

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p

Inside:

**Environment in crisis:
Who is to blame? -Pages 6&7**

*Can there be peace in
the Middle East?—PAGE 8*

Solidarity price £1

End the low pay scandal

£5

an hour minimum wage

TAX THE RICH!

Government blow to disabled rights

THE NEW Employment Equality Bill says employers will only have to recruit disabled workers if the costs of providing facilities are "nominal".

The Bill does not define what "nominal" means, but no doubt bosses will use it as a loophole to keep disabled people out of the workforce.

Disabled people are far more likely to be unemployed than the able-bodied.

ied. The Irish Wheelchair Association surveyed its members in 1993 and found that 72.5 percent were unemployed, 19 per-

cent worked from home and only 8.5 percent went out to work.

Lack of workplace and transport facilities are major reasons for these statistics.

Fianna Fail and the PDs have reintroduced a modified equality bill after the Supreme Court declared the last one "unconstitutional".

The judges showed what side they are on when they said the legislation would undermine the employers right to property!

The only part of the bill they upheld was the guarantee of church control of schools—the very section questioned by President Robinson!

Labour's Mervyn Taylor introduced that bill. The failure of Labour and Democratic Left to stand up to the bishops and the bosses has allowed Fianna Fail to bring in an even weaker equality bill.

"Where are the jobs? I have never had paid work and feel some times bitter that I have nothing to show for myself.

"Even though I don't consider myself to be old, the years are slipping away in terms of finding a job like so-called normal people.

"I have hopes and dreams for the

future, and don't see why I, or any person with a disability, should have to settle for anything less.

"I feel if nothing is done that I will still be doing courses to fill in time in ten year's time.

—Extract from a submission to the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities.

Protest at mobile masts

A NATIONAL campaign has been launched to stop the erection of mobile phone masts near residential areas.

Esat Digiphone have followed Eircell by building a network of masts around the country.

Esat boss Denis O'Brien is a Fine Gael supporter who was awarded a mobile phone licence by then FG minister Michael Lowry.

The mobile sector is proving extremely lucrative for the owners of the companies but ordinary people are suffering as a result.

Several people living near mobile phone masts have reported sore throats, constant thirst, headaches and exhaustion.

Others report mild electric shocks when touching metal parts of cars in the vicinity of masts.

The Minister for Public Enterprise, Mary O'Rourke, is now planning to enforce "co-location" of masts.

Erecting

This means new antennae will be placed on existing masts instead of erecting new ones.

This will coincide with the award of the third mobile licence.

The new company will operate a system like the BT Orange system which produces even stronger signals than Eircell or Esat.

Campaigners are demanding that instead of "co-location", masts should be relocated away from where people live.

Local militancy has prevented masts being erected in working class areas.

In the Blanchardstown area of Dublin, locals successfully threatened to boycott a supermarket which had agreed to allow a mast on their land.

A national campaign could prevent masts being built in residential areas in other parts of Ireland.

THREE QUARTERS AGREE BUDGET WAS...

Champagne Charlie's bonanza for the rich

THREE QUARTERS of people in a recent Irish Times MRBI survey believed that Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy's budget mainly benefited the rich.

They were right. McCreevy announced £517 million in tax cuts but the biggest gains went to the wealthy:

■The Minister slashed the standard rate of capital gains tax from 40 percent to 20 percent.

■The budget cuts the tax on corporation profits by four percent giving a bonanza to the rich at twice the rate of the previous budget.

The ESRI estimates that pre-tax profits have been increasing at the rate of 12 percent.

The tax cuts mean profits after tax will increase by 19 percent.

■High earners on £45,000 and upwards will get tax cuts of over £1,000 a year.

Those on £100,000 plus will benefit from £2,000 tax cuts and people on incomes of over £200,000 will gain by over £4,000.

Someone on £60,000 will get almost £40 a week extra.

Contrast this with the tiny gains made by workers and the poor:

■The single person's tax free allowances will now amount to £3,950 and the married allowances will total £7,100.

A married couple with one earner will be brought into the tax net at pay rates of only £4 an hour and will immediately pay tax at 40 percent.

■A single worker on £13,950—less than 80 percent of the average male industrial wage—will pay the top rate of tax.

■The lowest paid work-



■McCreevy

ers—on £7,000 a year—will only gain by £3 or £4 a week depending on PRSI payments.

■The unemployed and long term ill will only get £3 a week extra while pensioners get only £5 extra.

Old age pensioners will have to make ends meet on £83 a week.

Most of these increases will not be made until June.

■Child benefit will only increase by 35p a week for the first child and this will not be applied until September.

Growth

The budget makes it clear that the politicians have no intention of allowing workers to gain from the Celtic Tiger boom.

During the 1980s we were constantly told to "tighten our belts" and the economy would grow.

But now that there is record growth the belt is barely being loosened for the workers who have created all the wealth.

Equal pay victory only a start



THE EQUAL pay award to four women workers (pictured above) in the Civil Aviation Authority at Shannon is an important victory but real equality is still a long way off.

The four CPSU members were awarded back pay of £100,000 each when the Labour Court declared that their employers were wrong to pay them less than male radio operators.

The Civil Aviation Authority and the Department of Transport even

victimised the four women for taking the equal pay case.

Cartoons

Two of the women were left without work to do for six months in 1993 and sexist cartoons of "women trying to be men" were displayed in their office.

But this case is only the

tip of the iceberg. Despite almost 25 years of equal pay legislation in the South, women's average hourly earnings are only 72 percent of the male industrial rate.

There has been a recent increase of 40,000 women in the workforce but pay levels and job opportunities for women are still appalling.

★ The Irish Mirror "celebrated" the equal pay victory in the Aviation Authority with the disgraceful headline "AIR GIRLS WIN RECORD SEX PAYOUT". If a national newspaper can use such sexism to trivialise women's rights, it's no wonder we have a long battle ahead to win equal pay.

Lack of childcare is a major reason. Ireland has the lowest level of childcare in Europe. FAS training centres have no childcare facilities and this prevents many women getting the training which is supposed to result in a job.

Lack of childcare results in women spending more time outside the workforce than men, which partly accounts for their lower average earnings.

Thousands of women in the Civil Service and the Health Boards opt for job sharing in order to raise young children. Because of the high cost of private creches, job sharing is concentrated in the lowest paid grades.

Many jobs are predominantly female, which means the workers cannot directly compare their wages with men. Scandalously, the government's new version of the Employment Equality Bill leaves out a clause allowing these women to use hypothetical male comparators in other jobs.

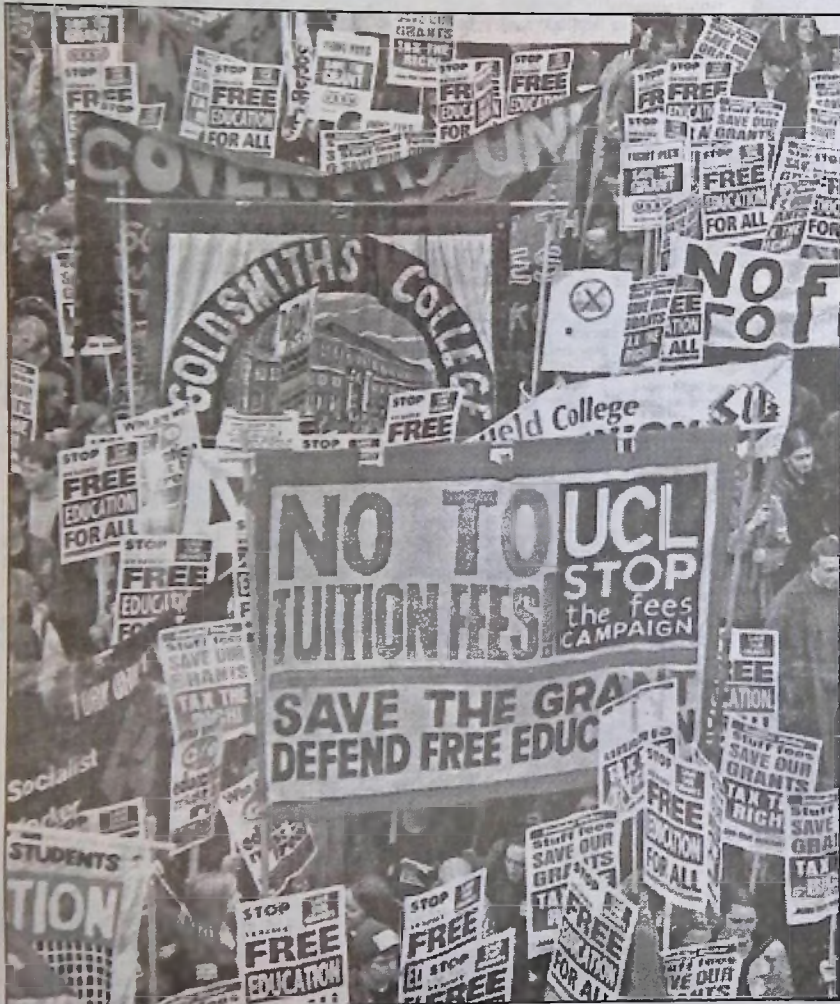
But while women still suffer inequality, they are also increasingly involved in trade unions. The Dunnes' strikes and Nurses' disputes over the past two years brought thousands of women into the unions.

While Labour Court victories are welcome, only militant struggle can bring the real gains that are needed.

what we think

TAX THE RICH £5 an hour minimum wage!

**Build
the
fight
back**



■ Last year's student demonstrations against fees—we need to build on them this year.

THE DAY after Charlie McCreevy unveiled his budget, share prices on the Dublin Stock Exchange jumped by £1 billion pounds.

The rich could not contain their joy at the handouts. And they know that the budget is only the start of many more tax concessions.

During recent European Union discussions, the Irish government was attacked by Belgium and Germany for allowing companies in the International Financial Services Centre to pay only a 10% tax rate on their profits.

Their complaint is that Ireland is stealing multi-national investment by introducing special tax concessions.

The Irish establishment's answer is to cut all taxes on profits to 12% by 2005. The budgets over the next few years will therefore see continual reductions in taxes on the rich.

The AIB and the Bank of Ireland, which make over a million pounds a day, will eventually be paying a lower rate of tax than a young teenager who works in a fast food restaurant.

Labour, Democratic Left and the ICTU union leaders have gone along with this disgraceful approach.

Curs

They accept the logic of the market and argue that Ireland has to be "competitive". They supported low wage rises in the past—and so have no difficulty with tax cuts today.

But cutting taxes for the rich means there is less money for schools and hospitals. It means that PAYE workers carry the full burden of paying for run down social services.

Instead of competing against other European workers, we should be joining in the movement to tax the rich and establish a minimum wage.

We have far more in com-

mon with French truck drivers who won a £5 an hour minimum wage through a magnificent strike than we have with the Irish rich and their multinational friends.

In the New Year, the Minimum Wage Commission which was set up by Mary Harney will produce its report. It does not contain a single trade union representative and we can expect nothing from it.

Workers have to look to their own efforts to achieve the £5 an hour minimum wage. We need a national stoppage of the whole trade union movement to enforce this demand on this right wing government.

PASS THIS MOTION:

This union branch believes that the Celtic Tiger has brought few rewards for the workers who produced it.

We call for the immediate introduction of a £5 an hour minimum wage.

We call on the ICTU to organise a national stoppage in support of this demand.

The North: What sort of settlement?

INTENSIVE discussions are supposed to begin in the New Year between the Unionist and Nationalist parties. The aim of the British and Irish government is to put an agreed "settlement" to a referendum in May or June before the marching season gets fully underway.

But as the outline of a proposed settlement emerges, it is clear that it will not end the North's sectarian conflict.

Up to now, Sinn Fein has assured their supporters that they were on course for an eventual united Ireland because of the powerful alliance they had constructed with Fianna Fail and the

Irish American lobby.

Yet when David Andrews even suggested that the cross border institutions might have some real powers, he was forced to apologise.

In an interview in the *Financial Times* Bertie Ahern even welcomed the prospect of David Trimble as a prime minister presiding over an assembly in the Northern Ireland.

Any settlement that comes out of these talks will not bring fundamental change. At most it will create space for the Catholic middle class to take out a stake in Northern Ireland.

Instead of removing sectarian divisions, it will freeze them around two communal camps who compete against each other for investment and scarce resources.

Up to now the ceasefire and the relative peace has given an important opening for class politics to emerge.

Issues that were left buried for years during the conflict, such as the call for legalisation of abortion, have come to the surface.

But as the deadline for a possible settlement comes closer, the bigots will seek to raise sectarian tensions to a new pitch.

The challenge facing socialists is to transform the mood for workers unity that exists today into a solid political expression.

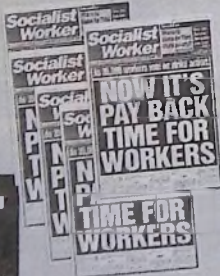
This has to start from an understanding that a settlement to the Northern conflict can never come from negotiations with Tory dinosaurs like David Trimble.

Unity has to be forged from below through a growing politicised class outlook.

This is why socialists argue that Protestant workers need to break from a loyalist tradition which has looked on Catholics as inferior while Catholic workers need to see through the sham that they belong in the same camp as Mary McAleese, Fianna Fail or Bill Clinton.

Our aim is to fight for a socialist Ireland that is built on the destruction of both sectarian states that grew out of partition.

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take
Socialist
Worker
to five
people?**



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news of the world

German students fight education cuts

STUDENTS IN Germany were continuing to organise mass resistance to the conservative government's attacks on higher education.

Before Xmas students from all over Germany were due to travel to the seat of government, Bonn, to demonstrate against Chancellor Kohl.

Special trains and coaches were laid on from around the country to transport protesters.

The march was to coincide with a summit meeting between the government's education minister and heads of Germany's 16 states.

The summit was to discuss introducing the market into higher education.

This includes plans to restrict university places by tightening up on student loans, "raising the productivity" of students and lecturers, allowing more corporate sponsorship of courses and cutting funding.

At the beginning of the student protests Chancellor Kohl tried to make himself sound sympathetic to the students' demands.

But students have hardened their attitude and are beginning to take up the slogan, "Kohl Must Go".

There is much discussion about how the student movement must be more radical.

The German magazine Der Spiegel reported that a student at a meeting in Berlin was given a standing ovation for demanding, "We should take our protests to where the rich people live." Students' anger was intensified by the announcement that Kohl had agreed spending billions of pounds on the Eurofighter.

The movement reached a new peak when students at around 112 universities and colleges struck, saying they would continue until the 18 December demonstration.

Blockaded

Students blockaded buildings and threw up picket lines at many universities.

Mass meetings of thousands of students decided to continue action. In Munich 4,000 students held an off campus meeting and decided to continue their blockade.

In Leipzig in the east a meeting of 6,000 voted to continue their action.

In Frankfurt students lifted their blockade, but 4,000 then marched to the unemployment office in the city centre.

Students in Cologne also lifted their blockade last week, but then some of them decided to march into the city centre.

They broke through police lines, marched into the railway

station and occupied the railway tracks.

Strike

There are also signs that the militancy is spreading to school students. In Berlin students in 17 schools came out on strike to join a 20,000 strong demonstration.

Commentators are linking the student movement with the

mass radicalisation of students in 1968.

One Green newspaper carried a key article headed, "A Generation of Strikers".

It argued that the student movement had the character of a revolt against the established political parties.

"Do the politicians need stones thrown at them to make them understand what is happening?" the article asked.

The student action, itself inspired by workers' struggles over the past couple of years, is feeding into general discontent with the government and its pro-market policies.

Struggle

During a student demonstration in Berlin some university workers and building workers joined the march.

Local workers in the giant IG Metall trade union voted to support students, saying that the government policy was directed at students from workers' families.

A right wing think tank last weekend published a survey which signalled the continued radical shift in workers' consciousness.

It asked whether people felt they lived in a society where

workers' and bosses' interests were the same, or whether they thought it was characterised by class struggle.

The majority of people, 44 percent, believed there was a class struggle, twice as many as in the 1980s.

It is a further sign of the breakdown of the "social partnership" that bosses and trade union leaders used to boast of.

Zimbabwe General strike makes Mugabe climb down

THE GOVERNMENT of Zimbabwe in southern Africa has been forced to make some concessions after it was rocked by a massive general strike last month.

Workers' solid response to the call for action shocked President Mugabe and also union leaders.

Much of the country stopped as hundreds of thousands of workers came out.

Mugabe then sent riot police to attack a planned demonstration.

A member of Socialist Worker's sister organisation in Zimbabwe says, "Thousands and thousands of workers poured into Africa Unity Square, which is next to parliament, on the morning of the strike."

"It was rapidly becoming the biggest mass protest ever experienced in this country."

"The government panicked and ordered the police to teargas workers."

"This repression followed a big propaganda campaign that workers should not go on strike because they were allying themselves with the white farmers who are angry about their land being taken back."

"However, workers ignored this and came out in masses. There were running battles in the streets of the capital, Harare."

After the strike the government withdrew a planned 5 percent increase in taxes on fuel and electricity charges.

An increase in income tax had been dropped earlier.

However, a rise in sales



■ Brazil: 10,000 Volkswagen workers in Sao Paulo voted last month to reject cuts in pay and hours.

tax is going ahead.

Home affairs minister Dumiso Dabengwa told parliament that if there were more protests, "Workers should know that if they stretch police patience too far they would not hesitate to shoot them."

Response

The success of the strike and Mugabe's response has fuelled criticism of the government and made many workers more confident that they can win.

A series of human rights

and church bodies have joined the denunciation of Mugabe.

But union leaders have tried hard to prevent further strikes and want to "cool down" workers.

■The British Labour government did criticise Mugabe last month—but not for attacking workers.

Instead Baroness Symons, a former union leader and now foreign office minister, reproached the Zimbabwean government for its plans to take back land from white farmers.

TURKEY: PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS HIT BACK

TURKEY'S conservative led government was hit by a massive public sector workers' strike before Xmas just six months since coming to office.

Public sector unions reckoned that one million workers had participated in the strike which shut down train services and hospitals across the country.

Around 100 schools in Istanbul were closed down as 4,000 public sector workers including teachers, nurses and council employees marched through the capital.

Public sector workers are angry that, although inflation is running at 95.3 percent, they have been offered only a 30 percent pay rise in the first half of 1998.

They were also striking against proposed government legislation to attack the unions, including the right to strike.



round up

■A MASSIVE strike breaking operation against Australian dockers, involving "industrial mercenaries" trained in the Middle East, has been uncovered.

It shows why the Liverpool dockers, who had scabbing outfit Drake International used against them, have so much support from waterfront workers abroad.

The scandal erupted after the International Transport Workers Federation (the umbrella body for dockers' unions worldwide) threatened to impose a worldwide shipping ban on the United Arab Emirates port of Dubai.

They are backing the claim of the Maritime Union of Australia that the Australian Tory government was involved in putting together a paramilitary waterfront "strike force" to bust dockers' unions.

It found that serving Australian military personnel were amongst recruits being trained.

Private shipping companies, the Tory government and the right wing Farmers' Federation were all involved.

■OVER 20,000 workers marched through the Bolivian capital, La Paz, last month as a one day general strike shut down much of the country's industry and government offices.

The protest was called against a government imposed rise in fuel prices, which has caused bus fares to rise by 100 percent.

Milton Gomez, leader of the main Bolivian union federation, said, "This enormous rise demands a tough response from Bolivian workers. We cannot accept further rises in the cost of living."

■PUBLIC sector workers in Angola, southern Africa, were preparing for strikes this week if the government reneged on its promise to pay outstanding salaries.

Public sector workers have not been paid for at least the last four months.

The workers' pressure on the government is a hopeful sign in a country torn apart by two decades of civil war.

Riots flare as RUC backs Orange bigots



■ The RUC are just as sectarian as they were in 1969

WIDESPREAD rioting erupted in Derry on 13 December in protest at the RUC sealing off the town for the Apprentice Boy's Lundy parade.

The Bogside Residents Group had called a counter protest for "nationalist rights" after the Apprentice Boys refused to negotiate over the route of the march.

A similar Apprentice Boys march on 12 August saw drunken marchers attack bystanders in the city centre and shout taunts about the 1993 Halloween massacre in Greysteel, outside Derry.

One of the banners on the Lundy Day march read "CCM 3rd Batt. UVF".

The RUC moved early on Saturday morning to close the city centre to prevent the counter-protest.

Attacked

The Richmond shopping centre was closed, locking in many shoppers, who were attacked by RUC dog handlers. "It was incredible," said one person who was caught in the shopping centre.

"They just pulled down the shutters locking everyone in and then set the dogs on people."

A crowd of over a thousand gathered to protest in Shipquay Street and rioting quickly spread and carried on late into the night.

The RUC, backed up by British Army reinforcements, fired over 160

plastic bullets.

The riots were the biggest since the start of the latest ceasefire.

Afterwards many people in Derry stated that the RUC had not changed since the first conflict in

1969.

It also showed that there is no such thing as a non-sectarian Orange march.

'Culture'

The notion that the Apprentice Boys march is a

celebration of "Protestant culture" ignores the message they always give of no concessions to Catholics.

The march came at a time of serious crisis within the Orange Order.

A week previously, 300 members of the hardline Spirit of Drumcree group occupied the groups headquarters in Belfast, accusing the leadership of selling out because they backed down from holding a number of parades

during the summer.

The crisis is set to continue, fuelled by the widespread opposition to Orange marches on the streets and a decline in support among Protestants for the empty bigotry of Orangeism.

Belfast Pro-Choice demo

AROUND 60 pro-choice demonstrators confronted a march by Youth for Truth in Belfast city centre on 13 December.

What was billed as a "candle-light vigil for the unborn" was disrupted by a noisy counter protest chanting "Not the church, not the state, women must decide their fate".

Abortion is unavailable in the North and over 2000 women are forced to travel to Britain each year for an abortion, at their own expense.

Linda, one of the organisers of the Alliance for Choice counter-demonstration, said, "We just couldn't let these people get away with it."

"The bigots say they want to keep abortion out of Northern Ireland. But abortion is a fact of life here."

"We've been petitioning for the last few weeks for

the right to choose and hundreds of women have told us their experiences of having had to travel to England, borrowing hundreds of pounds and having to lie to friends and workmates.

"Abortion is a difficult enough choice without these bigots shouting about 'murderers'."

Youth for Truth is a new group, modelled on Youth Defence in the South, set up to campaign against the

Labour government's policy to extend the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland.

But so far Labour has refused to extend the act, claiming that politicians in the North are against it. Mo Mowlam said raising the issue of abortion "would not be useful during the peace talks."

However, the anti-abortion bigots have seized the opportunity to parade their gruesome photos of aborted

foetuses in city centres throughout the North.

The RUC stopped the pro-choice demonstrators from marching and arrested one man who was taking photos.

He was later released. Paul, one of the pro-choice counter-protestors, said "I'm glad we took a stand on this."

"It was important that the pro-choice argument was heard loud and clear."

Sweatshop in Enniskillen

GILBERT Tunney Exhausts is an Enniskillen engineering firm which doesn't just make exhausts for cars, it also exhausts its workers.

A month ago, Tunney decided that his workers were taking it too easy so he cut breaks to 10 minutes in the morning and just 15 minutes in the afternoon for dinner.

Workers were also stressed out by a management who bawled and shouted at them.

In November of last year Steven, a 23 year old Liverpoolian living and working in Enniskillen, had an illness in his family so he took some days off.

On Friday 28th November he was threatened with the sack. Steve replied in unparliamentary language and was discharged.

Two days later, having failed to find another job, he hung himself. Sweatshops are the reality behind Blair's policies.



million disabled and long-term ill is a waste of money.

Instead Blair has urged Labour members to "think

the unthinkable."

Now he proposes an "integrity review" for all those claiming DLA.

The review of all claims takes place in March.

"It has become almost impossible for mothers with severely disabled children to claim DLA but even that is not enough for Blair, who calls himself a Christian socialist", says one disability activist in Enniskillen.

Blair and his wife enjoy an income of between £300,000 and £350,000 per annum.

Rather than tax the wealthy they expect the poor to suffer."

Now Blair attacks disabled benefits

AFTER HIS assault on lone parent benefits, Tony Blair is preparing more betrayals.

His latest attack is on the disabled.

Disability Living Allowance is paid at three rates to those with a physical incapacity or a mental illness.

'Waste'

The money is supposed to be used to cook meals or look after themselves in a proper manner.

But Blair and Harman think that the two billion pounds paid to over two

Derry and Limavady Seagate fears

WORKERS AT Seagate in Derry and Limavady are fearful for their future.

Even before the closure of the Clonmel plant, Seagate managers announced that plans for a second factory in Derry had been put on hold and that the plant in Springtown would be closed for a week over Christmas for retooling.

Workers were called to a meeting in early December and told that they would have to take a week out of next year's holiday for the shutdown over Christmas. "We were given no option," one of the workers said. "A lot of us were relying on the extra shifts."

"Now we have to pay for the time off ourselves."

There are rumours that another US firm has developed a method of producing the same computer parts in half the time and worries that Seagate will be forced out of the market.

The Springtown plant exports computer parts, mainly to assembly plants in Malaysia.

The collapse of the South East Asian economies, largely based on new technologies, is ominous for Seagate workers.

Seagate has taken millions in IDB grants and has been promoted as a model for inward investment by local politicians like John Hume.

Tony Blair visited the Springtown factory on his first visit to Derry earlier this year.

Seagate is notorious in Derry for being the first major non-union company in the city.

They openly tell workers in job interviews that they refuse to recognise trade unions.

Workers at Seagate need to heed the warning from Clonmel. Last year Seagate managers assured Clonmel workers there was no possibility of closure.

They said the same in Derry last month.

In July the Clonmel factory closed for retooling, just like the Springtown plant.

The politicians who have promoted partnership with Seagate will be no help if a closure is announced.

Now is the time for Seagate workers to organise a union.

Witchhunt in Hollywood



Chief anti-communist witchhunter Sen Joe McCarthy

The legacy of McCarthyism

In September, the largest union in America, the AFL-CIO finally removed its rule banning members of the Communist Party (CP) from holding union office.

Shortly after, the Screen Actors Guild and the Directors Guild formally apologized to the scores of Hollywood actors, writers and directors who were blacklisted during the anti-communist witchhunt of the 1950s.

These actions are long overdue.

Those who were witchhunted out of Hollywood lost their careers decades ago, and workers chased out of their unions and workplaces are now retired.

In fact, many of the victims of McCarthyism—the period named after chief witchhunter, Sen. Joe McCarthy, are dead.

But the impact of McCarthyism lives on.

It is the main reason why the socialist movement—which played such a central role in building the unions in America in the 1930s—was completely marginalised two decades later.

Infiltrated

The central theme of McCarthyism was that communists had infiltrated everywhere, from the factory floor to the uppermost echelons of government.

The wild accusations were designed to terrorise anyone even vaguely associated with the left.

Democrats as well as Republicans helped to create paranoia.

Democratic President Harry Truman instituted the Loyalty Act in 1947, forcing 8 million government workers to sign anti-Communist oaths to keep their jobs and allowing the FBI to investigate more than 2 million federal workers.

The witchhunt reached the point of hysteria in 1950 after Joe McCarthy made a speech claiming that he held a piece of paper with a list of 205 card-carrying Communists who worked for the U.S. State Department.

The piece of paper was, in all likelihood, blank.

During the witchhunt, which lasted from the mid-1940s until the late 1950s, thousands of people were investigated, lost their jobs, were fined, were sent to prison or were deported—for such “crimes” as at some point having signed a petition or attended a CP meeting.

The hysteria reached ludicrous proportions.

Politicians in Texas debated a

bill that would have made being a CP member punishable by the death penalty. They relented and decided on a 20-year prison sentence and a \$20,000 fine.

In Indiana, public officials decided that *Robin Hood* was subversive literature and removed all copies from the shelves of school libraries.

The centerpieces of the witchhunt were hearings conducted by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and Senate hearings chaired by McCarthy.

The McCarthy inquisition was a show trial, intended to make an example of anyone who was called before the committee or was tried in court for allegedly being a communist.

It was for this reason and no other that Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were executed on June 19, 1953.

Accused of allegedly passing on atomic secrets to the USSR—based on nothing but hearsay evidence—the Rosenbergs insisted on their innocence and refused to strike a deal.

“Our case is being used as a camouflage to paralyse outspoken progressives and stifle criticism of the drive to atomic war”, Julius wrote in a letter to Ethel while both were imprisoned at Sing Sing in New York.

Celebrities

HUAC targeted Hollywood celebrities because they were guaranteed to get lots of publicity.

Some well-known Hollywood liberals, such as filmmaker Elia Kazan, became informers and “named names” of communists they knew.

Others, however, stood up to the anti-communists.

Lionel Sander said he couldn’t name any Communists, but he could name “a group of fanatics trying to undermine the Constitution.”

Black singer Paul Robeson answered HUAC investigators who asked him why he did not go back to Russia: “Because... my people died to build this country, and I am going to stay here and have a part of it, just like you.”

Unfortunately, too few people stood up to anti-communism in the 1950s.

That would have been the way for the socialist movement to defend itself.

It is no exaggeration to say that McCarthyism nearly destroyed the left in the U.S. That was its purpose.

But one thing McCarthyism could not destroy was the ideas inside people’s heads.

That is why, 40 years later, socialism is not dead, and the left is experiencing a revival.

by SHARON SMITH

Global Warming Who is to blame?

THE WORLD is facing a major change of climate.

This year, for example, parts of Africa have faced devastating floods due to the effects of an exceptionally warm Pacific current, named El Nino.

Nearly two thousand Somalis have died in the worst flooding in fifty years.

The UN World Food Programme has had to set up a special task force after early estimates showed that 27 million people across Africa might be at risk from the changes brought by El Nino.

But many climate scientists believe that this may only be a foretaste of what is to come. The cause of this growing threat is global warming.

Rising levels of certain gases—above all carbon dioxide—are the chief cause. These gases in the atmosphere act like the glass in a greenhouse. They allow heat from the sun to enter but not leave.

Floods

As a result the earth’s temperature is rising.

The long term effects of this rise could be dramatic and unpredictable.

One scenario, for example, predicts a melting of polar ice caps which in turn causes the sea levels to rise.

This could lead to many low lying countries from Holland to Bangladesh facing devastating



As sea levels rise is this the shape of the future?

floods.

Another scenario sees shifting weather patterns bringing a new ice age to north west Europe.

Many fertile areas of the

world could then become arid deserts.

No one knows exactly which of these effects will happen but almost everyone agrees the effect will be dramatic.

The increase in carbon dioxide is caused by emissions from industry, power stations and cars.

The solution is therefore simple: to curb and cut the amount

of carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere. The problem market cannot need for a plan response to the climate.

Kyoto: All talk and no action

LAST MONTH’S global climate conference in Kyoto seems destined to follow previous summits which promised action but delivered little.

In 1988 the Toronto conference called for a 20 percent cut in carbon dioxide emissions. But US emissions continued to rise.

Five years ago the world’s leaders met again at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

The US pledged to at least peg carbon dioxide emissions at their 1990 levels by the year 2000.

But instead they will have risen by 14 percent by the new millennium.

The 1997 summit in the Japanese city of Kyoto heard that scientists believed that a minimum cut of 15 per cent in emissions was necessary over the next 13 years.

But those responsible for the bulk of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions refuse to take

the most elementary measures.

By far the biggest culprit is the US, which accounts for a quarter of all the world’s carbon dioxide emissions.

Europe comes next with around a fifth.

All the world’s leaders say they want to do something about the problem.

But their actions prove otherwise.

At the Kyoto conference the US spent most of its time trying to resist any definite targets

for cutting emissions and demanding more stringent restrictions on developing countries.

Warning

The US stance is not because it rules do not understand the problem.

Indeed, US vice-president Al Gore is the author of a well known book warning of the impact of global warming.

Their refusal to act stems

from the way they put the interests of US big business before any other.

The EU leaders who claimed to be more concerned for the environment than the Americans bowed to pressure from the European chemical giants.

They insisted that HFCs—implicated in loss of the Ozone layer—be excluded from reductions.

In the end the conference agreed to a cut of an average 5.2 percent over 15 years.

But it is by no means that even this cut

Insists

The US insists which allows growth in emissions fall in Russia economy.

US senators even this water will not be US Congress and not come into effect.

Pushing the car culture

NEARLY A quarter of carbon dioxide emissions come from motor cars. Car exhausts are the most rapidly growing source of greenhouse gases.

But the run down of public transport has meant that many people have no alternative but to use their car to travel to work.

Those railway lines that have survived outside of the main corridors are falling apart with 50 year old rails causing derailments.

Even Dublin’s proposed Luas tram lines have been stalled.

Yet despite all the emissions of carbon monoxide and the growing levels of asthma caused by exhaust fumes, people are moving slower now than

ever before.

One study showed quicker to get around London horse and tram in the last is with a car today.

Instead of running a cheap public transport market economics of the market to predominate in transport.

Warming: blame?



How big business stalled action

A KEY body lobbying at the Kyoto conference and in Washington has been the Global Climate Coalition.

Despite what its name suggests this is not a group of environmentalists. It was set up in 1989 by some of the world's biggest oil, gas, car and heavy industry companies. These include oil giants Shell and Texaco, the Ford motor company and the US National Mining Association.

They have used all their influence to prevent any move to force them to cut the huge amounts of carbon dioxide they and their products pump into the atmosphere.

When accused of doing more than anyone else to block any effective deal in Kyoto, John Grasser of the Global Climate Coalition boasted, "We regard this as an honour. "What we are doing is buying time for our industries by holding up these talks."

Profits

They argue that any action to control greenhouse gases will lead to higher taxes and job losses in the US.

Their real fear is that action to force them to clean up their act would cut into their profits.

To make sure their profits are defended at the expense of the environment, the bosses of some of the world's most polluting industries have spent huge sums in bribes political parties and politicians.

The Global Climate Coalition gave over \$50 million to Clinton's Democratic Party and the opposition Republican Party in the US.

It also spent \$13 million on a television advertising campaign in the US claiming that climate change was not a problem and nothing needed to be done.

Big businesses are prepared to endanger the global climate to satisfy their lust for ever more profit.

Is progress the problem?

MANY GREENS claim that economic growth is the cause of environmental crisis and that the future of the planet can only be saved by cutting consumption.

But it is not the standard of living of working class people that is the root of the problem.

Safe, clean industrial processes exist. The problem is that big business interests will not pay the cost of implementing them.

It is the profits of the rich not the consumption of the mass of people that is polluting the environment.

An official Dutch report claims that carbon dioxide emissions can be cut by 80 per cent over fifty years without stunting the growth of the economy.

If currently available technology was exploited, improved design of cars with more efficient engines and lightweight construction would cut emissions by a third with no loss of performance or comfort.

Even using fossil fuels like oil, coal and peat, power station efficiency could be doubled to 60 percent using existing technologies such as "combined cycle" gas turbines.

If the environmental costs of using dirty technologies to produce power were taken into account, investment in alternative methods like wind power would become quickly viable.

But all of this will mean challenging the madness of the market and replacing it with a system based on planning and workers control.

Questions on Marxism

Was Lenin a tyrant?

TIMEWATCH on BBC2 recently claimed it was going to "expose the real Lenin from his secret files".

But the so called revelations were nothing new to anyone who has seriously studied the man.

The programme told how Lenin had an affair with another Bolshevik, Inessa Armand. But this was not a well kept secret. Lenin's wife, Krupskaya, knew about it and after their deaths wanted them to be buried together.

The programme "exposed" details known to socialists for decades, yet drew none of the obvious conclusions from some of the facts.

It showed there was an assassination attempt on Lenin's life, yet did not conclude that this indicated an important threat to the revolution and had to be countered.

The discovery that Krupskaya and other leading Bolsheviks were utterly opposed to Lenin's body being incarcerated in the mausoleum led no commentator to deduce that there were political tensions with Stalin.

The only really new information was that Lenin suffered from a long term illness - hardly the stuff of hatchet jobs.

But the programme's experts were desperate to claim that this information proved conclusively that Lenin's leadership led directly to Stalin's concentration camps.

The thrust of the programme mirrored all the right wing ideas that great leaders make history by themselves.

Yet the horror of the First World War had driven millions to deeper hatred of the Tsar.

The Bolshevik Party

was cutting with that mood and the slogan "Peace, Land and Bread" expressed Russian workers' desire for fundamental change in society.

Soviets (workers' councils) had emerged as organisations uniting workers across many workplaces as the Tsarist empire collapsed.

They grew to become the real power in the country and a challenge to the Provisional Government which ruled in name only.

Vital

In the months between February and October, the Bolsheviks won enough respect and influence in the Soviets to secure a majority in Petrograd and Moscow.

The key argument was that the Provisional Government could not bring the peace and improved conditions that workers wanted. Workers themselves would have to take power.

The cry, "All power to the Soviets!" was taken up. Lenin's leadership was vital to this becoming a reality.

He fought against the caution of long standing Bolshevik Party members and argued they had to seize the time.

A decisive turning point had been reached - it was either forward to a workers' government or to an orgy of bloodshed as the old order re-established its rule.

Lenin's insistence over the October insurrection was not about a personal power trip. A workers' government was the most democratic and rational way of running society.

Lenin also knew that a revolution in Russia could ignite the spirit of revolt that existed around Europe. In turn Russia, an economically backward country, would need the support of

revolutions elsewhere to survive.

Lenin was proved right.

The insurrection of October 1917 led by the Bolsheviks gave birth to a society unmatched in its democracy.

It abolished legislation oppressing women and gays.

Workers ran society in the interests of the many, not the greed of the few, in a country devastated by war.

Only months after the First World War, Russia was plunged into a civil war that brought more chaos.

The Bolsheviks had to take measures to defend that revolution.

And the decimation of industry by the civil war also meant the decimation of the working class that made the revolution.

Even so, Russia in 1922 was still a world apart from the regime Stalin set up after Lenin's death.

Stalin could only consolidate his rule by murdering every single one of Lenin's group of collaborators.

There is a river of blood between what Lenin and Stalin stood for.

But for right wing commentators to concede this they would have to accept that 1917 was a mass uprising led by a workers' party.

They dare not admit that, so Lenin must be tarred as a bloodthirsty maniac who duped an entire population.

The programme did reveal something of value. The political disagreements between Stalin and Lenin meant his Last Testament was a warning not to trust Stalin and it stated that he should no longer hold a position of influence.

This is not new information either, but it is still useful for socialists to know today.

by HELEN SHOOTER

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Fifty years ago, founded in war...

Israel: The hijack state

by KEVIN KENNY

FIFTY YEARS ago, in 1948, the State of Israel was founded. Many people are still sympathetic to that state because of the Holocaust, when six million Jews were systematically slaughtered by the Nazis during the Second World War.

The founders of Israel claim that they took over a 'land without people for a people without land'.

But the reality is that Palestine was populated for centuries by a thriving Arab society.

They were only removed through a campaign of terror, racism and US dollars.

At its foundation Israel ethnically cleansed three-quarters of a million Palestinians from their homeland.

The 'terrorists' that Israel and the US want to put to death today are often the sons and daughters of those same dispossessed Palestinians.

Israel's political philosophy is usually described as 'Zionism'.

This is a partly religious and partly historical idea that the world's Jewish population has a claim on that part of the territory of the Middle East.

Zionism originated as a political movement among Jewish people after the outbreak of anti-Semitism in late 19th century Europe, especially the pogroms incited by the Tsars of Russia. But it was not the only response to racism.

A large socialist movement existed among Jews with parties like the Bund in Russia and Poland arguing for Jews and non-Jews to fight together against racism.

The 120,000 Jews who had arrived in Palestine by 1930 were a tiny minority compared to the more than 3 million Jews who had quit by the late 1920's for America—the real 'promised land' for most Jews.

Political Zionism maintained that while Jews were a minority amongst a non-Jewish population they would always be persecuted.

It advocated mass Jewish emigration to a region where they could establish an exclusively Jewish state.

In 1896 Theodore Herzl, a Zionist leader, argued that the movement should win the approval of one of the Great Powers to acquire the territory on which to found their new state.



■ **Zionist settlers occupy more Arab land**

He claimed that Zionism was 'a colonial idea' and courted Germany and Turkey under whose influence Palestine happened to be.

After WW1 Britain controlled Palestine. Zionists convinced it to make a commitment to the establishment of 'a national home for the Jewish people', arguing that 'a Jewish Palestine would be a safeguard to England in particular in respect to the Suez Canal'—the main sea route connecting Britain to many of its key imperial possessions.

British-approved Jewish immigration into Palestine stepped up rapidly.

Zionist settlers in turn helped the British put the boot in on the anti-colonial movement of the native Arab population, especially during the Palestinian general strike of 1936, which was followed by a two-year long uprising.

WW2 meant a boom for the exclusive Zionist economy.

When the war ended British power was on the wane and the US became the main player in the region.

Oil was the key to US designs in the Middle East as the richest oil fields lay in the area.

The strategy of the Zionists was to re-position themselves to offer a bulwark against radical Arab nationalist movements which might threaten US economic interests in the area.

IN 1947 a UN plan was drawn up to partition Palestine. The Jews who had grown to 30 percent of the population and owned only 6 percent of the land were granted 55 percent of Palestine.

The partition agreement soon became a legal figleaf which triggered the Zionist hijack of Palestine.

Terror on an enormous scale was used as a political weapon to enforce the take-over.

In April 1948, soldiers of the Irgun, a particularly fanatical Zionist militia commanded by Menachem Begin—a twice-elected prime minister of Israel—descended on the Palestinian village of Deir Yassin and butchered 254 women, children and old men while the young Arab men worked in the fields.

(Deir Yassin is now called Givat Shaul Beth. In 1980, what was left of the ruins of Deir Yassin was bulldozed and made into a settlement of Orthodox Jews. The streets were named after the Irgun terror units that had massacred the Palestinians)

On the 21 April in Haifa the Zionists rolled barrel bombs, which were cast filled with gasoline and dynamite, down the narrow alleys which crashed creating an inferno of flames and explosions. Zionist loudspeakers broad-

cast 'horror recordings' which filled the air with shrieks and anguished moans of Arab women, interrupted in Arabic with calls to: "Flee for your lives! The Jews are using poisoned gas and atomic weapons!" As the Palestinians fled Haifa only one phrase trembled on their lips: 'Deir Yassin, Deir Yassin'

These tactics were repeated throughout the country and three-quarters of a million Palestinians fled their homeland.

On 14 May Ben-Gurion proclaimed the state of Israel in the territories under Zionist control. Just eleven minutes later President Truman recognised the new state.

The next day Arab countries bound together in the Arab League "invaded" the new state.

Zionists make much of this 'war of independence'.

The truth is the Arab League mustered a grand total of 15,000 men. The Zionists had 30,000 fully mobilised regular troops, at least 32,000 second-line troops, plus 15,000 settlement police and several thousand in the Irgun.

The ruling feudal families of the region had no stomach for a fight.

King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan received the Zionist Golda Meir as soon as the 'war' began. He was happy to take part in the carve-up of the remains of Palestine by annexing the West Bank.

THE racism at the heart of the Israeli state is enshrined in its 'Law of Return' which endows automatic Israeli citizenship for any Jew from any country who wants to live in Israel.

Non-Jews are excluded - especially the former Palestinian inhabitants. They have been condemned, ever since the hijack of their country, to the poverty and squalor of shanty towns throughout the Middle East.

Today Israel is the largest recipient of US aid in the world. It is ranked fourth in the world's military league. It has engaged in war in every decade since its foundation—in 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982.

Its 1982 invasion of Lebanon left over 20,000 dead when Israel bombed refugee camps and West Beirut to ruins.

When it invaded the Lebanon again in 1996, 400,000 had to flee their homes.

One hundred sheltering civilians were massacred in the UN camp at Qana but the US prevented the UN from condemning it.

Israel assists the US by itself arming some of the world's most bloodiest dictatorships—when even the US has felt too embarrassed to do so.

By 1980, for example, no less than 35 percent of Israel's arms exports were going to the brutal apartheid regime in South Africa, despite a UN imposed mandatory embargo on arms sales to the regime.

Israel is a ruthless outpost for Western domination of the Middle East.

It has turned a previously persecuted people into a tool of imperialism.

The main opposition to the state of Israel came from Palestine Liberation Organisation which was formed to fight the occupation of Arab lands and create a Palestinian state.

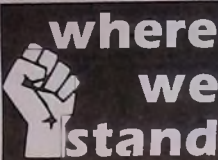
But the PLO did not challenge the conservative Arab governments which verbally oppose Israel but also help to prop it up much in the same way that Fianna Fail in Ireland props up partition.

By accepting the Oslo 'peace' accords the PLO effectively has made itself a collaborator with the Israelis and has settled for a mini-state on the West Bank that is little more than a glorified county council.

Today the only power that can undo the racist settlement of 1948 is the huge Arab working class in the region.

It alone has an interest in challenging both Israel and the surrounding conservative Arab regimes.

It alone can create a secular Palestine where Jew and Arab can live with equal rights.



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

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

FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST. The SWP welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class. We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination. FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION. We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry.

We stand for free 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 workers 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.

OLGA ANISIMOVA IS ONE OF HUNDREDS OF REFUGEES FACING IMMEDIATE DEPORTATION

'They won't even let me state my case'

OLGA Anisimova had to flee Moldova because of ethnic conflict. Olga had originally come from Siberia but found the hatred against Russians in Moldova frightening.

"It wasn't Bosnia but it was war. There was fighting, shooting in the streets. Once I was entering an elevator to our house when a man attacked me. He sprayed tear gas in my face and shouted "go home you Russian pig..."

Her daughter Elena was refused admission to a local state run school because she had a Russian name.

Olga decided to flee this persecution and eventually came to Ireland.

She had hoped to make a new life for herself as a refugee once she got a chance to prove why her life might be in danger if she returned to Moldova.

Ignored

But Olga Anisimova is not getting a chance to present her case for refugee status. Instead she has become the first refugee that is facing immediate deportation from this country.

An important test case in the Supreme Court has ruled that no one can apply for asylum if they set foot in any other European Union country before coming here.

Many people had originally hailed the Refugee Act of the last government as a 'progressive piece of legislation' ignoring the fact that it contained the provision of the Dublin Convention on immigration in Europe.

This disgraceful agreement specifies that applications for asylum can only be heard in the first European country where a refugee arrives. Olga's tragedy was that her flight from Moldova first stopped in Britain: there are no direct flights to Ireland.

The Irish government are now planning to use this ruling to the full to clear the country of virtually all refugees.

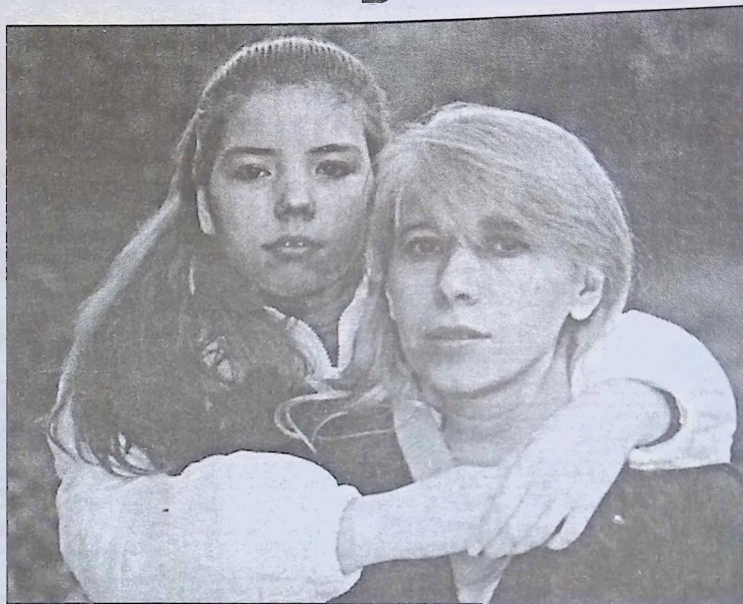
As Ireland is the most westerly country in Europe, it is difficult to come here without touching down in some other EU country.

When refugees are sent back to countries like Britain or France, they can in turn be deported to their country of origin if the government there consider them safe.

The British government, for example, considers Nigeria safe.

The bureaucrats at the Department of Justice recently ordered Gardai and customs officers to stop any black people at the Irish borders to demand passports.

Now they have found a new way of expelling refugees in order to stop Ireland becoming a multi-cultural society.



O'Donoghue in opposition



"Experience abroad has shown that the use of fast track procedures save neither time nor money. I totally agree with the observations and criticisms of Amnesty International in that respect"—John O'Donoghue TD 19 October 1995.

A fast track to deportation

The Department of Justice has also drawn up new rules for the processing of applications for refugee status.

Socialist Worker has obtained a copy of these regulations which promise to produce fast track procedures.

In reality, they give officials at the Department of Justice a free hand to prevent refugees settling here.

Department of Justice officials can now decide if a refugee has made "a manifestly unfounded" application and deport them straight away without any hearing.

Among the grounds for a "manifestly unfounded" application are:

- Failure to admit to having false papers. But many refugees have to travel with false papers and few will admit to the first official they meet that they are not in order.

Any withholding of 'relevant information'. But only department officials can decide what is relevant and what is not.

Failure to give sufficient details clearly. But there is no automatic right to an interpreter in the new rules.

Even if a refugee passes all these hurdles, they can still be deported on the grounds of 'national security'.

Defend refugees

EVERY socialist should defend the right of refugees to come to Ireland. In the past, many Irish republicans and left wingers had to flee this country because of formal and informal persecution.

While John O'Donoghue makes great play over the big rise in refugees coming here, the reality is that Europe as a whole only accepts 6% of the world's 20 million refugees. Most refugees have to flee to countries which are far poorer than Ireland.

No one should fall for the argument that refugees steal Irish houses or cause Irish people to be deprived of social welfare.

Local authority house building has been cut in half and this, combined with the escalating property crisis, is causing the housing shortage.

Right wing government always try to target poor groups like lone parents or refugees to claim they are 'sponging'. But the real spongers are big business who insist that they must have a 12% rate of tax on their profits.

Although refugees have been excluded from employment, it is vital that cases of deportation are raised throughout the broader labour movement. It is only by standing against racist injustice that the working class movement as a whole grows politically.

News from the SWP

As the new year begins the world is facing the prospect of large-scale crisis.

In South East Asia and Japan a massive crisis is hitting as a number of banks go bust after the collapse of the giant Yamaichi financial house, which left billions in debts.

Respectable commentators in the financial pages of the Sunday papers are now openly talking of the prospect of a 1930s type slump spreading throughout the world.

But masses of working class people are not prepared to be made to pay the price for the looming crisis in the profit system.

Since the French general strike of two years ago workers across the conti-

nent and beyond have fought to defend their pensions, wages and social welfare conditions.

There is growing anger and radicalism not just among minorities but more and more in the heart of the working class.

In Ireland three quarters of those polled characterised McCreevy's budget as a budget for the rich. A similar proportion supported the right of the girl in the "C-Case" to go to England to have an abortion.

The Celtic Tiger is extremely fragile and if the world economy moves into slump as seems more and more likely the small Irish economy must surely follow. Socialists who argue

that there has to be an alternative to the crazy market system can counter this influence and encourage workers to fight to victory.

But this can only really happen if socialists are organised and active in the unions, workplaces, communities and estates.

Our fortnightly paper Socialist Worker is invaluable for carrying socialist arguments and news of struggles into the working class movement. We are encouraging every member and supporter to take five copies to sell regularly to those around them.

The SWP invites you to become an active member of the Socialist Workers Party in the New Year.

SWP branch meetings

BELFAST Meets every Thurs 8pm contact 8722682 for details

CORK Meets every Weds 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 Christian Institute.

ENNSKILLEN Meets every fortnight Contact national address for details

GALWAY Meets every Thursday at 7.30pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square

MAYNOOTH Meets every Thursday at 6.30pm Class Hall D Arts Maynooth college

WATERFORD Meets every Thursday at 8pm in

ATGWU Hall, Keyser St.

DUBLIN NORTH-WEST Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in The Snug, Dorset St.

DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm Artane Beamount Recreation Centre opp Artane Castle

DUBLIN DRIMNAGH Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Black Forge (formerly the Bentley), Drimnagh Rd

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL Meets every Wed at 8.30pm in Cornways, 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/ CLONDALKIN Meets Monday at 8pm in the Sleering Wheel, Clondalkin

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

JOIN THE SOCIALISTS. If you want to join the Socialist Workers Party, fill in this form and send it to: PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682. Name, Address, Phone.

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p

Loyalist threats after King Rat killing

SOCIALISTS will shed no tears over the killing of Billy Wright.

He appears to have been killed by the Republican splinter group the INLA.

Billy Wright was Commander in Chief of the Loyalist Volunteer Force, the most vicious of the Loyalist murder gangs.

Wright, known as "King Rat", ordered the murders of dozens of people simply for being Catholics.

In the end Wright was convicted of threatening to kill a Protestant woman neighbour.

Wright was the product of the sectarian poison at the heart of the Northern Ireland state.

But his killing will not remove any of the poison of sectarianism from Northern Ireland. Already other thugs have been found to fill his shoes.

Within hours of his death they attempted a massacre of Catholic teenagers in a disco near Dungannon.

The attempt misfired but they managed to kill a doorman instead.

But this isn't the work of a few isolated thugs. "Respectable" politicians kept up regular contacts with Wright.

Last year the then MP for Mid Ulster, Rev William McCrea of the DUP, was happy to share a platform with Wright in Portadown.

David Trimble conferred with him too.

As tensions mount the ceasefires are in danger.

Working class people across the North reject any return to bloodshed. It is working class people from both communities that have borne the brunt of three decades of war.

The talks process however offers no end to sectarianism.

Instead any "settlement" will keep Catholic and Protestant workers competing with each other for low paid jobs and declining social resources—represented by middle class politicians from "their community".

The employers in Northern Ireland are the real beneficiaries of the divisions within the working class. Northern Ireland has the worst housing and lowest wages in these islands.

What is needed now more than ever is a politics that unites working class Catholics and Protestants against the sectarian structures of the state and the sectarian politicians.

The trade unions in the North should organise a mass demonstration to show the revulsion of workers at the rise of sectarian tension—and follow up by mounting a real fight against low pay and poverty.

Blair attacks single parents

'Labour is acting like the Tories all over again'

THE BLAIR government cut benefits to single parents in December despite widespread opposition from Labour MPs and Labour voters. The cuts will rob lone parents of up to £11 a week from next year.

Labour claims that the cuts are necessary to encourage single parents to get work. But the legislation was planned by the Tories before the last election. When Labour was in opposition, the Social Security Minister, Harriet Harman, was totally opposed to the cut.

"The abolition (of one parent benefit) will make working lone parents worse off and discourage work amongst this group".

Harman said in November 1996. Now she claims that the cut is one of the "hard choices" Labour has to make to stick to the Tory spending limits.

An unprecedented 47 Labour MPs voted against the legislation, despite the threat of being expelled from the Labour Party.

One of the rebel MPs Ann Clwyd, from South



What are Blair's women MPs doing for single mothers?

Wales, explained why she voted against.

"In the Cynon Valley there are 1,500 lone parents, 234 job vacancies and 14.6 per cent out of work. Just where are the jobs coming from?"

Poverty

The cuts in benefit are a punitive attack on single parents.

They are modelled on Bill Clinton's Welfare to Work policies which have driven thousands of lone parents into poverty in the US.

Sienead, a single mother from Newtonabbey, spoke to *Socialist Worker* about what the cuts will mean.

"I was horrified when I heard about it. I work and get family credit but if I stop work it looks like I'll be on a lower rate and the place I work in is up for sale at the moment."

"The way they talk about lone parents really annoys me. It's hard enough as it is.

"I work 20 to 25 hours a week. It costs me £36 a week for childcare for my daughter and the rest goes

on nappies and everything else she needs.

"I have nothing left for myself at the end of the week."

Announced

"Labour is just acting like the Tories all over again.

"It seems like there is nobody to stick up for working class people. There's so much that the government could be doing.

"They could put more money into childcare. I

don't know how they expect people with children below school age to get by."

Labour announced plans for after school childcare clubs as part of the Welfare to Work package.

This should have been a step in the right direction.

But it has not been backed up by resources.

The £300 million it was allocated from the National lottery will work out at just £1.15 a week per child.

The rest will have to be paid for by parents.

WHERE IS NEW LABOUR GOING?

THE CUTS to lone parent benefits are a watershed for the Blair government. Labour was elected on a wave of opposition to the Tories cuts in education, the health service and the welfare state.

But Labour is now ignoring its supporters. Over 60 per cent of Labour voters opposed the lone parent benefit cuts in a Guardian poll taken the day before the vote.

Despite this, Blair intends to continue Tory spending limits which will mean attacks on the poor. Labour refuses to tax the rich in Britain. Labour's own Post-master General, Geoffrey Robinson, who is in charge of collecting tax, has millions in off-shore tax havens.

Refusing to tax the rich means attacking the poor. Labour is now threatening to cut disability and sickness benefits, targeting some of the most deprived in society.

The revolt by Labour MPs is a reflection of the much deeper opposition that exists throughout Britain to these policies. But it can't be left to MPs alone.

Ken Livingstone, who has acted as a spokesperson for the left, says it might take 18 months for the left to grow. We can't wait that long.

If the Labour MPs, along with trade union leaders, had organised massive demonstrations against the cuts, Blair would have been forced to back down. But they see parliament as the main focus of change. Most MPs will be tied by loyalty to the Labour Party.

The potential for that opposition to grow outside parliament will increase over the next year. The government still has to get the legislation for student fees through parliament next year.

Now is the time to increase the pressure on Blair. But it will mean organising that opposition from below, mobilising massive demonstrations to force Blair to back down.