

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p

**Inside:**  
**FRANCE MAY 1968:**  
**TEN MILLION**  
**ON GENERAL**  
**STRIKE!—PAGE 8**

Solidarity price £1

## Australian dockers, Danish strikers

# THIS IS HOW TO FIGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS



☒ Australian workers have shown their strength

Workers on different sides of the world have given lie to the claim that strikes are out of date and cannot win.

In Australia dockers have been fighting a magnificent battle against a union busting operation by port bosses, the government and big business.

*Tens of thousands of workers across the country have taken solidarity action in support of the dockers struggle and thousands have joined mass pickets at the ports.*

In Denmark half a million workers struck shutting down the country for over a week demanding an extra weeks holiday and a substantial pay rise. Support for the strike was massive with over 120,000 marching in the country's capital Copenhagen on May Day.

Here in Ireland workers have been tied to miserable pay increases under partnership 2000 with constant demands for "flexibility" and productivity.

*With all the talk of the Celtic Tiger Ryanair showed we don't even have the right to be in a union.*

The strikes in Australia and Denmark show we don't have to accept this. When workers take strike action they have massive power to challenge the bosses.

*The action by Danish workers even affected car production in Germany and Sweden.*

The tragedy is that instead of leading a fight, our union leaders keep holding back action and telling us to moderate our demands.

We should take a lesson from the Danish and Australian workers and force our union leaders to stand up and fight.

# IT'S TIME TO BREAK PARTNERSHIP 2000

## LUAS: Government bows to car lobby

CITY CENTRE businesses and the car lobby are trying to halt or delay the building of the Luas light railway in Dublin.

The government has now decided on the "integrated option" instead of an overground system.

The integrated system will be underground in the city centre.

This will make it twice as dear and geological surveys will add years to its construction.

An underground will be less safe in an emergency, less accessible—especially to disabled people—and will not reduce car use in the centre.

At the same time Dublin Bus is cutting services under the guise of creating "quality corridors" which will actually get rid of routes deemed unprofitable.

But money is being pumped into keeping cars on the road.

At the moment €646 million is being spent on road schemes in and around the city.

There has been a boom in new car sales with a record 62,000 sold in Dublin alone.

Forty percent of these new cars are company cars, a favourite perk for executives.

Yet just €60 million

would buy 350 new buses for Dublin Bus. Just €15 million would provide the entire city with a network of cyclepaths.

But the government bows to the business interests instead of providing proper public transport.

## HOSPITALS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

# The workers' revolt has begun

**"WILDCAT action causes chaos." This is how the press described magnificent action of workers in the hospitals and local authorities.**

But they never complained about the fact that the number of beds in Irish hospitals were cut by 40%. The newspapers that are owned by Tony O'Reilly love to blame workers.

The reality is that the revolt of rank and file workers has begun. All across Munster, craft and general workers have staged unof-

ficial stoppages

"We are just frustrated with the union leaders. This deal means we have to do extra productivity. It means that the shop stewards will have no power to represent their members because everything will be referred to a national Review committee," a Limerick striker told *Socialist Worker*.

The workers are angry at the way the union leaders treated them with contempt. Although craft workers had

balloted by 20 to one to demand a #25.26 pay rise, the union officials called off the action at the very last moment without consulting the members. (see page 11 for a full report on the strike)

If they thought that workers were going to meekly accept their dictates, they got a rude surprise. Pickets started in Waterford and then spread all over the country. Semi official and unofficial have sprung up to organise the action.

"The mid west Region met and voted against this deal.

## What a sick management

WHILE THE Blair government give out money in Northern Ireland to win a Yes others are penalising workers are standing up for peace.

The Child Support Agency managers have deducted pay from their staff who had to walk out to resist LVA and INLA threats. The CSA is the only branch of the civil service to do this.

One CSA activist told *Socialist Worker*, "It makes you sick. We got Catholic and Protestant workers together to stand up for peace and to resist intimidation. "But the bosses probably want us to stay divided. That is why they are deducting our pay. We are not going to put up with us."

## Moriarty tribunal

# Ansbacher files go 'missing'

**A TOTAL of 139 files requested by the Moriarty tribunal have mysteriously disappeared.**

Last December, the tribunal investigating payments to politicians served an Order of Production on Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy for files to do with the operation of exchange controls from 1954 to 1993.

These decisions may have been of benefit to people who made payments to Haughey or who were the source of money held in the Ansbacher deposits for him.

The late Des Traynor, a former close friend of Haughey, was involved in

matters concerning these exchange controls and Ansbacher deposits.

He handled Haughey's financial affairs from 1960 to 1994.

Traynor was also involved in the foundation and running of the bank now known as Ansbacher (Cayman) Ltd., which controlled the Ansbacher deposits.

The Department of Finance knew of the files' absence for several months but only recently reported this to the tribunal.

Not surprisingly they claim to be completely at a loss as to where the files could have disappeared to. Meanwhile Haughey refuses to comment.

# A tale of two confessions

DEAN LYONS, a heroin addict with a psychiatric disorder, was wrongfully jailed for nine months for a murder he did not commit.

This happened after the last government rushed through a law which re-

duced the right to bail for serious crimes.

This legislation followed a referendum where the politicians assured us that innocent people would not be locked up.

Dean Lyons was kept on remand for nine months after "confessing"

to the murder of two women in Grangegorm in Dublin.

However less than a month after Dean was arrested, another man admitted to the murders

When reports of this miscarriage of justice appeared in the press, the government made no attempt

to release Dean Lyons. The charges were only finally dropped at the end of last month.

The case proves that opponents of the new bail laws were right to argue that innocent people—especially drug addicts—would be jailed as a result.



We have taken unofficial action to protest at the way our union is operating. We want to see a snowball effect. We want this action to spur on official action so that our union represent us properly."

Workers have enough of constant demands for flexibility and productivity.

It is not the workers who go off on long lunches or spend money on new carpets or flower arrangements for

their offices. But yet they are subject to constant pressure—even though the country is supposed to be booming.

No wonder many are now saying "Enough is enough—Strike Now."

## No to racism, no to deportations!

# ASSAULT BY GARDAI

At 3 am in the morning, Friday 1 May last, seven Gardai came to the house of Mr Belmondo Wantete, a Congolese refugee living in Drimnagh and subjected him to racist harassment.

They broke down the door of the house, shouting racist abuse "you black nigger, you fucking Niger".

Mr Wantete, who was naked was beaten around the house and his children were even dragged from their beds.

He was then brought down to Drimnagh Garda station and kept there for twelve hours where he was subject to more physical and verbal abuse.

They shouted "Scream for us monkey, scream."

But the Gardai had got the wrong man. The warrant for his arrest was for another refugee from a different address and the charges were dropped by

the Judge in court.

But Mr Wantete is now up for the far more serious charge of assaulting a Garda in his home that night.

He was brought into Mountjoy on remand and held there until he got bail one week later.

The Gardai are supposed to ensure justice in society. But they are helping to create a climate of racism and terror against refugees. Surveys abroad show that the police often show a higher degree of racist sentiment.

In Britain, for example, a high proportion of the police expressed support for the National Front in the eighties.

The behaviour of the garda in this case shows they could be going the same way.

Mr Wantete's case will be heard on 18 June next. Anti racists will be holding a picket outside the court.

## Rise in RUC complaints

The annual report from the Independent Commission for Police Complaints for Northern Ireland, shows a massive increase in formal complaints from 2545 in 1996 to 3111 in 1997. But only seven RUC officers were disciplined.

The increase was dismissed by the Secretary of State, Mo Mowlam as a result of "one or two incidents" and clashes during the marching season.

One of those "incidents" was the shooting at the Derryhirk Inn in County Armagh, the RUC fired recklessly at customers as they were leaving the bar. 90 people lodged a formal complaint.

The Independent Commission appointed a senior RUC detective as the investigating officer. No charges have been brought against any police officer.

It is a similar story with charges of assault by Mobile Support Unit officers, the ones who dress in black boiler suits, shin pads and

dark helmets.

All police are supposed to wear identification numbers.

Yet many of the assaults, such as that on a Derry woman who was hit with a truncheon while being restrained by an MSU officer, were inflicted by cops without ID numbers.

The Commission reported that despite interviewing every member of the relevant MSU to identify the officer responsible, such interviews were "invariably inconclusive".

In other words, the police lied to cover-up for each other. There were 814 similar cases in 1997.

Not a single police officer has been suspended or discharged for unlawful conduct during the last 30 years.

Independent Commissions have done little to change that.

The Belfast peace agreement proposes a commission on reform of the RUC which is chaired by the ex Tory Chris Patton.

Going by the experience of the Independent Commission, it is unlikely to bring fundamental change.

## what we think

# Amsterdam: A treaty for warmongers

**THE RULERS of Europe are trying to establish a military alliance. That is the real significance of the Amsterdam Treaty.**

During the Cold War, Western Europe was pulled into the orbit of USA. Britain and France saw their domination wane as their empires were reduced.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was the way that the US organised its military domination.

But by the end of the 1960s it was clear that the position of the USA was being undercut as Japan and Germany increasingly penetrated world markets.

Growing competition in the world economy, led to the formation of a single market in Europe.

The rich hoped this would provide a base to create industries of sufficient scale to overtake the multi-nationals of the US and Japan.

But this has also meant that the military umbrella of NATO no longer suits the needs of Europe's bosses.

Just as the US went to war in the Gulf to defend the profits of US-giants Texaco and Exxon, the bosses of Europe want to have a military arm to defend their interests.

And the interests of the rulers of Europe and America are increasingly coming into conflict.

European rulers have been at loggerheads with Americans over competition in the telecommunications and computer industries, environmental issues and "intellectual property rights".

As the world becomes a more unstable place these disputes will get worse. Europe's bosses will want to fight "resource wars" in the next few years — as the former EU commissioner Jacques DeLors pointed out.

The Amsterdam Treaty brings all this one step closer. It proposes a common foreign and security policy.

It demands greater integration of the EU and Western European Union which is a military alliance of European countries.

### Rivalries

It calls for the use of EU "combat forces" in "crisis management" around the world.

One reason why this process hasn't gone further up to now is that there are still rivalries and disputes between Europe's rulers.

Sections of the British ruling class,



What the EU means by crisis management

for example, see their future within an American axis rather than within Europe.

Arms spending however is rising once again. £40 billion a year is currently spent on producing armaments in the EU.

The Amsterdam Treaty clearly expects this to continue because it calls for "co-operation by states in the field of armaments".

At a time when millions are threatened with famine and malnutrition, it is a scandal that the arms indus-

try is being expanded.

A vote against the Amsterdam Treaty has little to do with narrow nationalist interests.

It is a vote for a better and more rational world that is not built on greed and guns.

## Brown lures the vultures

**BRITISH Chancellor, Gordon Brown, arrived in Belfast last Tuesday to tell business leaders that he will spend an extra £100 million in the North.**

This will be promoted as a "peace dividend".

But it will not be spent on addressing poverty or the crisis in the health service.

Instead, it consists of handouts to the rich and tax cuts to "lure investment".

Most of the money will go on just two road projects—a Toomebridge bypass and the Westlink in Belfast. Some will go on promoting tourism, one of the worst industries for low wages and lack of union rights.

The bulk of the rest will go on extending the Welfare to Work program to over 25's.

Under Labour's plan, people are forced to take jobs with the threat of losing their benefits. The money goes straight to employers, who pocket £60 a week.

One of the promoters of Welfare to Work are Desmonds.

In March women clothing workers at Desmond's Claudy factory walked out over plans to double their workload while cutting their pay.

Brown also announced cuts in taxes for business to encourage inward investment.

Business leaders in the North

want taxes reduced to compete with the South's low business tax rates.

This ties in with US economic envoy Jim Lyon's call three weeks ago for the North to cut business tax "move towards a more traditional capitalistic system."

He argued that American business wants a base in Europe "where they already speak the same language, where they are highly educated, literate, motivated to work and work hard. In my mind that's two words: Northern Ireland."

Brown's package is designed to attract the vultures of international capitalism.

### Low wages

They aim to prey on the generous grants, low wages and lack of trade union rights, while paying little or nothing back in taxes.

The "prosperity" promised by all the major parties in the North is a sectarian scramble to get these jobs for "their" community, with the only winners the bosses.

Trade union leaders are falling over themselves to encourage a "spirit of partnership".

Workers, Catholic and Protestant, have more to gain by struggling together against their real enemies—the bosses—than putting their faith in these saviours.

## Socialist Worker appeal

"We would like to thank Socialist Worker for their support and for the part they played in highlighting the issues surrounding the threats from both the paramilitaries and management in the recent walk-outs in the Civil Service"

NIPSA Shop Steward  
Branch 8  
Belfast

The Socialist Worker fighting fund has reached £2,850. We aim to raise £10,000 to expand our campaigning activities.

In the North Socialist Worker members were quick to respond to the Civil Servants strike, issuing hundreds of leaflets in their support. In the South the local branches are active on many issues such as fighting hospital closures or against Gardai racism (see page 2).

The Southern government has rushed through the Amsterdam Treaty - with tv adverts that obscuring the real issue of a proposed military alliance. The Socialist Workers Party has been virtually alone in mounting a "NO" campaign, issuing tens of thousands of leaflets and posters.

But all this activity costs money. That's why we are appealing to our supporters to help our fighting fund reach £10,000. Please send cheques/postal orders made to "Socialist Worker" to PO Box 354, Tomb St., Belfast or PO Box 1648 Dublin 8.

£10,000

£9,000

£8,000

£7,000

£6,000

£5,000

£4,000

£3,000

£2,000

£1,000

**SWP**



# news of the world

## Australia:

# Victory in sight for the dockers?

**THE** right wing Australian government and port bosses have bitten off more than they can chew by attacking the dockers' union.

Australia has been in turmoil since the Patrick docks company, backed by government and big business, sacked 1,400 dockers three weeks ago and shipped in scabs to try to break the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA).

The sackings sparked walk-outs by thousands of Australian workers, while angry mass pickets sealed off Patrick's wharves.

On Thursday of last week dockers and their supporters were jubilant when a federal court judge ordered Patrick to reinstate the dockers pending a full court case into the dispute in July.

### Judgement

Patrick lawyers then managed to get the judgement suspended.

As *Socialist Worker* went to press it was unclear what the result of another court appeal would be.

But a Melbourne newspaper, the *Age*, commented, "The legal, political and moral momentum is now with the Maritime Union of Australia, something that workplace relations minister, Mr Peter Reith, never contemplated in his worse nightmare."

The dockers fight back and workers' solidarity has knocked the Tory government's election plans sideways.

Prime minister John Howard set Reith on the dockers, hoping a quick union busting victory would win the government favours from Australia's bosses and traditional supporters.

Howard even passed a special anti-union law, the Workplace Relations Act, specifically to take on the dockers and other strong groups of workers.

### Courage

As the *Age* says, "There is now a compelling case that the company the prime minister lauded for its courage, broke his own Workplace Relations Act when it sacked its union workforce."

A poll published last week-end indicated support for the government had plummeted by 6.5 percent in just one week to 46.5 percent. The opposition polled 53.5 percent.

Last week the Police Association said it was fed up with being, "the meat in the sandwich in the waterfront dispute" and it had its own grudges with the government.

Shares in Patrick's parent company, Lang, plummeted on news of the court judgement favouring the unions.

The court wrangle has shifted the focus away from the anger on the ground.

However, the mood amongst workers to take action is still there.

In Fremantle last week MUA members working for P&O Ports walked off the job, while tug crews in Melbourne have said they will not help any ship into Patrick facilities.

At the end of last week there were a massive 11,000 contain-



■ Dockers fighting union busting

ers full of wool, meat, wine and dairy products alone stranded on the docks.

There was no sign of any shipping activity on Patrick wharves in the key ports of Sydney and Melbourne.

International solidarity has seen the 50,000 strong National Council of Dock Workers' Un-

ions of Japan black any ship loaded at Patrick docks by scabs.

Japan is a key importer of Australian goods.

The state of Victoria is still due to have a one day strike in support of the dockers on 6 May, with calls for the same in other states.

The danger is union leaders will demobilise the support on the ground.

But pressure from below scared the courts into challenging the actions of the government and Patrick.

Solidarity strikes need to be encouraged and escalated because unions cannot rely on the

judges.

Patrick is pleading it cannot reinstate the 1,400 dockers because it is bankrupt.

In fact Patrick's parent company Lang deliberately split its docks operation into four "new" companies last September in preparation for war against the MUA.

These four companies were asset stripped and loaded with debts.

They then struck a deal with the National Farmers Federation to supply scab labour.

### Dispute

The bosses are now terrified the dispute will flare up again, especially as the Australian economy looks set to slide into recession.

Shipping newspaper Lloyd's List expressed that fear when it called for a negotiated settlement last week:

"The alternative—a continued game of Russian roulette, played with a .35 loaded with the twin bullets of economic depression and political instability—is too horrible to contemplate."

## General strike in Denmark

HALF A million workers began Denmark's largest ever official strike. One in five of the country's workforce is out.

The strikers have rejected a two year national pay deal and are demanding an extra week's holiday.

Most Danish workers currently get five weeks annual paid leave.

The bosses are only prepared

to offer an extra day, Christmas Eve—already a holiday for many.

*Socialist Worker's* sister organisation in Denmark reports the coalition government led by the Social Democrats (Labour) is "in big trouble."

### Intervene

They would like to intervene in the strike. But the government is scared of the response inside par-

liament and outside."

The strike is popular with opinion polls showing a majority of people in support.

The report continues, "This is not a token strike."

"All but one of 23 trade unions argued to accept the deal in the ballot, but it was turned down by their members."

"Even in the powerful metal workers' union, led by the right wing of the labour movement, there

was a majority of no votes.

"The strike started with industrial, transport, building and newspaper workers."

"But it was expected soon to affect all parts of society."

### Maintain

"For example schools and kindergartens are closing down because the cleaning staff are on strike."

Other European governments are worried about the Danish strikers.

Bosses and bankers see the Danish Euro referendum on 28 May as vital to maintain the momentum of the single currency.

But polls suggest a close vote.

The strikes could reinforce the feeling among workers that the European Union is about a bankers' Europe.

## Comment

### From Apartheid of class to Apartheid of money

Throughout the Irish peace process, Sinn Fein has been drawing comparisons between Ireland and South Africa.

This is reflected in its calls for unionism to produce a de Klerk, and the promotion of itself as an Irish equivalent of the African National Congress (ANC).

Sinn Fein has also appropriated the rhetoric of the ANC, to justify its "peace strategy". Phrases such as "strategic compromise" and "new phase of struggle", are very similar to the language used by the ANC during its negotiations with the South African government.

Clearly, Sinn Fein is keen to associate itself with a movement, which it sees as having been successful in achieving its political objectives.

An example of this has been the recent visit by an ANC delegation to Belfast and Dublin, to meet Republican prisoners and appear on platforms with Sinn Fein leaders.

However, when we look at the what has been the result of the transition in South Africa, we begin to see the real nature the ANC's "success".

This was graphically illustrated by the recently screened TV documentary, "Apartheid did not Die", by the left-wing journalist, John Pilger. He showed how little had changed in South Africa, since he had been expelled from the country thirty years earlier.

Although there is a black government, and legalised discrimination has been abolished, the legacy of apartheid still remains. There are still vast inequalities in South Africa; 5% of the population owns 88% of the nations wealth; and unemployment runs at 40% nationally, 70% in the poorest areas.

The economic structure which underpinned apartheid still in place. Huge multinational companies like Anglo-America still dominate the economy, and the South African Reserve Bank still determines monetary policy.

This situation may have been expected after so many years of discrimination. However, the ANC government is doing very little to redress these inequalities.

The Freedom Charter, which had committed the party to wealth redistribution and the nationalisation of South African industry, was quickly abandoned in the course of negotiations.

Even the modest RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme), on which the ANC fought the first democratic elections in 1994, has been discarded.

### Thatcherism

It was replaced in 1996, by the GEAR (Growth, Employment, and Redistribution) strategy, an unashamedly right wing policy, described by a government official as "cautious Thatcherism." Potential for real reform is also restricted by the legacy of debt incurred by the apartheid regime.

The debt, which the ANC government has taken on, consumes 25% of South Africa's annual GDP. This has created the tragic situation in which, the black masses are effectively paying for their past oppression.

This is not to say that no one has benefited from the changes in South Africa. A new black elite has been created in business and government, through the policy of "black empowerment."

This policy has particularly benefited former ANC cadres. The personification of this new elite is Cyril Ramaphosa, the former leader of the miners union, and ANC chief negotiator who recently spoke at Sinn Fein meetings in Ireland.

He is now a millionaire, heading up a new black empowerment company, and holding directorships in some of South Africa's biggest companies. The ambition of his blackempowerment company is to take over a mining house; this would supposedly be a symbol of how much things have changed in South Africa. The ANC hail this as liberation.

Yet all that it has achieved is to increase the inequalities amongst blacks. A tiny layer of blacks have become fabulously rich, while the masses continue to live in grinding poverty.

The experience of South Africa shows the limitations of national liberation movements, whose objective is to get into government and promote the interests an oppressed community or racial group.

But in Ireland the situation will probably be worse as Sinn Fein is in a far weaker position than the ANC.

Far from forming a government, the best it can hope for is to part of unionist dominated executive in the north. This will not provide a basis for Sinn Fein to deliver significant reforms to its supporters.

It is clear that in both South Africa and Ireland, there is still the need to struggle for true liberation.

by Jonathan Morrison

## BELFAST AGREEMENT

# Sinn Fein buys in

"Flexibility, compromise and realpolitik have paid off," This is how the former leading IRA activist Danny Morrison described the decision by Sinn Fein to accept the Belfast agreement.

The movement has reached a turning point in its decision to enter conventional politics. This has brought a major change in rhetoric.

In 1979, at his address to Bodenstown, Gerry Adams said that republicans would not be "satisfied merely by a British withdrawal or by the establishment of a 32 county neo-colonial Free State. We stand opposed to all manifestations of imperialism and capitalism."

Even then there were limitations to the left wing rhetoric. Adams assured his more traditional supporters there were 'no Marxists in the movement'. And for all the talk of opposing the system, the party had few links with organised workers.

Now however British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlan 'has paid tribute to the leadership of Gerry Adams'. The reason is that the party is now committing itself to work a system that it once opposed.

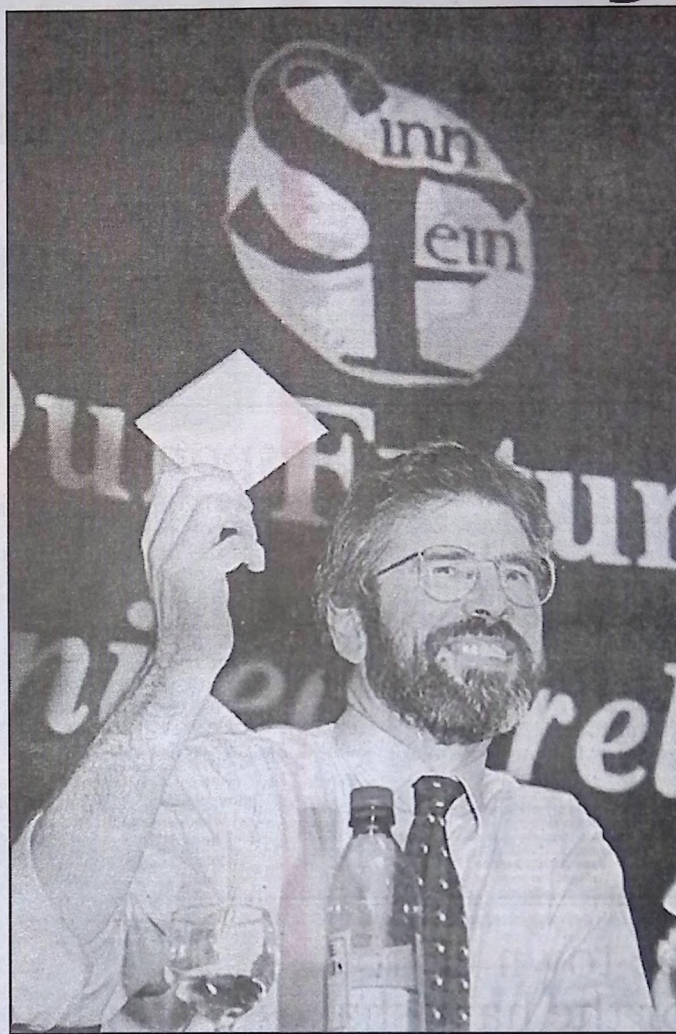
Over the next few years the party leadership will set themselves two main objectives in the "transitional phase" they now see ahead.

The first will be to overtake the SDLP and to enter the new cabinet formed by the Northern Ireland assembly as the majority nationalist party. Instead of just representing the poor Catholic areas, the party will attempt to extend its base in the growing Catholic middle class.

Already Adams has begun to take on the concerns of this class by calling for a tax cut on the profits of Northern industry. The emphasis on 'Irishness' and the cultural difference of nationalists rather than left wing rhetoric also suits this grouping.

The second objective of the leadership is to build their party in the South where they have been traditionally very weak.

But logic of the present strategy of a



pan-nationalist alliance will be to enter a coalition with Fianna Fail.

The party has always claimed that the vote for Fianna Fail is preferable to one for 'the former Blueshirts in Fine Gael'.

Its single TD in Dail Eireann Caoimhin o Caoilean gives implicit support to Bertie Ahern and is given quick access to Minis-

ters. Many were surprised by the scale of the vote at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis. But the party has always seen itself as beholden to the IRA.

### Activists

When the IRA called for a Yes vote, republicans activists lined up behind 'the leadership'.

However new splits and divisions are inevitable. Today the Adams leadership has built up a large stock of credibility from the long struggle.

But when they sit in a cabinet presiding over cuts on working class people either in the North or South many more will see that radical nationalism leads to a dead end.

## The bankruptcy of armed struggle

**SOCIALISTS condemn the shoot to kill policy employed by the Irish Garda to murder Ronan McLoughann.**

Just the like the RUC in the north, the Garda tried to cover up by claiming they were originally fired on.

### Re-start

But this turned out to be a lie.

But we also oppose the re-emergence of a 'new IRA' who want to re-start the armed struggle.

This grouping have already shown a tendency to hit mainly

Protestant towns in the hope that the LVF will be provoked into a response.

Their armed struggle will amount to a form of terrorism without any mass base.

This politics can only lead to a contempt for the concerns of working people. It will produce yet another republican movement that is built on the undemocratic structures of a secret army council which dictates politics.

And as Adams and McGuinness have tragically shown the hard militants of today will only become the conventional politicians of tomorrow.

## How Fianna Fail made the turn

THE NEW shift in Sinn Fein is similar to the way that Fianna Fail emerged in Southern Ireland in 1926.

While preparing themselves to work the system, Fianna Fail sought to win a political base by advancing a radical, non-socialist economic programme.

De Valera claimed that he sympathised with "James Connolly's passionate protests". The Fianna Fail leader Sean MacEntee even denounced foreign capital as "a menace to the peaceful development".

The party claimed that it wanted to "free the country from the bankers who are little better than agents of British finance".

The purpose of this economic message was to win a base among workers and to prevent the emergence class politics.

Adams has also understood some of these lessons. Although Sinn Fein now seeks to work closely with sections of corporate America, this does not prevent the party advancing a radical economic message that stops short of challenging the system.

Even though Sinn Fein now argues that it must encourage multi national investment particularly in Catholic areas in Northern Ireland, it still complains that the Celtic Tiger in the South gives little to workers.

The rhetoric is contradictory and will not prevent Sinn Fein eventually working the system with Fianna Fail.

But the key task for the left is to challenge republicanism today. Fianna Fail only grew in the 1920s because they faced a Labour Party that was so moderate that Sean Lemass accused it of being afraid to be seen as "pale pink."

This is why it is vital that socialists build quickly and strongly in the working class to offer an alternative to the fake radicalism of Gerry Adams.



WE ARE the power



Voting does not change anything - the struggle continues



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**FRANCE MAY 1968 - TEN MILLION**

# How a spa an explosi

## 'This strike is like a festival'

A STUDENT protest in Paris on the night of 10 May—"the night of the barricades"—the catalyst which threw France into a huge social confrontation.

The student revolt had started at the beginning of May. Students were protesting over seemingly minor issues—rotten conditions and petty campus rules imposed by the authorities.

Students in France at the time were no more radical than students in Britain and elsewhere.

But their protest showed how rapidly movements can develop when they touch on wider discontent in society.

The student revolt in 1968 began at Nanterre, a new campus of Paris University built to accommodate a growing student population.

The students were angry that men and women students living in segregated university accommodation were not allowed to visit each other.

The first demonstrations involved a handful and then a few hundred students.

But at the beginning of May the authorities cracked down on the students using the brutal CRS riot police.

The police arrested one of the student leaders, Danny Cohn-Bendit, and held him for 12 hours.

When students marched in protest from Nanterre to the Sorbonne campus in central Paris, university chiefs announced they were closing the whole university.

Riot police surrounded the Sorbonne and ordered the students to leave.

The students obeyed the order. But as they did so the police arrested 500 of the protesters.

This outrage provided the catalyst and the student movement developed with breakneck speed.

Around the country students went on strike, including those considered at the time right wing, such as medical students.

As the demonstrations gathered force they were met with batons and teargas. Night after night students fought running battles with the police.

On 6 May, when students tried to march on the Sorbonne site in central Paris, the police weighed in, hospitalising hundreds of demonstrators.

Then considerable numbers of young workers began to identify with the student protests and some started to join the demonstrations.

As one account explained: "Workers had a hardly flattering image of students, which was encouraged by the bureaucrats of the labour movement. In their eyes the students were simply 'the sons of papa', whose student antics would not stop them entering into the ranks of the exploiters."

"On the evening of 6 May this caricature was destroyed. The photos of the fights and the accounts of the battles earned gasps of admiration among workers."

On 10 May, in a further act of provocation, the police closed the Sorbonne and then invaded it.

This brought tens of thousands of students onto the streets in protest in what became the fiercest night of fighting—"the night of the barricades".

Students threw up barricades, piling up traffic signs, overturned cars, bricks from

THE STUDENT revolt and the repression it met galvanised the discontent simmering beneath the surface.

The 13 May demonstration called by the trade unions surpassed all expectations, with an estimated one million people on the streets of Paris.

Workers and students marched behind a banner which proclaimed, "Students, teachers, workers—solidarity", and they chanted, "Victory is in the streets."

One eyewitness described how "endlessly they riled past. Every factory, every major workplace seemed to be represented... row upon row of them, the flesh and blood of modern capitalist society, an unending mass, a power that could sweep everything before it, if it decided to do so."

The government and trade union leaders hoped the demonstration would be

The biggest mass strike the world has ever known took place 30 years ago this month in May 1968. Ten million workers rose up in a revolt which shook the world's fourth capitalist power to its foundations. It sent France's rulers into panic and terrified ruling classes around the world. In these pages we tell the story of the great workers' revolt.

sufficient to put an end to the revolt, but instead it gave workers a taste of their own power.

For then a minor struggle by workers at the Sud Aviation factory in Nantes in western France detonated an even bigger explosion.

The Sud Aviation workers had been staging 15 minute protest stoppages every Tuesday in a dispute over pay and conditions.

But on Tuesday 14 May, the day after the massive march, young workers in one section decided not to work. Instead they marched round the factory and barricaded the plant manager in his office.

The effect was incredible. By the end of the day 2,000 workers had occupied the factory.

The next day workers at the Renault gearbox factory near Rouen heard about the action at Sud Aviation.

About 200 workers started chanting outside their manager's office. When he refused to talk with them, the workers occupied the factory.

The revolt spread like wildfire. Within a week millions of workers were on strike or occupying their workplaces.

Often young workers fresh to politics and not in trade unions initiated the action.

Car workers barricaded themselves in car plants across the country. At the giant Renault Bifancourt plant over 5,000 workers gathered each morning for monster meetings.

Workers shut down most of the aerospace industry and occupied shipyards and rail depots.

France was brought to a halt as trains, buses, banks and postal services were all shut down.

Coal miners struck. Red flags hung from the tower of the shipyards of Penhoet at St Nazaire, which employed 10,000 workers.

Posters saying "Unlimited strike" appeared on the doors of office buildings, shops, banks and insurance firms. Workers at Berliet, a huge commercial vehicle manufacturing plant in Lyons, re-

building sites, sacks of cement and scaffolding poles.

One eyewitness described how "literally thousands helped build barricades—women, bystanders, people in pyjamas, human chains to carry rocks, wood, iron. A tremendous movement is started."

The riot police charged the barricades, shooting teargas and attacking students and passers-by alike.

The demonstrators fought back, tearing up cobblestones to repel the police attack.

The next day French prime minister Georges Pompidou was forced to retreat and announced he was reopening the Sorbonne.

The government hoped its retreat would dampen the struggle. But it was too late.

The students' marvellous resistance inspired workers to take up their own fight. Workers witnessed the brutality of the CRS riot police and they overwhelmingly sympathised with the students.

The leaders of the left wing parties and trade unions, who had initially dismissed the students, were forced to act.

They called for a one day strike and demonstrations on 13 May against police violence.

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LION ON GENERAL STRIKE

# Spark detonated Revolution from below

## Leaders ran to front to end revolt

**THE BREATHTAKING** events of May 1968 had the potential to develop into a movement posing a revolutionary challenge to the system.

But tragically that potential was never realised.

De Gaulle's government survived and the regime succeeded in turning the tide against the workers' struggles.

How did it happen?

The blame must lie to a large extent with the leaders of the established left wing parties and the French trade unions.

De Gaulle gambled on calling an election in June. He was banking on the desire of the official trade union and left wing parties to end the revolt.

They had been forced to call protests but they always tried to contain the action.

The leaders of the main left wing parties and trade unions in 1968 believed in parliamentary politics above all else.

They did not want the revolt to turn into a movement which would oust the Government.

The most influential organisations among French workers at the time were the Communist Party and its trade union federation, the CGT.

Its leaders were committed to working through parliament.

Initially the Communist Party leaders had dismissed the students as "the sons of rich bourgeois".

### Gamble

But as the revolt grew and spread to the workers, the CP tried to run to the head of the strike movement to limit it.

After de Gaulle's election gamble, one CGT leader said, "It is in the interest of workers to be able to press their desires for change in the context of elections."

The union leaders called off the strikes and argued for workers to return to work.

The right gained the initiative and began to mobilise. A massive counter-demonstration of the right marched on 30 May.

The police seized back the TV and radio stations, threw out occupying workers, attacked any continuing demonstrations and even killed two workers and a school student.

Communist Party leaders played a crucial role in trying to end strikes but they did not always succeed immediately.

Two days after de Gaulle's election announcement some 30,000 people marched through Paris chanting, "Election treason," and, "It's only the beginning. The fight goes on."

Many workers, having had taste of their own Power, were reluctant to return to work.

But the anger some workers felt could not prevent the settlements which were being signed in work place after workplace to end the disputes.

And tragically there was not a sizeable revolutionary organisation which could challenge the influence of the CP and the union leaders.

French bosses were badly shaken but workers did not get the great victory they could have won.

De Gaulle's government survived and French capitalism remained intact. But French workers were not totally defeated. The government were forced to give workers major concessions and movements in wages and working conditions.

Moreover the French revolt, by inspiring workers and students worldwide, opened up a new era of struggles from below.



**UP TILL** now we tried to solve our problems through petitions, partial struggles, the election of better leaders.

This has led us nowhere.

The action of the students has shown us that only rank and file action could compel the authorities to retreat.

The students are challenging the whole purpose of bourgeois education. They want to take the fundamental decisions themselves. So should we.

LEAFLET WRITTEN BY RHONE POULENC FACTORY WORKERS

WORKERS CHANTING "Victory is in the streets"

changed the letters on the front of the t-shirt to spell 'Liberte'.

The strike had become like a festival," reported one union official.

Workers at the Sud Aviation occupied their senior managers up for a fortnight.

They forced them to listen to the workers, the Internationale, until the workers themselves could stand it no longer!

Museum workers, film studio workers, theatre workers took action. Dancers occupied the Folies Bergere.

Professional footballers occupied the headquarters of the Football Federation.

On 25 May film crews and journalists set out in protest at government censorship of the strike movement.

At its height between nine and ten million workers were, striking or occupying workplaces.

In the ferment of struggle, workers and students began to question old ideas and

In Paris striking workers joined students at the Sorbonne and Paris's Latin Quarter in the flourishing of debate and discussion.

Some workers held on to a vision of a different kind of society altogether.

In Nantes, western France, workers barricaded access to the town and formed a central strike committee which took control of food and petrol distribution.

This experience was not repeated everywhere, but there were other marvellous examples of workers' initiative, challenging the rotten old ideas.

When student leader Danny Cohn-Bendit was denounced as a "German Jew", 50,000 workers and students marched through Paris chanting, "We are all German Jews."

The workers' revolt terrified the French government. De Gaulle's authoritarian right wing regime had been viewed as one of the strongest in Europe. Now, it was close to collapse.

At the end of the first week of the strike de Gaulle's government desperately tried

to sue for peace and reach a compromise.

Union leaders agreed a deal which meant a 35 percent wage increase for the lowest paid workers.

But workplace after workplace voted to stay on strike. Trade union officials at a mass meeting of 15,000 workers at the occupied Renault Billancourt factory were booed when they tried to sell the deal.

De Gaulle then promised a referendum on whether he should stay or go.

This attempt also failed. Striking print workers even refused to print the ballot papers!

On Wednesday 29 May de Gaulle fled Paris without telling anyone he was going. He went to see the head of the French army in Germany and was persuaded to return after a day.

But French prime minister Georges Pompidou later admitted, "Thinking that the game was up, he had chosen to retire. Arriving in Baden Baden he was ready to stay a long time."

MAY 1968 AND AFTER

# A new era of revolt

**CHRIS HARMAN** is the editor of *Socialist Worker*. A new edition of his brilliant account of 1968 and after, *The Fire Last Time*, has just been published.

Chris talks about the monumental events of '68 and their impact today.

## HOW DID '68 happen?

THE IMPORTANT thing about the period before '68 was that in some senses it was similar to today. People said the working class was finished. Even some on the left like Herbert Marcuse said that the mass of people would never be interested in changing society again.

Just before '68 sociologist André Gorz wrote an article on the working class. He said general strikes were a thing of the past. Unfortunately for him it did not appear until after the French strikes.

Suddenly in '68 two things happened. First you had an international students' movement that caught people's attention.

It began in 1966 in Berkeley, California, and spread to Berlin and Britain in 1967. Italy followed in 1968.

On May 8th French students took to the streets.

Second, what took everybody by surprise was when the workers joined in.

Nobody expected this. The establishment said it could never happen. They were absolutely shaken when it did.

## WHAT ROLE did socialists play inside those movements?

IN THE struggles began, socialist organisations were small everywhere.

'Me struggles were not started by socialists. The students in Berkeley, California, demonstrated and occupied around the question of free speech.

When the struggles began, socialists found a very large number of people were prepared to listen to their arguments.

Many people think socialists create struggle. That is a mistake. People

move into struggle and begin to discover that they have the power to change things. It is then that they become open to socialist arguments.

When the French events began, the number of revolutionary socialists in Paris numbered no more than 400.

Suddenly these 400 people were at the forefront of demonstrations of tens of thousands of people.

## WHAT IMPACT did the events of '68 have on politics?

WHEN THE media discusses '68 it talks about a time when young people adopted different lifestyles, listened to new music and took drugs.

The reality was very different—1968 created a generation of people who thought they could change the world.

The events in France were followed by a wave of strikes known as the "Hot Autumn", in Italy in 1969.

At the same time, the struggles for (civil rights in the US had led into the struggle against the Vietnam War which in turn led to the creation of the Black Panther Party.

And there was the resistance to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. These struggles inspired people in one country after another.

There were waves of strikes and protests all the way through to 1975—the strikes against the fascists in Spain, the struggle against the Heath government's anti-union laws in Britain, the experience of Chile, the revolution against fascism in Portugal in 1974-5.

You had a transformation of attitudes. This happened very quickly.

I was a student at the time. I remember how non-political the mass of students were in 1966. They wore suits and "politics" meant formal style debates.

By 1969 it had all changed. It was taken for granted that students were political.

But people saw change coming in two different ways.



PRAGUE, AUGUST 1968. The revolt spread East and West

One was to see change coming through revolution—organising the mass of people, not just students but workers as well.

The other was to believe that you could just change your own lifestyle, taking drugs and dropping out.

## DID '68 usher in a new era for the left?

BEFORE '68 most people who moved to the left either joined the Labour Party or the Communist Party.

If you joined the Labour Party you believed the only way to bring about change was slowly and gradually. By 1968 that meant that you did not change things at all.

Before 1968 many of those who reacted against Labour joined the Communist Party.

The Communist Party identified with Russia and the dictatorships in Eastern Europe—1968 showed to a large number of people that there was an alternative.

The International Socialists, as the Socialist Workers Party was known at that time, produced a poster during the Prague uprising that said, "Smash imperialism East and West." It was very popular.

Student leaders like Daniel Cohn-Bendit would speak in similar terms on television to millions of people.

We took it for granted in 1968 that those who demonstrated against the war in Vietnam also marched against the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Just as the police attacked our demonstrations over Vietnam they also attacked our demonstration over Czechoslovakia.

People began to see the connection between the two and thought there was a possibility of a genuine socialism

from below based upon mass democracy, not the fake democracy of parliament or Russian tanks.

## WHAT HAPPENED to the movement that grew up around '68?

BETWEEN 1968 and 1975 there was a huge build up of working class struggles. At first the old trade unions and the left parties did not know how to deal with it.

In France the Communist Party denounced the student protest. In Britain the strikes that began in 1969 were by and large unofficial.

By 1974 the old parties and unions believed that they could use these movements, not to smash the system, but to increase their own influence inside it.

In Italy the Communist led unions organised factory committees to channel the movement towards themselves.

In Britain you had the emergence of left wing trade union leaders like Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon.

In 1974 there was the first big recession since the Second World War. Governments were worried about how they were going to deal with the crisis.

A deal was struck with the official leaders of the movement. Some concessions to workers were granted like negotiation rights. In return the official leaders controlled the developing movement.

In Britain it was called the Social Contract. In Spain it was called the Pact of Moncloa and in Italy the Historic compromise.

This produced a massive confusion among people who had been fighting in the previous years.

While it was a question of fighting the Tories in Britain or the Christian Democrats in Italy it was simple. You

could see who the enemy was.

Now suddenly the left wing union officials who had supported the struggles in the previous years argued that we all have to work together, bosses and workers. Very large numbers of activists in the movement did not know how to respond. Struggles died down and this gave the employing class in every country time to reorganise.

## WHAT IS the importance of '68 fortoday?

THE DANGER today is that 12 months after the general election people feel nothing much has changed.

They face two choices. They can get angry or they can get demoralised and cynical—1968, however, proves how rapidly things can change.

Some people appear apathetic at the moment. It is not because they like existing society. Everyone individually wants change, but they don't realise how powerful the collective feeling for change is.

Once struggle starts it is as though all the switches change direction. Apathy turns into anger and militancy.

It is also important to have socialist organisation already established.

Revolutionary ideas did not gain a big enough footing in the factories in 1968. That is why French capitalists were able to survive the huge strike.

Today we have to ensure the anger and bitterness against the Labour government are transformed into political action so that when the struggle rises socialists are able to lead it and argue what needs to be done.

If that had existed in 1968 there could have been revolutionary change by 1975. New revolts will come again. The task for socialists is to prepare for the "fire next time".

## THE BEST BOOK ON 1968

\*THE FIRE Last Time is not primarily about 1968. It is a panoramic political analysis of Europe, East and West, and the United States, from 1968 to 1976.

"No one who reads *Socialist Worker* can possibly do without it."  
■ PAUL FOOT

\*THE SKILL in Harman's method is that he nowhere reduces 1968 to impersonal forces alone. French workers had been underpaid, overtaxed and knackered for almost ten years. "He has written it exactly to develop the theoretical understanding we will need to ensure that the fire next time burns down the system once and for all."  
■ BOB LIGHT

THE FIRE LAST TIME. 1968 and after by Chris Harman. £9.95. Available from Bookmarks, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8. Phone 8722682.



## Comment

### MICHELLE SMITH: Swimming in a cess pool

**THE SWIMMER** Michelle Smith has her passionate defenders and detractors. But whatever about the allegations of drug taking, the real issue is how the sport is organised.

Swimming has become more competitive with greater speeds expected from the participants. In order to achieve this, drug use has become an integral part of this industry. The sports bodies then implement Gestapo style drug testing measures in an effort to combat it.

If you are in the top ranking 20 sports people in the world, you are liable to be tested by FINA at any time during the day. In the case of Michelle Smith they came to her home at 8 o' Clock in the morning. She was made to give a urine sample in their presence and couldn't even go to the bathroom on her own.

Stories are rife about sports people wearing vials of alcohol internally which they can secrete while urinating. It only takes a finger tip of alcohol to manipulate a urine sample.

What gave rise to the spot check of Michelle Smith was the discovery of 13 vials of banned growth hormones in the luggage of a Chinese swimmer on her way to the World Championships in Perth last January.

This swimmer was particularly unfortunate. She was carrying enough for the entire Chinese women's team to enjoy their performance enhancing benefits for a fortnight!

### Muscle

Before the Chinese, it was the East German swimming team who were found out using their special muscle building drug *Unterstützende Mittel*.

And it's not just swimming. The sprinter Ben Johnson, the American runner Butch Reynolds and Michelle Smith's partner Erik de Bruin are only a few examples of caught using drugs. It gets more disturbing when you see some of the ages of these offenders such as the 15 year old American swimmer Jessica Fische who tested positive for steroids.

The evidence against Michelle Smith is strong. She was an unremarkable swimmer, who trailed behind in two Olympics. She then came under the wing of a Discus thrower who became her coach. They train in secret, while boasting that she does on average 100,000 laps a week.

Michelle Smith has also developed a massive muscle density, and at a time when most female swimmers of her age are slowing down she ends up winning three gold Olympic medals.

If Michelle Smith has been a Chinese swimmer, the Irish press would have been highly critical. But they rallied around 'their own' swimmer and drowned out the sceptics. It's all part of the modern flag waving that has turned sport into a orgy of chauvinism.

Under the capitalist system sports mirrors the insane pressure for 'competitiveness' that operates in the economy. Sponsors uses the athletes to sell overpriced brands like Addidas or Nike. The sports person is just another unit cost to be manipulated.

### Dogged

This all means that a huge hierarchy develops. The ordinary athlete will slog away in poorly funded grounds or pools. Yet Michelle Smith's earnings are ranked at £100,000—which is really not a lot because she is still dogged by bad publicity from the Olympics in Atlanta.

She is also known to demand very high fees for publicity appearances—such as the most recent controversial opening of a pool in the North.

It all shows how an enjoyable part of human activity has become corrupted. Sport has become a massive industry. At the end of the twentieth century capitalism is moving into every area of life to distort it with the money culture. Whether it is strips for Manchester United T-shirts or cigarette advertising at Formula One racing, the system turns everything a commodity.

When things start to go wrong the media then turn on the very heroes they hyped up in the past. The problem is supposed to be individual 'cheats' who refuse to play fair.

But rather than witch hunt victims such as Michelle Smith the finger needs to be pointed at the those who control the sports industry.

by SINEAD KENNEDY

## Book

# A tribute to unsung heroes

**HIDDEN AGENDAS** is the latest book by John Pilger, a journalist who has established a reputation as a champion of the oppressed around the world.

by Paddy Moen

It is an immensely worthwhile read for anyone fed up with the propaganda of the establishment media and keen to understand what is really happening in the world.

The book is devoted to "slow news" which, as he explains, happens in places like Iraq or Vietnam or the docks of Liverpool. Events that occur here are rarely reported as they are deemed not interesting enough to the average person.

Pilger's great advantage is that he has seen at first hand the effects of many of the wars of the last thirty years. This stands in contrast to editorial writers who regard events like the Gulf War as unpleasant but necessary.

His clear explanation of the reasons for that war gives lie to the notion that it had anything to do with restoring democracy in Kuwait.

Pilger believes that journalism should be more than simply the reporting of events and re-

gards those unwilling to challenge the established consensus as "counterfeit journalists".

The heroes of *Hidden Agendas* are "unpeople", Pilger's term for victims of the system who for the most part are voiceless. You get the impression the people he is most inspired by are those in the East Timorese resistance movement, as he tells the story of some of those who show incredible bravery in trying to free their country from the tyranny of Indonesian rule.

Pilger recently took part in the annual Famine Walk in Mayo. He denounces the current revisionism that makes out that the Great Hunger was a purely natural disaster.

He also takes the Irish government to task for seeking to build a relationship with NATO.

It is evident throughout the book that Pilger believes there is much cause for optimism.



**EAST TIMORESE boy and occupying troops, 1991**

He is convinced that an "invisible revolution" is under way around the world which will in time bring to an end the op-

pressive system we live under.

*Hidden Agendas* by John Pilger, Vintage, £8.99.

## play

# Fantasies of elegance

by Conor Kostick

**TENNESSEE WILLIAM'S** play *A Streetcar Named Desire* is set in New Orleans just after the Second World War.

An unstable and manipulative Blanche Du Bois, surviving on fantasies from a elegant upbringing in the Deep South, comes to stay with her sister Stella and husband Stanley. The intensity of the drama comes from the three of them being forced together in just two rooms.

Stanley is a tough factory worker and war veteran in whom violence simmers close to the surface. The airs and graces of Blanche drive him wild.

The resulting conflict has overtones of the



**Frances McDormand and Liam Cunningham at the Gate**

clash between a decaying Southern society and the crude but effective Northern industry. It is also an exploration of how fantasy and invention can always be broken down by stubborn reality.

The production is excellent, with a hothouse atmosphere created by great stage design and lighting. However for the play to really work you have to believe that Stanley is capable of massive acts of psycho-

logical cruelty.

And this is not the case. While Blanche (Frances McDormand) is played absolutely convincingly, the same cannot be said of Stanley (Liam Cunningham). Possibly this is due to weaknesses in the acting, but more likely it because the 1990s are very different to the 1940s.

The proud American manual worker, king of his home, is a more contradictory figure today.

We live in an age where the most popular cultural equivalents to Stanley Kowalski are Homer Simpson and Al Bundy.

As a result I suspect that some of the impact of this morbidly fascinating clash has been lost for good.

*A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams, Gate Theatre, Dublin.

## Drop out with the Dude

**THE BIG LEBOWSKI** is the latest offbeat offering from the Coen Brothers.

The hero is a laid back hippy, known as The Dude (Jeff Bridges), whose real name is Jeff Lebowski. He is mistaken by gangsters for another Jeff Lebowski, a wealthy veteran of the Korean War.

The film is set against a backdrop of the 1991 Gulf War and continually sends up the ravings of right wing America.

When *The Dude* comes face to face with his rich namesake, he is subjected to a barrage of insults about "drop-outs" who dodged the Vietnam War. The rich Lebowski is wheelchair bound since being maimed in Korea and never stops reminding the "dropouts" how patriots like himself did all the fighting.

Quoting President Bush, *The Dude* complains about Lebowski's "aggression". *The Dude* has only come to complain about the gangsters peeing on his favourite carpet but he becomes drawn into the underworld when Lebowski asks him to hand over the ransom for his kidnapped wife.

John Goodman plays *The Dude's* bowling companion, a Vietnam veteran with his own line in right wing patriotism. But the Goodman character has redeeming qualities and comes to his friends aid, even though it means breaking the Sabbath.

*The Big Lebowski* takes the side of the "dropouts", who refuse to take part in the rat race and play bowling for pleasure rather than to be competitive.

The film also sends up Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* and *Reservoir Dogs*—instead of the latter's severed ear, our heroes go in search of the owner of a severed toe!

by Dave  
McDonagh

**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 dictatorship. 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 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.

**While scabs get bonuses ...**

# Ryanair are sacking union members

**RYANAIR HAVE stepped up their campaign to break SIPTU. A fortnight ago two more union members at the company were sacked. Five of the 39 baggage handlers who took strike action have now been dismissed.**

The pretext that Ryanair is using is that the workers have been deemed unsatisfactory during their probation period.

But one of the sacked workers told Socialist Worker that this was a lie.

I was called in on Friday and sacked there and then. The manager told me that on my assessment after first six weeks in the company, they felt my work was fine but I had a 'bad attitude' But they never said anything about this at the time.

"The other reason they gave for sacking me was that I had an argument with a supervisor. I was not reprimanded or given a warning. So how could this be a reason for being let go?"

Ryanair are aware that nearly fifteen of the 39 baggage handlers are on proba-

**"The only reason they gave for sacking me was that I had an argument with a supervisor"**

tion. Their aim is to break the union by gradually letting them go.

The scabs at Ryanair are being treated very differently.

Nobody who broke the picket has been dismissed and instead they have been given a £700 bonus payment. One former union



THE SOLIDARITY which could have won

member who broke ranks on the eve of the strike has been promoted to a ramp agent.

The day we went back to work the company sent around a circular calling the strike breakers 'heroes' They were trying to roll our noses in it.

Yet we were told that there was to be no victimisation or intimidation while the committee of inquiry met.

When the Ryanair workers voted to go back, they were told that the Committee of Inquiry would take only short time.

Mary Harney told reporters that it would only take five weeks.

But it has gone on for eleven weeks and while SIPTU operates with its hand tied behind its back, Ryanair has gone on the offensive.

## SIPTU leaders refuse to fight

**The Ryanair strike was a test case for the new leadership who have taken over SIPTU. The union vice President Des Geraghty promised a more confident, modern union that would use its brain rather than just its muscle.**

at Aer Lingus organised industrial action in support for the Ryanair workers.

"When the Ryanair workers put a picket on the entrance to the airport we moved to close the place down.

The initiative came from the rank and file — not the union leaders' an Aer Lingus shop steward told Socialist Worker.

As soon as the strike began, the SIPTU leaders worked closely with the government to get the pickets lifted.

Instead of encouraging workers to hold out for victory, they pushed a committee of inquiry which gave no guarantee of union rights.

When Ryanair broke its promise of no victimisation and sacked union members, the SIPTU leaflets did nothing.

The victimisation that is now going on at Ryanair is proof positive that a new leadership needs to be forged in SIPTU out of the struggles of the rank and file.

## Danger from the Inquiry

**THE ALARM bells have begun to ring for many union activists in Aer Lingus as the Inquiry into the Ryanair dispute is due to report.**

Leaked reports to the press indicate that the in-

quiry team is even considering ways of stopping strikes closing down the airport in future.

Instead of sorting out Michael O Leary, they are looking for new ways to restrict workers taking strike action.

The inquiry team is

made up of the former union leader Phil Flynn who sits on the board of a bank and Dan McAuley who is a former representative of the bosses organisation.

"If this inquiry does not give Ryanair workers their union rights, then we should be looking at ways of re-starting this fight," a Ryanair worker told us.

## Obituary

**JACKIE Sprague died after fighting a long and hard battle against cancer.**

Jackie moved to Ireland in the late 1980s and spent nearly two years here.

She was a member of the SWP



when it was a small organisation and at a time when the work-

ing class had suffered defeats and were on the defensive.

Within weeks of her arrival she ensconced herself into the politics.

She very soon became a key person in the Dublin branch.

Jackie was a party

builder. She was part of the reason that the SWP in Ireland is now the organisation it is.

What a pity she hasn't lived to see the fruits of her work — a workers' revolution. Our sympathy to Gareth, her partner, her mother and her brother.

## 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.....

## SWP branch meetings

**BELFAST CENTRAL**  
Meets every Thurs 8pm, Garrick Bar, Chichester Street.

**BELFAST SOUTH**  
Meets every Weds at 7:30pm, Renshaws, University Street

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

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

**DUN LAOGHAIRE**  
Meets every Tues at 8pm in Christian Insitue.

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

**GALWAY**  
Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square

**MAYNOOTH**  
Meets every Thursday at 16.30pm Class Hall D Arts Maynooth college

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

**DUBLIN NORTH-WEST**  
Meets every Tuesday at 8:00pm 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 Conways, Parnell St.

**DUBLIN RATHMINES LOWER**  
Meets every Wed at 8pm in O'Connells Pub, Richmond St.

**DUBLIN RATHMINES UPPER**  
Meets every Mon at 8pm in O'Connells Pub, Richmond St.

**DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL**  
Meets every Thur at 8pm in the

Trinity Inn, Pearse St.  
**DUBLIN TALLAGHT/ CLONDALKIN**  
Meets Monday at 8pm in the Steering 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

**OUT NOW: The 1798 rebellion. A Marxist analysis of the 1798 bourgeois revolution, by Mark Hewitt, £1.50, available from SW paper sellers and branch bookstalls plus 50p postage from SW Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8**

**1798 THE YEAR OF REVOLUTION**

Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen

By MARK HEWITT

A Socialist Worker pamphlet

## New & reports—politics; the unions

send in your reports: telephone (01) 872 2682; fax: (01) 872 3838; e-mail: swp@clubi.ie

### THOUSANDS OF PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS SAY:

# 'It's not enough'

THOUSANDS of rank and file workers are up in arms over the latest deal for the local authorities and health boards.

"It's a re-hash of a deal we rejected before. It's £7 short of our original claim.

"It is all about de-skilling craft workers. I don't see why we should accept it," a Waterford craft worker told *Socialist Worker*.

Workers originally voted by 20 to one for their union leaders to pursue a £25.26 pay increase due under an analogue arrangements.

Analogue means that

the wages of craft workers in hospitals and local authorities are measured against a basket of other groups of workers in the public and private sector.

The system is supposed to be granted automatic increases.

General workers are then supposed to get 80% of whatever increase the craft workers get.

#### Squeeze

But the management have deliberately allowed the analogues to fall behind.

Now looking to squeeze productivity concessions out of workers before they get

what is rightfully theirs.

Workers are being asked to accept a 'Main Trade Makes Good' arrangement which calls for craft workers to take on the work of others.

The agreement gives management a blank cheque to push through major changes.

They say they are unable to 'outline an exhaustive interpretation of the MTMG concept'—but they still want workers to sign up to it.

If the deal goes ahead, workers will be forced to work the new practices 'under protest'.

Craft workers will also be asked to undertake the work of general operatives.

Management want to

intensify the work effort to establish a 'competitive workforce'.

But this in turn will mean more divisions between workers and job losses for general workers.

Strong opposition to the deal is being led by the Waterford region who have taken unofficial action.

#### Support

They received tremendous support for their action from general workers in the area.

Opposition has also spread to Cork where special meetings to discuss following the Waterford example took place.

"We are against the phasing in of increases. We voted 20 to one for our unions to go in and get the full claim with no strings attached.

"Why should we be asked to make concession when it was management to run down the analogues?" a Cork SIPTU member said.

Rank and file activists are now organising for a No vote in the third ballot that workers have had to go through.

■ *Copies of a leaflet written by Socialist Workers Party members in the health boards and local authorities are also available from Socialist Worker c/o PO Box 1648 Dublin 8.*

## TEAM workers set to reject buy out deal

SIGNIFICANT numbers of craft workers at TEAM are set up to reject a buy-out offer from FLS.

The media have presented the offer as very generous and quoted an average figure of £35,000 per worker to take over the semi state firm.

"It's a lot less for many

workers. There is also a tax bill to pay on it. But what they do not tell you about are the strings attached," a TEAM shop steward told *Socialist Worker*.

TEAM workers are being asked to give up their semi-state status and face the prospect of redundancy from FLS.

"This company has let

half their workforce go since 1992. The deal means they could sack us down the road or contract out sections like the paint shop or sheet metal area.

"Contract workers who move around the place say there is no where worse to work than on a PARC agency job with FLS"

The deal also means that

TEAM workers would leave behind a solid pensions arrangement that has accumulated funds of £800 million over the years.

"FLS have told us we would have to transfer—but they do not spell out what their pension arrangements are."

The rejection by TEAM workers would represent an

important blow to plans to privatise the semi states. The real aim of government strategy is to sell off Aer Lingus but there will be few offers so long as it is tied to TEAM.

The irony is that TEAM is profitable but airline companies are generally loath to take on a maintenance division.

## Telecom Eireann share threat

UNION leaders in Telecom will spend the month of June trying to sell the new ESOP deal to their members.

The media has claimed that the share deal will make

Telecom workers better off. Fine Gael's Alan Dukes even claimed the ESOP was a "giveaway" by the state!

But the hypocrisy behind the talk of partnership came clear when Telecom threat-

ened workers that if they did not vote for the ESOP deal they would not get a pay rise due under the PCW.

Workers are now balloting for industrial action over this denial of their leg-

itimate rise.

The deal involves major concessions on jobs, pension payments and conditions.

Telecom is being prepared for privatisation so

the government can bring more money into the coffers.

This is the same short term thinking that led Thatcher to privatise British Telecom, resulting in thousands of job losses but giving huge profits and salaries to the bosses.

The Irish government even wants to use the money from the sale to pay for the LUAS light railway in Dublin!

#### Expense

Luas should be built, but not at the expense of Telecom jobs.

What is wrong with taxing the rich to pay for public transport?

Telecom workers should not listen to the rhetoric about "partnership" being used to sell the ESOP.

As one Telecom worker said, "We should reject ESOP and tell our union leaders to start representing members instead of engaging in business unionism".

## MSF Leaders rapped on Irish Life sell-out

Delegates at the MSF union conference came out strongly against the discrimination of refugees in Ireland.

They agreed to campaign against the spread of racism in Ireland. Motions were also passed strongly condemning the brutal arrest and assault by gardai of Congolese refugee Belmondo Wantete. (see page 2) Delegates demanded that all charges be immediately dropped against Mr. Wantete.

Delegates also voted to boycott goods and services of workplaces involved in disputes over union recognition. Speakers denounced

Ryanair as one of the main targets.

The MSF leadership suffered a severe rebuff over their handling of the Irish Life dispute. In their annual report they merely noted that

the strike was caused by a director who had been replaced and looked forward to better relations.

However Irish Life workers challenged this dismissal of their of their long struggle.

In his reply, the MSF General Secretary John Tierney attacked the commitment of the strikers but he was met with loud boos.

Delegates then voted to rewrite this section of the report and nominated the Irish Life delegates to produce a more accurate account.

One delegate who attended the conference told *Socialist Worker*, "There is a clear left-right divide in this union."

"There was a lot of opposition to the changes in union structure which have cut back on democracy. We need to organise to challenge the leadership which sold out the Irish Life workers."

### GARDAI STRIKE FOR PAY

THOUSANDS of Garda took strike action on May day to demand higher pay. It was a slap in the face to John O'Donoghue who demanded loyalty at all costs.

Socialists do not regard the police as simply another group of workers. They exist to keep order on behalf of the rich and among their main functions are clamping down on strikes and demonstrations.

But in this instance, if the gardai win up to 39 percent, it will encourage workers to push for a break with the pay restraint of Partnership 2000.

That is what politicians mean when they talk about the fear of knock on claims.

## March for Health Services

ON FRIDAY 8th May, five hundred people marched to defend health services for Dublin's South inner city.

The march was organised by the Hospital Action Committee which was formed by local residents.

As the proposed move to Tallaght, which is scheduled for June 21st, comes closer it is becoming clear that the current plan involves a serious loss of health care.

The future of the Meath, Adelaide and Harcourt hospitals is uncertain.

The Meath Hospital was to have had 76 beds retained for a year to ease the move, but a recent decision of the Tallaght Hospital board has reversed that.

The consequence for patients depending on public health care is a serious worsening of services.

Facilities are already overcrowded and underfunded, following the loss of 3,000 hospital beds over the last ten years. Now they are set to get worse.

One member of the Portobello residents association gave examples of the problems ahead:

"The Tallaght hospital was supposed to be the most up to date hospital full of facilities. But the funding for it is only £50m, that is about half the amount of similar sized hospitals like James' or the Beaumont.

"Play Therapists for example lacks very basic equipment. The blood testing area is too small and has no waiting area.

"People who cannot afford it are going to be pushed into private health care, especially in cases where it is a matter of life or death.

"A lot of people don't realise yet what it is going to mean, not having an accident and emergency in the Meath or beds for treatment locally."

Brian Cowen, Minister for Health, has ignored the campaign so far.

But there is still time to win a reprieve for the threatened hospitals.

The resistance of the hospitals workers involved could be the key to the campaign.

## CPSU conference

The CPSU conference takes place in Killarney following the outcome of a ballot for industrial action against job losses in the civil service.

The Department of Finance has already secured agreement that 150 posts should go but they have sought a further 200 in return for extra promotions.

The extra promotions arise because of the Gerster ruling which says that job sharers and former job sharers should be given promotions lost due to discrimination.

#### Equality

There should be no question of trading jobs for equality.

Even if only 100 extra posts go, as opposed to 200, staff left behind will face increased workloads.

The CPSU conference is also due to discuss withdrawing from Partnership 2000 and claiming a £35 a week increase.

The motions for withdrawal should be supported as well as the motion calling for an amnesty for asylum seekers.

# Socialist Worker

Inside:

**FRANCE MAY 1968:  
TEN MILLION  
ON GENERAL  
STRIKE!**—PAGE 8

Solidarity price £1

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p

A POSTER from the Unionist "NO" campaigners in Belfast said "Millions of pounds for the Irish language and no Orange marches, VOTE NO".

The bigots have also announced plans for a "monster rally" at Drumcree just two days before the referendum.

These actions will sicken the thousands of Protestants and Catholics who want a safe and peaceful society in which to bring up their children.

Many will vote for the Belfast Agreement for this reason.

But the Agreement will bring not bring peace because it fails to deal with the causes of the conflict—the sectarianism that is built into the Northern state.

No one should expect fundamental changes from the RUC when the Commission to inquire into it is chaired by a Tory, Chris Patton, who has always backed up the 'forces of law and order'.

An editorial in the Belfast Sunday Life says that "Everyone knows that a resounding Yes vote will not stop the violence. But it will provide the British and Irish governments with the mandate to take whatever measures are necessary to rid us of the scourge of terrorism."

The ground swell of peace came from working class people.

But that impulse was taken by the rulers of Dublin and London and used to fashion an agreement which is in the bosses' interests.

## Competing

So, Catholics and Protestants are still expected to stay in their separate camps, voting for their 'tribal' political parties, competing with each other in the Assembly over scarce resources for schools and hospitals.

All the main Northern parties from Sinn Fein to the Unionists want to cut the taxes on business to bring them into line with the South. But this can only mean less money for decent hospitals and schools.

The new Assembly contains the danger of encouraging sectarian conflict, as these parties appeal to their respective communities in disputes over funding or grants.

Issues of human rights, decommissioning, sectarian marches and reform of the RUC are already a source of sectarian point-scoring.

It is not hard to see how factory closures and school funding will continue to be used to stir up sectarian rivalry and hatred.

# IF THIS IS A SETTLEMENT IT'S TIME FOR CLASS POLITICS

## The way forward

**BUT THIS is only one scenario. In the aftermath of a settlement there is also the potential for the development of class politics.**

The Assembly will force all the main parties to take responsibility for managing capitalism in the North.

That will mean that Sinn Fein, the SDLP and the Ulster Unionists will push through the same cuts in public spending and tax cuts to business that Blair is implementing in Britain.

This raises the possibility of working class struggles against these policies. Tens of thousands will ask—why was there so much suffering when so little changes?

The key to the situation lies in a break from communal politics. Not just from

bigots like Trimble and Paisley—but also from 'progressive parties' like Sinn Fein or the loyalist DUP.

But of these claim to advance working class interests—but only in so far as the working class are safely ensconced in their ghettos voting for them.

## Enemies

Just like Celtic and Rangers, these former enemies claim to represent workers only on their side of the fence.

Genuine class politics has to spring from common struggle where Catholics and Protestants fight together. That means from struggle against bosses who are both Orange and Green.

In Northern Ireland, this will demand socialist politics

to overcome decades of division.

This means opposition to all forms of loyalism with its trappings of monarchy and empire.

It also means a break from the bankrupt politics of republicanism. In every generation, the leaders of republicanism shift from armed struggle to respectability.

Sinn Fein are behaving no differently today than Fianna Fail acted in the South in the 1920s.

Today it is becoming more clear that the only socialist politics offers a real hope of challenging oppression and privilege.

If these politics are built for quickly, then the settlement can provide the materials for turning workers against its architects.

## SOCIALISM into the MILLENNIUM

Friday 5th & Saturday 6th June

Queens University Students Union

FRIDAY 8pm: After the Peace

Settlement—the Left in Northern

Ireland—Kieran Allen (Editor, Socialist

Worker)

SATURDAY 10.30-11.45: Irish Patriot or

Revolutionary? Wolfe Tone and the

lagacy of the United Irishmen—Mark

Hewitt;

12-00- 1.25: Trade Unions, their leaders

and the Rank and File—Colm Bryce

2pm-3.15: Women's Liberation, Marxism

and Oppression—Joan Gallagher

3.30-4.45: The Protestant Working Class

and the Struggle for Socialism Today—

Niall Morton

5pm: Building the Revolutionary Party—

Kieran Allen

Tickets £2 (£1 students/unemployed)

For more details contact SWP, PO Box

354 Tomb Street Belfast