

Socialist Worker

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inside

THE SCAM TO HELP THE RICH AVOID TAXES

PAGES 6-7



£120 million stolen every year...

BANKERS ROB THE POOR

WHEN A robber gets caught for a hold up in a bank, he is jailed. But when the bankers rob us they get off.

The major banks in Ireland have organised a tax scam that cost up to £120 million a year. According to a major report from the Comptroller General banks made sure that their rich clients did not have to pay DIRT tax by knowingly letting them away with false declarations that they were 'non-residents'.

This money was robbed directly from the poor.

★ If all the taxes the banks helped to swindle were paid, the old age pension could be doubled for one year.

★ Twice the amount of money could be spent on primary schools every year. That would mean small

classes of 20 pupils or a huge increase in computers.

But the greedy parasites who milk the system for grants and subsidies do not want to pay a penny in tax.

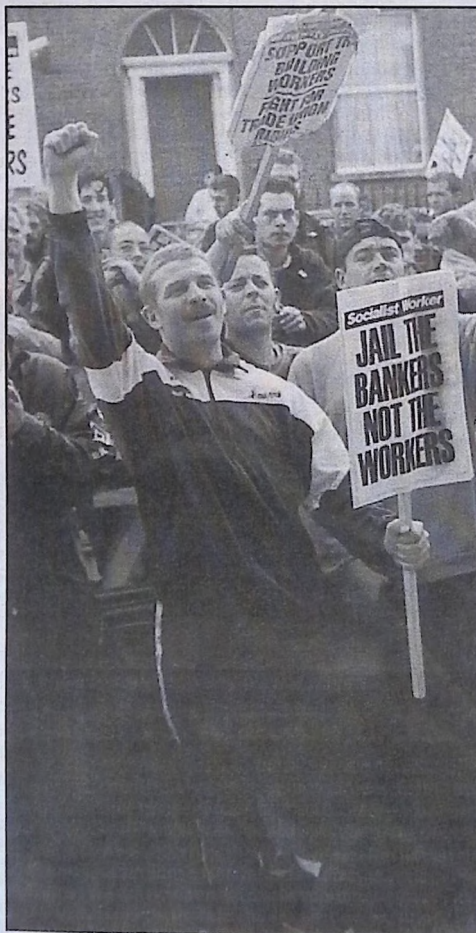
Maurice O'Connell, the governor of the Central Bank turned a blind eye to what was going on, claiming that any fuss would scare away investors.

Yet O'Connell had previously attacked social welfare recipients calling them scroungers.

Last year eight people were sent to jail for minor social welfare fraud. They had claimed a few hundred more than they were due.

But the directors of the AIB and the other banks have swindled millions.

These are the real crooks that should be behind bars for robbing the poor.



MAKE THE RICH PAY THEIR TAXES

Did social partnership cause the boom?

page 11

How do we save the ENVIRONMENT?

page 8



Tribunals corruption & cover-ups

page 2

Fed-up waiting for the N.I. assembly

page 5

PRIVATISATION IS A RIP-OFF

page 3

Also in Socialist Worker:



STAR WARS & the moon landing reviewed

page 9

Bailey cooks the books

MICHAEL BAILEY, the builder who denies having bribed Ray Burke seems less keen on paying his workers than paying politicians.

Bailey and his brother used to own the Riversdale Nursing Home in Palmerstown, Co Dublin but closed it, claiming it was unprofitable.

Most of the 32 care staff earned only £4.20p an hour and the nursing staff £8 an hour. This means that the statutory redundancy would be minuscule as most of the workers worked part time.

Three of the workers turned up to the Flood Tribunal to picket Bailey. They want proper redundancy payments from their tax-judging employer. In 1998 Bailey was convicted in the District Court for failing to make any tax returns and fined a trivial £750.

Mars Monster

FORREST MARS, billionaire manufacture of Mars bars has died leaving a £12.5 billion legacy.

Forrest Mars ranks as one of the monsters of US capitalism. He lived a reclusive life above his factory and spied on his workforce through two way mirrors.

He terrorised his workforce and not even his own son was spared. At a marketing meeting in Germany, Mars ordered his son to kneel in front of the workers and pray for the company.

His son was left kneeling for one hour while Mars senior laid into the workforce.

FF'S EURO PALS

FIANNA FAIL are keeping good company in the European Parliament.

They have joined a new group, the Union for Europe of the Nations (UFEN).

The group consists of the 12 members of the French right led by Charles Pasqua, one Danish anti-immigrant, two Portuguese conservatives and 10 members of the former neo-fascist AN.

Charles Pasqua, president of the new group, was a hugely controversial Minister of the Interior who charted plans to deport immigrants from France.

Another key member is Mogens Camre, a member of a far-right Danish party.

Its leader, Pia Kjaersgaard, campaigned against the Maastricht Treaty claiming it threatened to flood Denmark with bogus asylum seekers.

I'm Spartacus!

THE NEW "Enslaving America" theme park in Virginia is certainly stirring emotions.

Holidaymakers pay to get the "experience" of life on a slave plantation. But things started to go askew when manacled children started bursting into tears.

Wrestled

Other participants then started taking their roles seriously. One got so involved he wrestled a musket from an actor playing an overseer and attempted to shoot him.

Another incited a slave revolt, shouting, "There's only three of them and 100 of us!" before being restrained by staff.

Tribunals

Arrest to hold back the Flood

IN A desperate attempt to stop the truth coming to light about the corruption in Irish politics the DDP has charged George Redmond with not filing tax returns.

Redmond can now say he cannot give evidence to the tribunal because this could prejudice his criminal trial.

This same stalling tactic was used to keep witness out of the Beef Tribunal.

Prevented

Three managers from the Goodman's Rathkeale plant

Harney attacks single parents

MARY HARNEY'S announcement that she is cutting 5,000 Community Employment scheme places is another attack on single parents. It is also designed to force young people into the low paid jobs.

Twelve months ago a top firm of consultants Deloitte Touche claimed that too many single parents and young people were on CE schemes.

Deloitte Touche are an accountancy firm who have long served the rich. They know nothing about life on the bread line.

Their advice was music to the ears of Harney. During the

were prosecuted for irregularities and this prevented them giving evidence to the beef tribunal.

Last year the DPP only charged 6 people with tax offences.

Yet the morning that the Supreme Court ruled the Criminal Assets Bureau had to hand over all its documents on Redmond to the Flood Tribunal, Redmond turned up of his own accord at a Garda station to be arrested.

This is the second time that Redmond has been conveniently arrested.

The first time was in February this year, when he was coming back from the Isle of Man with suitcase containing £300,000 of unexplained money.

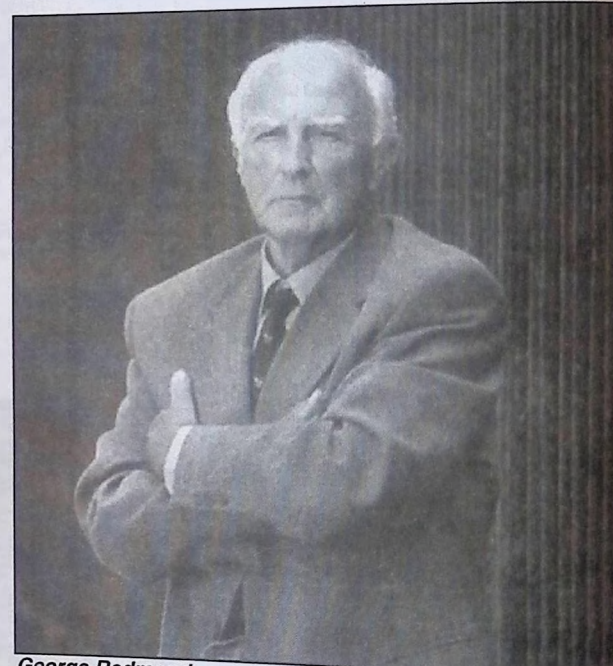
It was also suggested that he was carrying the documents to hand over to the tribunal as part of a non-prosecution deal.

Abuses

Redmond has key knowledge about planning abuses. James Gogarty has accused him of taking bribes and demanding a 10% cut of all the savings he made for developers.

Redmond was the Assistant County manager for over twenty years, and oversaw nearly all the planning deals in Dublin.

Yet now Redmond could be kept off the witness stand in a legal manoeuvre to stop the truth getting out.



George Redmond

Ahern's Amnesia

AHERN RECENTLY gave evidence to the Moriarty Tribunal but despite an hour and half of testimony nobody is any the wiser about what happened the £1million of tax payers money that ended up in Fianna Fail's accounts and Haughey's lavish lifestyle.

There were three signatories on the account - Haughey, Ahern and Ray McSharry. Almost all the 1,615 cheques draw from the account were signed by Ahern and Haughey. Six of the seven cheques which the tribunals are investigating, including one made out to Haughey's son's company Celtic

Helicopters were signed by Ahern in 1991.

Ahern claimed it was his practice to sign blank cheques and that it was normal for the FF chief whip and Party's Finance Spokesperson to sign cheques with the party leader.

However Ahern's name remained on the account for almost five years after he ceased to be chief whip in March 1987.

But none of tribunal lawyers asked Ahern why this happened.

When he was asked a direct question Ahern appeared to suffer from chronic amnesia.

He could not remember what happened to the files relating to the bank account.

He couldn't remember signing any cheques for Brian Lenihan's medical expenses. He didn't even remember signing a £25,000 cheque made out to cash which ended up in Haughey's Guinness and Mahon account.

Obscene Divisions

THE WORLD'S three richest men have more wealth between them than the annual income of 600 million people in the least developed countries.

That is the staggering figure recorded in the latest United Nations Human Development Report. Bill Gates and Paul Allen of Microsoft and financier Warren Buffett have total assets of \$156 billion.

This amount is greater than the combined annual output of the 43 least developed countries.

Other figures show that the world's richest 200 people have more than doubled

their wealth in the four years up to 1998 - up to £602 billion.

In contrast more than 80 countries have a lower income per head today than a decade ago.

Income

The report says that "global inequalities in income and living standards have reached grotesque proportions".

Thirty years ago the gap between richest fifth of the world's people and the poorest fifth stood at 30 to one. Today it stands at 74 to one.

PRIVATISATION: The Thatcherite lies

FIANNA FAIL are planning a massive sell-off of the public sector.

The Telecom share flotation is being used to win popular support for a plan that will eventually see Aer Lingus, Aer Rianta, Coillte and the two state banks sold off.

Many workers bought shares in the hope of gaining a quick few hundred pounds.

But Fianna Fail's aim is not to reward workers but to create opportunities for big business to make a fortune from the sell-off of state assets.

They are now repeating some of the old lies about privatisation that Maggie Thatcher used.

**LIE No 1:
Privatisation will help to bring more efficiency.**

THE EXPERIENCE in Britain tells a different story. Thousands have to queue for hours at the Passport Agency this summer because the privatised company could not organise its computer system properly.

When social security benefits were privatised Andersen Consulting Ltd. ran up a two year back log in dealing with cases.

In London the water system was privatised after the right-wing government claimed that more investment was needed to cut down on the leakage rate.

Yet today the leakage rate at Thames Water is 38 percent.

The reality is that privatised companies are run by big bureaucracies just like state companies. Because of the scale of capital needed to run an airline or a telecommunications system, state monopolies are replaced with private monopolies or cosy cartels.

A study conducted on EU electricity industries in 1995 concluded that private and public companies "are being operated equally efficiently".

**LIE No 2:
Privatisation will cut costs for the consumers**

SUPPORTERS OF privatisation cite the example of Ryanair to claim that it reduces costs. But they fail to mention that only Ryanair was given access to Stanstead airport in London. The Irish government banned Aer Lingus from using it.

The evidence generally shows that privatisation does not lead to cheaper costs for consumers.

A comparison between the cost of water in Britain and Sweden showed that Swedish water was cheaper. The main reason was that Swedish water is publicly owned.

Privatised companies are more likely to cut costs for their big industrial consumers rather than working people.

This is why the price of electricity is cheaper in Ireland and Greece rather than Germany and Belgium where private companies control much of the supplies.

Private companies also cut back on subsidies to the very poor. The British Gas Consumers Council found that British Gas was more likely to cut off supplies to the poor and the elderly in winter because they did not 'want to be left with a rump of poor customers'.

LIE 3: Privatisation and share ownership will benefit workers

MARY O'ROURKE is promoting



Ahern is planning a massive sell-off

worker share ownership schemes as a way of winning compliance with privatisation.

But while Telecom workers may gain few hundred pounds now, there will be a worsening of conditions in the long term.

After British Telecom was privatised, a quarter of the workforce or 100,000 workers were eventually sacked. One study concluded that, "all of these jobs could have been sustained if the cash distributed as dividends had instead been applied to paying wages."

The energy sector in Britain accounts for half of all EU jobs lost in this area - because it is privatised.

Privatisation is usually associated with a contracting out of services which brings more hardship for workers.

A Treasury report from Thatcher's own government in

1986 noted that, "contractors offer poorer conditions of employment . . . they eliminate costly bonus systems and overtime working, provide little or no sick pay, and avoid national insurance payments by means of more part time working. The difference in total labour costs may be of the order of 25 per cent. Pension are the main single element in it."

The long term aim of O'Rourke is to weaken public sector trade unionism by using 'market forces' to discipline workers.

**LIE No 4:
Privatisation cannot be resisted**

THIS IS the line of the union leaders. They are going along with the

share ownership schemes because they believe it reduces the pressure for higher wage increases and so helps maintain partnership agreements.

But workers at the Olympic airline in Greece stand out as a shining example of how to resist privatisation. Last month they held two 24 hour general strikes to stop a sell-off.

This has been part of a long pattern of struggle that stopped the Greek government in their tracks.

Privatisation could be resisted in Ireland but the union leaders do not want any serious struggle. Instead they push a message of defeat and claim that workers only want to get hold of their own shares.

That is why it is up to socialists to carry the message of resistance to these old Thatcherite schemes.

RANK AND FILE CONFERENCE THE ALTERNATIVE TO SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

"P2000 has been a disaster for workers. Super profits for the rich while workers are constantly asked for extra productivity.

"Yet despite this the union leaders want to take us into another partnership deal. We are in a stronger position than ever before to break from wage restraint, but we need to get organised.

"I encourage every trade unionist to come to the conference."

—CAROLANN DUGGAN

**Saturday September 25th,
Teachers Club, Parnell Square, Dublin**

Organised by the Rank & File Solidarity Network

To get full details of the conference return this form to
105 O'Hogan Road, Dublin 10.

Name

Union

Position (shop steward etc.)

Address

Tel. No.



news of the world

Balkans

Where is NATO's humanitarianism?

100,000 strike in South Africa

HUNDREDS OF thousands of South African civil servants, teachers, health workers and police struck on Friday of last week and many of them marched on government offices to protest against poverty wages.

Rallies were held in Pretoria, and five other cities.

The ANC government is trying to force one million public sector workers to accept a pay deal far lower than the rate of inflation.

Three major unions—the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union, the SA Democratic Teachers' Union and the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union—are demanding a 10 percent rise while the government is offering just 6.2 percent.

Workers were due to start an all out strike this Thursday unless there was a settlement.

The public sector strike comes amid mass job losses which have been fuelled by a huge privatisation programme and sliding gold prices.

Since the end of apartheid 150,000 public service jobs have gone and more are threatened and up to 80,000 gold mine jobs are also at risk. A week long strike by over 4,000 workers at the Oryx gold mine against job losses has ended with the bosses agreeing to suspend redundancies while further talks are held.

In another sign of hardening attitudes, workers at Columbus Steel, the country's only stainless steel producer, last week voted to stay out on strike despite the police arresting over 150 union members on the picket line.

This is a legal strike but the workers were initially refused bail for being what the judge said was "a danger to society".

"FIRST YOU bomb us, now we're being killed, what next". This is what one Serbian woman told the NATO troops who arrived to examine the scene of the 14 farmers who were massacred by supporters of the KLA in Kosovo.

The farmers were lined up near their combine harvesters close to the village of Gracko and shot with machine guns. The dead included a 15 year old boy.

According to the Observer, "the killings re-kindled fears that KLA hard-liners are secretly trying to push their master plan for an independent — and ethnically pure — Kosovo."

Attacks

Since the NATO troops went into to Kosovo there have been scores of attacks on Serb civilians.

This is not surprising. The British Defence



A victim of Nato's war in the Balkans

Minister, George Robertson, claimed that NATO's aim was 'Serbs out, NATO in and refugees back'.

Now NATO is turning a blind eye to the activities of their KLA allies who aim to ethnically cleanse Kosovo of Serbs and the Roma population.

The terror campaign has meant that there are now 146,000 Serb refugees out a previous population of around 200,000. In Pristina, which had 25,000 Serbs before NATO's occupation there are now only 1,000.

The Serbs who are being cleansed are not

colonialists.

They have lived in the area for hundreds of years.

But NATO is following the same pattern that occurred with all the Great Powers who intervened in the Balkans — it is setting one ethnic group against another.

They have forgotten all their hypocritical talk about 'humanitarianism'.

The Italian government which provided the air-bases for NATO bombers have just announced that it no longer will accept any refugees from Kosovo, despite killings of the Serb population.

The money for emergency relief is also drying up.

The Financial Times reports that the United Nations High Comm-

ission for Refugees sometimes 'has only two days money in hand because of the slow payments from donor countries'.

All of this is a tragic confirmation of what the anti-war movement warned of.

NATO was operating as a colonial power who would preside over new forms of ethnic cleansing.

Iran

Khatami shows his true colours

STUDENT protesters in Iran called off demonstrations last week, fearful that they would be massacred by security forces.

The student protesters began in opposition to proposed new measures restricting the press.

But their anger exploded when the security services and right wing Islamist vigilantes attacked students in the dormitories of Tehran university. At least one student was murdered.

Angry protests then spread from the capital Tehran to other towns and cities.

In Tehran thousands of students broke through police lines, attacked government buildings and burnt banks.

Some of the students' placards said "the silence is over - the uprising has begun" and, "This is Iran's intifada".

The regime responded by declaring demonstrations illegal. The regime in Iran is split between right wing conservatives who control large parts of the state and those around President Khatami who want the Iranian economy to open up to

the west and want more political reforms like more freedom of the press.

The promise of reform produced much radicalisation in the universities.

There have also been a number of strikes in recent months, and there was a sizeable May Day demonstration in Tehran.

But Khatami turned on those who want reform last week, scared their protests would go "too far".

The right wing called a counter-demonstration in Tehran denouncing the demonstrators as instruments of the West. The called for the students to be tried as enemies of the state - punishable by execution.

Khatami backed the counter-demonstration and said of the students protests "I am sure these people have evil aims. They intend to foster violence in society and we shall stand in their way".

Many of Khatami's supporters are now bitterly disillusioned with him.

The university term is over. The protests have been beaten for the time being, but this is only one round in the battle.

Turkey

OVER 300,000 workers took to the streets of Ankara, the capital of Turkey, recently in one of the biggest workers' demonstrations in the country's history.

They filled the main Kizilay square and surrounding streets for miles around.

The Labour Platform, a joint initiative of all the trade union federations in Turkey, called the rally to oppose a batch of anti working class laws brought before parliament by the new government.

Coalition

It took office two months ago and is a coalition headed by social democrat Bulent Ecevit. It also includes 12 ministers from the fascist Grey Wolves and members of the right wing ANAP party.

The demonstration has shaken the government. It deployed 10,000 police to control it, but they were unable to frighten protesters off the

streets. Workers are furious at proposals to raise the retirement age to 60 for men and 58 for women.

The average life expectancy for men in Turkey is just 63 years. Trade unions call the proposals "a pension in the graveyard". Pensions are already very low-less than £30 a week-and there are no unemployment benefits. Raising the pension age is one of the conditions the International Monetary Fund is insisting on for further loans to Turkey's tottering economy.

The huge turnout on the march was a magnificent display of workers' opposition to a government which is only a few weeks old and which was elected on a tide of anti-Kurdish chauvinism following the kidnapping of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Marchers chanted against the government: "Between the wolf, the dove and the bee [the symbols of the three coalition parties] the country has gone to the dogs."

Protesters burnt an effigy of prime minister Bulent Ecevit and called for right wing minister of labour Yasar Okuyan to resign.

Workers from the Kurdish areas of Turkey also shouted, "Long live

the brotherhood of peoples!"—a slogan traditionally associated with rights for Kurds.

However, the trade union leaders, who were almost as shocked by the size of the march as the government, sang the national anthem from the platform and encouraged workers to carry the Turkish flag.

The Turkish state is continuing its repression of the Kurdish and workers' movements, ordering a wave of arrests of officials of the pro-Kurdish HADEP party and seizing Kurdish leader Cevat Soysal from Moldova.

He appeared on television showing signs of having been tortured. Sevim Erol general secretary of militant civil service union KESK, is still missing after police kidnapped him on Wednesday of last week.

But last Saturday's mass demonstration shows the power workers have to derail the unstable coalition government.

It also gives a glimpse of how Turkish and Kurdish workers can unite against repression, provided the forces of the left make a clear break with the nationalist scapegoating whipped up by Turkey's rulers.

Eamonn McCann

Easing down the road

THE ORANGE Order "does have a right to march" along the Garvaghy Road.

The residents along the road "also have a right not to be curfewed and hemmed into their homes".

These conflicting rights "could easily be reconciled" if it weren't that "those on both sides who have been whipping up this issue have an agenda which goes far beyond parades".

The fault lies with "the sectarian intransigents on both sides".

As an analysis of Drumcree, this won't raise many eyebrows. It could have come from the *Belfast Newsletter*, the *Irish Independent* or the *Daily Mirror*. What's somewhat surprising is that it's from the July issue of the monthly paper of the Socialist Party (formerly the Militant.)

Socialist Worker seldom attacks other left-wing organisations. We disdain those "Marxist" publications more concerned with defining the precise difference between themselves and all others on the Left than with supporting the actual struggles of the working class.

But the latest turn in the thinking of the Socialist Party (SP) raises issues which socialists have to take seriously. Members and supporters of the SP itself should query the path their group is taking.

Reality

In itself, the SP's Drumcree line is nothing new. For decades, Labour and socialist organisations have grappled with the problem of sectarianism in the North and, as often as not, given up and accepted "the reality". Most commonly, like the Northern Ireland Labour Party in the '60s and '70s, they have adopted a "one side's as bad as the other" approach.

That's what's happened here. Harold Gracy and Breandan Mac Cionnaith are presented as "the sectarian intransigents on both sides".

The SP article goes on to suggest as a solution that "The return leg of the Drumcree march should be via the Garvaghy Road every second, or possibly every third year". Which is logical enough: if one side's as bad as the other, splitting the difference is as good an answer as any.

But if one side's as bad as the other, how come there's a huge number of ordinary Protestants, including many thousands of trade unionists, whose main response to this affair is revulsion against the Orange bigotry on display at Drumcree Hill and the vicious sectarian violence which has been associated with it?

The Orange Order and the Garvaghy Road residents are not two sides of the same coin. The Orange Order represents the open sectarianism which has characterised the Northern State since partition, excluding and showing contempt for Catholics while trying to con Protestant workers into seeing themselves shoulder-to-shoulder with the bosses.

The residents' group, whatever criticisms we might have from time to time, represents resistance to this sectarian pattern of politics.

The notion that socialists shouldn't take sides in this conflict is at best the avoidance of an awkward issue, at worst capitulation to bigotry. It arises from a lack of revolutionary politics.

Moving

The SP has been moving steadily away from revolution and towards reformism. Its strategy is now geared not towards working-class action but towards winning votes. Setting out thus to expand its influence within the system, it has lost sight of the defining function of revolutionary socialist politics—to mobilise the working class against the State.

In Northern Ireland, now as ever, this means backing off from confrontation with the sectarianism on which the State was built.

This comes through, too, in an editorial on decommissioning in the same SP paper. It refers to the prospect of "the effective disbandment of the IRA", suggesting that "the more astute unionists recognise that this is an unqualified victory for them", and urges Unionists not "to snatch...defeat from the jaws of victory".

This is a strange perspective for a group still styling itself "Marxist". It is, again, the result of a drift away from revolutionary socialism and towards the constitutional mainstream. The editorial contains no mention of the forces of the State, or the role of the State in nurturing sectarianism.

This is not a serious socialist approach. Serious socialists will have to look to the politics of the SWP.

Fed-up waiting for the Assembly

THE REFUSAL by the Ulster Unionists to set up the executive dashed the hopes of many who looked to the Assembly to bring change.

Carol Lindsay is chairperson of the Upper Bann Labour Party and lives in Craigavon. "My main feeling was frustration and sheer anger.

"My main concern is that we have no voice when it comes to government cutbacks or legislation and the Assembly for me is an opportunity to have that voice. But the politicians are only focused on one issue."

Shocked

Michael, a trade unionist from Derry, said, "I was shocked that it happened the way it did, but not surprised. The unionists are split.

"How could they not be. How can they try to whip people up into a frenzy every July and then turn around and say we're going to do things differently now, we're going to sit down in government with Catholics."

"People are really fed up with it all," said Jim Larmour a shop steward with the GPMU printing workers union in Belfast. "It's as though it doesn't really matter what ordinary people think. We voted for the Agreement last year, but the politicians are just messing about."

These feelings of frustration are closely connected to a desire to see social issues addressed by the Assembly.

Jim Quinn, a firefighter and local chair of the Fire Brigade

Could the Sectarian politicians ever deliver?

OTHERS ARE more sceptical that issues directly affecting working people would be addressed in the Assembly.

"There's a lot of talk about just getting the Assembly working and rest will fall into place." Michael said, "But I have never once heard one of those politicians put forward a plan for the health service or what we're going to do about schools."

Jim Larmour also has doubts. "There's still going to be a lot of point-scoring. The Assembly is dominated by parties like the Ulster Unionists and the DUP.

"You saw the way Paisley acted that day, jeering and laughing, making a fool of himself. These people aren't going to change."

Competition

More importantly, Jim is concerned that even the hope of new jobs could be a source of more communal competition. "All the parties are talking about new investment. They want to do it



The hard right of Unionism have been allowed to wreck the Agreement

Union, explains. "I was very disappointed, because we were hoping that with the Assembly working we could make our

politicians accountable. For years we've had to deal with faceless bureaucrats at Stormont. And we've seen what

firefighters across the water could do by having lobbies at their local fire authorities to stop some of the cuts."

by handing out grants and cutting business taxes.

"It is a recipe for competition because these sorts of jobs are based on competition between workers, so they are bound to be low paid."

Trimble has made decommis-

sioning the main barrier to setting up an executive. "I don't think decommissioning is the most important thing," said Carol Lindsay, "The point is that the guns aren't being used. It's about creating a climate where you can stop people using them."

"When you put it to people in the way the media does about 'guns under the table', it is an emotive issue," said Jim Larmour. "But this wasn't the main issue when we all voted last year, it's been thrown up since as a stalling tactic."

Don't wait for agreement at the top

PEOPLE ALSO thought that Blair's warning about the only alternative being a slide back to sectarian violence sounded hollow.

Jim Quinn said, "If it was true then the war would have started again by now. But it's obvious that people don't want that."

Jim Larmour said,

"Blair tells us we're standing at the edge of the abyss, as if we're all stupid.

"If we don't accept this, our other bad side will come out.

"There is a danger of violence if the whole thing collapses, but there no desire to go back to war that I can see.

"The message from the trade union leaders is that progress on the other issues will have to wait until the Assembly is set up.

"What should the trade unions be

doing?

Jim Larmour said "The trade unions should be campaigning over the big issues like decent jobs and wages.

Campaign

"We've been having a recruitment campaign in factories that have never had a union and we're getting loads of people signing up.

"People are really pissed off at the moment and they

want to see unions active."

Jim Quinn said, "The unions should be doing more.

"They've been very silent over the years.

"They should be mobilising that feeling that people want to get on with things.

"The job of the unions is to lead.

"It's our future as well, it doesn't just belong to the politicians."

Zimbabwe: 'Boiling mood of resistance'

ZIMBABWE in Southern Africa, a country of 11.5 million people, has seen mass strikes and monster demonstrations over the past 12 months.

President Mugabe faces intense pressure to go but seems grimly determined to hang on to power. Socialist Worker spoke to ANTANATO CHOTO from the International Socialist Organisation in Zimbabwe about those struggles.

"Zimbabwe is going through a real crisis, and the result is that hundreds of thousands of people who have never been involved in political discussion are arguing about the future.

There is terrible suffering but also the potential for real change.

Since 1990 prices of basic commodities have gone up by 300 percent. Buying bread and milk has now become a luxury for ordinary workers.

According to an official government report 76 percent of the population are now officially poor. 1 in 5 of the population are HIV positive but they are just dying at home with no proper care.

Many families live in one room yet you see Mugabe and his wife building mansions for themselves. Workers have not taken all this lightly. We have seen the re-emergence of the African working class.

1997 was the year of the highest number of strikes with many demanding better pay and working conditions.

1998 was opened by food riots. Six ordinary women in one township started taking bread from the delivery vans and this spread to all the other townships. They were not looting as the government say - they were taking what belonged to them. Mugabe sent soldiers into the townships. It was the first time since the white regime of Ian Smith did the same in 1973.

This forced the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions to call for a stay-away and 99 percent of workers responded.

In 1998 we also saw the students rising up. They protested against the privatisation of facilities in the universities.

The government was forced to close the universities because the students were saying that 'Suharto is gone so Mugabe should go now'.

Mugabe tried to turn to the peasants for support and promised to

take land from the white commercial farmers. But he never did and there were huge revolts last year with peasants taking the land themselves.

At the end of last year the ZCTU was forced to call another stay-away.

In response Mugabe banned demonstrations and strikes. The union leaders caved in but the ban has only managed to stop national strikes - individual companies and students are still coming out.

The economic crisis has fed into political unrest and the argument about a new Zimbabwean constitution has suddenly become a live issue for millions.

Ordinary people used to think issues like this were just for the politicians but now they feel that this is their issue too.

Workers are arguing that the constitution should include the right to strike, the right to work, the right for the state to take over any business which the bosses abandon.

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was set up by the ZCTU because they sensed that workers were far ahead of them and they felt the pressure on the ground to involve workers.

The MDC has become a forum for debate and a focus for grass roots organisations.

The situation is very exciting and things are really moving forward. In many workers there is a feeling that we can run things ourselves.

The middle class people who are against Mugabe don't want a workers party. They are afraid that a workers party might go beyond getting rid of Mugabe and might raise issues about rich and poor.

Of course the setting up of such a party will not solve all our problems. It will be headed by the same trade union leaders who have proved they cannot be trusted in the struggle against Mugabe.

But we are looking at the influence it would have in boosting morale for workers all over Africa and the greater opportunities to build a bigger socialist party."

Non-resident tax scam was...

MASSIVE FROM THE

THE BIGGEST ever robbery in Ireland was encouraged by the banks and covered up by politicians and the Revenue Commissioners.

The report into the banking industry by the Controller and Auditor General shows how millions of pounds has been stolen from the PAYE workers by the Irish rich.

At any one time as much as £10 billion was hidden in dodgy non-resident accounts designed to avoid tax.

The Department of Finance has said that "half the non-resident accounts are thought to be bogus". Another internal memo even mentioned 'funny money'.

Avoid

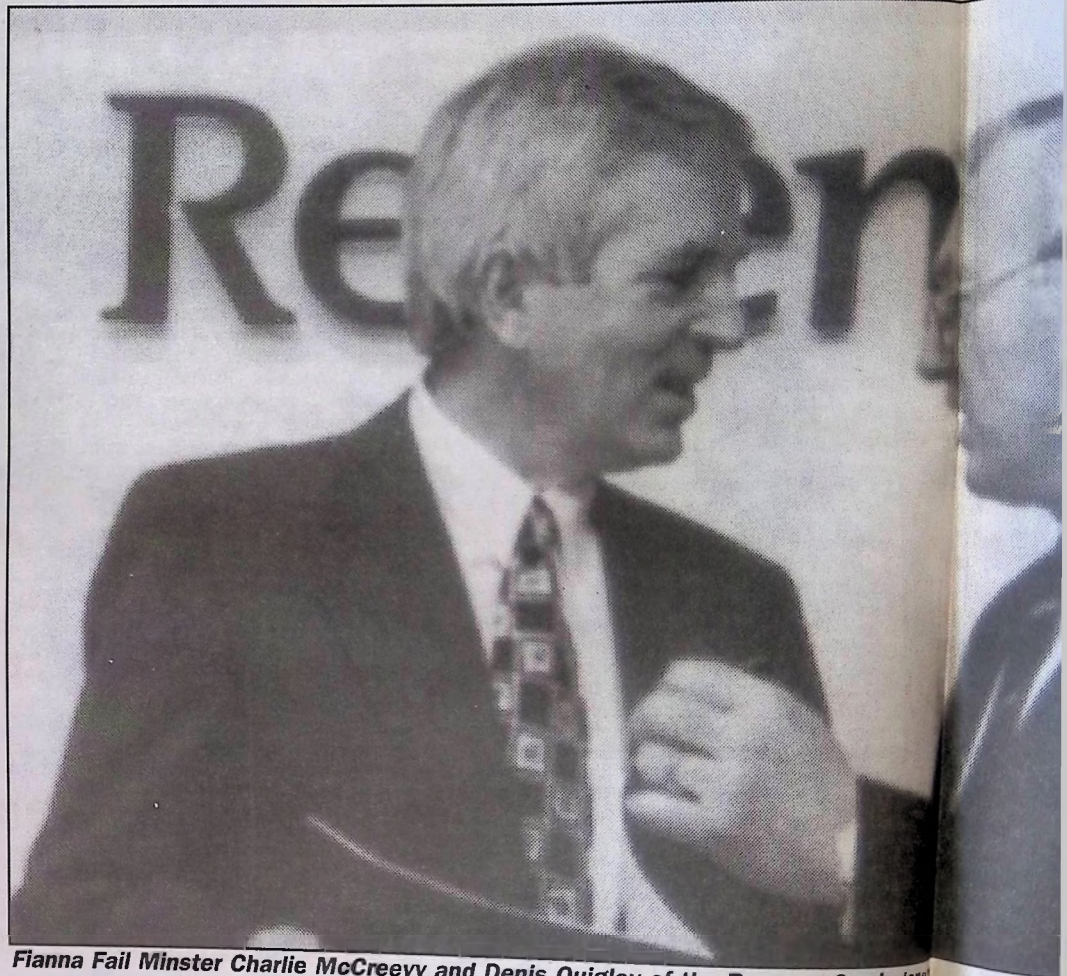
The non resident accounts were an easy way to avoid paying tax. In the run-up to the introduction of DIRT tax (Deposit Interest Retention Tax) in 1986-87, the number of "non-resident" accounts suddenly trebled.

Yet the rich originally only had to pay a tax rate of 15 percent on their unearned income.

The contempt the rich have for paying taxes is shown by the fact that they didn't even attempt to hide the scale of the scam.

To get a non-resident account a form was supposed to be filled in with a foreign address. Yet more than a quarter of all the forms were clearly wrong. Mail was held at branches for holders who used a "care of" address.

Why they let the scams happen



Fianna Fail Minister Charlie McCreery and Denis Quigley of the Revenue Commission

Sometimes the care of address was the bank branch itself or else was in Ireland.

In Claremorris, non-resident accounts were normally opened

in the Irish version of the customer's name.

Over 12 percent of the account holders didn't even bother filling in the form.

FINE GAEL'S Alan Dukes, Fianna Fail's Albert Reynolds and Bertie Ahern and Labour's Ruari Quinn were all Ministers of Finance who ignored the cover-up of the tax scam.

They wanted rich people who were based abroad to be able to hide money here because this benefited Irish financial institutions.

Each year accountants in Ireland make over £40 million in commission from dealing with off shore investments.

"Further information requirements could have been off-putting for genuine non-residents who feared exchange of information to the tax authority in their country of residence," the Revenue Commissioner have admitted.

Any attempt to ask for tax details was seen as "a very sensitive area", according to the Auditor's report. It was agreed that proof that someone was not an Irish resident was left up

to the banks' discretion, so as not to "seriously impede our ability to attract foreign investment".

The other reason was direct pressure from the rich. "The bogus non-resident accounts were seen as the lesser of two evils," the report says.

In 1983 there was a provision in the Finance Bill that all notices by non-residents requesting that interest not be returned to the tax authorities be accompanied by a sworn affidavit.

Champagne

But this was dropped after a champagne breakfast organised by the bankers to persuade Alan Dukes the Minister of Finance against the idea. £800 million was taken out of government bonds as a warning not to try and take money from the rich.

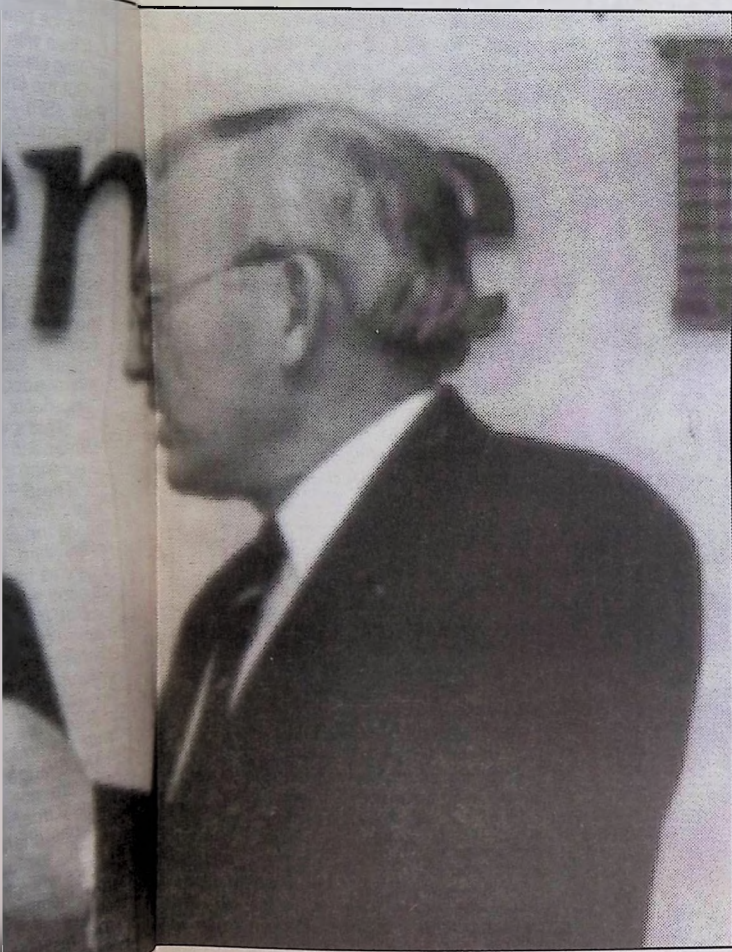
Successive governments did nothing about all this and instead introduced two tax amnesties, in 1987 and 1993, which gave free reign to the tax head

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by SIMON
BASKETTER

WE THEFT THE POOR



'Taxes are for the little people'

THE NEW York millionaire heiress Ivana Trump once said that "taxes are for the little people". It is an attitude that the Irish rich enthusiastically endorse.

Widespread tax evasion by the rich is still going on. The former auditor of the AIB, Tony Spollen, has said that "The commercial fraud that comes to the public eye is just the tip of a very large iceberg."

Avoided

The Auditor's report estimates that at least 27 percent of non-resident accounts are still bogus. That amounts to a staggering £1 billion.

That means that at least £120 million in tax is still being avoided every year by the rich from this one scam alone.

That money could be used to cut hospital waiting lists or employ more teachers so that class sizes could be reduced.

On top of this the Revenue is owed £1.167 billion in other taxes from the rich. This doesn't include the £216 million written off as uncollectable in 1998, and the £281 million written off in 1997.

The Revenue Commissioners have an appeal system which gives the rich an extra avenue to get their taxes written off. This was used to reduce Haughey's tax bill from £2 million to zero.

In 1997 £41 million in corpora-

tion profits tax was written off as well as £61 million worth of PAYE money that the employers had stolen.

The Irish rich already pay the lowest rate of tax in Europe on their profits. They have enjoyed two tax amnesties in 1987 and 1993 when they were asked to pay a mere 15 percent to clear their bills.

Yet this is still too much for those who think that wealth gives them a right to pay no taxes at all.

And it is no wonder. Last year there were only six prosecutions for tax evasion and no one has ever gone to jail for not paying their taxes. The fat cats know there is one law for the rich and another for the poor.

That is why they will do anything to satisfy their greed. That is until workers get organised and do something about it.

What the report says the banks owe:
 *AIB GROUP: At least £35 million
 *BANK OF IRELAND GROUP: The Revenue Commissioners say they owe £1 million.
 *ACCBANK: £1.4 million
 *ULSTER BANK: admits owing £1 million
 *NIB: Has offered £1 million.
 *FIRST ACTIVE PLC: admits owing £1.7 million for 1994 to 1998.
 *GUINNESS & MAHON LTD: offered to pay a miserable £52,863. This is the same bank that houses the Ansbacher accounts.

Ideas and REVOLUTION

Why Russia was state capitalist

ONE OF the questions socialists constantly face is: "What about Russia?"

by PAUL
McCARTHY

It was socialist and look what happened there." It is vital that we are able to understand the nature of the former Soviet Union and explain why it had nothing to offer the working class.

Leon Trotsky played an heroic role in standing up against the bureaucracy that strangled the Russian Revolution of 1917.

He was naturally appalled and outraged at the system which developed under Stalin and resisted it until his death.

Yet he did not break completely with the idea that Russia was a "degenerated" workers state which had to be defended.

A workers' state is one in which the means of production are controlled by the working class.

The institutions of the state must also be under the control of the class through the democratically elected soviets. This was clearly not the case in Russia.

Competition

Production was focused on competition with Western capitalism.

As Tony Cliff points out, the major institutions of the USSR - the KGB, the standing army and the bureaucracy could all be readily used by the bourgeoisie, but were completely useless to a revolutionary proletariat.

Russia's economy became state capitalist during the first Five Year Plan which began in 1928. In order to compete with Western capitalism, Stalin ruthlessly sought to accumulate industrial wealth.

In doing this, he subjected Russian workers to the same forces that ruled in Germany, England or the United States: "anarchy in the division of labour and despotism in the workshop."

This was also the period in which the bureaucracy transformed itself.

It changed from being in some way under the control (however indirectly) of the working class into the ruling class of the USSR.

By enforcing rapid industrial development, the bureaucracy completed the mission of the Russian bourgeoisie and effectively took their place.

Capitalism cannot exist in one state alone.

It needs to compete and sometimes this takes the form of aggressive military rivalry.

It is not surprising then, that while Stalin talked about the possibility of building "socialism in one country alone", he in fact set about expanding state capitalism abroad after 1945.

The Soviet "satellites" in Eastern Europe provide the most obvious evidence of why the USSR itself was not a socialist country.

Revolution is the self-emancipation of the working classes, seizing control of the forces of production from below.

But the so called socialist regimes in Eastern Europe were formed not by workers but by the tanks of the Red Army.

Just as Bismarck and Disraeli had sat down in Berlin to divide up Africa in the 1870s, so Stalin sat down with Churchill, Roosevelt and later Truman, in 1945 to discuss the colonisation of Eastern Europe.

In becoming an imperialist power, Russia really came of age among the capitalist states.

Likewise, just as the 1950s saw a series of revolutions against the British and French imperial regimes in Africa and Asia, the Russian colonies periodically rose up against their conqueror - in Hungary in 1956, Prague in 1968 and Poland in 1980.

If Trotsky had been right about Russia being a degenerated workers' state - some sort of transitional phase between capitalism and socialism - it would be more productive than those of the West.

Trotsky himself provided a basis for how we might measure this when he wrote that "socialism has earned its right to victory, not on the pages of Das Kapital, but in an industrial arena..."

However the 1970's and 80's saw Russia's economy decline to the extent that in its final three years there was a negative rate of growth.

Practises

Further evidence of the capitalist nature of the Soviet Union can be seen by the ease with which the institutions and practises of the market were adopted there after Yeltsin's coming to power.

No revolution was needed for the free marketeers to assume the reigns of production.

But revolution is exactly what Russian workers need today to rid themselves of their brutal, incompetent rulers.

Bankrolling the politicians

WHILE THE banks easily forget about their taxes they always remembered to pay off the politicians.

The banks are generous in donations. For instance, the average payment from the AIB last year was £40,000.

All the main political parties get money from the AIB, including the Labour Party.

The ties between politicians and the bankers is even closer than these donations suggest.

* PETER SUTHERLAND was chairman of AIB when the tax scams took place. He was also a political advisor to the fine Gael leader John Bruton and is a former Attorney General - the top legal officer in the country!

* BEVERLY COOPER FLYNN, the wife of the late Minister of Finance, was used to organise the sell off of the dodgy offshore accounts for the National Irish Banks.

She now sits on the Dail committee that is supposed to prevent the scams happening again.

* MIRIAM HEDERMAN O'BRIEN is on the board of AIB.

She was also the chairperson of the Government sponsored Commission for Taxation which was supposed to look at unfairness in the tax system. It never recommended increasing taxes on the banks or mentioned offshore accounts.

The links to politicians help explain how the AIB was saved from bankruptcy in 1987. One of its subsidiaries, the ICI, ran up huge debts by speculating on the London insurance market. When this threatened to bring the whole bank down the government organised a special £600 million rescue scheme which was financed by PAYE workers.

In return the AIB wrote off Charlie Haughey and Garrett Fitzgerald's overdrafts.

PASS THIS EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

This union condemns the connivance of the banks and the Irish State in tax evasion by the wealthy.

It notes that this money could have been used for under-funded schools and hospitals.

Accordingly it calls on the ICTU and local trades councils to once again organise PAYE marches to demand:

1. Jail sentences for those who organised evasion on a massive scale.
2. A special punitive tax on the banks.

As German Greens split...

How do we save the ENVIRONMENT?

ENVIRONMENTAL disasters are becoming more and more frequent and the levels of air, sea and noise pollution are increasing. Alongside the threat posed by nuclear weapons this has led many to see the environment as an issue of central political concern.

During 1980s a green movement emerged which seemed to offer a radical alternative to the system.

Thousands rallied to their calls for nuclear disarmament, for greater restraint over multinational corporations and for a halt to the environmental destruction of the Third World.

Today the green movement is in crisis after the Green parties who were in government in Europe supported the aerial bombardment of Serbia and Kosovo by the NATO war machine.

Decades

The destruction of oil depots by NATO and the use of chemical and radioactive weapons such as depleted uranium brought environmental destruction that will take decades to overcome.

One of the most enthusiastic supporters of the war was Joschka Fisher, the Green Foreign Minister in Germany. When the party called a special conference to discuss the war, hundreds of protesters gathered and the leadership called in the police.

Now a centrist group who look to Fisher and Cohen Bendit, the 1968 student leader, are calling for the expulsion of radicals inside the party.

"We're no longer prepared to look on idly at the actions of the many moralising know-alls", they declared.

The Green parties who joined governments in Germany, Italy and France have not been able to oppose environmental destruction caused by big business.

The German Greens have even dropped their demand for a quick elimination of nuclear power in return for a seat in government.

The Red-Green government has also attacked the welfare budget while cutting taxes on business.

The crisis in the Green movement have their roots in a failure to

see class society as the fundamental cause of the destruction of the environment.

Instead many Greens argued that the growth in the world population levels was the cause.

A Green Manifesto proclaimed, "The explosion in human numbers is the greatest long term threat to the future of human and non-human inhabitants on earth."

Yet their is no observable link between population growth and human misery. During the nineteenth century, Europe and America combined record growths in population with record increases in prosperity.

Breathing the air in Mexico City is equivalent to smoking 60 cigarettes a day. Industrialisation has destroyed the traditional ways of life of most of the world's indigenous peoples.

Holland has a very high population density but it is extremely wealthy. Angola and Mozambique have a very low population density but poverty and starvation are essential facts of life.

Millions are still dying from famine each year. But locating the cause in the growth of the population makes as much sense as claiming that the Irish famine of 1847 occurred because there were too many people living here.

Today there is no barrier to the amount of food that can be produced due to improvement in agricultural techniques.

The real problem in the Third World is that the world market forces people to produce cash crops instead of food crops.

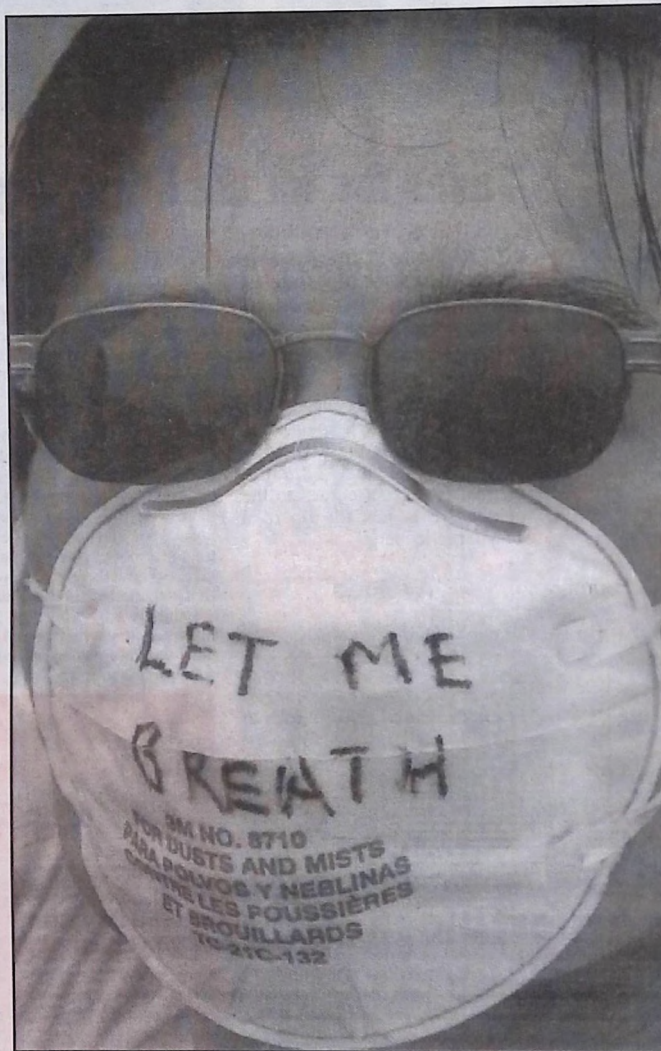
In the Western world massive grain surpluses are allowed to rot to suit the logic of the market.

Just 1 percent of the world's grain stockpile would feed the 15 million children who starve each year.

But the poor have not the money to buy it, while to give it away would be contrary to the logic of profit.

The Green movement claimed that industrialism rather than its parent capitalism was the enemy of the environment. The massive expansion of industry since the industrial revolution has produced pollution on an almost incomprehensible scale.

Today chemical factories all



over the world spew poison into the atmosphere causing acid rain, the depletion of the ozone layer and global climatic change.

In the developing world things are even worse. Breathing the air in Mexico City is equivalent to smoking 60 cigarettes a day. Industrialisation has destroyed the traditional ways of life of most of the world's indigenous peoples.

But this is only one side of the story. Modern technology has greatly improved the lives of the mass of humanity. Life for most people in the pre-industrial era was a grinding round of work with little opportunity for leisure, education and culture.

The production and distribution of food on the present scale would not have been possible without the development of industrial processes.

Modern means of transport have also had a major impact on our lives. Time saving devices, such as the vacuum cleaner have released millions of women from the drudgery of constant housework.

Printing, recording and cinema technology have brought culture to hundreds of millions of people world-wide.

The development of modern medical technology has made it possible to extinguish diseases such as smallpox that in earlier times could wipe out whole swathes of populations

Industrial development has also created a society of massive abundance.

POTENTIALLY WE could live in a world where nobody starves or dies from preventable diseases, where everyone has access to decent and rewarding education, and where work can become a pleasure.

With a change in priorities it would even be possible to reverse much of the environmental damage that production for profit has been responsible for.

For example the use of alterna-

tive energy sources such as wind and water power could drastically reduce the amount of pollution caused by reliance on the petrochemical industries.

Greater use of public transport could cut down on pollutants from cars. A massive programme of insulating houses would cut back on use of fossil fuels to heat homes.

Ozone could even be produced to repair the damage in the atmosphere. One estimate is that it would take just 2 per cent of the US civil airline fleet to release enough ozone above Antarctica to fill the hole there.

What prevents this from being realised is not industry itself but the control of the world's resources by a tiny minority at the top of society.

Those at the top of society use their enormous influence to stop measures that could affect their profits.

The owners of pharmaceutical and nuclear power industries use their economic muscle to influence the decisions of governments in both the western and developing world. Decisions that affect the health of millions are always made behind closed doors by handfuls of the rich.

Class

The power to change all this lies in the hands of the working class. However the Greens have always insisted that class struggle is no longer a key aspect of society. Instead they concentrated on elections and winning seats in cabinets.

But their relatively small size meant they were always forced to compromise in Coalitions, even more so than conventional left wing parties.

Workers in many countries have shown they have the power and interest to save the environment.

Every day health and safety representatives take on managements who try to use cheap chemicals which can damage people health.

Australian building unions have organised strikes to save the green belts in cities.

British merchant seamen who were members of the National Union of Seamen prevented nuclear waste being dumped directly into the sea. Instead of trying to work with war mongers in European governments, the real solution to the environment lies in mobilising the power of workers to break a system built on the madness of the market.

by DAVE LORDEN

Space: the cold war frontier

NEIL ARMSTRONG'S carefully scripted words about "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" are still famous.

Yet they helped give a gloss to a deadly space race that was about military conquest and domination.

Thirty years ago the Apollo astronauts went to the moon in the name "of all mankind" but everyone on earth knew they really did it to beat the Russians, who had put into space the first satellite, the first dog, the first human.

Before World War II rocket scientists, like American Robert H Goddard, were ridiculed by the establishment. Few took the prospect of human beings going into space as anything more than stuff of science fiction.

World War II changed all this. The Nazis developed rocket technology and produced the powerful V-2 rocket missile. At the end of the War the Russians and the American scrambled to make friends with the missile designers. The V-2 architect Werner Von Braun went to America where he was put at the centre of the US space effort.

The Russians took the rest for their space programme. The standing joke among US journalists at the time was that the race for space was a battle with "their Germans against our Germans".

In America, Von Braun spoke about his vision of an orbiting rocket, whose purpose was to be the observation of 'troop movements'.

The space race was a race to dominate the world. The US led in long range bombers and in atomic bombs to drop them, but the Soviet Union countered US technology with its man power and its massed military forces aimed at Western Europe.

Satellites

In 1946 a confidential US government report noted the 'great military value' of satellites but urged that this aspect of the space programme be played down. Instead the 'peaceful' uses of this 'remarkable technological advance' were to be pushed.

One confidential memo sent to US Secretary of Defence said "If the Soviet Union should accomplish this ahead of the US, it would be a serious blow to the technical and engineering prestige of America all over the world. It would be used by the Soviet propaganda for all it's worth".

No one expected the Russians would get into space first. But on 4 October 1957 Russia launched the Sputnik satellite which sent tremors right to the heart of the US establishment.

Sputnik also produced a wave of hysteria across America which was gripped by the McCarthy witch hunts. Lyndon B Johnson gave a voice to this hysteria when he said: "I don't want to go to sleep by a communist moon".

During the Cold War space was seen as the ultimate battlefield. In 1958 NASA was established under orders from President Eisenhower. Officially it was designated a civilian space programme but this was only used to provide a cover for the development missiles and spy satellites.

The Russians once again won the race when in 1961 they put the first man, Yuri Gagarin in space. The was only one goal left and in May 1961 after the Bay of Pigs debacle, President Kennedy vowed that the US would put the first man on the moon.

In the end the US achieved its goal. But no sooner had the Apollo astronauts returned to earth than the US administration cut the space budget.

Thirty years on space exploration has been drastically cut back. Now big business and the military have colonised earth's orbit. Tourist trips by rocket into space are promised within the next few years. And that's only the start. Japanese businessmen are proposing orbiting hotels and American businessmen are even looking for orbiting factories.

The lunar landings stand as a testimony to humankind's technological achievements. The tragedy is a system that uses that potential for the pursuit of war and profit.

by SINEAD KENNEDY



Lukewarm Skywalker

AFTER THE biggest publicity campaign in cinema history, Star Wars: The Phantom Menace is here.

This, the fourth Star Wars film, is called Episode One, probably because George Lucas has difficulty counting any numbers below a billion and without a dollar sign in front.

Successful

The original Star Wars is the most successful movie ever. Merchandising spin-offs alone have made Lucas over \$5 billion.

In the earlier movies in series when the rebels were fighting the empire this could have been a reference either to the Vietnamese fighting the Americans or the US fighting the evil empire of communism.

It meant the film's success was based on being all things to all people.

Religious

Now there is no point searching for a sub text. The religious elements are still there, as are vague political hints, like "The taxation of trade routes to outlying star systems is in dispute...".

But marketing is the real purpose of the film.

The bad guy is called Darth Maul, presumably a reference to shopping centres specialising in Star Wars memorabilia.

Instead of calling up the wonder of someone else's old-time movies, Lucas now recapitulates his own. You watch *The Phantom Menace* ticking off the Star Wars gimmicks and note how they've

been amplified.

Then there are the doublings of events from other films.

Once again you see the massing of goofy, "primitive" creatures for war.

There is a light-sabre duel conducted over a mechanical precipice; an attack by a small, out-gunned fleet on an orbiting war-ship; the introduction of a young Skywalker to the Force.

But Lucas no longer makes "more" seem like "new."

And there's the nine-year-old Anakin

Skywalker who, as everybody knows, will grow up to be Darth Vader. It's a good thing everybody does know it, because he is un-watchable.

This the fourth Star Wars film is called

Episode One, probably because George Lucas

has difficulty counting any

numbers below a billion

without a dollar sign in front.

Having spent 20 years playing with his digital toys, Lucas seems to have lost

interest in working with actors.

Most movie blockbusters are full of overblown special effects. But *The Phantom Menace* is full of overblown dialogue, too.

To compensate for the thin characters up front, the film clutters the background with all manner of cutesy characters – but it is irritating rather than engaging.

Worse are the comic-relief creatures: double-dealing, fish-faced traders who

conform to Fu Manchu models; a guttural-voiced Middle Eastern merchant in the form of a huge bluebottle fly; and an endlessly irritating sidekick for the heroes, who looks like a gangly reptile and acts like a 1930s b-movie stage negro.

Lucas used to give the audience more than they'd expected of exactly what they'd expect.

Now he gives us more of the same and collects the money while the audience vainly searches for nostalgic reasons to cheer among the effects.

— SIMON BASKETTER

Imperialist games at the end of the world

SCOTT RITTER was the chief weapons inspector for Uncom, the United Nations operation in charged with disarming Iraq, until he resigned disgust in August 1998.

His new book *Endgame* should be required reading for anyone who had illusions in NATO's war on Serbia.

Manipulate

Ritter's book is a detailed description of how the US government increasingly began to manipulate the UN disarmament mission in Iraq to meet the requirements of domestic politics.

Ritter eventually resigned because he could no longer stomach the way inspection operations were timed to coincide with US plans for bombing raids on Iraq. These raids were increasingly dependent on Bill Clinton's political needs.

This culminated in last December's Operation Desert Fox, which was launched without UN approval while Clinton was mired by the Lewinsky scandal.

Ritter shows how the CIA was involved in the UN inspection process right from the start and used it as a cover for a series of operations aimed at deposing Saddam Hussein — all of which ended in abysmal failure.

He shows how the US government has feared the Iraqi people more than it does Saddam Hussein.

However Ritter is not against US imperialism. He would like to see a ground war to finish off Saddam, but understands that it is politically impossible.

This is why he is now for accepting the French and Russian governments calls for an accommodation with the Iraqi regime.

To justify such a proposal, Ritter has to accept many of the points made by anti-

war campaigners. He shows how Washington has vilified Saddam as the Middle East's Hitler.

Mortality

He argues that "prior to Desert Storm the annual mortality rate for children under the age of five in Iraq was a little over 7,000. Today it is 50,000. That increase can be directly related to sanctions."

US intervention has caused more suffering than Saddam ever could have done alone. It has destroyed the Iraqi opposition and strengthened Saddam and after a decade of suffering, led to calls for accommodation with the existing regime.

Has anyone learnt the lessons?

Endgame is published by Simon and Schuster Price £14.99



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 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.

SWP Branch meetings

ATHLONE:

Contact 01- 872 2682 for detail

BRAY:

Meets fortnightly on Thursdays at the Mayfare Hotel at 8pm

BELFAST CENTRAL:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Garrick Bar, Chichester St.

BELFAST EAST:

Contact 01- 8722682 for detail

BELFAST SOUTH:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in Queens Students Union

CORK:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in Dennehy's Pub, Cornmarket

DERRY:

Meets every Thursday at 8.15pm in Badgers Bar upstairs, Orchard St.

DUNDALK:

Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details

DUN LAOGHAIRE:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Christian Institute

DUBLIN ARTANE /

COOLOCK:

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane / Beaumont Recreational Centre opp. Artane Castle

DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways, Parnell St

DUBLIN NORTH WEST:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in the Vietnamese Centre, Hardwicke St (off Parnell Square).

DUBLIN RANELAGH:

Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Tom Kelly Flats, Charlemont St.

Community Centre

DUBLIN RIALTO:

Meets every Tuesday at 8:30pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR, Rialto

August 10th: Does Human nature mean socialism is impossible?

August 17th: The Iranian revolution of 1979

DUBLIN RATHMINES:

Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond St.

DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL:

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St

DUBLIN TALLAGHT:

Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in Jobstown Community Centre

ENNISKILLEN:

Meets fortnightly on Saturdays at 4pm. Phone 01 - 872 2682 for details of venue

GALWAY:

Meets every Thursday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square 7.30pm

LIMERICK:

Meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 8pm. Phone 01 - 872 2682 for details of venue.

MAYNOOTH:

Meets every Wednesday in Classhall D, Arts Block, Maynooth College

TRALEE

Meets every Thursday at 8.00 pm Harty's Bar, Tralee

WATERFORD:

Meets every Thursday in at 8.00pm ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

Sacked for having asthma

'No justice for people like me'

THE GRESHAM Hotel has long been a symbol of grandeur and respectability in Dublin. Porters who are impeccably dressed hail taxis and bring out the luggage of the rich guests.

The hotel prides itself on having the airs of a bygone day. But it's a very different story for people who work there.

Marie Nolan spent twelve years of her life working for the Gresham. Nine of those years was spent as a 'casual worker' with few rights. After many protests, she was finally made permanent in 1995 as a house assistant in charge of cleaning around fifteen rooms a day.

"They never really liked me for standing up for my rights. Employers can always make life difficult for you if they want. They might ask me to take down heavy curtains or clean the room again. We used to say there was a Hatchet Day when managers went around looking to give someone the chop", Marie told *Socialist Worker*.

Hatchet

Marie's Hatchet Day came on March 5th in 1998. She had always cleaned her rooms with a bio-scam detergent and this was found to be satisfactory. On that day however she was called into Room 238 - which she still remember to this day - by two managers, Paul McCracken and Ronan Walsh.

"They pointed to a big stain on the carpet. Stains of this sort

would normally be removed by a contractor or someone assigned heavy duties. But I was handed an aerosol spray and asked me to go down and do it" Marie said.

"I told them I had asthma and could not use aerosol sprays. At that point Ronan Walsh told me to leave immediately and go to my doctor. I was not to come back until this issue was sorted out".

Marie's doctor gave her a note stating that she "has to avoid certain inhaled chemicals, otherwise an asthmatic attack may be precipitated".

Sufficient

She brought it back to her manager Ronan Walsh but was told it was not sufficient. He wanted "a list of all the chemicals you are allergic to" and until that was provided she was to be suspended for a week.

"An asthmatic cannot give that sort of a list. You would have to test every possible chemical on yourself and that is a very dangerous. They were putting me in an impossible situation. I just wanted to carry on working as I had done for twelve years. Why is having asthma a problem for a hotel like the Gresham?" Marie said.

Marie was embarrassed to go back to her doctor again but felt she had to. This time her doctor wrote, "we cannot test someone for every possible allergia but ask her to avoid certain substances which are likely to cause an attack". The doctor included on this list 'chemicals which vaporise'.

Although Marie had done everything to be helpful, she then received an extraordinary response from Ronan Walsh, Deputy General Manager.



Marie Nolan

In a signed statement he noted that, "Unless you can furnish me with confirmation that the chemicals in use in the hotel Accommodation Department will not have an adverse effect on your health I cannot see any way to continue your employment with the Gresham."

Access

Marie Nolan is not a chemist and has little access to scientists who work in this area.

Yet she was asked to analyse all chemicals used in the accommodation department of the Gresham lest they endanger her health.

The fact that she had worked in the hotel for twelve years was not sufficient.

The exact causes of asthma

are still the subject of serious inquiry. Yet Marie was being asked to do more than many asthma researchers had succeeded in doing: find out exactly which chemicals damage her health.

After Marie was pushed out, she hired a solicitor and a barrister to represent her at the Employment Appeals Tribunal. She felt her union was not strong enough and mistakenly took the legal route.

Cases for constructive dismissal are notoriously difficult to win because the onus is on the employee to prove the were pushed out and Marie lost the case.

"It showed me what this system is all about. There is no justice for people like me. I was pushed out because I suffered from asthma. Is that what Ireland is about today?"

Join the Socialists

"WE NEED a strong socialist party that is going to take on the rich."

This is the message that is coming out strongly from both parts of Ireland.

The Socialist Workers Party is embarking on a major drive for expansion.

The party had been involved in spearheading resistance to evictions, in opposing NATO's war and in preparing the ground for an offensive against the partnership agreements that have shackled the working class.

Over the next period the party will be approaching hundreds of supporters who take our paper to join and become active members.

JACKIE COONEY has been active in resisting eviction in St Ultan's Flats. The struggle at St Ultan's has convinced Jackie to get involved.

She told *Socialist Worker* why she joined.

"I joined the Ranelagh branch of the SWP just over four weeks ago now. I joined as an active picketer on St Ultans flats, against evictions.

"To me being an active SWP member means that you can actually make a difference to what is going on around the country. Take the Celtic Tiger. For me it's a farce. I'm less well off now than I was three years ago. It's a case of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

"Ordinary working class people are being pushed out of what were slums five years ago to the outskirts of Dublin and Naas to



Jackie Cooney

make room for the wealthy.

"It's time for the working class people to say no and stand

up be counted. If you fight for what you believe in you will see the difference.

"Just six weeks on in the St Ultans eviction case we have now been promised the temporary re-housing of the four tenants and a promise that they can come back when the flats are refurbished by the Corporation and all get life time leases.

"You can win when you get organised and fight for what you believe in."

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.....

Iarnrod Eireann

Hands off the ILDA

IARNROD Eireann is attempting to shut down the Irish Locomotive Drivers Association.

In early July drivers in two regions — Athlone and the West of Ireland and Cork — took action over management's attempts to prevent officers of the ILDA representing drivers in disciplinary hearings.

Drivers demanded the company withdraw this discrimination and intimidation and permit workers to have the representation of their choice at such hearings.

Action

Following this action drivers threatened action throughout the country the following Sunday. Management backed down and issued letters to officers of IDLA acknowledging

Fulflex

OVER A hundred workers at the Fulflex factory in Limerick have been locked out.

The workers were suspended for not complying with new company regulations.

One of the regulations include the use of a 'swipe card' which workers are supposed to use every time they moved away from their work stations, including going to toilets or to take a rest break.

Agreement

Up to this the union had a procedural agreement with the firm where swipe cards were only to be used for clocking in and out but management decided to use the system elsewhere.

The company first of all went for the chair of the shop stewards committee and asked him to use the card but he refused. Then an entire shift was told to use the swipe cards and they were suspended. This went on

their right to represent workers at disciplinary hearings.

But having been forced to back down, Iarnrod Eireann immediately went back on the offensive.

Drivers who had taken action in Athlone and the West of Ireland were summoned to disciplinary hearings to be held shortly.

Then the company instituted court proceedings against the National Executive Council of the ILDA under six headings. The charges involve "interfering in commercial contracts of the company".

"This is clearly an attempt to destroy the ILDA," one driver told *Socialist Worker*,

"The company say they will only lift this crippling legal action if the IDLA agrees to no longer call on drivers not to work their Sunday rest day.

"They demand the ILDA issues no public statements and does not speak to the media.

"This is effectively a demand that we disband the Association.

"The ILDA was formed because we feared another sell-out by the NBRU and SIPTU of drivers, conditions in the Viability Plan.

"I think it is now accepted by unions and management that the Viability Plan is dead. They need to either deal with us or destroy us — this is how they have responded"

The action taken by the ILDA received support from members of SIPTU and NBRU.

If management can attack the ILDA all unions and all workers will be next in line.

Whatever the disagreements and rivalries, what's now needed is a clear call from all unions and their leaders that an attack on the ILDA will not be tolerated, and that legal action and victimisation of individuals must be dropped.

until the whole factory was locked out.

After the suspensions, the company presented 24 set of demands to the workers. It included increasing the life span of a warning from three months to twelve months, increased probationary period and a reduction of the overtime rates.

"This is 1940s stuff and we are not putting up with it" one worker said.

Pickets have been placed on the plant and these were maintained during the holiday period.

Craft workers who originally passed the pickets refused to maintain machines and they were suspended. Management have tried to keep some of the machines running but the unions involved, SIPTU and TEEU, have applied for an all-out picket.

The US owned Fulflex have embarked on a major attack on the union. They are looking at other factories such as Dell and are trying to break the union. But workers are standing by their union and are putting up stiff resistance.

Mutiny

A MAGNIFICENT campaign of solidarity in Waterford has forced the hand of the owners of a Russian ship to pay back wages to their crew.

When the ship arrived in Waterford the crew staged a mutiny because they had not been paid in weeks.

Immediately the local trade union movement rallied around and gave them support.

The sailors were enlisted in the SIPTU and union officials opened negotiations with the owners.

Collections were also taken up across the city with £500 being raised by the Waterford Glass Workers and another £500 from collections and socials organized by the local branch of the Socialist Workers party.

The sailors had to put up with a wave of threats and attempted intimidation. It was intimated that their families at home would be made pay for their actions.

When this intimidation did not work, the owners backed down and agreed to pay over the wages to SIPTU. The sailors were to fly back to Russia and the fares were being paid for by the company.

At the last moment fear developed among some of the crew that revenge would be extracted from them by Mafia style elements. They were also particularly suspicious of the route home they were asked to take. A number of them then jumped ship and at least one has applied for political asylum.

Mount Congreve Estate

TWELVE gardeners and ground staff at the Mount Congreve Estate in Waterford have gone on strike over poor conditions.

The workers joined the union recently and have been standing up for their rights.

However there was an attempt to victimise one of the union members and workers responded immediately. The strikers are looking for decent wages and improved working conditions.

TARA mines

Government tax plan to sponsor wage cuts

WORKERS AT Tara Mines have been forced to accept wages cuts and longer hours after being blackmailed by their company.

The Finnish owned Outokumpu group said they would close the mine if they did not get their way. Instead of resisting this and calling for the mine to be nationalised, SIPTU leaders offered the company 90 per cent of wanted.

The Tara Mines case is being used to set a very dangerous precedent for the wider trade union movement.

Cuts

In the midst of the crisis, the Minister for Local Government and local TD, Noel Dempsey arrived on the scene to offer tax cuts in return for wage cuts.

Provision for this already existed in legislation introduced in 1997 but Dempsey proposed to extend it to cover wage cuts of the order of £8,000 a year or 20% of a workers pay.

While the Tara miners will see this relief, it is also setting a dangerous model for the future.

Up to now wage cuts have been comparatively rare in Ireland but in

America the employers embarked on a major offensive in the eighties to get 'give-backs' off workers.

When the Celtic Tiger collapses more employers here will do the same and will point to this tax law to

demand wage cuts. Yet no matter how high the tax relief is, it can never cover workers for wages they have lost.

It is also an other form of subsidy to employers who are already milking the system for grants and tax relief.

Bricklayers

STRIKE ACTION at St Raphael's Manor housing estate resumed after the employer reneged on an agreement with union members.

The site owner, Sean Dunne, had agreed to abolish sub-contracting and pay bricklayers £18 an hour.

But when the traditional building holiday began he tried to bring in other workers to finish off the site.

The bricklayers involved rejected this and resumed picketing.

They were given an offer to work to new productivity terms but this represented a worsening of conditions already agreed.

Gardai also arrived at the picket lines to push through ground workers who were laying pipes.

Workers are now determined to keep up pickets until the employer sticks to his agreed word.

Johnny Fox's

WORKERS at Johnny Fox's pub are continuing their all out strike.

The strike began over six weeks ago when management refused to negotiate with the union MANDATE.

Bus drivers which used to take coach loads of tourists to the pub are now turning away.

Last Sunday afternoon there was only a handful of cars outside the pub even though it would be packed in the past.

Staff at the pub have not received pay rises for five years. They have lost out on even the small pay increases that were due under the partnership agreements.

The law is supposed to stop under 18s working beyond 10 pm.

But staff as young as 14 years old work regularly

until 12.30 am and the lounge staff generally work until 1.30 am.

After finishing work in the early hours of the morning, the workers have to wait for taxis to take them home. This often means waiting for over an hour and sometimes even several hours.

The staff have on average of £30 to £40 per week deducted from their wages in place of taxi fares.

This happens without their consent and no receipts of details of the charges are given.

MANDATE are running a magnificent campaign to win this issue. Leaflets in different languages have been produced and a well organised picket line displays banners for passing tourists.

Send messages of support to MANDATE office 9 Cavendish Road, Dublin 1

Issues for the labour movement

Did Partnership cause the Celtic Tiger?

'IF THE unions get rid of social partnership, the Celtic tiger boom will end'. This is the new refrain of Fianna Fail.

The argument, which is often echoed by the union leaders, is that partnership agreements were introduced in 1987 and the boom followed because workers took the 'hard medicine' of wage restraint and cutbacks.

Few would deny that big business scours the world in search of low wages.

The Industrial Development Agency even produces charts to show them that Ireland has some of the cheapest labour in Europe.

Readers will be glad to know that the total hourly

compensation for an Irish workers is only \$14 compared to \$29 in Germany

But low wages and hard medicine does not always produce a boom.

After Eastern Europe was opened up to the market after 1989, wages were slashed and governments pushed privatisation.

But the whole region of Eastern Europe received half the investment that Britain alone received even though British wages were higher.

Slump

Similarly, there have been social partnership programmes in Ireland in the past but they have not produced a boom.

National Wages Agreements began in 1970 but they were followed by a slump in 1973.

In 1979 and 1981, Fianna Fail forged two National Understandings with the unions but the country entered a major recession after 1982.

If low wages or the practice of union leaders policing their workers produced booms, then most of Africa and Asia would be a capitalist paradise.

In reality the Celtic Tiger boom did not arise because of particular actions by the Irish state but rather because of developments in global capitalism. Two in particular are relevant.

First, after the mid eighties there was enormous growth in US foreign investment abroad.

Profit rates had fallen since the seventies and US capital searched the globe for new opportunities to restore

profitability. In 1982, \$207,752 million was directly invested abroad but by 1997 this had risen to \$860,723.

Second, global capitalism has divided up into the major trading blocks — the European Union, North American Free Trade Area and an Asian trading block centered on Japan. Multi-nationals feared that these trading blocks would be protected by tariff barriers that would keep out their goods.

Market

So as the EU announced moves to form a single market, US and Japanese companies rushed to establish plants inside its borders.

The Irish boom was caused by a huge influx of US investment which wanted a European base.

Ireland's main attraction was that it provided a tax haven that allowed multi-nationals to pay, what one study claimed, were 'low and in some cases negative tax rates'.

Today Ireland has the highest level of US investment per manufacturing worker in the EU. The capital deployed per worker is a full seven times higher than the EU average.

The situation is so unusual that Ireland tops the world league for the role that US foreign investment plays in its Gross Domestic Product. Countries like Costa Rica or Honduras which are often labelled by the US as backyard have lower level of US investment per head of population than Ireland.

All of this means that the Irish boom is tied up with the fate of the US economy.

Or to be more specific, with the fate of a handful of US computer companies such as Intel, Dell, Hewlett Packard.

Even if Irish workers agreed voluntarily to live on bread and water for the next year it would not guarantee that the boom continued.

That will be decided on the stock markets of Wall Street.

Today the US economy is a relative success story. But the success is built on very shaky foundations.

US share prices for example stand at a 125 year high — even though real growth in the US economy is quite low.

All of this means that the Irish boom is dependent on the anarchy of the world market.

Social partnership deals are just a drop in a very turbulent ocean.

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p Solidarity price £1

inside:

HOW DO WE SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT—PAGE 5

Fed-up waiting for the assembly
pages 5

MASS STRIKES IN TURKEY AND SOUTH AFRICA
page 8

£64,000 TO PUT BIGOTRY BEFORE PEACE

SEND TRIMBLE HOME WITH NO PAY

DAVID TRIMBLE has treated the majority of people in Northern Ireland with utter contempt.

He is being paid £64,000 a year as First Minister, plus another £100,000 as a Westminster MP, but he didn't even bring his Ulster Unionist Party to the meeting of the Assembly on 15 June.

Trimble has now jetted off on a holiday to Switzerland and Italy, while the peace process goes into a review process.

Stalling

Trimble has been stalling for the last 14 months, putting obstacles in the way of the Agreement, making a mockery of the desire for lasting peace.

Tony Blair has continually given in to his threats, even rewriting the Good Friday Agreement just before the Assembly meeting to exclude Sinn Fein from the Executive if the IRA doesn't decommission.

But Trimble still turned the Assembly meeting into a fiasco.

Ian Paisley was overjoyed, saying that it was "a good day for Northern Ireland."

Even Seamus Mallon, the moderate SDLP Deputy First Minister resigned in disgust, saying the Unionists were "bleeding the peace process dry".

It is now obvious that

Trimble is prepared to drag out the negotiations until May 2000, the final date for decommissioning, in order to make sure that Sinn Fein are kept out of the Executive.

He is prepared to play games with other people's lives just to hold on to his own position.

Do we have to wait another year?

The shambles in the Assembly has thrown the republican movement into crisis.

They were prepared to offer decommissioning as the price for getting into government, but Trimble has thrown it back in their faces.

They know that they can't go back to the armed struggle. But their strategy rests on getting Trimble to accept them as a legitimate political party.

The republicans accept Trimble's claims that he is representing the 'unionist community'. Yet a poll taken a day before the Assembly meeting showed that even 62 percent of Unionist Party voters wanted Trimble to get on with setting up the Executive.

Recent social attitudes surveys also show that the main concerns of over 80 percent of Protestants and Catholics are

issues like the health service and education.

Thousands of people want the politicians to get on with it so they can start to address real social issues. Since last May, people in the North have had another 14 months of hospital closures, student fees, disability benefit cuts, privatisation of services and wages that are worse than Britain.

It is not the same for Unionist politicians. Their position depends on reinforcing sectarian divisions.

That is why we can't rely on power sharing at the top of the Assembly to lessen sectarianism.

The potential to break the mould of communal politics lies in the common struggle by working class people. It's time to stop waiting for Trimble and Adams to do a deal and start to organise for that struggle at the grassroots now.



Taylor and Trimble: cashing the pay cheques while wrecking the peace

Giving Paisley a chance to wreck the peace

TRIMBLE HAS exposed the real agenda of the Unionist Party. The press, the British government and even Sinn Fein have built him up as a moderate alternative to old-style Unionism.

Trimble knows that Unionist politicians will never get political power again unless they share it with Catholic parties.

But he is the head of a political party that is based on treating Catholics as second class citizens and telling all Protestants to unite against the common enemy.

Trimble differed from Paisley only in seeing the Agreement as a way to get the IRA to accept surrender.

This has meant that every time the hard-right scream about a concession to Sinn Fein, Trimble jumps to their tune.

The demand for decommissioning is about trying to reunite the 'Unionist family' and rewriting history to claim that IRA violence was the only cause of the Troubles.

Trimble is handing Paisley the chance to wreck the peace.