends on keeping Protestant and Catholic workers apart in their 'own' communities.

That's why they react to every sign of a renewed ceasefire as if it heralded disaster.

### Discard

The Unionist Parties want a veto on who should be let into all-party talks.

They want to discard the democratic wish of 44% of

the Catholic electorate to be represented by Sinn Fein.

They want to be able to stall these talks for as long as they can so that no real change is made in the North.

Tony Blair is hardly likely to behave any different to Major.

The last Labour Home Secretary for the North Roy Mason backed everything the

British army generals wanted.

Blair himself has sacked Kevin McNamara because he once voiced support for a united Ireland.

The fiasco that is going on in the North at the moment shows that real peace will not be delivered from on high. It will have to be forged from below by working class people.

# Bombs offer nothing

**THE CAR bomb outside the RUC station at Strand Road in Derry showed what Major's gambling with peace could mean.**

Despite all the talk of hardline elements within the IRA wanting to go back to war, there is no sign of any support for such a move even in the most republican areas.

A return to the armed struggle would be a disaster. Everyone knows that it did not work over the last 27 years and would be even weaker if it was started up again.

It is working class people, Protestants and Catholics alike who will suffer and die if it does.

The politicians who don't want peace live in safe and leafy suburbs.

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# TRIMBLE'S HYPOCRISY

TRIMBLE presents himself as the champion of all Protestants in the North.

His "special relationship" with Major is supposed to be about defending the interests of "the Protestant community".

Yet he met Major on the very day it was announced that Banbridge Hospital, smack in the heart of his own constituency, was to close.

The day after he was elected leader of the Unionist Party, Trimble joined a march in Banbridge to keep the hospital

open.

But when he had John Major by the short and curries, all he was interested in was keeping Sinn Fein out of the talks and avoiding another IRA ceasefire.

It never even occurred to him to demand the hospital be saved. The sectarian politicians of the North have nothing to offer workers, Protestant or Catholic.

They will do nothing to fight the Job Seekers' Allowance or defend the NHS.

It is strike action like that which saw Protestant and Catholic



workers unite on the picket line in Lisburn, Downpatrick, Omagh and Enniskillen that show the way to fight for a better future.

But these struggles needs to be politicised.

As long as workers unite only at an economic level, sectarian politicians will try to break their unity.