

Socialist Worker

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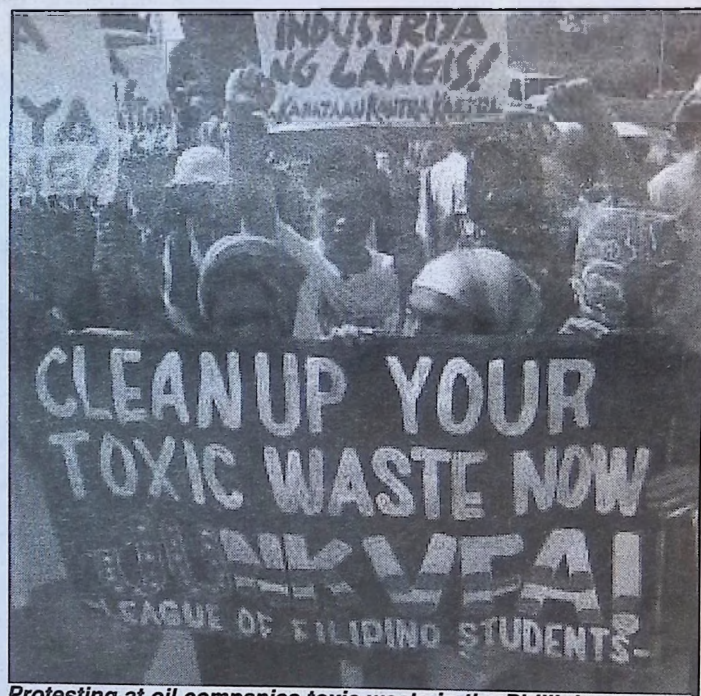
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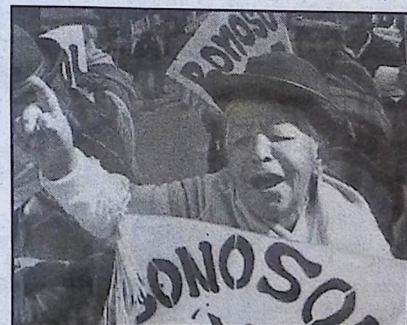
Fighting against arms manufacturer Raytheon in Canada



Shutting down the World Economic Forum in Australia



Protesting at oil companies toxic waste in the Philippines



Fighting for better pensions in Bolivia.

Build the anti capitalist movement

Haemophiliacs poisoned for profit

FIFTY SEVEN haemophiliacs contracted HIV through contaminated blood products given to them by the Blood Transfusion Board in the pursuit of profit. This shocking revelation has finally emerged from the Lindsey Tribunal.

In the 1970s an American company, Travenol, offered the Blood Transfusion Board a ser-

vice fee of 10 per cent for distributing its Factor 8 product.

But the head of the board Dr. Jack O'Riordan warned the government not to grant a license to the US pharmaceutical giant to distribute their products here.

It had been revealed that Travenol was not screening its blood products, making them potentially deadly.

However, for yet unexplained reasons O'Riordan changed his mind. It appears that the Blood Transfusion Board suffered from the

public spending cuts and needed to get income from other sources.

The BTSB made at least \$100,000 from selling Travenols products to hospitals.

Generate

There were other options.

The Board could have made its own Factor 8 product — which would have been safer. But they agreed that it was economically more "prudent" to sell Travenol's

commercial concentrate.

Minutes of a BTSB budget committee meeting in 1983 said that "new products such as Factor 8 concentrate, while being highly desirable as import substitutions, will not generate a profit in the early stages of production".

A BTSB document referred to the sale of factor concentrates and said: "More purchases = more sales = greater profits."

BOMBS OR PEPSI?

SECURITY GUARDS checking for dangerous weapons at the Olympic Games in Sydney have been asking visitors if they are carrying "knives, weapons or cans of Pepsi" in an attempt to appease the "official soft drink" sponsor Coca Cola.

The move is an attempt by the Olympic officials to serve the interest of companies who are reported to

have paid up to \$1bn to become official sponsors.

Logos on computers and televisions, which are not IBM or Panasonic, have been covered with black tape.

A café inside the Olympic complex was told to remove an egg and bacon roll because it resembled the Egg McMuffin by "official" sponsor McDonalds.

Danger Zone

LATIN AMERICA is the world's most dangerous place for trade unionists, according to a new report from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

At least 90 trade unionists were killed in Latin America in 1999.

Jailing and torture of activists is widespread.

There were 69 assassinations in Colombia alone, including the leader of the agricultural workers union, often by paramilitaries with links to the government.

Killings also took place in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Brazil, Argentina and Ecuador.

Sky high bonuses

DESPITE THE Eircom debacle, Mary O'Rourke has given the green light to privatise Aer Lingus. And already the fat cats are licking their lips.

One advertising company has already won a £750,000 contract to help sell shares.

And the Board of Directors are already looking forward to the super-salaries that come with being in a private company.

These hard working entrepreneurs include:

■ **Des Richardson:** This is Bertie Aherm best mate and personal fund raiser. He used to work as a director in the Nations! Treasurer's office in Paddy's Fall.

■ **Paddy Wright** who is the Chief Operations of Smurfit. This company is involved in attacks on trade unionists in Colombia.

Meanwhile Aer Lingus tries to squeeze their workforce for ever more productivity

Socialist Worker

www.clubi.ie/swp

Framed for murder then hounded by the State

How Gardai drove Dean Lyons to his death

DEAN LYONS' death in an English prison came as a relief to the Gardai. For if they had their way he would have died in an Irish prison for a murder he did not commit.

In 1997 someone made their way upstairs to the bedrooms of two long-term psychiatric patients, Sylvia Shields and Mary Callinan, aged 59 and 61, and brutally stabbed both women to death.

Two hundred officers were put on the case.

Eventually 50 of them stormed the Salvation Army hostel a hundred yards from the scene of the murder and dragged Dean Lyons from his bed.

A homeless heroin addict, with learning difficulties, who had a tendency to fantasise Lyons wasn't physically strong enough to have committed the murders.

Charged

Dean Lyons had two interviews before being charged.

One was videotaped and includes no confession.

The second wasn't recorded but produced a well written statement and included exact details of how the murder was committed.

It could only have come from severe intimidation inflicted by the Gardai on him.

Twenty-one days after Lyons was charged, Catherine

Doyle was stabbed 16 times and died along with her husband Carl.

The man who killed the Doyles, Mark Nash, made four separate and voluntary admissions to the Grangegorman murders, which included even more details, which only the killer could have known.

Released

But Dean Lyons was not released and spent another seven months in jail.

But six months later the gardai could not cope with him as a free man.

So he was arrested and charged with robberies he may have been involved in before the Grangegorman killings.

Judge Cyril Kelly — the same judge who tried to release Philip Sheedy for 'humanitarian reasons', sentenced him to seven years imprisonment

After a drug rehabilitation course, Dean Lyons, according to his family, went to Britain because he was terrified of the Gardai.

In Manchester he got back on heroin and was arrested for shoplifting.

The exact reasons for his death are unexplained He was twenty-seven.

No compensation was ever paid to Dean Lyons.

No apology ever made, no state car drove Dean Lyons to a tribunal in Dublin Castle.

It wasn't a miscarriage of justice — it was murder.

Perma temps

AMERICAN BOSSES are profiting by violating workers' rights.

A Human Rights Watch report has slammed the US's eight year "economic miracle" for being at the expense of the workforce.

The report slams US bosses for flouting labour protection laws.

Bosses are taking advantage of immigrant workers and growing numbers of part

time and contract employees.

Migrant farm workers have been threatened with investigation by immigration authorities, and deportation for trying to set up a trade union.

The computer giant Microsoft was also nailed for flouting employees' rights.

Staff totalling 6,000 are officially employed by an agency.

They have worked for Microsoft so long they are known as "perma-temps".



Hundreds of homeless drug addicts are open to abuse by the Gardai

Unhappy meals

A McDONALD'S "Happy Meal" toy supplier has been caught out exploiting child labour.

City Toys has factories in the "special economic zone" in southern China.

The child workers were forced to work 15 hours a day, seven days a week.

Their working day could top 20 hours.

Many of the youngsters lived in factory dormitories. Sacked workers were paid one month's wages, and told to pack and leave immediately.

Socialist Worker Student Society

National Conference 2000

Sunday 15th October

Vietnamese Centre, Hardwicke St., D.I

11 am - 12 pm: Standing up to racism The marxist alternative to the free market

12.15pm - 1.15pm: Can we get socialism through the Dail? Fighting for women's liberation today.

2.30pm - 3.30pm: Does all organisation lead to hierarchy? Have the multi-nationals bought off western workers?

3.45pm - 5.30pm: Fighting for socialism in the colleges... Campaigns, Protests and direct action, student unions plus resolutions & SWSS committee elections

ring 086-4098186 or email swp@clubi.ie



what we think

After Prague

Build the anti capitalist movement

"IT WOULD be a big mistake to dismiss this global militant tendency as nothing more than a public nuisance, with little potential to change things. It has already changed things — and not just the cocktail schedule of upcoming meetings."

So says the *Economist* magazine. The anti-capitalist movement is frightening the corporate elite who rule the world.

It is only a year since the movement was born in Seattle.

But already it has involved hundreds of thousands in protests against the three pillars of global capitalism, the World Bank, the IMF and the World Trade Organisation.

Policy

The movement has been born in opposition to the neo-liberal economics, which now shapes the policy of almost every government in the world. These argue that everything must be subject to the market. State industries must be privatised. Taxes have to be cut on multi-nationals.

Labour has to be made more flex-

ible so it bows to every whim of big business.

The results are already evident. In America, it is estimated that the average employee is now working a month longer each year than in the sixties.

The number of people living on less than one dollar a day has increased from 1.1 billion in 1985 to 1.3 billion today.

De-regulation has also led to terrible environmental decay as the climate warms up and the polar ice caps start melting.

But from Seattle to Prague a movement has sprung into existence to challenge these policies.

Up to now globalisation has been a code word for "Multi-nationals Rule OK."

The anti-capitalist movement is determined to replace it with global solidarity and resistance to a system build on greed.

In every mass movement there are different tendencies and different views.

The task of socialists is to push this movement in a revolutionary direction so that it links up with the struggles of workers and shuts down capitalism for good.



Thousands of Protestors went to Prague to close down the IMF

Anti capitalism comes to Ireland

THE CELTIC Tiger has been hailed as a success story for neo-liberal economics. In reality it has led to a massive gap between the super rich and the majority of workers.

Since 1987, the share of the national economy going to the wealthy has increased by over 10 percent while the share

going to wages, pensions and social welfare has declined by 10 percent.

Tax cuts for the multi-nationals has meant a run down in public services.

All of this has created a fertile ground for the emergence of an anti-capitalist movement here.

The first step in is a Carnival for Economic Justice, which takes place in Temple Bar in Dublin on Saturday 30th September when hundreds will demonstrate their

anger at system based on greed.

But the movement will extend well beyond this. In the colleges students are already following the example of their American counterparts in United against Sweatshops and are targeting particular multi-nationals.

In the unions the rank and file are already stirring to get rid of the shackles of social partnership.

Linking these impulses into a large and vibrant anti-capitalist movement is the key challenge ahead.

The anti capitalist conference

Nov 17 - 19, Trinity College Dublin

OVER 30 MEETINGS INCLUDING...

'Globalisation and Anti-Capitalism'

Kevin Danaher (Author of *Globalize this*)

Chris Harman

(Editor *British Socialist Worker*)

Catherine Hannon

(eye-witness from Prague)

'Rank and file trade unionism'

Owen McCormack (Busworkers Action Group)

Pat Cahill (ASTI), Jimmy Kelly (ATGWU)

'What's changed for women in Ireland?'

Goretti Horgan

'Republicanism: from armed struggle to

conventional politics'

Eamonn McCann

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news of the world

Thieves fall out under pressure from below

AFTER YEARS of authoritarian leadership, President Alberto Fujimori of Peru has capitulated to pressure with the announcement that he will stand down and call new elections.

overseen vicious repression of his opponents.

Much like Panama's General Manuel Noriega in the 1980s, Montesinos served as a key collaborator for Washington in the region, only now to be reviled for his well-known corruption and repression once he no longer serves the CIA's purposes.

But the main reason for the crisis at the top is pressure from workers.

Immediately after the announcement, thousands of jubilant Peruvians celebrated outside the presidential palace in Lima. In other cities drivers waved flags and honked their car horns late into the night.

At one point Fujimori said he was going to arrest his security chief Vladimiro Montesinos, and was closing down the national intelligence service.

However, after pressure from the military he seems to have backed down.

The politicians and bankers held up Peru throughout the 1990s as a great success story for "neoliberalism."

The ingredients in the "neo-liberal" recipe are familiar-privatisation, deregulation and dismantling welfare provision.

The result is that over half of families are now living below the official poverty line.

Repression

The other side of the neo-liberal policy was authoritarianism. The Peruvian intelligence chief was a member of Central Intelligence Agency and has

Protests

In July, mass protests greeted the inauguration of Fujimori after a rigged election. Thousands attempted to storm the Congress where the highly security ceremony was taking place.

It took over 40,000 police to beat back the protests. After the pitched battles ended, six people were dead and over 150 were wounded, including four with gunshot wounds. At least 172 were arrested.

The boiling anger against the regime has continued. With a truck and public transport strike, starting the day Fujimori announced his resignation.



Protestors moved onto the parliament building to force Fujimora to resign

- Ivory Coast

IMF brings violence and poverty

Instability and tension is growing in the Ivory Coast. As presidential elections planned for October 22 approach, the country is being

torn apart by escalating ethnic violence and mutiny in the army.

Since a military coup on Christmas Eve last year, a military junta headed by General Robert Guei has ruled.

The most recent manifestation of the instability was an assassination attempt on General Guei in the early hours of September 18.

His home was attacked by rebel soldiers. The forces behind the attack are uncertain and there are suggestions that it was staged to

clamp down on the opposition.

Guei took power last year when soldiers protesting over low pay rioted and forced the president, Henri Konan Bedie, to flee the country.

Guei was expected to diffuse the anger in the

army.

Instead protests over pay have continued. Soldiers loyal to Guei put down a revolt in March.

In July hundreds of rioting soldiers took over the streets of the capital Abidjan and other cities for two days and Guei only just hung on to power.

The Ivory Coast is the world's biggest cocoa producer.

A steep decline in cocoa prices and an IMF structural adjustment programme has brought growing poverty and unemployment.

Unpopular

Bedie became increasingly unpopular and the dominant PDCI was challenged by the growth of the Republican Assembly (RDR) led by a previous prime minister Allasane Ouattara.

A former IMF official, with Western backing, Ouattara has won support by opposing corruption, and defending the rights of Muslims. But he looks to the US and more free market economics.

The old regime often used ethnic division to attack the opposition, a strategy that has been continued by the new

the coup.

Ethnic attacks on people from Burkino Faso, who moved into the Ivory Coast to find work in the 1970s and make up to 40 percent of the population, have led thousands to flee the country.

Over the last two weeks recurrent fighting has taken place in rural areas between "Ivoiriens" and immigrant workers, leaving eleven people dead.

The main division between the ruling elites in the Ivory Coast is whether to look for backing from French or American imperialism.

The Ivory Coast is of strategic importance, both for the production of cocoa, coffee and palm oil and also for the possible exploitation of offshore oil.

One socialist from the Ivory Coast said, "There will be no improvement as long as the military are in power."

"But unfortunately the opposition simply represent the other hand of capitalism."

"Ouattara wants to run the economy better, but only to make sure we can keep up the debt repayments to the IMF."

"We need a new party that is not tied to the west and the IMF."

Monsanto's dirty tricks

A leaked document from Monsanto to the *Observer* newspaper reveals the extent that Monsanto is prepared to go to influence the debate on genetically modified food.

The 10 page report written by Monsanto this spring and stamped 'confidential' discloses how Monsanto got pro-GM supporters into influential positions on key international food safety committees and

built up a network of 'independent' scientists it calls on to write articles attacking GM critics, including a number of Irish scientists.

Secretive

Some of the most controversial aspects of the document involve the firm's secretive "scientific outreach team".

The report reveals how the team was instrumental in assuming that GM supporters got on to a food safety consultation run by the

UN and WHO.

The document states that this produced reports "very supportive of plant biotechnology".

The report also states how this scientific outreach team, "averted attacks on recently emerging biotechnology issues" which included reports warning that alien genes used in genetic modification of crops could jump the species barrier and mutate.

The team has also started targeting US doctors and trainee doctors in attempts to convince them their

products are safe.

For example a meeting was held with Professor David Khayat an internationally well-known cancer specialist, to collaborate on an article demonstrating the absence of links between GM foods and cancer.

The document also reveals how Monsanto used its operation Thailand. The company secretly supported a government lab in the country to certify that Thai food exports to Europe are GM free.

Monsanto, which has helped train techni-

cians, makes clear that the company's co-operated because the labs director Dr Pakdi is a key player in international Codex activities.

Codex is the key UN organisation responsible for setting international food safety standards.

The report also showed that Monsanto had been successful in lobbying the UN committee on food safety to ensure that food labelling in third world countries can continue to be voluntary, not compulsory.

Eamonn

McCann

McCrea plays same old tune

ALMOST ALL commentary on the South Antrim by-election has concentrated on the damage done to the Agreement. But the result might also be seen as a product of the Agreement.

This is to say that among the seeds contained within the Agreement are the seeds of its own destruction.

The Agreement takes the Orange-Green divide as the only possible basis for politics in the North. The underlying strategy aims at allocating the entire population to one or other block, and then maintaining a balance between the two.

This ensures that the representatives of each side are on permanent red alert to see that the other side doesn't gain an advantage. It's a recipe for keeping levels of sectarian consciousness topped up.

The DUP is bitterly opposed to the Agreement because, to the likes of Paisley and McCrea, the idea of balance, of equal rights for "the other side", is anathema. But like all bigots, they feel generally at ease with a system of politics which keeps the main focus on how "their" community is faring vis-a-vis the other community.

The argument in South Antrim came down to whether the DUP or the UUP could be the better trusted to push the interests of Protestant-Unionists forward while putting a brake on what they both represented as Catholic-Nationalist advance.

This was an argument which the ambivalently more moderate Burnside was never likely to win.

Peter Mandelson's reaction to the result was to suggest that Burnside was a bad candidate (true, but a marginal consideration) and to indicate that more "sensitivity" to Unionist feelings was needed. In other words, there will be pressure on the SDLP and Sinn Fein to back down, on policing, for example, in an effort to shore up David Trimble as UUP leader. The New Labour strategy for preserving the Agreement is to go slow on reform in order to buy off bigotry.

Mobilise

The result of the Agreement's invitation to both Catholics and Protestants discontented with their situation to mobilise on a communal basis can be seen on the streets around the Shankill as well as in the figures from South Antrim.

UDA thugs tell alienated working-class people that their problems are caused by uppity Taigs getting everything. They are urged to strike out against Loyalist organisations which supposedly aren't anti-Taig enough. What is this but a gutter-level version of the anti-Trimble polemics of Paisley and McCrea on the hustings?

But like the Ulster Unionists in South Antrim, the PUP on the Shankill doesn't face down its opponents by calling on Protestants to rally to the Agreement and compromise with Catholics. Instead, it tries to establish its own uncompromising credentials.

The SDLP and Sinn Fein were likewise slugging it out in the by-election as to which would more vigorously represent Catholic-Nationalists — Sinn Fein accusing the SDLP of weakness in relation to policing, for example, the SDLP angrily maintaining that they are just as tough as their rivals on the issue.

But both the SDLP and Sinn Fein, being pro-Agreement, have signed up to a system whereby new policing arrangements, to be valid, must command the support of separate majorities of Catholics and Protestants.

If Paisley, who doesn't want reform of the RUC at all, can plausibly claim to speak for a majority of Protestants, then, under the implicit rules of the game, he can stymie the proposed changes — whatever the arguments between Nationalists as to whether they go far enough. When socialists challenge the basis of the Agreement, we are commonly asked, "What's your alternative?"

The alternative lies in a fight which would win a solid majority of working-class Protestants away from Loyalism and towards support for equality with their Catholic fellow-workers.

But then, that would only be possible in the context of a fight to advance the interests of all workers together. And none of the pro-Agreement parties has any such perspective in mind.

South Antrim by-election shows the depth of the...

CRISIS IN UNIONISM

WILLIAM MCCREA'S victory in the South Antrim by-election highlights the deep instability at the heart of the peace process in Northern Ireland.

McCrea is a right-wing fundamentalist bigot who joined Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church after a protest rally against civil rights in 1968.

He believes that if you give an inch to nationalism you are going against God. After the election he claimed that Trimble's "eyes are blinded to the sin and the deception he has brought on the people of Northern Ireland."

McCrea notoriously appeared on stage at a support rally for loyalist killer Billy Wright and officiated at Wright's funeral.

McCrea claims that the DUP victory over Ulster Unionist candidate David Burnside by just 800 votes was a rejection of the Belfast Agreement and called for David Trimble to resign.

Relying

But both candidates were against the Belfast agreement.

The election shows that unionism is in a deep crisis.

It can only sustain the notion of Protestant supremacy by relying on the empty symbols of the Orange Order, the union jack and nostalgia for a 'Protestant state for a Protestant people'.

The era of untrammelled one-party Unionist rule, based on discrimination in jobs and housing is long gone.

Unionism isn't progressive

AS MAINSTREAM Unionism tore itself apart, many looked to the Progressive Unionist Party to represent the interests of working class Protestants and the desire to life in peace with Catholics. But the loyalist feud has exposed the deep limitations of 'loyalist working class politics'.

Rally

The PUP's response to the challenge posed by Adair, was not to rally people to their political alternative, but instead to prove their military strength and

The Northern economy is now dominated by multinational businesses, attracted by low wages.

The British government recognised that the only way to ensure stability was through power-sharing including Sinn Fein. Trimble reluctantly accepts this.

Encourages

But the Agreement locks in the communal division of politics and encourages every Unionist politician to claim they are the best representatives of 'the Protestant community'.

During the election campaign, Burnside claimed that the Unionist Party "must not lose its traditional Orange and unionist support in the search for some vague vision of new unionism."

Burnside moved the motion at the UUP conference to try to prevent any change to the RUC's name.

Trimble offers no alternative, except to push the same politics within the Assembly.

After the by-election, Trimble claimed it was a protest vote against changes to the RUC and must be heeded by "republicans and nationalists who have been putting far too much pressure on the Patten issue."

But none of the Unionist factions have any answers to the poverty and unemployment of working class estates like those in Newtonabbey and Antrim.

None referred to the 600 redundancies announced the same week to the mainly Protestant workforce at Harland and Wolff.

Their only answer is to encourage Protestant workers to compete with Catholics.

Joining

A socialist organisation which is consistently opposed to sectarianism is urgently needed. It has to be based on Protestant and Catholic workers joining together in a common struggle.

That means openly challenging Unionist politics that promote supremacy and imperialism.

But it also means tackling the fake radicalism of republican politicians who have no problems implementing New Labour's economic policies.



THE DUP's one man sectarian band

Arms maker in the dock

ONE HUNDRED people heard a "citizen's jury" decide that Raytheon, the third largest arms manufacturer in the world, is not "a welcome guest in Derry".

The debate was hosted by Fingerpost community magazine and chaired by Christine Bell, Professor of Law at Magee. The jury was chosen at random from the electoral register and invited to attend.

Eamonn McCann, for the Foyle Ethical Investment Campaign, led the case against Raytheon.

Local politicians defended Raytheon's welcome to the city. Sinn Fein Councillor Gerry McLaughlin and SDLP Cllrs Annie Courtney and Shaun Gallagher argued that Derry would not welcome jobs at any price. But they agreed

producing software which could make missiles "more effective" at killing children is a price worth paying for 150 jobs.

Interest in the debate had increased when Sinn Fein Lord Mayor Cathal Crumley told Radio Foyle that he gave the Raytheon jobs a "guarded welcome".

Sinn Fein sometimes claims that it is a radical party. But its representatives lined up with an arms manufacturer against anti-capitalist protesters.

Many speakers from the floor insisted on the need for global solidarity against multinationals who produce weapons of mass destruction.

The politicians had given naive assurances that software produced in Derry would not contribute to missile guidance

systems.

Des Boyle of the Latin American Street Children's Organisation responded that "if they were making toasters in Derry", Raytheon should not be welcomed because of the misery caused in the name of its profits.

In summing up, Eamonn McCann said that Raytheon had powerful friends among America's rulers.

Those who had become used to frequenting the White House were not willing to risk their invitations for ethical reasons.

"People in Derry always give generously to Emergency Relief collections.

"Now we can show that solidarity in a more practical way, by rejecting Raytheon's dirty jobs."

The jury agreed

Oil Crisis

Tax the bosses to fund public transport

EUROPE WAS brought to a standstill in recent weeks as the price of oil more than tripled, from \$10 a barrel to almost \$35 over the past 12 months.

But with the exception of a brief surge during the 1990 Gulf War, oil prices have been low since 1980. This low price of oil was part of a more general fall in world commodity prices which was driven by the interests of global corporations that want cheaper raw materials.

The impact of low oil prices on some countries was severe.

Latin America countries like Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela depend on oil exports.

Low world oil prices plunged these countries deeper into debt. Their governments then cut back public spending on the advice of IMF and the World Bank.

Western leaders who complain about high oil prices said nothing at all while low oil prices brought misery to the developing world. Meanwhile they insisted that oil-producing countries like Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Nigeria used money from oil exports to buy arms.

Last year however the price of oil has suddenly leapt up and the oil corporations themselves are partly to blame. The Financial Times says "The industry has been so focused on cost-cutting and consolidation in recent years that it has left itself with inflexible refineries and permanent vulnerability to shortage of specific oil products".

But the giant oil companies are making huge profits on the back of these soaring oil prices. The top five on are on course to make record profits of well over \$30 billion this year.

Protests

What the organisers of the recent protests don't say is that these companies are more responsible than the government for keeping prices high. Texaco made profits of \$1.9 billion in the first six months of this year.

This is a 51 percent up on last year and the company's own report stated: "Revenues reflect higher crude oil prices."

Shell made \$6.27 billion profit in the first half of this year; "an all time record mainly due to higher oil and gas

by SINEAD KENNEDY

prices" stated its interim report. Shell is the same company which encouraged the murder of the nine Ogoni leaders who were protesting against its activities in Nigeria.

The recent protests that began in France, against rising fuel prices, quickly spread and soon paralysed Britain.

However there is the major difference between the protests in France and those in Britain.

Occupying

The first people to take the action in France were workers.

They had already won concessions from the bosses and the government over the last five years by striking, occupying workplaces and blockading roads. Fishermen then followed their example and won compensation. Finally small haulage companies joined the bandwagon.

In Britain it was the other way around. The same haulage bosses that force drivers to work more than 48 hours and who broke workers pickets, from the miners strike in 1984 through to the Liverpool dockers, were organising the pickets, aided by the major oil companies.

BP for example, dealt with the blockade at a terminal in Warwickshire by serving tea and sandwiches to the protestors.

This is not the usual response of the bosses to pickets.

Ordinary people are understandably angry that the price of petrol has gone up. The attacks on public transport across Europe have forced more and more people to rely on cars.

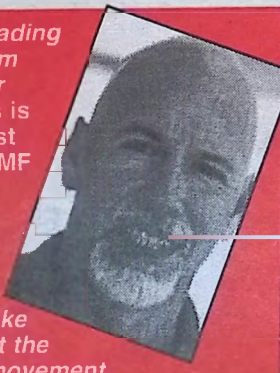
But the crisis shows that we need decently funded public transport and the oil companies should be taxed to the hilt to pay for it.

And instead of letting small businessmen take the initiative over price rises, the union leaders should be lodging pay claims for their members — and organising picket blockades and direct action to achieve them.

Interview with Kevin Danaher

EVICT THE CO CROOKS

KEVIN DANAHER is a leading anti capitalist activist from America. He is the author *Globalize This! 50 Years is Enough: The Case against the World Bank and the IMF and the renowned Corporations are Gonna Get Your Mama: Globalization and the Downsizing of the American Dream. He spoke to Socialist Worker about the growing anti-capitalist movement.*



Their sales and stocks are down. What that also means, which is very satisfying is that the executives who get paid in stock are losing a lot of money.

USAS has been very effective in mobilising people and undermining the image of these corporations.

Despite limited means they have countered hundreds of millions of dollars of advertising money.

HAS CORPORATE AMERICA TRIED TO MAKE A COMEBACK SINCE SEATTLE?

YES, IT'S interesting that since Seattle they have tried to co-opt our language, for example our concern about poverty and the environment.

But this is very contradictory. It is victory if your opponent is mouthing your ideology — they are consolidating your ideas as legitimate.

So that means you can go on to ratchet it up to the next level. "OK you say you believe this, what are you doing about it?"

By pretending to agree with your concerns it actually becomes harder for them to brush you off.

WHAT DO ORGANISATIONS LIKE THE WTO AND THE IMF SAY ABOUT THE NATURE OF DEMOCRACY IN SOCIETY?

THE FIRST gain from Seattle is that we've dragged the snake from out under the rock.

You can't judge whether a snake is poisonous or not when it is hiding.

But once it is in the open for everyone to see, then the public can decide. The first step is knowing that it exists.

Before Seattle, if you'd have gone on the streets you'd have found it hard to find one sensible sentence from a member of the public about the WTO. Now people have seen it they can judge for themselves.

And what they see are very undemocratic organisations.

The rich countries, the G7 plus Saudi Arabia, control dominant block of votes in the IMF. It is a very hierarchical organisation. Their pay scales are huge, with the

WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF THE ANTI-WTO PROTESTS AT SEATTLE?

SEATTLE TOTALLY changed the picture. Everything is different. Seattle punctured this bubble of powerlessness.

The feeling used to be that 'we can't really change things.' Well, that's gone.

Now people are constantly looking for new ways to confront corporate power.

For example, next week the National Association of Broadcasters is meeting here in San Francisco.

So of course people are organising a street protest against these corporate media owners. What is going on here is a consolidation of the theme of 'end corporate rule and get power back to the hands of the people.'

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RALPH NADER'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN?

IT'S THE first time that people have had a viable left candidate who is critical of corporate power.

He's getting enough support that the Gore people are frightened.

It's a very significant campaign, and beyond his candidacy it's a way for people to see that we have to have a left party in the U.S.

There is very much a grass roots movement around him, which is particularly strong on college campuses.

Between two thousand and ten thousand people come to see him

on the campuses, many more than for Gore and Bush and of course, not stage managed like their meetings.

HAS THERE BEEN AN INCREASE IN WORKING CLASS MILITANCY RECENTLY?

NOT ONLY has there been an increase in the number of strikes but the strike action has been much more militant.

Significant victories have been won, which has changed the feeling that nothing can be done against the corporations. Recently Verizon (a merger of two very large telecom companies) had to concede to the Communications Workers of America.

The CWA is a particularly militant union and they kicked the company's ass by disrupting services.

So the company was in breach of its contracts, its stock was falling and it was forced to give in.

WHAT IS THE UNITED STUDENTS AGAINST SWEATSHOPS MOVEMENT IN THE COLLEGES?

USAS IS an incredibly powerful network across 100 to 200 campuses.

It is very effective in turning people out against corporations which are treating people as near slaves. Companies like Nike are very vulnerable as their product is about image.

So if thousands of young people come out on the streets pissing on their name it's very effective.



Turtle power: Protestors at Seattle

that corporate right to experiment as if we are mi

They have no stuff is safe. The principle traditionally product is safe it c

What corpora the WTO has d around and now you prove our pr

And they say they have data show the product

For example data showing pre safety. Ford proce even though they problems with an

And over those years there is not one country the IMF or World Bank can point to as an example of success for their policies.

What's motivat of GM is not the a planet there is en world it present to Genetic modi about eliminat ing profits is their So our job is t waking up to t being used as t guinea pigs. Dei citizen are suppo corporations.

MY MAIN position on this is

what do socialists say?

Are anti capitalists violent?

MEDIA ATTENTION on the protests in Prague against the IMF and the World Bank have focused on violence.

Yet in reality most of the anti-capitalist protests that have been growing since Seattle last year have been non-violent.

The violence in Seattle was carried out by police using pepper gas, teargas and truncheons against people sitting in the road taking non-violent action. Robocops in medieval armour attacked peaceful protestors.

In Prague, it is the same. Czech soldiers assisting police with security in Prague during the International Monetary Fund/World Bank meetings will use six armored personnel carriers, six troop trucks, two fire engines, two Mi-17 helicopters and two W-3A Sokol helicopters. Around 1,600 troops will help the police with security chores. More than 11,000 police, most of them in riot units, will be deployed on city streets.

Suffering

There are 20,000 people who have gone to Prague for the express purpose of planning violence. They are not the demonstrators but the delegates and advisers attending the IMF/World Bank conference. Their organisations impose policies on countries that lead to rich people getting still richer and poor people suffering.

They do so whenever governments find it difficult to meet the burden of paying interest on previous debts — often incurred by long-overthrown dictators. The IMF and the World Bank lend a little extra money to such governments.

But they insist the debts continue to be repaid and "neo-liberal" policies are adopted.

These include drastic welfare cuts, privatisation, reduced taxes on the rich, "labour flexibility" laws, an end to price subsidies, and dismantling barriers to the multinationals.

Such actions have a much more violent impact than breaking a few windows in McDonalds. IMF programmes force many countries to send more money to the Western bankers than they spend on the health and education systems combined. People

who need medicines do not get them and so die.

The IMF has killed them just as surely as if it had shot them in the head, all in the interests of making sure that rich people get richer.

But, of course, such routine, institutionalised killing never gets called "violence". The Czech police, the FBI, Special Branch and Interpol do not intend to spy on the IMF and arrest its leaders for conspiracy to cause violence.

The key factor determining whether there is violence on protests is the actions of the police. Their role is to defend the rich and big business. Often they decide that street protests offer no direct challenge to these forces and let them go through peacefully.

But on other occasions they adopt different tactics and try to instill fear in protestors in the hope of demoralising them.

After the Seattle demonstration, police in Philadelphia took revenge on anti-capitalists by arresting hundreds and beating them out of view of the cameras.

They were particularly incensed at people calling for freedom for Mumia Abu Jamal as they had framed him.

The main defence against this type of state violence is numbers.

This is why socialists always advocate tactics that involve the largest numbers of workers rather than relying on the anger of the committed few.

A few hundred people trashing McDonalds is one way of taking revenge on the system but it is also an attack on the symbols rather than the core of the system.

By contrast the mobilisations of tens of thousands brings an extraordinary feeling of power and liberation and terrifies our rulers.

In Seattle the tear gas and the pepper spray did not disperse the crowds.

As a group of protestors was beaten, gassed, clubbed, and pushed back, a new group would replace them. One protestor commented that what the police were not prepared for was a network of non-violent protestors totally committed to one goal: shutting down the WTO.

An organised mass movement that puts workers' action at its centre has the potential to not just shut down the WTO but the system that lies behind it. And that is one very good way of ending the rule of violence.

by SIMON BASKETTER

THE IMF, GLOBALISATION AND RESISTANCE

A Socialist Worker pamphlet by Chris Harman

Price £1 from Socialist Worker sellers or



OUT NOW

E-CORPORATE



Protestors at Seattle last November

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WHAT CAMPAIGNS IS GLOBAL EXCHANGE INVOLVED IN AT THE MOMENT?

MOSTLY GLOBAL economy stuff. It was US policy in southern Africa that got me started back in the 1970's.

I asked what I could do about the effect of US policy and I was told that the best thing I could do was go back to America and organise campaigns here.
 So that is what I did, our current concerns are mainly anti-sweatshop.
 We recently took a billion dollar lawsuit against 19 companies for their sweatshop policies, 16 of them have given in. GAP is one of the remaining targets.
 They import more goods from Saipan than any other company so we are focusing on them.
 Saipan is part of US, way out in the Pacific, but it has a kind of commonwealth status. US Laws on trade union rights and the environment don't apply.
 Through its special status,

GAP have saved about \$200m worth of taxes that they would have paid if they were sited outside the US.

Their factories use migrant labour on immigrant visas from China, the Philippines, and Bangladesh etc.

They make these workers pay to get the jobs, so they begin work in debt to the company. The conditions of work and the wages mean the workers are like slaves.

It's long been known that GAP was profiting hugely from this setup. So we are suing and mobilising students and communities outside their stores.

GAP sales are down, profits and stock are down.

They are hurting. It's the only way to get to them, through the god that they worship. We are also doing a lot on the IMF and World Bank.

DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE FOR THE PROTESTERS IN PRAGUE?

WE'RE ALL looking to you to

set an example.

We have stuff going on in over 50 cities here in solidarity all with the theme 'end corporate rule'.

Here in San Francisco we are focusing on evictions, there is a growing housing crisis.

Our theme is 'evict the corporate criminals'.

We have to focus on education for mobilisations. Steve Biko, the murdered South African activist said the most powerful weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the minds of the oppressed.

If we can get into people's mind to raise the question of who rules, people or corporations? Then the answer is obvious.

The idea we can't change things is bullshit. The US would still be part of Britain, Ireland would still be part of Britain!

Women would not have the vote — basically we would still be living in caves if you believed that it was not possible to change things. We can change the world, through unity.

That's basic lesson of politics. If we come together we can do anything we want.

Kevin Danaher is speaker in Dublin at the Marxism 2000 conference details see page 3

1968



The fire last time

Students and workers storm a tank in Prague during 1968

“We are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter.”

That was Malcolm X summing up the spirit of the last great upsurge of revolt against the system which took place in the late 1960's. It was a revolt that flowed around the world and back.

The patterns of resistance were diverse, ranging from guerrilla warfare, student marches, non-violent civil rights campaigns and workers' strike action.

And the revolt was powerful.

The Vietnamese liberation army inflicted a humiliating defeat on the U.S.

The "Prague Spring" cracked open the grip of the 'Communist' rulers of Eastern Europe. Black activists in the U.S. bravely tore down the racist segregationist policies of the southern states.

Most dramatically of all, a general strike in France was so swift and all-embracing it brought the country to the brink of revolution.

"All power to the imagination!" was written on the walls of Paris, reflecting the sense of freedom that grew from the revolt.

Yet the revolt of that generation subsided without breaking through.

Symbolically, Mayor Paul Schell of Seattle who unleashed the police with their weapons and pepper spray onto the anti-WTO protestors, describes himself as "a protestor from the 60's".

To look at why the movement of the last generation failed to transform the system is crucial for the new phase of global protest which emerged at Seattle.

Students began the May '68 explosion of revolt in Paris. One of the myths is that students in the sixties were natural radicals. In fact,

compared to today's awareness of environmental and international issues, the students of Paris were relatively apolitical at first. A protest against police harassment of an anti-Vietnam demonstration saw only 142 of the 12,000 Nanterre campus students occupy the Sorbonne's admin building.

It was government over-reaction to this small minority which created wider support amongst the wider body of students.

On May 2nd a protest was taking place at the Sorbonne to defend a student radical, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, from trumped up disciplinary charges.

The university rector and minister of education made the mistake of deciding upon a complete crackdown against the protesters. The university was shut down and police sent in to make wide scale arrests — hitting out with their batons at anyone on the streets who looked like a student.

But the students of Paris were quick to fight back. And as word of the battles spread, they poured in their thousands onto the streets, digging up cobblestones to throw back at the police.

Overnight the whole confrontation had escalated to a new level. A 6,000 strong demonstration set off to break through the police lines to the university.

Many more demonstrators were assembling in different parts of the city. By nightfall these had regrouped and again marched into battle trying to break through to the Sorbonne. The conflict was bitter with 739 protestors needing hospital treatment.

On May 13th a monster march took place with student leaders and trade union leaders side by side. Hundreds of thousands marched behind a banner reading "students, teachers, workers, solidarity". The popular chants of the day were "free our comrades", "victory is in the streets" and "adieu de Gaulle."

The authorities by this time had realised that the students were not to be intimidated. Police presence

was kept to a minimum in the hope that the movement would peak and then go into decline. But as the protestors dispersed a new spirit of revolt found a dramatic expression in the factories.

A defensive strike against wage cuts at Sud Aviation in Nantes took a new turn when the younger workers marched around the factory and blockaded the management in their offices. That night two thousand workers barricaded themselves in the factory.

The next day workers in a Renault plant near Rouen learned of the action in Sud Aviation. The younger workers left their places and organised a demonstration, chanting slogans outside the office of the manager who refused to meet them.

"That's how the occupation at Cleon started. The new strikers were euphoric. No more bosses, no more bullying, total freedom," one worker said.

Over the next week the example of factory occupations spread like fire on petrol. By May 25th France had ground to a halt.

Strike fever gripped all of society, not just the traditional working class heartlands: dissident architects occupied the offices of the association which regulated their profession; government planners and statisticians issued manifestos denouncing the use of their skills 'by capitalism in the use of profit'.

Arts students and painters took over the School of Fine Arts and turned it into a centre for the collective production of thousands of posters supporting the movement.

Film makers withdrew from Cannes because it was 'too competitive' and discussed how to rescue the film industry from the profit motive. Even professional footballers occupied the headquarters of the Football Federation.

So powerful was the movement that the President, General de

Gaulle, lost heart and left the country without even telling his own supporters. "In reality the general suffered a crisis of morale. Thinking the game was up, he had chosen to retire," said his prime minister, Pompidou.

In terms of mass protest, the action of workers was decisive. For a few days people tasted freedom and the possibility of genuinely democratic popular control of society.

Yet ultimately the revolt was defeated. A strong element of the anti-capitalist movement today is an emphasis on diversity and respect for different strategies. But there comes a point in every protest movement where what is needed is clarity and consensus as to the next step.

The French events are a critical example of what happens if the revolutionary movement fails to articulate and centralise its own efforts.

In France in 1968 the numbers involved in openly revolutionary socialist organisation was tiny.

This created a vacuum into which stepped the leaders of the trade unions, and crucially the Communist Party.

By the 1960's the French Communist Party had long since ceased to be revolutionary. Their outlook was reformist — much like that of Labour today. While the French authorities had virtually no influence over the protest movement, the Communist Party had a credibility from its working class base.

They wanted to use this credibility to become a parliamentary force and the one bargaining chip they could bring to negotiations with the employers was their ability to control the movement.

Where they could the Communist Party ensured their own members became leaders of factory occupations, and in those factories mass involvement and politicisation of workers was discouraged. "More often than not whole plants were occupied by skeleton crews of pick-

ets and maintenance workers. In such cases most of the strikers probably stayed at home and observed the crisis unfolding, with sympathy to be sure, on radio and TV."

When de Gaulle announced that elections would be organised, the Communist Party hurried to end the strike movement as quickly as possible.

Within three days of the announcement, negotiations were concluded bringing a return to work in key sections of the public sector.

Although the Communist Party was challenged by activists in colleges and factories up and down the country, they were in no position to offer anything other than local resistance.

There existed no sizeable revolutionary party which could help co-ordinate an alternative strategy.

The movement won many concessions, but it fell back from ushering in the new society. Demoralisation amongst militants set in and the tide began to turn back towards the right.

The lesson from those events is that alongside the spontaneous creativity of the mass revolt, there needs to be co-ordination and clarity amongst those wanting to take the movement forward to a successful revolution.

The role of a revolutionary party is not, as it is sometimes caricatured, to substitute itself for the movement.

Rather the party has to play the vital role of helping the activists link together in rank and file organisations and within those organisations offer strategic and tactical suggestions that can counter the manoeuvres of the right wing and the reformists.

The global anti-capitalist movement today is still on the rise, but internationally revolutionary parties are still relatively small. The lesson of the revolt last time is that there is an urgency for them to grow.

— CONOR KOSTICK

in my view

Wrap the Stars and Stripes around me

SILE DE VALERA HAS discovered a new theme for Fianna Fail republicanism. The 'Brussels bureaucracy' are apparently 'impinging on our identity, culture and traditions' and FF must resist.

Until now de Valera has never had the slightest problem with 'interference' from Brussels. Fianna Fail entered the last election with a pledge to hold a referendum before Ireland joined Partnership for Peace. But the pledge was dropped after the slightest whisper from Brussels.

De Valera has no difficulty sending Irish soldiers to fight in EU resource wars in the future — but if there is as much as a finger raised against our 'national traditions' then all hell will break out.

What exactly are these national traditions?

One apparently is the sanctity of land ownership. Since 1997, de Valera has been involved in a battle with the EU over a directive on Special Areas of Conservation. The directive would stop builders tearing up wild bird sanctuaries and so preventing land owners making big profits.

Rewarding speculators and landowners is very much part of FF's 'national tradition' which the Brussels bureaucracy cannot touch.

The 'great debate' on Europe which de Valera has opened has little to do with cultural traditions. It is about sordid economics.

The Celtic Tiger is an economy that has been fuelled by a huge influx of US investment. Today Ireland has a higher proportion of US investment to Gross Domestic Product than any other country in the world. There are more workers employed in US manufacturing firms than by native Irish capitalists.

If the country is not located in America's back yard, it has certainly become its off shore island. US companies use Ireland to avoid tax on a massive scale.

So the relationship between Ireland's rulers and the bosses in the Pentagon and Wall Street have grown ever closer.

Monsanto

Ireland has offered Monsanto fields to experiment with its GM crops. It gives over Shannon to the US air force every time it wishes to intervene in the Gulf or Kosovo.

And despite all the talk of social partnership, the reality is that all Irish governments have followed the US model of de-regulated markets and low taxes on profit as the recipe for economic success.

When Mary Harney backs up de Valera with statements about Ireland being spiritually more closer to Boston than Berlin, she really means that she likes the way US companies get such a free hand to exploit everything in sight.

Beyond that, some within the political establishment are aware that there are growing tensions between the US economic bloc and the EU. The global economy has heightened competition and each one uses all sorts of trade rules to gain advantage over the other.

The Irish ruling class dislikes such rivalry as it gets caught in the middle. But some of them are starting to think that, maybe someday, they might follow the British example and become more semi-detached from EU. Especially now that the grants have run out and the EU is set to include more Eastern European countries.

None of this, however, should push the left into defending the EU as a bastion of progressive legislation and social partnership as Fintan O'Toole and Pronsias de Rossa advocate.

In the seventies both were ardent supporters of the Workers Party and, by extension, the regimes in Eastern Europe. Today they attach themselves to the supposed progressive and 'civilising' influence of the EU. However there is no fundamental difference between the capitalist culture of the US and EU — only about the pace at which they push through a neo-liberal agenda.

The stronger resistance of workers in the EU has slowed down the push to privatisation and flexible labour markets — but the Brussels bureaucracy would like to pursue this route as much as their American counterparts.

The talk of social partnership in Europe is only a fig leaf to co-opt the union leaders into helping that project.

Instead of choosing between Boston and Berlin workers should look at the resistance in both cities — and add their own against the gods of profit and greed.

by KIERAN ALLEN

music

Songs of struggle

by SUSANNE
McGILLOWAY

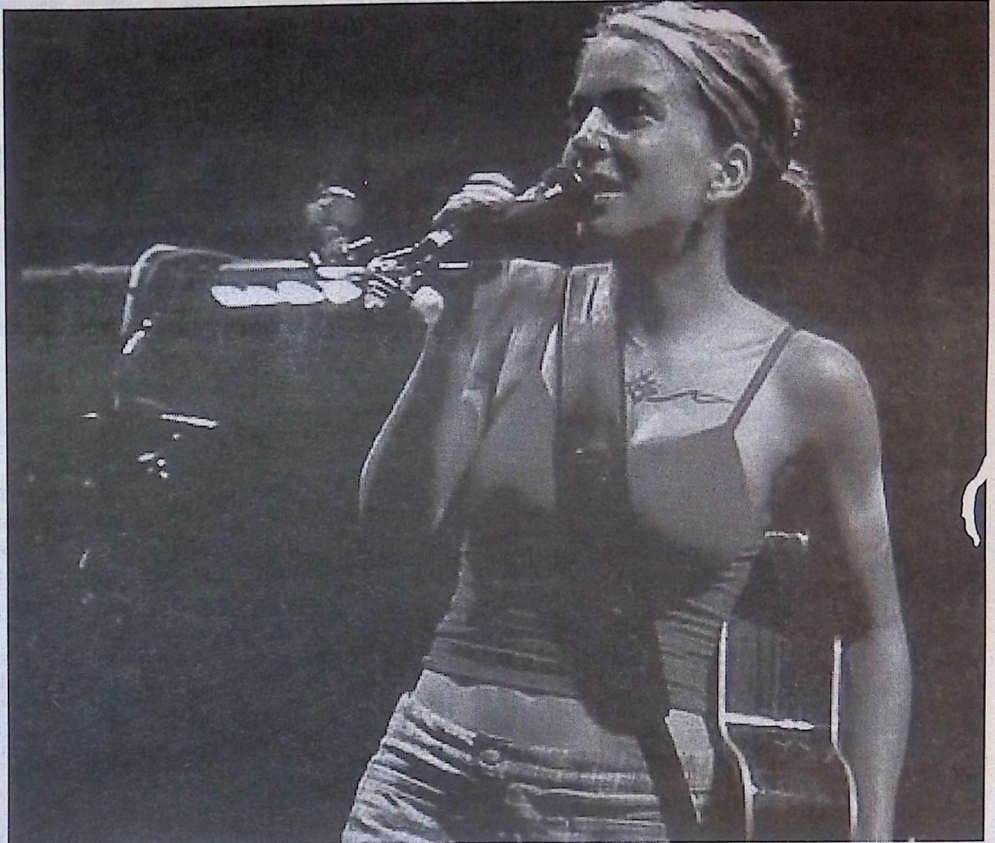
Over the course of the last decade, the 29 year old songwriter, acoustic guitarist, and vocalist Ani DiFranco has released 13 self-produced albums, including two collaborations with Utah Phillips, a longtime labour activist and folksinger.

Their new album *Fellow Workers* tells of people who seemed to be powerless before the might of corporations but who struggled, fought back, and changed their lives.

Utah and Ani bring a message of defiance, disobedience, and solidarity.

They remind us of Mother Jones, the miners' friend, who at 83 years of age was labelled by President Theodore Roosevelt as "the most dangerous woman in America", a feisty workers' champion who drove scabs from the coal pits with a broom and single-handedly faced down a militia.

Ani comments on *Fellow Workers*, "I



Ani DiFranco -

hope that the true history of working people will not be forgotten. After all, we need these old stories of solidarity, struggle and victory to instruct and inspire us in our consciousness even today.

"The 'boss' may have mutated from a cigar-chomping, suspender-snapping mogul into a nameless faceless (hard to point at and hard to hold accountable) multinational corporation but little about the power

dynamic therein has changed.

Communities

"The Exxons and the McDonalds are no more concerned with, or responsible to, us, our communities and

our environment, than the Rockefellers were to the miners and their families in the decimating coalmines of West Virginia in the 1930's."

Ani DiFranco hails from Buffalo, New York. Rather than sign a contract with a major record company, Ani formed her own label: Righteous Babe Records.

Ani describes RBR as a "people friendly, sub-corporate, woman-informed, queer-happy small business that puts music before rock stardom and ideology before profit".

Challenge

DiFranco's idea "is to actively challenge a system of big business" that she thinks co-opts and commercialises.

She uses her music, a folk/punk/funk mix to speak frankly about sensitive, soul-searching subject matter.

Her lyrics have explored both the politics of love and the personal dimension of political issues.

The album's 18 tracks were recorded in front of a live in-studio audience.

This is an album that all people should listen to for what it is, an untold history communicated through compelling, humorous and emotional stories, and traditional song.

Film

Billy Elliot is the name of an 11 year old boy growing up in a mining town in the northeast of England. His mum has recently died and he lives in a council house with his dad and older brother and his mildly senile granny.

The year is 1984 and when the movie begins we are right in the middle of the famous miners' strike.

Billy is attending the local village hall for boxing lessons when he notices a ballet class for young girls going on at the other end other hall.

When the boxing lesson is over he rather sheepishly joins the line up of girls in ballet class.

The teacher, Mrs Wilkinson, encourages Billy in a persuasive yet off hand manner and treats him as just another pupil.

Pretty soon, Billy is no longer attending the boxing but is spending his pocket money on



Billy boy's ballet

ballet lessons.

But these classes have to be kept a secret between Billy and Mrs. Wilkinson because Billy's father is of the opinion that ballet is for "poofs, queers and nancy boys."

Confrontation

Eventually Mrs. Wilkinson decides that Billy is good enough for an audition at the Royal ballet in London — which leads to a con-

frontation between Billy's teacher and his father.

The film revolves around the humiliation Billy feels and the difficulty his dad has in seeing that he has a talent for ballet.

A further difficulty is that of money. How can Billy have a career in ballet when the family is broke because of the strike?

I would hate you to think that this was a children's film about a boy. It is not. It is about a working class family

ravaged by the miners' strike and their ability to overcome the odds against them.

It wears its heart firmly on its sleeve and has had standing ovations at the Cannes and Edinburgh film festivals.

If, like me, you are sick and tired of the big budget Hollywood pap then you'll love this emotionally charged bitter sweet movie.

■ PADDY
LOCKHART



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.

11 plus gives NI worst education in UK

STATISTICS from the Department of Education for 1999 show the Northern Ireland system to be the least effective in the UK.

The figures show the percentage of people of working age who hold qualifications at four different levels.

At three of the four levels, Scotland comes out best. There is no selection in Scotland and all non-fee paying schools are comprehensives.

England and Wales, where there is a mixture of selection and comprehensives, were in the middle on all levels, bar one. As for Northern Ireland, where selection is still the rule, it is bottom of the heap at every level.

Degrees

So, 25 percent of Scots have degrees or higher qualifications, compared to 23 percent and 21 percent for England & Wales and 19 percent for NI.

When it comes to those who have GNVQs, Highers or more than one A level, 46 percent of Scots score, compared to 36 percent of NI students.

The greatest scandal, however, is the proportion of pupils from the North who leave school with no qualifications at all. While England scored best on this, with only 15 percent of people of working age having no qualification, Scotland was close behind with 17 percent. The North fared by far the worst, on 26 percent.

These statistics tend to be ignored or buried by those defending the social division created by the 11+. They know that working class children suffer the most from a system where widespread coaching for

the 11+ (at £25 per hour) has replaced fee paying schools.

Grammar schools in Northern Ireland are similar to Public Schools in England (private to me and you). The difference is that the wealthy class here don't have to pay £4,000 a year for the privilege—our taxes see to that.

The Gallagher report shows that the Scottish system is best. But powerful vested interests among both Catholic and Protestant middle classes will fight to maintain the system that benefits their children at the expense of the poor.

It is essential that activists help build for the major demonstration against selection in November to put pressure on Education Minister, Martin McGuinness. This issue should be raised in the work place, in schools colleges and communities. Let's grab this chance to put down an education system that props up social division.

Fax (01) 872 3838
E-mail swp@clubi.ie

letters

PO BOX 1648, Dublin 8

Bus unions need to counter racism

THE RECENT well publicised incident of racism in which a bus driver was charged with assault, and incitement to hatred has focused attention on the treatment and perception of refugees and asylum seekers.

As a bus driver and a shop steward I have found it necessary on repeated occasions to argue against racist comments and attitudes. A lot of workers I encounter in these circumstances deny they are racist but merely indulging in 'light banter'.

Whatever the motivations racist comments and crude jokes in workplaces create a culture of racism, which can easily lead to the sort of incident in which a bus driver ended up in court. Racism in any form is a source of divisiveness.

The only people to benefit are those that rule over us.

The real issues like poverty, homelessness, hospital and housing waiting lists, low wages, lack of public transport, wholesale institutionalised corruption, tribunals that serve to whitewash, denial of union recognition, obscenely high profits etc. are the issues I choose to reserve my venom for.

As socialists it is important that we never flinch from countering racism in any of its guises. Now is the time for our trade unions to take a much more positive role in countering racism.

■ **JOE FALLON** Bus driver & NBRU Shop Steward, Dublin

Fruit of the loom slash more jobs

FRUIT OF The Loom in Buncrana, Co Donegal have just announced that they are to lay off a further 300 workers, 170 in November and 130 in March 2001.

In 1998 FOTL made it clear that they intend to source their product in Morocco owing to production costs in Ireland.

When the first lay offs took place the government rushed to set up the Donegal Employment Initiative to try and save jobs and encourage more industrialists to locate in Donegal.

To date this has failed. Maybe the next bit of news will explain.

Defend

A few weeks ago Clubman Shirts in Buncrana had to rush to the press to defend themselves, when Buncrana Urban District Councilor Jim Ferry exposed their plan to source their product in Portugal.

The company's Managing Director defended the decision saying, they had to do this as they had too many orders on their books and these had to be honoured.

And no councillor was going to tell him how to run his company.

Sourcing a product is a very serious step for any company, so the board did not take this decision in the morning and send the material to Por-

tugal in the afternoon. This measure must have taken some months to reach. So did the company investigate the large pool of experienced shirt workers in Inishowen, Derry and Donegal.

At least 3-shirt factories have closed in the last few months in Inishowen alone, and some shirt factories in Donegal are struggling.

These factories could have produced the shirts. The local TDs have all come out on the side of Clubman in this matter.

What they all failed to mention is the fact that Mr Sean Tighe MD Clubman Shirts also sits on the board of the Donegal Employment Initiative.

Another member of the Clubman board Mr Paul Bradley sits on Buncrana Urban District Council, and on Monday last was shedding tears about the loss of more jobs at FOTL.

Tighe and Bradley are both members of Fianna Gael.

So far the Donegal Employment Initiative has said nothing on both matters, no doubt they are trying to put together a form of words to explain, on the one hand it is alright to source and on the other when its FOTL it's not alright.

As usual SIPTU are looking into the matter.

There is only one reason to source and that is PROFIT at the expense of the worker.

■ **Former FOTL worker, Buncrana**

SWP branch meetings

- **ATHLONE:** Contact 01-872 2682 for details
- **BRAY:** Meets every Wednesday at the Mayfair Hotel at 8.30pm
- **BELFAST CENTRAL:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Kitchen Bar, 16 Victoria Square, near Cornmarket
- **BELFAST WEST:** Meets every Monday 8pm Divis Community Centre
- **BELFAST SOUTH:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Queens Students Union
- **BELFAST WEST:** West Belfast Branch meets Divis West Community Centre Falls Road, Monday 7.30pm.
- **CORK:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in O'Donoghue's Pub, Crossbarry St
- **DERRY:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Backlog Bar, Newcastle, Orchard St
- **DUNDALK:** Contact 01-872 2682 for details
- **LUCAN:** ring 8722682 for details
- **DUN LAOGHAIRE:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in the Christian Institute
- **DUBLIN ARTANE / COOLOCK:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane / Beaumont Recreational Centre (opp. Artane Castle)
- **DUBLIN FAIRVIEW:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in the Fairview Inn
- **DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Cornways Pub, Parnell St
- **DUBLIN KILLBARRACK:** Phone 087 6235071

- **DUBLIN STONEYBATTER/CABRA:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Aughrim St Parish Hall, Prussia St
- **DUBLIN BALLYMUN:** Phone Kevin at 8622209
- **DUBLIN DUNDRUM:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Dundrum Family Recreation Centre
- **DUBLIN RIALTO:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR
- **DUBLIN RATHMINES / RANELAGH:** Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm Upstairs in La Touche, 24 Earlsfort Terrace Dublin 2
- **DUBLIN HAROLDS X:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Innon the Park Harolds Cross
- **DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Trinity Inn, Pearse St
- **DUBLIN RINGSEND:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Ringsend Community Centre
- **DUBLIN TALLAGHT:** Meets every Monday at 8.30pm in Jobstown Community Centre
- **ENNISKILLEN:** Phone 01-872 2682 for details
- **GALWAY:** Meets every Wednesday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square (beside Cubaj) 8.30pm
- **LIMERICK:** Phone 01-872 2682 for details
- **SLIGO:** Meets fortnightly on Saturdays, phone 087 6329511 for details
- **TRALEE:** Phone 087 6329511 for details
- **WATERFORD:** Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

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Glanbia

Glanbia workers fight lock-out

OVER thirty workers in the Glanbia plant in the Mayberry Road in Tallaght have been outside the gate for six weeks.

The company continues to lock them out demanding they sign a new procedural agreement before they can return to work.

Now the dairy combine has turned up the intimidation taking legal

action against the workers.

Solicitor's letters have been sent to shop stewards claiming tens of thousands of pounds in damages for lost production since the beginning of the dispute.

Imposed

The company locked the workers out after they took action in defence of a victimised shop steward.

The workers accepted binding arbitration from a Rights Commissioner but then the company imposed new conditions.

They demanded acceptance of a new agreement that would commit the workers to binding arbitration if all the company's demands on new work practices were not agreed by the end of October.

The company also demanded that the shop stewards police a no-strike policy.

The workers have rejected this and have indicated they wish to return to work on the basis of their existing contract of employment now that the original dispute has been resolved.

They are prepared to negotiate in the usual way all matters once they are back at work.

Glanbia foods is a huge

dairy combine.

They are using this dispute with a relative small group of workers to push an agenda throughout the company.

If the Tallaght workers are forced to accept draconian new conditions, then the company will try to impose the same thing on the rest of the workforce.

The support of other workers in the group, particularly at the large production plant in Inch in County Wexford, needs to be gathered and the dispute widened.

All trade unionists should raise this lock-out in their local union branch/workplace, sign petitions of support, take up collections and organise delegations to visit the picket line.

ESBOA

ESB staff set for action on Pay

Over 2,000 members of the ESBOA voted earlier this summer to take strike action for a pay claim of 16fi percent.

Clerical workers in the ESB are gearing up to take action over pay. Their union, the ESBOA, has served a pay claim for a 16.5 percent increase on the company.

The clerical workers used to play a key role in leading wage negotiations in the past. But over the years they have fallen well behind other groups.

Tied

The main reason is that they have been tied down by the social partnership agreements.

Now however they have voted by a staggering 84 percent to take action and

time is running out for the government.

Much is at stake in this dispute. The growing pressure for privatisation means that the ESB management are again making demands on their staff for more cut-backs.

They want a further 2,000 redundancies and changes in labour practices without conceding any extra pay.

In 1996, ESB workers agreed to another 2,000 redundancies in return for a

measly pay rise of 6 percent.

The ESBOA dispute could also set the trend for other groups. Already the ATGWU has indicated that it supports the claim and is even thinking of serving the company with a higher claim.

If the strike goes ahead it will be a major test of strength between the government and the unions. And that is why we should all get behind the ESBOA on this one.

Aer Lingus

Baggage handlers strike ballot

SOME 400 baggage handlers are balloting for strike action over Aer Lingus's refusal to pay up properly for productivity workers have given.

The baggage handlers have given an estimated £1.6 million in savings to the company.

But they were only offered a once off lump sum payment for the productivity they gave.

The workers have argued that they should be paid extra on their basic wage.

And for once the Labour Court agreed with the workers on the basis that as the pro-

ductivity was ongoing they should see an ongoing improvement in their wages.

Results of the SIPTU ballot are due shortly.

Pressure

SIPTU is under hue pressure at the airport as cabin crew workers who used to be in its ranks defected to IMPACT.

IMPACT is also balloting these workers on a pay claim and the SIPTU leadership can no longer be seen to kow tow to managements' agenda.

Why won't the ATGWU make the dispute official?

THE WORKERS are members of the 3/19 Branch of ATGWU. In the last couple of weeks they have begun to receive support from rank and file ATGWU members.

One shop steward said. "We got a great response when we addressed the ATGWU shops stewards in Waterford Crystal who gave us good advice and a marvellous donation."

"Also Nissan workers in Dublin-themselves members of the ATGWU-supported us."

But the workers are angered that so far their own full-time official has broken promises and refused to organise official backing.

"It's a disgrace. We had been out of the gate for five weeks and had received no support or assistance from the union officials."

Another locked-out worker added, "We were told at first that the original strike was unofficial so the

union could not help. But now it's a lock-out and we are fighting to defend basic trade union principles."

"Since we were locked out we have organised meetings of the workforce and a secret ballot where all except one worker voted to reject the new conditions. But still we are waiting for proper backing."

The leaders of the ATGWU present themselves as a left wing union but have completely failed when it comes to giving their members the backing they deserve.

There needs to be a campaign throughout the union to raise this issue and force the union leaders to make the dispute official.

ATGWU members throughout Ireland are circulating a petition demanding the union leadership immediately makes the dispute official.

For collection sheets and leaflets contact 087 2353539 or 087 2490294

Social Workers

FIGHT FOR BETTER CHILDCARE

Social workers in the North West are fighting back against understaffing and a chronic underfunding.

The NIPSA workers in the Foyle Trust's family and childcare services are balloting on industrial action, having rejected a derisory offer from the Trust.

Children's homes are overcrowded and children and families in crisis don't get seen as quickly as they should. There are so few

staff that the registration of playgroups and childminders falls by the wayside, which causes ever-longer waiting lists for parents.

Vulnerable

"There's no doubt that children are suffering," says NIPSA branch secretary Lee McDermott. "The system is failing the most vulnerable children because we haven't got the resources. And many social workers are leaving out of frustration."

The Children's Order,

introduced in 1995, has heaped more responsibilities on social workers - without the cash and staff to support them.

In September, Trust management offered an extra six social workers, but that offer was unanimously rejected. Dozens more staff are needed, as well as new facilities. It's the same in other Trust areas. In North and West Belfast, social workers have also taken limited action. Action by Derry workers would increase pressure on Bairbre de Bruin to provide more cash.

ICTU

Unions in turmoil over PPF

The Irish trade union movement is in turmoil over the failure of social partnership.

Last February, union leaders pushed through a pay deal, which they claimed was they envy of trade unionists across Europe. But now the Partnership for Prosperity and Fairness is unravelling as inflation soars and many workers face a pay cut.

Advocates of social partnership claim that all workers gain when they stick together and bargain centrally.

This assumes that the only interest of the union leaders is in representing

their members.

But this is no longer the case.

The top echelons of SIPTU, IMPACT and the ICTU are committed to managing a capitalist economy as well as promoting workers interests.

This means they mislead their own members. In February, for example, the president of SIPTU Des Geraghty claimed that inflation could not rise above three percent.

When opponents of the deal argued otherwise the economic 'experts' in the union research department even circulated a document to assure members that inflation could not raise much further.

However the union bureaucracy can only go so far in smothering working class discontent.

The huge labour shortage has meant that 'a controlled free-for-all' has already emerged in sectors such as the construction industry as employers are forced to pay above the PPF rates.

Switch

This in turn has led other workers to seek ways of gaining higher pay increases. One mechanism that workers have used to pressurise the union leaders has been to switch unions, to demand the right to join union of

their choice.

The ICTU's attitude to the ILDA strike showed how they regard this as a deadly threat.

The logjam was broken, however, when 1,400 Aer Lingus cabin crew workers left SIPTU in disgust at its pro-employer policies. The union of their choice, IMPACT, was not much better - but it showed that the rank and file were not simply willing to sit back and let union leaders away with anything.

Soon IMPACT announced that it was serving an extra pay claim to compensate for inflation. Within hours SIPTU responded with an ambiguous statement stating they

wanted an extra 5 percent compensation. It was unclear whether this was a direct pay claim or yet another plea for more tax cuts.

An internal SIPTU document from the new Vice President Jack O Connor indicated the pressure the union leaders was under.

He wrote that 'we cannot manage the economy and we cannot allow our members to suffer the burden of maintaining economic competitiveness for the benefit of others'

The MSF General Secretary, another former left winger Gerry Shanahan said that 'the PPF will be dead before Christmas' if the government and the employers did not give extra pay.

Rank and file workers should regard these developments as a major opportunity.

They help legitimate the argument of opponents of social partnership that workers have a right to make pay claims when they choose rather than being tied into three year long agreements where no one is sure what will happen in capitalist economy.

But we should also be aware that the trade union leaders have a long practice of throwing shapes and doing nothing.

They want to stall the anger until the December budget and hope to get away with it by being seen to be doing something in the meantime.

Action

There should be an immediate ballot for action and a series of strikes should be organised to win the claim.

If the union leaders are not willing to go down this route then it should be clear that they are yet again engaged in shadow boxing.

In that event, workers should submit their own claims at ground level and start fighting for them.

Socialist Worker

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AS INFLATION WIPES OUT PARTNERSHIP...

WE NEED ACTION

FOR A 5% EXTRA PAY RISE

"CERTAINLY WORKERS have not lost." This was Bertie Ahern's contemptuous dismissal of demands for extra pay to beat the rising level of inflation.

Ahern must be living in a dream land. Despite all the predictions of government ministers and economic experts, inflation has soared to 6.2 percent and is set to go higher.

Yet workers have only received a 5.5 percent pay rise under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness.

Many will not receive that increase until October.

It amounts to a straight pay cut. The PFP was supposed to be a different sort of agreement — one where workers would finally get a share of the boom.

But it has turned out to be

another con.

The union leaders in the ICTU have finally started to get the message about the huge levels of discontent after 1,400 cabin crew workers in Aer Lingus decided to leave their union SIPTU to join IMPACT.

ICTU General Secretary Peter Cassells said he wants 'compensatory pay increases'. Unions like SIPTU have a put a figure of 5 percent on the extra rise that workers need.

But the rank and file of the union need to keep up the pressure for action. The ICTU should lodge the pay claim immediately and ballot its members for action as the employers have already refused any concessions.

And if the ICTU are not willing to organise this action themselves then workers at ground level need to put in their own claim.