

# Socialist Worker

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As Tribunal tracks Taoiseach's tax deal...

# WHAT IS AHERN HIDING?



**BERTIE AHERN is being investigated by the Flood Tribunal for a dodgy tax concession he gave to the Cork based developer Owen O'Callaghan.**

As *Socialist Worker* first revealed in February last year, Bertie Ahern signed a statutory order to give a 50 percent tax break to O'Callaghan in controversial and unexplained circumstances.

The 1994 Fianna Fail/Labour government decided not to give huge tax breaks to the controversial £20 million Golden Island shopping centre development in Athlone built by O'Callaghan.

The coalition later collapsed over the Brendan Smyth scandal. On December 14th, the day before the next govern-

ment came to power, Ahern signed a statutory instrument which saved Owen O'Callaghan millions of pounds.

That decision was taken against the advice of Department of Finance officials just hours before.

It now turns out that O'Callaghan gave over £50,000 as a political donation to Fianna Fáil after a party fund-raising dinner.

### Collapse

On November 10, 1994 when the Coalition Government was on the brink of collapse Ahern met with Owen O'Callaghan.

According to the Taoiseach, O'Callaghan "made representations about the site". But O'Callaghan denies that

the meeting ever took place.

Six months before Ahern helped out O'Callaghan, the developer stumped up between £5,000 and £10,000 at a fund-raising dinner in Cork.

But some time after dinner he made a further donation of more than £50,000.

Strangely, a large number of files covering the granting of special tax status to developments went missing from the Department of Finance when Ahern was Minister, but have now turned up in the hands of the Flood Tribunal.

Owen O'Callaghan has already admitted paying off councillors - including Fianna Fail councillor Colm McGrath - to get permission to build the controversial Liffey Valley centre. McGrath said when he was caught out,

**How Socialist Worker exposed Ahern's**

"I am being set up by Mount Street, (Fianna Fail headquarters). There is a much bigger story out there involving some people who are now taking the moral high ground."

It looks like the "bigger story" is Ahern's relationship with O'Callaghan. No wonder Ahern wants to claim that all the scandals belong to the Haughey era.

**FOR MORE ON THE  
CORRUPT POLITICIANS  
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# Fight to save the Glen

## Stress centres

A MASSIVE 91 percent of call centre workers feel they suffer from stress, according to a recent survey carried out by the British Communication Workers Union. While some 36 percent of workers had sought medical attention.

## GARDAI HARASS GAYS

GAY PEOPLE are facing harassment from Gardai in Dun Laoghaire.

Two gay men sitting talking in a car were recently approached by police who threatened them.

They were forced out of their car and questioned on the side of the road. The officers told the two men that they "knew what was going on", implying that one was a male prostitute.

The driver was ordered to leave or face arrest. When he returned to look for his friend, he found he had been pushed down the steps beside the harbour.

At a time when the gay press is reporting an increasing number of attacks on gay people in Dublin, it is disgraceful that the police are adding to the homophobic climate.

## GM stitch up

A US government department was exposed last week for trying to cover up scientists' concern over genetically modified (GM) food.

Alliance for BioIntegrity, used a public hearing to accuse the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of suppressing warnings by its own scientists over the dangers of GM food.

One microbiologist working for the FDA spoke of an internal document that attempted to gag workers' concerns. Another official of the FDA wrote to a senior official about the "different risks" that were involved in the GM process. Yet that senior official, James Maryanski, dismissed all the concerns, saying GM crops were "generally regarded as safe".

OVER A HUNDRED protesters descended on Glen of the Downs on Sunday the 2nd of January to show their continued support for the campaign to save the Wicklow nature reserve. The protesters openly defied FF Minister Sile De Valera's order closing the area to the public.

The eco-warriors have been campaigning to protect the 95 hectare woodland and stop plans to build a four lane motorway through the Reserve. Building the motorway would require the felling of 1700 trees.

Shortly before Christmas the legal battle to save the trees came to an end when the high court turned down the fourth appeal to postpone the tree-felling for an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out. The minister for the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Sile De Valera immediately ordered that the reserve be cleared of all members of the public. Ironically, the protestors are being asked to leave "in the interest of safety and protection of the nature reserve".

The campaigners have put forward a number of viable alternatives to the planned development including a three rather than four lane road with a centre lane alternating depending on levels of traffic flow. They have also suggested there be greater funding for public transport to reduce levels of traffic on the road.

All suggestions have been



FIGHTING the car lobby

ignored.

The government has decided that satisfying the money-grabbing car-lobbyists is more important than protecting the environment or listening to what ordinary people want.

Barry who has been involved in the campaign since it began nearly three years ago spoke to Socialist Worker about the impact of the campaign.

"I think we've won. We've had huge support and we've managed to

expose the corruption in this country. The campaign is to highlight what's going on and it's become a catalyst for what's going on everywhere.

If there's any attempt to cut down the trees I think there'll be huge numbers of people willing to come down and stop them. It's a waiting game now to see what happens now but after holding them up for three years I think they'll think twice before they try anything like this again."

The protesters at Glen of the

Downs have taken an important stand. It's not a protest against progress it's about stopping bullyboy developers trampling over the wishes of ordinary people and destroying our environment for their own gain.

As *Socialist Worker* went to press, campaigners were preparing to resist attempts by the Council to evict them and begin felling the trees. Show your support by contacting the Campaign website <http://www.emc23.tp/glen/>

## School is Out

BLACK STUDENTS in the US are being expelled from school in a racist clamp down on discipline by the school system.

After the recent spate of school shootings American schools have introduced a policy of "zero tolerance" discipline.

What this means is that students are expelled or suspended for the most trivial of reasons.

### Penknife

In one case a pupil was expelled from a school in New York after being asked by a teacher to help unjam a computer disk and tried to use his penknife to release the disc.

In San Francisco 52 percent of expulsions from schools were of Black pupils, yet they only make up 15 percent of the pupils. In Phoenix 4 percent of the pupils are black but make up 21 percent of the expulsions.

This is despite the fact white teenagers are responsible for the vast majority of school shootings.

# Tribunal gravy train

THE FLOOD tribunal while sitting for over two years has discovered next to nothing about the corruption in politics and business but has spent over £5fi million of the tax payers money.

The two leading barristers on the tribunal team have shared over £1 million in legal fees so far. Patrick Hanratty and John Gallagher, the two senior counsel originally appointed to the tribunal team, have earned over £550,000 each in fees so far. They earn £1,540 a day whether or not the Tribunal is sitting.

Overall over £2fi million has gone to the lawyers, and this is before the legal eagles for the crooks like Burke, Bailey and Gogarty put their claims in.



Builder Bailey spends a day away from the Tribunals chasing the uneatable

## Bigoted Bishop broke up families

PAPERS RECENTLY released from the office of the Attorney general under the 30 years rule demonstrate the powerful influence of the Catholic Church in the Ireland of the 1940s and 1950s.

The papers reveal how the government of the time

abandoned its plans to introduce adoption legislation in 1945 following strong opposition from the country's most powerful primate Archbishop John Charles McQuaid.

In 1945 De Valera decided to approach McQuaid to seek his opinion on its proposals to introduce adoption legislation and to ask whether he would have any objections to such a bill.

McQuaid said he did not think that the such a Bill would provide satisfactory guarantees. He also told De Valera that if it decided to press ahead with the legislation that it would be desirable to consult the entire Catholic hierarchy.

Following correspondence with McQuaid, a senior civil servant in the department of justice observed: "we deduced from the general tone of his reply that he was

## Poverty to rise

THE WORLD bank has admitted that it will not meet international targets for halving world poverty by the year 2015.

This despite its predictions of faster economic growth rates.

not in favour of any legislation on the subject."

The Minister for Justice at the time decided to drop all proposals on the legislation.

A few years later during the government's eventual enactment of an Adoption Act in 1952, McQuaid forwarded an advance copy of his speech on adoption. In the speech he emphasised the superiority of nuns over non-Catholic carers in looking after parentless children.



## what we think

# A spark to light a global revolt



**JUST BEFORE** the twentieth century closed, robo-cops confronted tens of thousands of environmentalists, socialists and trade unionists on the streets of Seattle.

The protesters had come to unite against corporate rule and eventually closed down the World Trade Organisation conference.

It was the most visible sign yet of the anti-capitalist mood which is growing across the world.

Up to recently, many had accepted the idea that 'globalisation' and 'corporate power' could not be challenged.

### Drive

The rich got away with their claim that the drive for 'competitiveness' and 'flexibility' was inevitable. All they had to do was echo the famous TINA slogan of Margaret Thatcher - There is No Alternative.

Yet the costs of neo-liberalism have been enormous.

**Millions of children under five are malnourished. Yet a 1997 study from the American Association for the Advancement of Science found that 78% of them lived in countries where there was a food surplus.**

Every month, there are reports of more 'natural disasters'.

One reason is a type of intensive agriculture which is driven by a fanatical greed for profit. It is estimated that up to 70 percent of the 5.2 billion hectares of dry land on the planet is at risk of being turned into desert.

The same type of capitalist agriculture has produced innumerable new diseases

from BSE to deadly new strains of salmonella in chickens.

Yet while stock markets reach dizzy heights and fortunes are made from trading bits of paper, workers everywhere have seen their share of national economies decline.

No wonder that millions recognise that it is 'the system' itself which brings wars, poverty, famine and environmental destruction.

One sign of the new mood is the way every country in Europe, with the exception of Ireland and Spain, now have a Labour party in government.

The leaders of these parties want to manage capitalism but millions voted for them in order to end the attacks on the welfare state.

**A more direct sign has been the growth of radical extra parliamentary movements. In the US there has been a wave of 'Teach-Ins' after Seattle.**

Thousands of trade unionists also gathered outside Niketown in New York to protest against their cheap labour policies.

In France, there have been massive protests about unemployment, McDonalds and in defence of asylum seekers.

So far the leaders of global capitalism pretend to relate to the 'concerns' of these protests. Clinton even appointed a special policy advisor to manage the aftermath of Seattle. But this will not last.

New clashes and struggles against the system are sure to break out. The challenge is to deepen the anti-capitalist mood and give it a focus.

The best way is to recognise that the key to defeating the system lies in the organised power of workers.

The year 2000 is a good time to get active as a socialist.

There is a world to be won.

## CELTIC TIGER IS GETTING SHAKY

**'BE AFRAID, be very afraid'. That is how the conservative Sunday Tribune columnist Stephen Collins headlined his warning to professional politicians for 2000.**

Behind the celebrations about the Celtic Tiger, the Irish political establishment are nervous.

They know that workers are restive and are not sure that the union leaders can hold the line.

SIPTU leaders initially appeared to welcome McCreevy's budget last year but were forced into an abrupt about turn. They only started to sound militant when union officials were 'ate, bate and roasted' by their members.

Now SIPTU have manoeuvred themselves back into partnership talks but unless they can deliver big pay rises, they will not sell a new deal.

**Yet the bosses are in no mood to make many concessions. They know that the Celtic Tiger is dependent on the US boom and that this in turn is built on a stock market bubble that can burst at any moment.**

For the first time in over a decade, the Irish Stock Exchange has taken a big dip as nervousness grows about how long the Celtic Tiger will last.

The stage is being set for big confrontations.

On one hand, the boom has helped restore confidence to workers and many are now beginning to flex their muscles.

Yet just as they start looking for more, fears are growing that the tide of economic advance is running out.

**Even in its best years, Irish capitalism has left a pool of misery behind. It has the second highest level of low pay in the industrial economies. Homelessness and evictions are rising.**

If capitalism does not work for the majority when there is a boom, then it is time to look for a different way to organise society.

The challenge in the year 2000 is to build the biggest revolutionary socialist

organisation Ireland has ever seen.

We are going to need such a party when the confrontations really start. This is why the Socialist Workers Party is entering the new year with an invitation to all its readers: **Join the Socialists. Fill out the form below.**

**Join the socialists**

I want to join the SWP  I want more info   
I want to get Socialist Worker every fortnight

Name: .....

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Return to SWP, P.O. Box  
1648, Dublin 8  
Tel: (01) 8722682





# news of the world

# AIDS: Drug giants let millions die

**THERE ARE 22 million people in Africa who are HIV Positive. Yet drug companies have been involved in a major conspiracy to prevent South Africa getting cheap drugs to help relieve the disease.**

Recent revelations shows how a corporate cabal exists in Washington that is prepared to risk the lives of the world's most poorest in order to preserve profits.

It comprises some of the most powerful drug companies in the US and Britain. They are not only withholding treatment but are currently engaged in a battle to stop South Africa from treating its millions of HIV sufferers.

The cabal embraces a cosy triangle of big time Washington wheeler-dealers:

Vice President (and would-be President) Al Gore, White House Chief of Staff John Podesta and his brother Anthony Podesta - point man in Washington for the most powerful lobby in town, the pharmaceutical barons.

These three men and their friends in the big drug companies have put South Africa's attempt to combat Aids on hold while millions stand to die. Yet there are townships in South Africa where the death rate from Aids is higher than the birth rate.

## Patent

The issue has to do with patent law. The drug companies use patent law to ensure that a HIV cocktail would cost the South African health service an inconceivable \$10,000 per Aids patient.

But by using a system called parallel importing, which allows a country import drugs made more cheaply in one country than another, South Africa could reduce costs by between 50 and 90 percent.

Yet this has been denounced as 'piracy' by Pharma - the Pharmaceuticals Research and Manufactures of America. This is a formidable alliance of the nation's 100 biggest drug companies. They claimed that South African law would violate patents and undermine profits.

Pharma had a powerful ally in their fight against the world's poor. It is none other than Mr. Environmentalist himself and US Vice-President Al Gore. Al Gore has presented himself as a campaigner for environmental protection against corporate America.

However a closer look shows how Al Gore has received millions of dollars in campaign contributions from many of the



**A child dying of AIDS in South Africa**

key Pharma members.

Gore told Nelson Mandela that the US would not tolerate South Africa anti-patent legislation and soon afterwards the US placed extra tariffs on South African goods. When South Africa still refused to comply, Pharma intervened directly and sued South Africa.

Al Gore continued to put intense pressure on South Africa, threatening to halt

US investment in the area. On 30 April 1998, the US placed South Africa on the '301 Watch List' usually a preparation for economic sanctions.

Daniel Berman head of the Access to Essential Medicines Campaign has pointed to how pharmaceutical companies divide the global market into the lucrative territories of America, Europe and Japan and what is known as the 'Rest of

the World'.

Berman's calculations are that of 1,300 new medicines marketed between 1975 and 1995, only 13 cover diseases that afflict the Rest of the World.

He said: "The responsibility is to shareholders and no one else. If you were to try and raise the question of Aids in Africa, they'd look at you like you were from another planet."

## Indian Airlines hijack

**THE HIJACKING of an Indian airlines planes just before Christmas was a result of the dangerous games that nationalist leaders of the region have been playing in recent months.**

While the hijack was carried out by Kashmiri secessionists, it is part of the crisis created by the conflict between Pakistan and India.

The two rivals have fought three wars since 1947, two of them over Kashmir, which is partitioned between them. The conflict has cost the lives of over 30,000 people in the last eight years.

Over 150,000 Indian and Pakistani soldiers face each other along the 450 mile long border. India and Pakistan are both now nuclear powers and were on the brink of all out war in their dispute over the state of Kashmir in June last year.

In India, the government, as well as scapegoating India's Muslim minority, has pushed up arms spending.

The military regime in Pakistan has constantly used the question of Kashmir to stir up nationalism at home to keep control at home.

It seems more than likely that the Islamic militants of Harkat-ul-Mojahedin, who carried out the hijacking were trained in camps run by the Afghan Taliban that are paid for by the Pakistan military.

The concessions given to the hijackers by India showed a unwillingness to escalate the conflict further - partially in response to protests at home. But overall it is another sign of the depth of the chaos created by nationalist politics in the region.

# Rwanda: UN ignored genocide

**'WHEN THE massacres started, UN troops saved white people'**

Five years after hundreds of thousands of people were murdered in Rwanda, a new independent report about the United Nations role in the killings has been published.

It is a damning indictment against the UN, claiming that not only were they completely ineffective in preventing the murder of 800,000 Tutsis, but they stood by and watched while it happened. Instead they deliberately choose to save only the few white westerners.

After the report's publication, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed his deep remorse for the role of the UN in Rwanda during 1995.

But Annan himself was the target for much of the

report's criticism. He was head of UN peace-keeping in 1994 and is severely criticised for ignoring repeated warnings that the genocide was in the offing.

The Security Council, in particular the US, are also severely condemned.

After ten UN Belgian troops were killed on the first day of the genocide, the Belgium government insisted on immediately withdrawing all of its troops.

One contingent of 2,000 Belgian troops were guarding 2,000 Tutsis at a technical school in the capital Kigali. The troops were told to leave the school to protect westerners.

Lieutenant Luc Lemaire who was in command of the contingent has repeatedly confirmed that his troops were re-deployed to help white foreigners. "We received a series of clear messages that showed me that the



**Kofi Annan**

UN's mission was to be the evacuation of expatriates to the airport".

As the Belgian soldiers pulled out of the school grounds, groups of Tutsis rushed towards the UN vehicles, clinging to the doors in an attempt to stop the troops leaving.

But the troops just fired into the crowd to drive them back.

"We knew the UN was

abandoning us. We cried for them not to leave. Some people even begged for the Belgian's to kill them because a bullet would be better than a machete" said Helena Nwitezini whose was one of the few to survive the massacre.

"We could not believe the United Nations was just going to let us die. We were always hearing on the radio how they were there to help us.

"But when the killers were looking us in the eye and telling us we were going to die what did the UN do? It saved white people."

The UN also left behind its Rwandan staff. When it came to preserving life, the UN were quite explicit, white westerners not black Rwandians.

While some Tutsis managed to climb onto UN vehicles pulling out, even this was no guarantee of

safety. They were pulled off the vehicles and butchered in front of French and Belgian soldiers who said they had no mandate to intervene.

There was never any doubt of what was unfolding, but neither Washington nor London were in any mood to spend money on saving poor Africans.

After the US debacle in Somalia, when a US led force slaughtered hundreds of Somalia in a so called attempt to 'impose order', Washington wanted nothing to do with Africa.

Kofi Annan has insisted that UN has learned its lesson. But most Rwandan survivors doubt it.

Helena Nwitezini summed it up. "Do you think anything has changed?" she says. "We are still poor Africans. Why should they want to help us now when they would not help us before?"



## Eamonn McCann

# Precious bigots

**PRECIOUS LIFE** believes that it's OK to kill people---but only once they've been born, and if they've been born Catholics.

That's one conclusion from recent events in Scotland, where the local leader of Precious Life has been exposed as a sectarian thug.

The founder of the Dublin-based Youth Defence, Niamh Nic Mhathuna, sat alongside the sectarian thug at the Scottish launch of Precious Life in November.

*Precious Life was founded in the North by Ballymena woman Bernadette Smyth. Last summer it linked up with Youth Defence to host a visit to Ireland by US extremists involved in fire-bombing abortion clinics and threatening the lives of pro-choice doctors.*

In November, Smyth and Nic Mhathuna travelled to Glasgow to endorse Jim Dowson as he established a Scottish branch of Precious Life. Youth Defence paid for a full-page ad for the launch in the Scottish Catholic Observer.

However, to the consternation of Smyth and Nic Mhathuna, Dowson has been unmasked as an anti-Catholic bigot.

### Resigned

He had resigned from the Orange Order, believing it had gone soft on "Taigs".

He spoke of Catholics as "Fenian scum". As organiser of a "Kick-the-Pope" band in Cumbernauld, he had produced a tape dedicated to Michael Stone, the psychotic thug who launched a gun and grenade attack on a Republican funeral in Milltown Cemetery in Belfast in 1988. The tape was inscribed "To fearless Michael Stone, champion fast bowler".

Dowson himself has a conviction for possession of an offensive weapon. Precious Life made a big impact in Scotland in its first few weeks of existence, mimicking the violent tactics of US anti-abortionists. It demonstrated abusively outside family planning centres, branded pregnant women who chose abortion as "baby-killers", announced plans to picket the homes of doctors who carry out abortions and threatened to publish the pictures, names and addresses of abortion staff on the internet.

*In late November, police in Scotland visited people working in family planning clinics and advised on them on how to protect themselves and their homes from attack.*

Precious Life in the North and Youth Defence in the South were fully in support of Dowson in these tactics until his exposure in December in the Glasgow newspaper, the Sunday Herald.

Socialists will be tempted simply to take pleasure in the predicament of the fanatical Catholics who find they've been in cahoots with a man who thinks of all Catholics as sub-human. Their own blind bigotry had blinded them to Dowson's different bigotry.

Bernadette Smyth's branch of Precious Life includes "saying the Holy Rosary every day" in its list of "Things to do to stop abortion".

Youth Defence's web-site displays a photograph of the Pope presenting a simpering Nic Mhathuna with a rosary.

But while we might laugh at the latest fine mess these fools have gotten themselves into, there's a more general lesson we'd do well to take on board.

*The episode shows, again, how readily religious zealotry shades over into right-wing extremism in politics. In this case, the trajectory of the bigotries may have led in different directions, and eventually pulled the alliance apart. The point is, however, that the bigotries converged when it came to denying women choice.*

And there is convergence on other issues, too. It is not an accident that both Dowson and Smyth are anti-semites. All are fiercely anti-socialist.

We cannot dismiss "pro-lifers" as people with a bee in their bonnets about abortion. Underneath the shiny-eyed moralising, there are ugly ideas which we got a glimpse of when the mask was ripped from Dowson.

We can enjoy their discomfort. But we should remember that there's nothing comical about the evil which they represent.

## New Northern Ireland Executive

# The shape of things to come

**AMIDST ALL** the media coverage of the new Executive in Northern Ireland, some indication of what is in store slipped out. Even before the new executive met for the first time, the newly-appointed Further and Higher Education Minister, the SDLP's Sean Farren, announced that "student fees are unlikely to be scrapped".

At the end of last year, Mark Durkan, the new Finance Minister, announced that the current spending plans will not be changed, saying, "time and circumstance do not allow us to demonstrate the devolution difference in setting next year's budget."

In the debate which followed in the Assembly, Sinn Fein called for harmonisation of corporation tax across Ireland. That means reducing tax on big business from 30 per cent to 12.5 per cent.

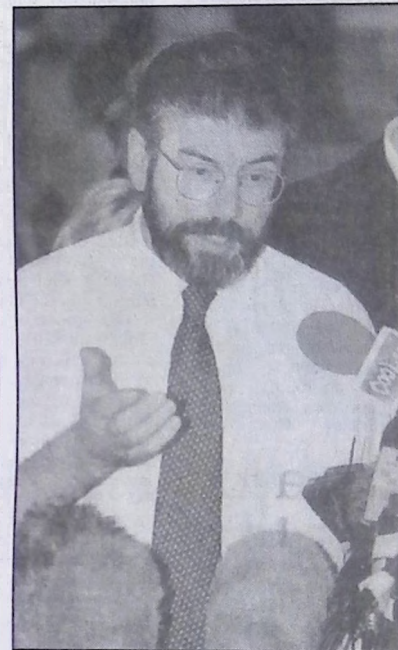
### Investors

The Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment already boasts that business investors "can achieve zero taxes for a number of years."

They also promote Northern Ireland as a low wage economy, with wages in manufacturing which are 30 percent less than in the US, 10 per cent less than Britain and less than half those in Germany. Lowering corporation tax means getting even less from big business to spend on social needs.

All of this is reminiscent of the early days of the Blair government in 1997. The main concern of Blair's early administration was to dampen the hopes for change and reassure big business that Labour would not do anything rash.

The Assembly is headed along the same path. The widespread hope that "bread and butter" issues will replace sectarian point-scoring, belie the growing consensus among the main parties in the Assembly that, as Reg Empey puts it, "Northern Ireland means



business."

The Assembly is facing two directions at once. On the one hand, they promise that people's lives and incomes will improve. On the other, they tell business that Northern Ireland is a good place to invest.

But they can't do both things at once. The desperation for inward investment

runs counter to any measure which would improve the lives of working class people.

The education system is currently starved of resources, pensions and benefits are at poverty levels, the 11-plus is still in place and over half of university students are paying £1,025 fees. The fire service faces

cuts, with new recruits being employed on lesser conditions.

There is a threat of privatisation hanging over the public service, the post office and the railways. Harland and Wolff shipyards are threatened with closure in the near future and clothing factories are closing at the rate of one per week.

### Putting guns into the North

**THE RAYTHEON** arms factory was recently opened in Derry.

It was officially launched by David Trimble, John Hume and Peter Mandelson.

Trimble, the same politician who stalled the peace process with a row over the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons, was among those just welcomed the world's third biggest arms manufacturer to Northern Ireland.

Also present at the plant's opening was Nobel Peace Prize winner John Hume.

Raytheon makes armaments ranging from software programmes to missile systems.

The company is based in Boston, where the Massachusetts state is taking a case against them for selling weapons to Indonesia, at the height of the massacres in East Timor.

## RETURN TO CLASS POLITICS

**THE GREAT** hope in Northern Ireland today is that the end of the war has lifted an enormous weight from the shoulders of working class people.

The Assembly itself has already shown that it will not deliver on them.

In the coming months it is not difficult to imagine those same politicians diverting the inevitable disappointment into communal channels.

David Trimble has prepared a ready-made get out clause, with his resignation threat over decommissioning in February. But there is every reason to assume that Trimble will be able to play it all his own way.

Already, teachers' unions are planning a march on Stormont next May for the scrapping of the 11 plus. Students plan a demonstration on 16 February against student fees.

Trade unions in Derry are organising a united working class March

Against Poverty for early March. This is the direction in which real change will be delivered and the basis laid for destroying sectarian division once and for all.

Many trade unions are demanding a £5 an hour minimum wage. This would directly benefit over 100,000 workers in the North.

But demanding it would be resisted by every major business organisation and by the new Assembly.

They are terrified of frightening the business leaders and multinationals. The same goes for increased spending on health, education and welfare.

That's why socialists argue that class politics will only develop through resisting the agenda of the main Assembly parties.

It is in the united battle against the 11 plus, for a decent minimum wage, for the abolition of student fees, against factory closures and against privatisation that working class people will promote their common interests.



## Who are the Irish ruling class?

THE IRISH RICH always like to pretend that they aren't a class. Fianna Fail has always sold itself on the plain people of Ireland image, yet there are a set of complex networks that bind the state and the bosses together – always in the interest of the bosses.

Corruption isn't just about their personal greed (though that is important) but about how the Irish rulers rule.

Despite the denials about the existence of a ruling class, Ireland has been one of the most successful former colonies in producing a confident and strong capitalist class.

Marx argued that the state in modern society represents the committee of management for the capitalist class – but it does not follow that it is necessary for every capitalist to sit on the committee.

Because of the weak nature of Irish capitalism on a world scale, the bosses here concentrate on specific sectors where they can dominate and become big players. Irish bosses tend to concentrate on food, property, bloodstock, finance, and software.

### Network

In the food sector there is a network of FF supporting business people such as the Goodman group and Hibernia meats. We footed the bill for Goodman's EU fines because he is important to the 'National (bosses) interest'. The wealthy behind Haughey – Dermot Desmond, JP McManus and John Magnier – may have started with an interest in horses but they moved quickly to embrace currency speculation and finance.

Their overwhelming dominance of specific sectors allowed them to charge higher prices and so ensure high profits and even expand overseas.

The effort to generate super profits from limited markets means an obsession with cutting taxes for the rich.

Because capital is so concentrated in particular sectors, very minor changes in the Finance Act can dramatically affect the profits of particular companies. It is noticeable how many accountancy and financial lawyers have jumped from professional status to fully fledged bosses.

Charlie Haughey being perhaps the most prominent and corrupt.

The source of much of the corruption is the need to win the contract to build toll roads, to supply hospitals, or to buy state land at cheap prices.

The weak base of Irish capitalism means

by KIERAN ALLEN

that the bosses often need the direct aid of the state. That is why the concept of "gaining access" to politicians is so central to the bosses.

This corruption goes all the way from the building firm who helps a councillor in return for a local authority contract, right the way to the banks.

The AIB wrote off the debts of two former Taoiseach: £1 million for Haughey and £140,000 for Garret Fitzgerald. One official was quite honest – the debts were written off 'because of the likelihood of Haughey being a man of influence in the future'.

Of course the AIB had the favour returned in the bail out of its failed insurance company at our expense. And the banks gained the contract to process most people's wages under the partnership agreements, making huge profits for themselves.

Sometime individuals sit on both sides of the fence.

As an example, former minister Ray McSharry is a member of several state or former state boards as well as private boards. His list of directorship include Coillte, the state forest board; Eircom; Bank of Ireland, Ryanair, Green Property and London City Airport – which incidentally is owned by Dermot Desmond.

Another example is CRH, the company at the centre of the controversy about the Ansbacher tax scam.

A look at its present and former directors gives a good insight into the Irish ruling class – Tony Barry, from the Barry tea family; Howard Kiro, a Bank of Ireland director; Kieran McGowan, who is also on the board of Enterprise Ireland, Elan, An Post, and the National lottery; Tony O'Brien, is a director of Cantrell and Cochrane and Anglo Irish Bancorp; David Kennedy, is a former chair of Aer Lingus; and Des Traynor, who was the bagman for CJ Haughey.

Crony capitalism is responsible for the untold misery of hundreds of thousands of people in this country. Every move to shore up the profits of big business is made at the expense of Irish tax payers as we see our health, education and social services destroyed.

# First Kosovo, Now Chechnya

# RUSSIA AND INFLICT BLOOD

THE NEW millennium is starting as the last one ended with the world racked by poverty and the horror of war.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Berlin Wall, the Gulf War was supposed to herald a more stable 'new world order' with US dominant. We were promised a peace dividend' as arms expenditure fell.

Yet in reality as the US Joint Chiefs of staff stated in mid 1991, we have seen 'the intensification of intractable conflicts between historic enemies, now fuelled by weapons of enormous destructiveness and less well constrained by the bipolar superpower alignments'.

That prediction has been borne out.

Kosovo was supposed to be a new sort of war where NATO was fighting for humanitarian reasons.

Yet 8,000 civilians lost their lives while not a single NATO soldier died.

Tens of thousands of ordinary people were driven from their homes. Bridges, power stations, buses carrying refugees were all deemed 'legitimate targets'.

NATO simply backed one group who were involved in ethnic cleansing over another.

Serbia drove 50 percent of the Albanian population out of Kosovo and this was hailed as the main reason for the war.

But when the war ended, the Albanians drove 80 percent of the Serb population out of Kosovo.

### Reason

The real reason for the war was that NATO wanted to demonstrate its military power and expand eastwards. According to Noam Chomsky, NATO acted like a Mafia don who wanted 'credibility' by reducing Serbia to rubble and showing what happens to anyone who disobeys its rules.

Since the end of the Cold War, the US has doubled its share of the world arms trade, capturing 44 percent of the market.

It arms sales help fuel regional arms races like that between Greece and Turkey or between two nuclear states,



Russian troops and one of their victims

India and Pakistan.

It is a crazy situation where the Pentagon has to plough billions of dollars into orders for the new F-22 fighter plane from Lockheed to outmatch the F-15s and F-16s the company has sold to other states.

The US is engaged in an arms race with itself.

The other reason for the war, is that NATO and the US want to turn part of Eastern Europe into their economic colonies. Kosovo has been turned into a 'protectorate' so that NATO can have an excuse to locate vast amounts of weaponry close to the Russian border.

One of the long term goals of the US is to grab its share of the vast oil reserves in the Caspian Sea.

It was recently at the centre of a deal for a pipeline to pump oil from the Caspian to Turkey, sidelining Russia altogether.

It also wants to tear up a nuclear treaty with Russia in order to push ahead with plans for an anti-missile defence system which will enable the US to further dominate the globe.

## 'Hell on earth'

RUSSIA IS carrying out the same sort of barbaric war against Chechen civilians. It is trying to bomb the area to rubble to reduce losses among its own soldiers.

Almost 40,000 people are trapped in Grozny.

Most of those sheltering from the onslaught are too old, sick and frail to leave the city.

Since September, Russia, a major nuclear power, has used its might to relentlessly pound the tiny Chechen republic, with a population of under one million people. Russia has slaughtered countless civilians and totally destroyed towns and villages throughout Chechnya.

In the town of Alkhan-Yurt, for example, journalists report that every single building has been smashed and ripped apart by Russian bombs. Over one third of the Chechen population has been made homeless and over 200,000 refugees are facing cold, disease and squalor in neighbouring Ingushetia.



Refugees fleeing Russia's war

The Halo Trust mine clearing agency says the Russian onslaught on Chechnya has been more devastating than anywhere else it has been-including Afghanistan, Cambodia, Somalia and Angola.

A spokesperson said, "Grozny is not the only front and the Russians are directly targeting refugees fleeing from the fighting in other areas. Grozny itself is hell on earth."

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# Kosovo, Now Chechnya

# RUSSIA AND AMERICAN INFLICT BLOODY WAR



Russian troops and one of their victims



## WESTERN HYPOCRISY

WESTERN leaders have shown nothing but hypocrisy in the face of Russia's slaughter of civilians and the suffering of hundreds of thousands of refugees.

US president Bill Clinton and British foreign secretary Robin Cook say Russia has a right to deal with "bandits" and "terrorists", despite Russia labelling every Chechen civilian a "terrorist".

The nightmare in Chechnya has exposed the lie that the leaders of NATO fought the war in the Balkans earlier this year for "humanitarian" reasons.

Even commentators who were in favour of NATO's war have admitted as much. Hugo Young in the Guardian, for example, argued that, "As moral obscenities, the fates of Chechens and Kosovans are

India and Pakistan.  
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demonstrate that it has returned to military 'greatness'.

The clique around Yeltsin has used the war to build up the image of the former KGB spy, Vladimir Putin.

They want him to replace Yeltsin who has now stepped down.

Putin has already signed a decree guaranteeing Yeltsin immunity into a prosecution for corruption.

## Fight to end

THE AMERICAN anthropologist Margaret Mead argued that war was an 'invention'. By that she meant it was product of class society.

And just as capitalism has increased class polarisation in the 20th century, it has taken warfare to heights of horror unimaginable to past generations.

### 'Civilised'

The numbers who died in wars during the twentieth century was seven times more than those killed in the 18th century when people were supposed to be less 'civilised'.

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# AMERICA DODDY WARS



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Even commentators who were in favour of NATO's war have admitted as much. Hugo Young in the Guardian, for example, argued that, "As moral obscenities, the fates of Chechens and Kosovans are

on a par. But as political challenges to the West, they are quite different."

The Russian onslaught in Chechnya is a direct result of the disorder unleashed by NATO's Balkans war.

The Russian ruling class, which felt humiliated and sidelined by NATO, is attempting to reassert its role as a major world power.

### Billed

Yeltsin's successor, Putin, is already being billed as a Pinochet style strong man who will make Russia a superpower again.

The war is also a product of the West's intervention in the region.

Russia wants to assert control over its own "backyard" in the Caucasus and Central Asia, which border the rich oil and gas reserves of the Caspian Sea before the US begins to meddle in the area.

## what do socialists say?

### What is alienation?

**NOBODY** likes going to work in the morning. While part of that is the tiredness from being overworked and underpaid, it also reveals something quite important about how capitalism operates.

Work is the most fundamental aspect of what it means to be a human being.

It allows us to alter and change the world around us. However, under capitalism, the work we do is manipulated, distorted, and exploited.

This gives rise to what Marx called alienation.

feel himself. He is at home when he is not working and not at home when he is working".

The anarchy of the market and the exploitation of natural resources for profit means we have no control over the natural world or how our society is planned.

The workings of the market not only takes away control of society from workers, it also disguises who is taking that control away.

The product of a workers labour is owned by the capitalist and exchanged on the market.

The success or failure of the workers labour is measured by whether or not the product can be sold. Whether or not it can be sold or realise any value is dependant on the actions of the market which no-one, least of all the worker, has any control over.

### Gaining

Instead of all humanity gaining from the work we do, the wealth we produce only goes to benefit a tiny minority who don't do any work. More than that, the capitalists control and direct the work done and make it subservient to profit.

We have no control over how or what is produced because capitalists own all the means of production - the factories, machines etc.

The competition at the heart of the system means that class is set against class and workers are set against each other, so that workers even lose control over their relationships with other people and become alienated from them.

As Marx put it "the worker feels himself only when he is not working, and when he is working he does not

workers are controlled by the things or 'commodities' that they produce.

As Marx wrote "their (workers') own movement within society has for them the appearance of a movement made by things, and these things, far from being under their control, in fact control them".

The workings of the free market or the free exchange of commodities increases alienation by hiding the real workings of capitalism.

Marx referred to this as 'commodity fetishism'. By this he was describing the ideas that are produced by the formal equality that individuals appear to enjoy in the market.

One example Marx used to explain this was of a worker and a millionaire both buying a loaf of bread.

They both pay the same so it appears on

the surface that the market treats all fairly but the real relationship of each person to production is obscured.

Work then, instead of being a source of satisfaction and pride for a worker is something "external" to them which is a source of oppression.

Alienation makes workers feel powerless to change things and as a result helps the bosses to perpetuate the idea that the way things are is natural and unchangeable.

But the other side of the equation is that the reality of our society forces us to work together and fight back. While capitalism's production for profit drives people apart and against each other, the reality is that we have to cooperate together to produce anything at all.

We are not just driven together to work but to fight for our rights.

And it is when we act collectively that we battle against alienation.

At a small level the solidarity people feel when they are on a demonstration or a protest is a blow to the alienation of this society.

### Power

When workers use their collective power by going on strike they call into question the basis of alienation.

Not just by replacing competition with solidarity but by undermining the economic structure that lies at the heart of our alienation.

This is why the Hungarian revolutionary Georg Lukacs said "the rise of the workers' council spells the end of alienation".

by GRACE LALLY

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## Fight to end war

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### 'Civilised'

The numbers who died in wars during the twentieth century was seven times more than those killed in the 18th century when people were supposed to be less 'civilised'.

But just as capitalism breeds war, it also creates a working class and class struggle.

And if capitalism is a global system so the working class is a global force.

For example millions of people around the world protested against the US led NATO bombing of Serbia.

Recent events in Seattle show how millions of people around the world are no-longer prepared to tolerate the horror and inequality generated by capitalism.

It is becoming clearer every day that workers everywhere have a common interest.

That common interest means opposition to our rulers' barbarism.

As the German revolutionary socialist Rosa Luxemburg wrote at the start of the century, "Where the chains of capitalism are forged, there they can be broken."

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Start the new year with one...

# RESOLUTION: REVOLUTION!

**CHRIS HARMAN** is the author of *A Peoples' History of the World and Explaining the Crisis*. *Socialist Worker* spoke to him about the direction that the crisis of capitalism is heading and what the prospects for a left alternative are.

## WHAT STANDS OUT FOR YOU ABOUT THE LAST CENTURY?

THE 20TH century was the century that capitalism took over the world.

In the beginning of the 20th century there was already a world market, but most of the population worked on the land, largely cut off from the world market. In Ireland, France and Italy workers were less than a third of the population.

By the end of the 20th century, this had completely changed. We can see this as the working class have become about half the world's population and even those still working on the land are tied to the world system.

The growth of capitalism has been accompanied by the horror of two world wars, terrible slumps that ravaged the lives of millions, and periods of terrible barbarity.

From 1949 to 1975 was a period of expansion in the system and relative stability in the midst of a long term boom. But the last twenty-five years have seen capitalism entering into a period of economic stagnation with slow economic growth, new crisis and new instability and new wars and barbarity.

**WHILE IRELAND IS CURRENTLY IN A BOOM, THE REST OF WORLD SEEMS IN ECONOMIC TURMOIL, YET MUCH OF THE COMMENTARY SEEMS TO SUGGEST ECONOMIC SLUMPS ARE OVER.**

IF WE look at the world as a whole, in the last 25 years we have had three huge economic crises hit in the major industrial economies — 1974-76, 1980-82 and 1990-92.

Since 1990 there has been immense economic crisis across the former eastern bloc.

The output of Russia is half what it was ten years ago. Even in Hungary and Czechoslovakia economic output is only the same as it was twenty years ago.

The second biggest economy in the world, Japan, has not grown for ten years and Europe has been in stagnation for the last four to five years. There has been growth in the US and because Ireland is a small country on the off-shore part of Europe it has been able to grow on the back of the US.

However, that growth is completely dependant on growth in the American



## TURTLE POWER

economy, which could easily go haywire. For instance, even the latest report from the world bank, which argues that everything is going OK for capitalism, is worried about the weakness of the American boom.

**AS WELL AS ECONOMIC INSTABILITY, THE WORLD SEEMS MARKED BY POLITICAL TURMOIL AGAIN. WHY IS THAT?**

AFTER THE collapse of the eastern bloc, the official line from the western governments was that the world was in for a new period of peace and prosperity.

In fact what we have seen is a period of intense international instability.

The decade of the 1990's began with the war against Iraq. It ended with the war against Yugoslavia, and the war by Russia against Chechnya. There are growing tensions between America and China, and there is serious debate about the possibility of a new cold war between America and Russia.

Where this comes from is that the world is divided by giant multinational firms, which are ultimately reliant on one national state, trying to carve out a space for themselves colliding with each other.

Combined with this we have ruling classes that cannot solve the problems of their populations trying to turn people's bitterness against other countries.

**IS THERE ALSO A SENSE THAT WE ARE IN A PERIOD OF IDEOLOGICAL CRISIS?**

THE 1980S was a period of exultation of the market — greed is good, etc. In the 1990s right across Europe there has been a reaction against this.

There is increasing bitterness against the system. Even when people's standard of living is rising, their lives have got worse in all sorts of ways. They are forced to work longer hours, under more pressure from management.

For instance, in the United States there has been a fall in living standards for workers since 1975. This decline means that two people in a family have to work to essentially earn the same as they did 25 years ago. Incredibly, at the same time the average working year in the US has increased by one full month in the last fifteen years.

That pressure on people has resulted through the 1990's in a move to the left with the election of social democratic, labour type parties across Europe.

People are reacting against the system, without necessarily understanding the entirety of that system. However, what we find is that the election of Labour parties does not stop the move to the left. The general feeling that enough is enough, while not a revolutionary mood is one where people feel something can be done about the system.

At the end of last year you saw the protests in Seattle where people started to talk about anti-capitalism. The protests showed people not relying on Labour type politics.

It's not so much the protest itself, it was only one protest in one city, but rather internationally people seeing an alternative in people standing up to the system.

It becomes a focal point for whole layers of people changing their ideas about been able to take on capitalism.

**WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR THE LEFT IN THE COMING PERIOD?**

ALL ACROSS the world there is a sizeable minority of people looking for very hard alternatives to the system. People looking for a different way to run society.

Often they have some confusion because they mistakenly think that the

old eastern bloc was some sort of socialism.

So it's not automatic that being against the system means that they see socialist revolution as the way forward.

But they are people who can be argued with and won to that perspective. Importantly there is a much larger number of people, at times the majority, who are increasingly cynical about business, cynical about politicians.

They are periodically driven to struggle over housing, or to strike over wages.

The point is for socialists to win the minority to a clear understanding of what needs to be done and through that minority begin give some direction to the frustrations and bitterness of the majority.

At the moment, 40 percent of the world is in recession, Western Europe in stagnation, really just America and Ireland have a boom.

It's a false world were people think life is just about tolerable, can you imagine what it will be like in the next major slump. Peoples' lives will be torn apart.

Socialists have to build networks of people on the ground in each locality, in each workplace and each college.

Talking to the fellow workers about the way we can change things.

We need to be at the forefront of showing the potential for people to change things through their own struggles.



in my view

## McCann's good book

ACCORDING TO the Church's own figures, 35 priests, brothers and ex clergy have been convicted on child sex abuse charges since 1991. There are only about 8,000 religious in Ireland.

As the television program and book, *States of Fear* showed, despite the attempts of right wing columnists to rubbish the research, the reality of church abuse both sexual and physical is far more widespread than even that high proportion of convictions would indicate.

The influence of the church is declining almost in direct proportion to the increase in revelations about the crimes of the church. Yet at the same time the church still dominates health and education. What the bishops say on social morality is ignored by many but is still listened to by politicians. Thousands attend mass, Southern Ireland is still a Catholic country if a less devout one.

In this context, Eamonn McCann's new book *Dear God*, is a timely assault on all that the church stands for.

**Eamonn does not belittle those who believe in God, but rather he demolishes the role of religion in actively supporting and campaigning for the continuation of capitalism.**

The pope gets a good kicking, as does the corruption of the bishops and priests who thrive on superstition and ignorance. He tears apart any notion that "human nature" or "culture" can explain religious sectarianism in the North of Ireland.

### Powerful

Charting the history of the North, he outlines how the marriage of capitalism with religious bigotry served the needs of the rich and powerful. His rejection of the "two tribes" argument leads on to optimism for the future.

The contradictions within religion are highlighted throughout and are reflected in his statement, "Religion emerged as an expression of human helplessness in the face of vast and seemingly inexplicable power, and can also be a vehicle for protest." He compares the treatment of Islamic fundamentalism in the press and by politicians, to the silence that greets the extreme absurdities of the Catholic church.

Eamonn frequently demolishes the logic of Catholic teaching by showing the underlying politics behind the mysticism. In particular, in the cases of Mother Teresa and Padre Pio, he uncovers the right wing agenda behind the false saints.

The absurdities of a bleeding con artist who could be in two places at once and the friend of the poor who lived off the rich are lacerated.

**Eamonn brings entertainment and enlightenment but by revealing the right wing political agenda behind the fraud, he does a service to socialists.**

This is most notable in the articles on the cult of Medjugorje which should be passed to any body with relatives thinking of heading on a jaunt to apparitions in Bosnia.

The use of the shrine which is often seen simply as another point of pilgrimage in Ireland is revealed as a central plank of Croatian Nationalism.

If I have one criticism of the book it lies partially in its structure. As Eamonn himself points out in his introduction arguments alone do not diminish the role of the church. Catholicism has always been illogical and hypocritical but it holds the allegiance of thousands of people.

What is required is to undercut the power of religious ideas by ending the real suffering it reflects. In the midst of the demolition job, the way in which people fighting for their rights have frequently put manners on the Bishops is strangely absent.

Overall the book is a marvellous assault on the hypocrisy of the church.

This is most powerfully portrayed in his writings on clerical child abuse, which has destroyed many people's lives. Here *Dear God* is sad and full of anger. And these sections alone make the book essential for every socialist's bookshelf.

■ **Dear God, The Price of Religion in Ireland, by Eamonn McCann, (Bookmarks £9.99).**

SIMON BASKETTER

music

# Rhythm to keep the soul alive

CHARLES SHAAR MURRAY is a respected journalist whose new book about John Lee Hooker and the blues has just been published. He writes for *Socialist Worker* about the blues.

**"BLUES IS the healer, all over the world. It healed me. It can heal you."**

■ JOHN LEE HOOKER, 1989

EVERYBODY knows what "the blues" is supposed to be all about: an old black guy with a guitar and a straw hat sitting in a rocking chair on some Deep South back porch mournfully singing, "Woke up this mawnin, found ma baby done gone.

Well, that may be a good enough definition for makers of beer commercials, but there's an awful lot more to it than that.

A musician will say that the musical structure of the blues involves three chords, 12 bars and an A-A-B rhyme scheme with three lines in which the second line repeats the first and the third serves as the punch-line.

### Recorded

A cultural historian would probably tell you that the blues is a distinctive African-American folk style which originally appeared in its recognisable form around the turn of the last century in the Southern states of the US and was first recorded during the 1920s.

And a god-fearing, church-going, "respectable" African-American of that time would probably have insisted that the blues was "the devil's music" and that the blues singer was the lowest of the low who, like the legendary 1930s bluesman Robert Johnson, had probably sold his soul to Satan.

So what, exactly, is the blues? There are a few million definitions, but the core of its truth can be found in a remark once made by Sam Phillips, the

Memphis record producer best known for having discovered Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis and Carl Perkins in the early 1950s.

Phillips got his start recording local blues artists. When he first heard the voice of Howlin' Wolf, Phillips said he realised, "This is where the soul of man never dies."

The greatest single error that anyone can make about the blues is to believe that it is all about being miserable. Of course, there is deep, intense sorrow and anger in the blues.

How could it be otherwise when the music originated in the racist, segregated, apartheid-in-all-but-name Deep South?

John Lee Hooker was once asked why the state of Mississippi had produced so many blues artists. He replied, "Because it's the worst state."

But that expression of sorrow and anger is only the beginning of the blues process. Before you can triumph over those feelings you must first acknowledge them.

The point of the blues is not feeling



John Lee Hooker

miserable, despite everything that the world and the system can throw at you.

What the blues ultimately tells us is that the human spirit is indestructible.

### Survives

An individual can be broken, but the community survives.

And that by one man or woman telling

their story and sharing it with others, we can shoulder each other's burdens and draw strength from our shared experience.

Whatever the blues may be as a collection of stylistic devices, as social history, as entertainment or as inspiration, it is a means of asserting our collective humanity.

Through its chorus of individual voices,

each one contributing a personal piece, it tells a much bigger story—the story of who we are as human beings.

After all, if we can say that we "woke up this morning", it means that we're still alive. And ready to fight another day.

■ **Boogie Man: The Adventures of John Lee Hooker by Charles Shaar Murray (Viking, £17.99).**

book

# NATO's Kosovan lies exposed

**THE ASSAULT on Yugoslavia by US led NATO forces last spring was accompanied by daily outpourings of humanitarian concern by western leaders in newspaper columns and on TV screens.**

This brilliantly organised propaganda campaign took place at the same time as these very leaders continued to authorise the sale of weapons of mass destruction to some of the most brutal dictatorships in the world.

Within the ranks of NATO itself, Turkey, a country with open fascists in government, continues its long war against the Kurdish minority.

This is just one of the many

contradictions of the Kosovo war that Noam Chomsky explores in his brilliantly researched expose of the real priorities driving NATO foreign policy "The New Military Humanism - Lessons From Kosovo".

### Elite

Employing the rigorous scholarship for which he has become renowned, Chomsky shows how the western elite deliberately provoked a refugee crisis in Yugoslavia in order to destabilise Kosovo and enforce its rule on this strategically crucial region.

He argues that Kosovo was the testing ground for a new ideology of Military Humanism tailored to meet the needs of an economically and politically unstable post

cold-war world.

But if Chomsky's analysis has a flaw it is his lack of faith in ordinary people to see through the hypocrisies of their leaders and begin building a movement to challenge the basis of the system that breeds war.

Thus he fails to mention the growing opposition across the NATO countries to the Kosovan campaign which went as far as an Anti-war general strike in Yugoslavia's neighbour Greece.

It is around the power of the working class to grind a war machine to a halt that any future anti-war movement must be built.

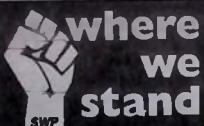
— DAVE LORDAN



WHAT IS AHERN HIDING?

# LATEST SCANDALS SHOW...

# FF corrupt to the core



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

**FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM**

The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system.

The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion.

To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

**FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:**

The SWP welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class.

We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

**FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION**

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We stand for: free contraception and 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 every Wednesday at the Mayfare Hotel at 8.30pm

**BELFAST CENTRAL:**

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Garrick Bar, Chichester St.

Tuesday 11 January The origins of women's oppression

Tuesday 18 January The fight against racism today - Tom Prier

**BELFAST QUEEN'S UNI**

Tuesday 11 January Class struggle in the new millennium Colm Bryce

Tuesday 18 January Chechnya and the new world disorder

**BELFAST SOUTH:**

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Queens Students Union

Wednesday 12 January Do we need violence to change society - Cathy Sloan

Wednesday 19 January The politics of James Connolly Barbara Muldoon

**CORK:**

Meets every at 8.30pm in Hairy Lemon, Oliver Plunket Street

Wednesday 12 January Chechnya and the new world disorder

Wednesday 19 January Marxism and History

**DERRY:**

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Badgers Bar upstairs, Orchard St.:

**DERRY**

Thursday 13 January The origins of women's oppression

Thursday 20 January PUBLIC MEETING Can we stop capitalism destroying the planet, Sandino's Bar, Water St, 7.30pm

**DUNDALK:**

Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details

**DUN LAOGHAIRE:**

Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Christian Institute

**DUBLIN ARTANE / COOLOCK:**

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

Tuesday 11th January: Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.

**DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL:**

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways, Parnell St

**DUBLIN NORTH WEST:**

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in O'Mahoney's Pub, Phibsboro (near Crossguns bridge)

12th January: Marx and the State

19th January: The Politics of James Connolly

**DUBLIN RANELAGH:**

Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Tom Kelly Flats' Community Centre, Charlemont St.

**DUBLIN RIALTO:**

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

**DUBLIN RATHMINES:**

Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in O'Connell's Pub, Sch. Richmond St.

**DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL:**

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

**DUBLIN TALLAGHT:**

Meets every Monday at 8.30pm in Jobstown Community Centre

**ENNISKILLEN:**

Phone 01 - 872 2682 for details

**GALWAY:**

Meets every Thursday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square (beside Cuba) 8.30pm

**LIMERICK:**

Phone 01 - 872 2682 for details

**SLIGO**

Meets fortnightly on Saturdays, phone 01-8722682 for details

**TRALEE**

Meets fortnightly on Mondays at 5.50pm in Harty's Bar, Tralee:

**WATERFORD:**

Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

Thursday 13th: The Chechen War and the New World Disorder

Thursday 20th: Public Meeting: Can we stop capitalism destroying our planet?

**WEXFORD**

Meets every fortnight, phone 01-8722682

## BERTIE AHERN claims that the days of corruption in politics are over but a new series of revelations shows a different story.

Tom Gilmartin, the property developer who gave FF's Pdraig Flynn a £50,000 cheque is threatening to name the politicians he had to pay off before retiring to England.

"One million pounds was taken out of my company's account without my knowledge," the property developer claims.

Gilmartin wanted to develop the Quarryvale site into a shopping centre.

### Senior

He says he pressed his case at meetings with senior Fianna Fail figures including Charlie Haughey, Bertie Ahern, Pdraig Flynn and Brian Lenihan. He was introduced to them by the Fianna Fail TD Liam Lawlor.

At the meeting, the first question Ahern asked was had Gilmartin given a donation to Fianna Fail.

He then helped Gilmartin to complete the purchase of a 70 acre site from Dublin Corporation.

As he left Government Buildings, Gilmartin says he was approached by an unknown individual who said his problems would be solved if he put £5 million into an offshore bank account.

Gilmartin didn't lodge the money and didn't get to build the Liffey Valley centre.

The man who did build the shopping centre is developer Owen O'Callaghan. Ahern met Gilmartin in the company of Tim Collins.

It now turns out that Collins was paid at least £30,000 in connection with work done for O'Callaghan. O'Callaghan got tax breaks from Ahern for his shopping centre in Athlone.



## Ahern's rotten record

IT'S NOT just a couple of dodgy planning deals that Ahern is involved in. The man Haughey called "the most devious of them all" is surrounded by scandal.

AT LEAST £1 million of tax payers money ended up in Fianna Fail's accounts and was used to fund Haughey's lavish lifestyle. Almost all the 1,615 cheques drawn from the account were signed by Ahern.

One went to Haughey's son's company, Celtic Helicopters, and at least one ended up in the Ansbacher account. Ahern says he can't remember what the cheques he signed were for.

£10,000 WENT into a bank account which Ahern controlled in 1993. The donor was Jerry Lidzon, an American businessman who was buying an Irish passport. The bank account contained at least £300,000 - no explanation of where the money came from has ever appeared from Ahern.

## DIRT inquiry...

# Give us back our money!

THE DAIL report into the DIRT tax scam has shown how the banks and the Irish rich used dodgy non resident accounts to evade millions in tax.

The amount of DIRT not paid by the financial institutions has been estimated to be at least £200 million but the figure could be more than that.

The former AIB head of internal audit, Anthony Spollen, estimated in 1991 that up to 60 per cent of his bank's non-resident accounts might be bogus, making for a DIRT liability of £100 million a year. The bank still has 91,000 non-resident accounts.

Taxes from this money could have been used to cut hospital waiting lists or employ more teachers so that class sizes could be reduced.

Last year there were only six prosecutions for tax evasion and no one has ever gone to jail for not paying their taxes.

★ AHERN WAS backed financially by John Finnegan. Finnegan used to organise property deals for Haughey and is one of the key figures in the Ansbacher scam.

★ IN 1992 when Fianna Fail was alone in a caretaker government, Ahern appointed two Revenue Appeals Commissioners - his own brother-in-law Ronan Kelly and John O'Callaghan who wrote a policy paper on taxation for Fianna Fail. They subsequently reduced Charlie Haughey's tax bill from £2 million to zero.

★ Ken Rohan is a big Fianna Fail donor. Ahern introduced a scheme that allows Rohan to get huge tax breaks for his enormous mansion. Rohan is the only beneficiary of this piece of benevolence from Ahern.

★ GUY SNOWDEN invested £100,000 in Celtic Helicopters and was then given a multi-million contract to install Lotto machines for An Post. Ahern, who was Minister for Finance at the time, gave out the contract without putting it out to tender.

## Jail the bankers ... and the politicians!

The DIRT Inquiry heard from five former finance ministers - John Bruton, Ray MacSharry; Albert Reynolds; Bertie Ahern and Ruairi Quinn. But because it was written by politicians there are no real criticisms.

The report says  
★ "It is remarkable that successive Ministers had so little awareness of the Revenue operating procedures". In fact each of these politicians knew about the dodgy accounts and did nothing.

★ "The evidence suggests that the State and its agencies were perhaps too mindful of the concerns of the banks and too attentive to their pleas and lobbying," the report says. What that means for the AIB, for instance, is that it gives donations to every political party.

★ "It is clear that the law was not applied equally between different categories of taxpayer over the relevant period." In plain English: there is one law for the rich tax dodgers and another for the rest of us.



Tel: (01)8722682; fax (01) 8723838; email: swp@clubi.ie web: www.clubi.ie/swp

Landsdowne Valley eviction

# Protest stops eviction

**RESIDENTS** at the Landsdowne Valley apartments in Drimnagh have succeeded in stopping a millionaire property owner evicting them from their homes.

Tommy Quinn, owner of the apartments tried to evict the tenants ten days before Christmas so he

could sell the apartments to make way for a multi-million development.

On the morning the eviction was supposed to take place, a group of thirty people turned up to help prevent the sheriff's office carrying out the order.

They were supported by members of the Housing Action Campaign and residents of St. Ultan's, Ranelagh who prevented their homes being demolished last year.

They forced the Corporation to buy the flats and kept their homes.

## Support

"We came to show our support", one of the St Ultan's residents told *Socialist Worker*. "We were really grateful for all the support we got in our dispute. It shows how working class people can take on property tycoons and win."

"Most people here have been model tenants", said Brendan. "I have always paid my rent on time, even after he served notice on us."

Another of the tenants facing eviction is Anne-Marie, who has a young family.

If evicted, they would have to spend Christmas in a B&B or a hostel. "That's no place for my kids to spend Christmas,"



she told *Socialist Worker*.

Thanks to the massive support they received the tenants have forced Quinn to postpone the evictions until after Christmas.

The tenants are demanding that Dublin Corporation buy the apartments and refurbish them.

Quinn has deliberately

become run down.

Rubbish is building up as he cancelled the contract with the waste disposal company.

And many of the buildings are full of damp, and others have mice.

Only fourteen of the fifty flats in the complex are occupied.

Yet with proper invest-

ment Landsdowne Valley apartments could provide decent accommodation for some of the people on waiting lists for public housing.

"Most of these flats are empty, and people sleeping on the streets," said a local man who came to support the tenants.

"It's just disgraceful."

Bray UDC

# Strike over privatisation

**LOCAL AUTHORITY** workers in Bray had begun unofficial strike action, as *Socialist Worker* went to press, after Wicklow County Council went ahead with its plans to privatise the Refuse collection.

The council had agreed to postpone the privatisation.

However, management cynically used the Christmas period to remove all the bin lorries from the depot. Workers returning to work found that they had been redeployed.

The workers wanted to go on strike immediately but were told by SIPTU that they couldn't strike over privatisation.

Instead the strike is officially supposed to be about changes in working conditions. But as one worker put it, "We are totally against privatisation. We saw how Thatcher used it in Britain".

Residents of Bray are due to pay £150 a year to a private company for refuse collection.

This scandalous decision was pushed through by Fianna Fail councillors at the meeting of the Urban District Council.

However, after a campaign set up by local residents to fight the privatisations, 'Bray Against Privatisation', the Council were supposed to have agreed to postpone the move until the end of January when another Council meeting could be held.

Privatisation also raises issues affecting all PAYE workers. PAYE workers shoulder the burden of tax because wealthy crooks like the Ansbacher account holders refuse to pay their tax.

Many people in Bray are asking why should they put up with another form of double taxation in the form of a high refuse charge?

Up to now there is some degree of democracy because elected councillors had a say on how the service charges are set.

But privatisation of refuse means that a private monopoly will take over. Once they have got a grip, they can raise charges even higher than £150.

These proposals can be beaten if people in Bray get behind the local authority workers. A mass campaign of non-payment was enough to defeat water charges nationally when they were levied some years ago. If such a campaign is linked to opposition to privatisation, the Thatcherites in Bray can be beaten.

**★ Building bosses are making a fortune out of housing. The numbers of houses being built is enormous but so too are the profits.**

This means that housing is now out of reach for most people. At the same time, the numbers on the waiting lists for public housing remains above 100,000.

The numbers of homeless people are also increasing. In any year, 10,000 people sleep rough in the city, 42 percent of which are now under 18.

Ringsend incinerator

# Tax the rich wasters

**OPPOSITION** IS growing to Dublin Corporation and the Government's plan to build a waste incinerator in Ringsend.

Burning waste means toxic chemicals will get into the atmosphere. The dioxins that incinerators emit are poisonous.

According to the American Environmental Protection Agency, "Exposure to dioxin, even at minute levels, poses cancer risks, and health concerns, including possible damage to the immune and reproductive system".

For instance, people living within five miles of a waste incinerator in Texas were found to be twice as likely to have respiratory diseases as those living away from an incinerator.

A British study found a "marked concentration of larynx cancer cases among



Anti-incinerator protest

adults within 2 kilometres of a waste incinerator."

Fianna Fail see the incinerator as part of the privatisation of waste disposal. If it goes ahead the harmful plant will be run for profit by a private company.

## Recycled

The Department of Environment say that they have to incinerate the waste, but there is no need. Currently 90 percent of waste in Ireland is dumped and only 5 percent of waste is recycled.

Yet the government's own figures say it is possible to recycle up to 80 percent of all waste.

42.2 million tonnes of waste is produced in Ireland

each year. Only 1.85 million tonnes of that comes from household waste.

31 million tonnes comes from agricultural waste and over 8.61 million comes from industrial waste.

The factory owners who pay the lowest rate of tax on profits produce the most harmful waste. If they were forced to pay for cutting down on waste from their factories the there would be no "waste management crisis".

Last time there was an attempt to bring a poisonous waste incinerator to Ringsend protests and demonstrations stopped the plan in its tracks.

Meetings and protests are planned in the area to do the same again.

SIPTU Election . . . SIPTU Election . . . SIPTU Election . . . SIPT

# Rank and file candidate contests SIPTU election

**A MAJOR** election will take place in SIPTU this year for the position of Vice President. The main left wing candidate is Carolann Duggan, who has contested two major previous elections as a rank and file factory floor worker. She is currently Vice President of the Waterford Branch of the union.

At the moment there is huge discontent in SIPTU. The pressure on the union leaders was seen during the budget crisis.

Initially the ICTU and the SIPTU leaders seemed to give a guarded welcome to the budget.

They had been closely involved in the drawing up of the report of the National Economic Council which was supposed to outline the broad framework of budget policy.

When the budget first appeared, Equality Officer Rosheen Callender, issued a statement giving it a cautious welcome.

But they soon found there was

huge anger amongst their own membership.

The SIPTU leaders were forced to suddenly change tack. They denounced McCreavy's 'concessions' to the rich and pulled out of partnership talks briefly.

Yet this was simply a manoeuvre and before long they were back in talks after they got a minor tax credit for the low paid.

Discontent has also grown in the union over Des Geraghty's attack on public sector workers. At a special ICTU conference Geraghty claimed that private workers would not tolerate a situation where public sector workers put in for special pay claim after special pay claim.

The union has so far refused to print a letter in Newsline, the union's paper, from nearly twenty public sector shop stewards attacking these crude remarks aimed at dividing workers.

Many workers are also asking why nothing has been done about the Ansbacher scandals. At the union's conference it was agreed to call a demonstration against corruption.

But as Carolann Duggan put it, "The whole thing has disappeared into the black hole of the ICTU."

**Carolann Duggan is running to provide a new direction for the union. She has been a firm opponent of partnership and has also been opposed the high living expenses that the union officials get.**

The favoured candidate of the union hierarchy is Jack O'Connor, the Regional Secretary for the Midlands. O'Connor has been using his position as a full time official to visit factories to canvass for the post.

But despite this unfair advantage, Carolann Duggan looks set to tap into a huge wave of anger amongst the rank and file.

The first stage in the election process is the nomination stage.

All SIPTU branches have to call special meetings to nominate a candidate. The union bureaucra-



Carolann Dugan

cy hope that this meetings will be small and their favoured candidate get the nomination.

## What you can do

■ Ring up your SIPTU branch official to find out when the special nomination meeting for the union vice presidency takes place.

■ Organise to bring your SIPTU workmates and friends down to the meeting to propose Carolann Duggan.



# Socialist Worker

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## Comprehensive education now

# SCRAP THE 11+

"I DON'T care if the Pope ran our schools, as long as my kid doesn't have to do that bloody exam"

That was the response of one woman from East Belfast signing a petition against the 11 plus.

It is ridiculous to think that an exam done by a child at 11 years of age will determine their entire future.

How a child performs in the 11 plus has an enormous effect on the rest of his/her life as it determines what type

of second level school a child attends. Almost all children who eventually attend University have attended a Grammar school. Children who fail the 11-plus are sent to secondary schools which are geared towards creating a low skill, cheap workforce for the future.

The 11 plus clearly discriminates against working class children. Figures show that failure rate of working class children is disproportionate to failure rate of children of middle class parents, who can provide extra tuition and computers to help their children pass.

Children suffer psychological effects years after the exam that effect them throughout their lives.

Depression, loss of interest in school work, acute anxiety, nightmares and bed-wetting are not uncommon among children who fail.

There is also a social stigma attached. As one parent told *Socialist Worker*. "You only have to walk through Belfast in the afternoon and you can tell who failed and who passed by the type of uniform they are wearing."

McGuinness is right to oppose selection but he should abolish it immediately, not wait for a review.

### Misery

This would cost the assembly nothing and at once end the misery of thousands of eleven year olds.

Already over a thousand signatures have been collected in the schools and on the streets of Belfast and Derry.

The decision by the Belfast teachers union the NASUWT to march on Stormont in May against selection is widely popular.

And the enthusiastic response to the setting up of the Campaign against Selection is a further illustration of the possibilities of ending educational apartheid.

### CAMPAIGN AGAINST SELECTION

THE CAS has been set up by teachers, parents and others opposed to the 11+ and to fight to end selection.

It is circulating petitions throughout schools as well as an open letter calling for change.

In February the CAS will be holding meetings in order to help build the NASUWT march on Stormont.

For further details, petitions, copies of the open letter, contact: John Price (Secretary) CAS, 1 Woodland Park North, Lisburn, Tel : 01846-660011, Email: [camapign\\_against\\_selection@hotmail.com](mailto:camapign_against_selection@hotmail.com)

## Socialism in Belfast

**A WEEKEND OF DISCUSSION AND DEBATE ON SOCIALISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

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