

Socialist Worker

inside

Why you should vote NO

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Nice treaty

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

50p

Solidarity price £1

Smurfit earns £5.2 million in a year



MEET THE top fat cat of the Celtic Tiger, Michael Smurfit, the boss of the paper and packaging empire, who was paid a salary of £5.2 million last year.

Even top investment fund managers were outraged and voted against his re-election to the board.

But £5.2 million is only the headline figure. Smurfit also got another £4.34 million as part of a 'long term incentive scheme'. And then there were a few little extras from dividends and super-pension provisions.

The *Sunday Tribune* reckoned that the total package came to a staggering £14 million.

This is money grabbing on a big scale. But government ministers did not condemn this greed.

When teachers looked for a 30 percent pay rise, Bertie Ahern denounced them. When any worker looks for more than the partnership pay deals, they are told they will destroy the Celtic Tiger.

Because Smurfit is one of their own and part of the Golden Circle, the political establishment do not criticise him.

And the rules of the partnership game mean that wages are regulated while greedy fat cats like Smurfit can take as much as they want.

It's a mug's game—and we should break it up.

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SHEER GREED

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Film review:

No trust in Capitalism:

Anti Trust reviewed

Ireland's unequal society

A COMBAT Poverty Agency report, which was commissioned by the government, states that Ireland is one of the most unequal societies in the European Union, with one of the lowest levels of public spending in the industrialised world.

The report, *Rich and Poor. Perspectives on Tackling Inequality in Ireland*, points out that the Celtic Tiger also has one of the highest exchequer surpluses.

The CAP report shows that over the past 15 years public spending has fallen by nearly 10 per cent, while reduced taxes have disproportionately benefited the better off.

The report also says that Ireland is a low-tax economy and there is huge scope for increased expenditure on public services.

It is believed that McCreavy and Ahern have not read it, let alone acted on it.

Soft focus on Ian Jnr

VIP, Ireland's answer to *Hello* magazine has an interesting profile in its April issue.

Normally the pages are filled with "intimate profiles" of TV and radio personalities desperately trying to boost their flagging image.

But in the April edition we are treated to a "remarkably intimate portrait" of guess who?

Ian Paisley Jnr! All soft focus family shots and pics of him on his bike.

Great to see that VIP has room on its pages for unadulterated sectarian bigots.

Dangerous agribusiness

A MAJOR new study has shown that the antibiotics routinely used in agriculture are endangering human health, reports the *New Scientist* magazine. Agribusiness routinely feeds antibiotics to animals to promote quicker growth and fatter profits.

Over 70 per cent of all antibiotics produced in the US are used for this. Campaigners have long warned that this practice could risk spreading antibiotic resistance to the animals, the wider environment and to humans.

Such resistance could make it more difficult to treat lethal bacterial

infections.

Now scientists at the University of Illinois have confirmed that such fears are justified.

They found that resistance to the important antibiotic tetracycline was developing in bacteria in the guts of pigs fed the drug to boost their growth. Worse still, the resistance genes had also been passed on to bacteria living in groundwater in the area that was used to supply drinking water for people.

The study also found that these bacteria could pass the resistance on to bacteria in humans who drank the water. The researchers say the use of antibiotics as growth promoters in livestock should be banned.

US racist comes to Dublin

THE LEADER of a white supremacist group is attending a conference in Ireland along with Gerard Casey of the Christian Solidarity Party.

The Rockford Institute a bizarre far right historical group are holding a conference on May 21st to 28th.

The main speaker is Michael Hill the founder of the League of the South. The League of the South are at the forefront of fighting to defend the Confederate Flag. But it is just an excuse to organise racism.

Hill who thinks slavery was "God-ordained"

opposes racial intermarriage under any circumstances. He says people other than white Christians would be allowed to live in his South, but only if they bow to "the cultural dominance of the Anglo-Celtic people and their institutions."

Klan

One founding member of the League who now sits on the board of directors is Jack Kershaw, who recently erected in Nashville a huge statue of Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest — a man who was also the Ku Klux Klan's first imperial wizard.

Michael Hill is honest about his disgusting ideas saying:

★ "Tell the courts to go to hell, take back their Second Amendment right to arm themselves, and organize 'well regulated Militia[s]' state by state."

★ "White Southerners should [not] give control over their civilisation and its institutions to another race, whether it be native blacks or Hispanic immigrants."

★ "No apologies for slavery should be made. Christians who owned slaves in the South were on firm scriptural ground."

There should be no welcome for this racist scum in Ireland. Protests are being organised ring 8722682 for details.

DIRT amnesty

Government backs tax dodging — again



Ahern and the crooked banker

LINKS BETWEEN Bertie Ahern's close friend, Tim Collins, and a notorious criminal who tried to organise a multi-million property deal with the Government are being probed by the Flood Tribunal.

Collins and his partner, Swords solicitor Liam Moran, shared a £500,000 finders' fee after the Office of Public Works last year bought a

run-down Coddington estate at Oldbridge near Drogheda for £7.85m - giving a £5m profit to the company that owned it.

Jailed

Lorraine Esme Osman is the former chairman of the Malaysian-based Bank of Bumiputra. He came to Ireland after being released from Hong Kong jail. He had served almost ten years in Britain and the Far East after facing 36 charges of corruption, theft, and fraud in con-

nection with a £600m investment swindle.

Collins and Osman were involved jointly in a number of business projects including Liam Lawlor's deals in Prague. Collins is a trustee of Ahern's, Drumcondra house, St Luke's and a powerful figure in Fianna Fail.

The Oldbridge estate was acquired by the Government at the suggestion of the Ahern. The 500-acre property is opposite the 29-acre site traditionally regarded by locals and the Orange Order as the site of the Battle of the Boyne.

THE IRISH rich avoided paying DIRT tax for over a decade by pretending to be foreigners.

These cheats lived in Ireland but filled out forms declaring that they did not live here.

They then opened non-resident bank accounts where they could hide their wealth away from the tax collectors.

At least £120 million in tax was avoided every year by the rich from this one scam alone.

Owe

And the Government has just decided to let them off with a amnesty on the tax they owe.

The Irish rich already pay the lowest rate of tax in Europe on their profits.

They have enjoyed two tax amnesties in 1987 and 1993 when they were asked to pay a mere 15 percent to clear their bills.

On top of this the Revenue is owed £1.167 billion in other taxes from the rich.

This doesn't include the £216 million written off as uncollectable in 1998, and the £281 million written off in 1997.

The Revenue Commissioners say they will come down hard on anyone avoiding tax. Yet nobody has ever gone to jail for tax evasion.

And during the DIRT scandal they did very little to stop the practice.

Tax inspectors could examine the declara-

tion forms to see if the person was lying about not living in Ireland.

However, their bosses ordered them not to look at the forms.

In July 1986, Revenue bosses issued Order SIM 263.

Instructions

This order told tax inspectors not to examine declaration forms and to "await further instructions".

They waited 12 years for those instructions.

So for over a decade the tax inspectors had the power to investigate massive fraud but their bosses told them not to do so.

The fat cats know there is one law for the rich and another for the poor.

And they are being let away with robbery again.

Worker arrested for picketing

A MEMBER of the building workers' union BATU in Bray was hauled before the High Court this month.

He was forced to "purge his contempt" for the mere act of picketing.

The dispute had risen originally in Mennolly Construction when two local bricklayers turned up looking for employment on a local site.

Instead of being given direct PAYE employment they were

offered a C45 form to work as sub-contractors.

The workers put up pickets but the company rushed off to the courts to get an injunction.

One worker was arrested at the site and brought straight to the court in dubious circumstances.

This activity is in marked contrast to the treatment of those engaged in bribery of politicians. Another example of one law for the rich.....

★ ISRAEL'S militaristic obsession knows no bounds. It is entering a soldier in next month's Miss Universe contest, due to take place in Puerto Rico.

Miss Israel, soldier Haunt Levy, has even incorporated a bulletproof army-style flak jacket into her outfit. But designers have at least adorned the jacket with floral designs and encrusted diamonds for a "softer look".

what we think

The human cost of Smurfit's millions

MICHAEL SMURFIT is one good reason to be an anti-capitalist. While he lives a life of luxury that would make an aristocrat blush, workers for his company in Colombia live in grinding poverty.

The man who says he is "devoid of ego" jets around the world in a Gulf Stream V jet, bought for £25 million from profits, extracted from sweated labour on Colombian plantations.

Extracted

In June, Smurfit will get another luxury yacht. It is so big it will not be able to enter Dun Laoghaire harbour.

But that is not a problem because Smurfit spends a lot of his time in the Barbados in the company of Dermot Desmond, JP McManus and John Magnier.

These are the core of the brown envelope gang that bribed Haughey and got favours in return.

Smurfit is not even officially a

THEY ARE DESTROYING OUR ENVIRONMENT

LIKE ALL capitalist firms, Smurfit's sheds crocodile tears for the environment—even as it destroys it.

"They plant this monoculture crop of pine and eucalyptus trees which draw out massive amounts of water from the region.

"It means there is less water for the local peasants for their coffee plants," said Nestor Ocampo.

"There is often no vegetation under the trees in the plantation.

So the water runs off quickly into the river, swelling them into floods.

"There is access to water only for short periods of the year—rather than throughout.

"There is also evidence of water contamination from the chemicals like Round-Up which the company uses.

"Many of the local town councils have tried to stop these plantations spreading but Smurfit's can use their political influence to get these decisions overturned."

resident in Ireland. He declares his earnings in Monaco, because it offers an even better tax haven than the Celtic Tiger.

He is also the owner of the notorious K Club, the playground of the super rich which provides "an environment of luxury without equal in Ireland", according to the *Sunday Tribune*.

People like Smurfit are hailed as "risk-taking entrepreneurs" by the media and the politicians.

They are put on a pedestal and we are encouraged to admire their glamour and wealth.

But the source of all this obscene luxury is exploitation on a grand scale.



Globalise resistance protest at Irish Stock exchange

SOME 350 people protested outside the Irish stock exchange on May 1st. Protests also took place in Belfast, Derry and Cork.

For more on Globalise resistance and Genoa turn to pages 7&10

pic: Paula Geraghty

Buying politicians for tax breaks

ALL CAPITALISTS claim they do not want government interference.

But the bigger they get, the more they buy politicians who bend the rules in their favour. Smurfit's play this game in both Ireland and Colombia.

Two prominent Fianna Fail politicians sit on the board of Smurfit's as non-executive directors.

Former Taoiseach Albert Reynolds gets £31,000 a year for attending a few meetings while Ray McSharry got £41,600 for sitting on the Remuneration Committee that awarded Smur-

fit his colossal salary.

Smurfit has made considerable donations to Haughey and in 1991 was implicated in a scheme to sell Bord Telecom property from which he benefited. He also gave £150,000 to Michael Lowry.

But the real benefit that Smurfit gained from Haughey was a policy of cutting taxes on profits to a mere 12.5 percent, the lowest in the EU.

In Colombia, Smurfit has its own representative on the Council of the Ministry of the Environment.

Former Smurfit employees have pushed proposals for huge tax breaks for the paper indus-

try. Smurfit's can write off investments and services to plantations against their tax. Their subcontractors can write off 50 percent of their running costs against tax.

When the company faced legal action, they hired a top barrister whose daughter sat on the Supreme Court. Not surprising they won the cases.

Yet there is also a cost for these tax write offs, whether in Ireland or Colombia. Working people end up subsidising corporate welfare by putting up with miserable public services because there is so little money in the kitty.

THEY TRIED TO SHUT ME UP

NESTOR OCAMPO was the director of an ecological organisation Cosmos. When he criticised Smurfit's, they hauled him before the courts for libel.

They even claimed that his accusations "constitute a culture medi-

um for subversives".

This was directly setting up Ocampo for attack by far right paramilitaries that operate in Colombia.

But Smurfit lost on two occasions.

The second judge stated that the "events denounced by Ocampo are true as are their consequences".

THE SWEATED LABOUR BEHIND THE GLITZ

NESTOR OCAMPO, is a Colombian environmental activist who traveled to Ireland recently to expose the reality behind the Smurfit empire.

"Smurfit has monopolised the paper-making market in Colombia. They control the entire chain from growing trees to logging to pulping to exporting.

Secrecy

"But many of its activities are surrounded in secrecy. Their official headquarters is like a parking lot.

"You need a special permit to visit the real headquarters in Cali and no photographs are allowed," Nestor told *Socialist Worker*.

The company owns 58,000 hectares of land and is the biggest

landowner in the county of Calarca.

In the region of Santa Rosa, Smurfit bought up land that was marked for re-distribution to the local peasantry.

It runs huge plantations where workers are employed on sub-contract teams without any union representation.

"Someone working as a logger might earn about £130 a month.

"They are often brought in from outside regions, from the poorest areas and made to feel dependent on the company.

"Sometimes they do not get proper social security from the contractors and might not be treated in hospitals if they are injured.

"They are paid on a piece work system, according to the weight of wood that is felled. You are not supposed to use a chain saw when it is wet, but the system means workers do"

In the pulping plants, Smurfit has

cracked down hard on union representation.

A report from the Smurfit Environmental and Human Rights Shareholders Group shows that over 100 trade unionists have been sacked in recent years.

Dismissed

They include Francisco Rueda, a union leader who was dismissed for producing a bulletin which compared the director's pay to those of the workers and Hector Alderete, a shop steward sacked for organising a meeting at the factory gate.

Just as Nike and Gap use contract labour to draw profit from sweatshop conditions, Smurfit's still operates as a colonial master that squeezes workers on plantations and pulping mills.

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news of the world

General strike shakes Greece

S THE return of the working class! It was the biggest strike for many years in Greece, at least the biggest since the fall of the military junta in 1974."

That's how Panos Garganas, editor of Socialist Worker's sister paper in Greece, describes a magnificent one-day general. It forced the Greek government to stall over major attacks on workers' pensions.

"We've had many days of action in recent years, but this was a real general strike, with workers shutting down factories and workplaces," says Panos.

Paralysed

Strikes paralysed much of the country, with bus, rail, port and airline workers all joining the protest.

Teachers, shipyard workers, textile workers, civil servants, bank workers, TV and newspaper workers, and even Greek Orthodox priests—who are technically civil servants—also struck.

The revolt was sparked by a pensions "reform" plan put forward by the Greek government, run by the PASOK Labour-type party.

The plan aimed to



Firefighters join the general strike.

increase the retirement age for workers, cut some pensions, and do away with a number of special pensions for certain groups.

Cuts

The attack was in part inspired by pressure from the European Union, which wants the Greek government to impose such cuts as part of its membership of the

euro single currency.

The assault sparked fury among Greek workers. It saw even trade union leaders who hold prominent office in the governing party forced to call action.

Leaders of the main GSEE trade union federation and the ADEDY public sector workers' union rejected the pension plan and called last week's strikes.

"The most important thing was that workplaces

where people hadn't been on strike for 15 or 20 years were shut down.

"In workplaces where the union hardly existed workers struck and joined the demonstrations," says Panos.

Numbers

"It's hard to put numbers on it but there were perhaps two million workers on

strike." That is an astonishing figure in a country with a total population just over ten million people.

"In Athens there were some 200,000 workers on the demonstration, perhaps more, and there were very big numbers on demonstrations in other cities too," says Panos. "The numbers on the marches are impressive—there was no transport running at all.

"Everyone who came

had to travel on union coaches or make their own way there on bicycles or something." The pensions attack has sparked a crisis inside PASOK.

Some 66 members of the party's executive wrote to prime minister Simitis demanding special meetings of PASOK's ruling bodies.

Gulf

They said they were worried that there was a growing "gulf between PASOK and its social base". The government announced it was freezing its pension plans, and said it wanted "dialogue" on the eve of last week's strike.

"But despite that the union leaders are calling more action," says Panos. "No one trusts that the government won't just come back later with a similar plan, so the union leaders want the government to adopt a union plan for pensions."

"The unions felt they had to call some action because of the feeling below. But the response was bigger than they expected. Now they

can't just walk away from it. That's why they have called more action."

A massive protest took place on May Day and another general strike has been called for 17 May.

"Such a huge explosion of workers' anger can benefit the left..."

"Such a huge explosion of workers' anger can benefit the left," argues Panos. "We in the Socialist Workers' Party were very visible in the marches. We had slogans like 'Pensions before Profit' and 'People before profit'."

We had lively contingents and many people joined in with our slogans. We also carried a huge banner saying 'Globalise Resistance: Genoa 2001' which went down very well.

There is strong support for protesting against the G8 summit in Genoa in July. "The next few weeks are going to be very exciting here in Greece."

India is also part of global wave of protest

ONE OF India's most important cities was shut down by a general strike.

Millions of people stayed at home in Bombay as unions and political parties called protests against globalisation and privatisation.

The Indian government is pushing ahead with a World Trade Organisation plan which could see cheap imports flood the country, devastating many local industries and farmers.

Privatisation

It is also pushing through laws to make it easier for companies to sack workers, and is driving ahead with a pri-

vatation programme.

The strike across the Indian state of Maharashtra once again gives the lie to those who claim that protests against globalisation are the preserve of people in richer industrialised countries.

While the strike was directed against the right targets, it was organised by an unholy political alliance.

As well as trade unions and left wing parties such as the Communist Party, it was backed by the Shiv Sena party.

This is a right wing Hindu chauvinist organisation.

It is hoping to build a base by fighting privatisation and attacks on workers. But it also seeks to scapegoat India's Muslim minority.

Protest across the world



Demonstrators in Germany

AROUND THE globe people took to the streets against capitalism on May 1st.

England

IN LONDON ten thousand anti-capitalists converged to exercise their right to protest and free assembly, using the monopoly game board to symbolise capitalism's stranglehold over people and planet.

Six thousand police were draughted in to combat such violent acts as cycling, pigeon feeding, guerrilla gardening and giving away free veggie burgers.

The protests cost the city £20 million in 'profit loss', mostly from shops like Nike, Gap and McDonalds which had to close all day.

Australia

Thousands of protesters defied police and blockaded stock exchanges and company headquarters.

Police put up barricades outside stock exchanges in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.

Thousands of trade unionists on the traditional May Day parade in Melbourne linked arms with anti-capitalist protesters to force the closure of several streets.

Turkey

Protesters marched in 50 cities against the IMF's austerity programme, poverty and corruption.

There were 50,000 on the streets in Istanbul and 10,000 in Ankara.

Police prevented meetings and demonstrations in the Kurdish area of Turkey.

South Korea

Thousands of workers

marched through Seoul to protest against economic "reforms" that have caused massive redundancies.

Japan

Nearly half a million people took part in a workers' march in Tokyo on May Day.

They included delegations from Burma as well as all the main Japanese trade unions.

Palestine

Palestinian trade unionists marched to protest against Israeli occupation.

France

Tens of thousands joined demonstrations in dozens of cities across the country.

In Paris workers fighting mass sackings by multinational corporations like Moulinex, Danone and Marks & Spencer headed the march.

Eamonn McCann

Violent double standards

THE ROW over Martin McGuinness admitting he was number two in the Derry Provos on Bloody Sunday highlights the hypocrisy surrounding the issue of political violence.

The hypocrisy was underlined by the fact that the controversy came in the same week as the European Court of Human Rights castigated the British government for failing to seek out the truth about the killing by RUC and SAS men of 11 IRA members and a civilian in the 1980s.

Right-wing commentators in both Britain and Ireland heaped scorn on McGuinness's outline of his statement to the Bloody Sunday Inquiry. He was saying nothing new in confirming his IRA status, they sniffed.

And he wasn't going to tell the whole truth about his IRA career anyway, but intended to confine his evidence to what had happened on Bloody Sunday. This wasn't good enough, they declared. McGuinness shouldn't be allowed to take a selective approach.

Testimony

It was almost forgotten in the heat of the argument that the IRA didn't carry out any of the killings being investigated by the Tribunal McGuinness will be giving testimony to. It's freely admitted by lawyers for British soldiers that all the dead and wounded were unarmed, and were struck by British Army bullets. And yet none of the soldiers who fired the shots will be named.

They will give their evidence anonymously, and possibly from behind screens. We won't know who they are and may not even see their faces. But none of the commentators who have been ranting about Martin McGuinness has had a word to say about this far more glaring example of selective evidence.

We should be used to these double standards. Every class-divided society operates on the basis of its "official" forces having a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Indeed, their violence isn't usually regarded as violence at all. A cop battering in the head of a protester is "keeping the peace", but May Day demonstrators milling around in central London are "spreading terror".

Last month, George Bush called on Palestinians whose restraint in the face of years of oppression has been little short of saintly to "end your violence".

As he spoke, he was standing literally shoulder-to-shoulder with the serial mass murderer, Ariel Sharon.

Attitudes

The contrasting attitudes to Martin McGuinness on the one hand and to SAS men, RUC special units and paratroopers on the other fits into this general pattern. As does the reluctance of the Dublin government to search out the truth when it's Irish State forces who have used lethal violence.

The garda inquiry into the killing of John Carthy in Longford was such a blatant whitewash that not even conservative Dublin commentators would accept it. Pressure for more of the truth led to hearings before a Dail committee. But that, too, has been derailed by the determination of the gardai directly involved to account in the open for their actions.

And Taoiseach Ahern and Justice Minister O'Donoghue, in effect, back the gardai up. The context of the Carthy case is very different to Bloody Sunday. But there's no difference with regard to the accountability of the perpetrators or to the attitude of the authorities to pleas for an honest investigation and the full truth to be told.

Against that background, the calls by Sinn Fein and other nationalist groups in the North for the Dublin Government to take up with its British counterpart the issues of State-sponsored killing and collusion are, at best, inadequate.

It is in the interest of all workers on the island, Catholic and Protestant, that the truth about State killings, North and South, should be told and the killers held accountable.

This means rejecting the double standards of those who have been denouncing Martin McGuinness, and rejecting also any perspective of lining up with the Dublin establishment in relation to killings in the North.

Private Finance Initiative bent on..

Selling off the public sector

THE PRIVATE Finance Initiative is set to sweep through the education sector in Northern Ireland, handing public sector buildings and jobs to private corporations.

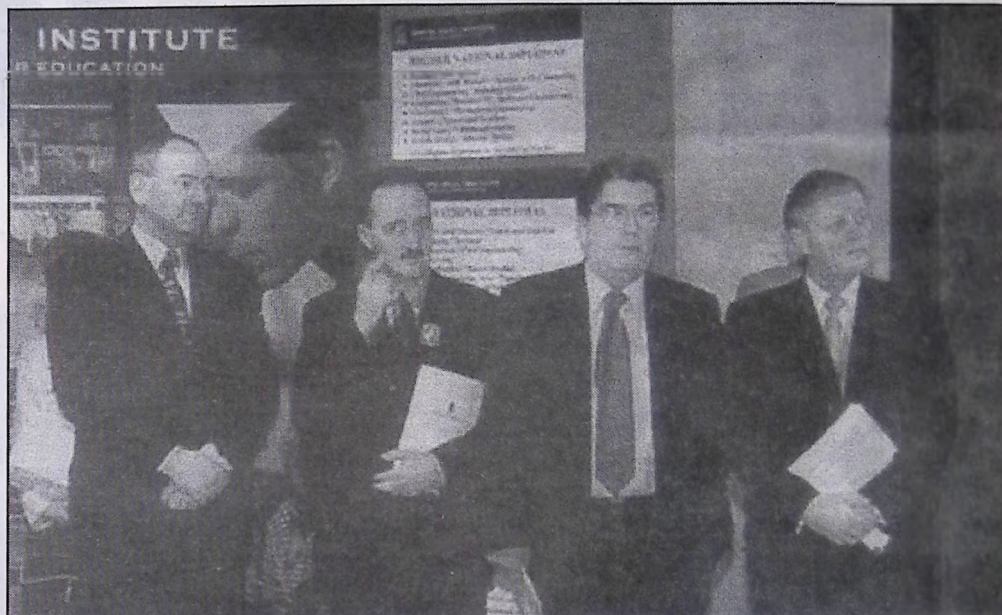
At the end of April, SDLP higher education minister, Sean Farren opened a new extension for the North West Institute of Further and Higher Education in Derry, built using PFI.

The Derry building is the first higher education building to be completed using PFI.

Farren noted that other PFI projects including the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education were underway. "PFI gives us the chance to make better and speedier progress and allows colleges to devote more time to the core business of providing education," said Farren. "That is essential if Northern Ireland is to compete and succeed in the global marketplace."

Scandals

The new building in Derry was built by the Northwin Consortium, which includes a sub-



REAL ESTATE agents for the public sector: L-R Mark Durkin, SDLP; Cathal Crumley, Sinn Fein Mayor of Derry; John Hume, SDLP; Sean Farren, SDLP at the opening of the PFI building in Derry.

siary of the massive Cement Roadstone Holdings, which was heavily involved in the Ansbacher corruption scandals in the South.

The deal means that Northwin will be paid for the building over 25 years.

In Britain, campaigners against PFI estimate that this usually amounts to twice or three times the original cost. PFI was

a policy developed by the former Tory government and extended by Blair's New Labour.

PFI is now being introduced throughout the education, transport and health sectors in Northern Ireland.

Privatise

Sinn Fein ministers, Martin McGuinness and

Bairbre De Brun have both endorsed it for the schools and hospitals. DUP Minister Gregory Campbell is planning to use PFI to privatise public transport.

PFI represents a massive extension of the previous policy of subcontracting work in the public sector to private com-

panies. Northwin will also control catering, cleaning, portering, security and maintenance for the next 25 years.

All of these jobs are notoriously low paid and are set to get worse as Northwin tries to squeeze the maximum profit out of the arrangement.

Student Fees to stay

SEAN FARREN, the SDLP Minister for Further Education confirmed that student fees are set to stay.

When addressing the NUS-USI conference in Belfast he said, "Abolishing the loan based system or the abolishment of fees are not real options".

The cost of getting rid of the fees would amount to £35 million.

Yet Raytheon arms company in Derry received £75 million in handouts.

Is it not better to invest in education

than in arms companies?

Farren's statement comes after the announcement of a bursary scheme which pays a pittance to students from low-income families.

With the average student leaving university with debts between £7,000 and £10,000, it is not surprising that rate of dropouts are increasing, enrolment is also down. 1

A recent survey found that 20 percent of students drop out of their courses mainly due to financial problems.

Bill Clinton is to visit Ireland again

THIS TIME Clinton will be accepting an honorary doctorate from Queen's University for his "contribution to peace".

He tried to save his presidency by bombing Iraq and a medical factory in Sudan when he faced impeachment.

Clinton's last visit

to Belfast, which was greeted by protests and demonstrations of over 100 people and led to the first occupation of the American consulate.

When he spoke, protestors heckled and booed him.

A similar welcome is intended for Bill Clinton when he comes to Belfast on May 24. The Socialist Environmental Alliance will also hold a counter protest to Clintons visit to Derry on May 25.

For information e-mail: grbelfast@hotmail.com or seaderry@hotmail.com

Bigots hold back choice

THE SOCIETY for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) in England has taken a court case to try to stop over-the-counter availability of the morning after pill.

Women in Britain and the North have been able to buy the emergency contraceptive Levonelle-2 without a prescription since January.

SPUC argues that the morning-after pill is the same as an abortion and should be as strictly regulated.

Doctors, however, insist that abortion is "the interruption of an established pregnancy, i.e. after the embryo has attached in the uterus."

Fundamentalist

The fundamentalist move comes after the official Unionist Party and SDLP got together to try to ban the morning after

pill in the North.

Esmond Birnie (UUP) and Alban Magennis (SDLP) have tabled a motion in the Assembly that the decision taken to allow emergency contraception over the counter was wrong.

No date has yet been set for debating this motion.

Rights

A spokesperson for Alliance for Choice in the North told Socialist Worker, "It's interesting how nationalists and unionists have no problem stopping their sectarian bickering to unite in opposition to women's rights."

"It's simple really. Most women see the morning after pill as an important part of keeping control of their lives."

"Those who think emergency contraception is wrong need not use it."

They should allow other women to make up their own minds."

Why you should

VOTE NO TO NICE TREATY

Abbeylara

Cops cover-up killing

JOHN CARTHY, a building labourer, with a history of depression, was shot in the back four times by officers armed with Uzi machine guns and assault rifles at a siege in Abbeylara in Longford last year.

Now a Dail sub-committee set up to investigate the events surrounding the fatal shooting has been closed down for 30 days because of police pressure. This comes after the council for the Gardai argued that a number of their members who were due evidence should not have to.

The exact same type of arguments were used by British soldiers to try to avoid the Bloody Sunday inquiry but the Irish government supported civilian groups who demanded they appear. Yet this time Justice Minister O'Donoghue has weighed in behind Garda plans for a cover-up.

This sub-committee is not the first 'investigation' into the incident. An internal inquiry by the Gardai themselves in the months following the shooting has been severely criticised by many who say that it was biased.

The call for an independent inquiry into the events of April 19th and 20th last year has gathered much support from various sources. The family of the late John Carthy have called for a public inquiry and they have been joined by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL).

Report

The Garda report into the events was only made public after huge public pressure had been exerted and when it did become available, even the Tanaiste was criticising the "selective leaks" made to the media.

During their own investigations the Gardai brought the FBI into to look at the events concerned, however the American force does not have a great record on such incidents. In the Waco siege in which the FBI were involved, over 80 lost their lives.

The Garda Report on the fatal shooting of John Carthy contains no expression of regret or apology to the family, apart from one sentence towards the end of the document.

According to sources in the ICCL the Garda Report set out to portray John Carthy as "mad, bad, and sad and that the actions of An Garda

by JACK REED

Siochana were highly professional if not heroic."

The ICCL have made a submission to the Dail committee calling for the application of international law to the Abbeylara incident.

The ICCL has said that the Garda report into the incident is not satisfactory.

The Garda Report shows no need for "enhanced police training in human rights, psychology, and negotiation tactics is not even addressed in a manner which indicates any purpose of institutional amendment on the part of An Garda Siochana.

Approach

"In the absence of such an approach one is left with the pessimistic conclusion that Abbeylara could happen again," concludes the ICCL.

The forces' 'foot dragging' at the Dail Committee has also shown that they are more interested in protecting the "good name and reputation of certain members" of the Gardai rather than getting closer to the truth.

There is a wider point for socialists. The Gardai like any police force in a capitalist country is not a neutral body. The Gardai are there to defend the state and the status quo. It is not a democratic organisation and remains very reluctant to allow even the smallest amount of accountability into the organisation.

Because of this lack of democracy the Gardai have been extremely reluctant to allow any independent third party look into the incidents surrounding the shooting, apart from the FBI of course.

Simple questions need to be asked: Why was Carthy's sister denied permission to talk to him during the 24 hours he locked himself in his house?

Why was the psychiatrist who treated him for depression not consulted? Why was his request for a solicitor not met? Why were the heavily armed Emergency Response Unit called in in the first place?

It doesn't look likely the Dail Committee are going to answer them.



PATRICIA MCKENNA

SW: The government says that the Nice Treaty is only about enlarging the EU. So why are you objecting?

PATRICIA MCKENNA: THERE ARE 70 pages in the Nice Treaty but only eight pages deal with enlargement.

It is not the real issue. The changes in the EU will occur regardless of whether the new countries in Eastern Europe decide to join. They will come in early before any of them join.

The treaty allows for enhanced co-operation between any eight states. It will create a two-tier Europe - one where is an inner circle which dictate to the rest.

The Nice Treaty is almost entirely devoted to transferring more power to the big EU Member States at the expense of smaller

The government is trying to rush through the Nice Treaty without much discussion. The reason is that it contains new measures, which will speed up the creation of an EU military super-power.

The government is getting backing for all the main parties in Dail Eireann, including the Labour Party.

The party's Dublin MEP, Proinsias de Rossa, is one of its most enthusiastic backers.

Disgracefully, the ICTU has joined the political establishment in calling for a Yes vote.

But questions are being about who exactly who ICTU General

states such as Ireland.

You have argued that business interests are pushing the Nice Treaty. What is your evidence for this?

THE EUROPEAN Round Table of Industrialists have been campaigning actively behind the scenes for this treaty. They are calling the shots.

If you look at the statement they made beforehand and compare it to what is in the Treaty you can see

how much they got.

One article in the Treaty — article 133 — allows the EU Commission powers to enter into negotiations with the World Trade Organisation.

This will allow them to push through the globalisation agenda which means more power for the multi-nationals.

The Nice Treaty moves decision making from open meetings in national and regional parliament to the EU institution in Brussels where elected representatives of the people have no access.

This closed door policy denies

Secretary speaks for.

These questions are prompted by the fact that the largest union, SPTU, refused to take a position on the treaty.

This followed after divisions developing in the union at the highest level.

Ranged against these forces are a variety of mainly left wing movements ranging from the Greens to the Socialist Alliance.

Here two key opponents of the Treaty, **ANDY STOREY** of the human rights group Afri and Green MEP **PATRICIA MCKENNA** tell *Socialist Worker* why they are against the treaty.

people insight into voting details and makes it very difficult for the people to hold Ministers and civil servants responsible is unacceptable.

Do you think that the treaty will lead to the militarisation of Europe?

DEFINITELY. The European Rapid Reaction Force is already leading to global insecurity.

The Treaty is designed to turn the EU into another military super-power.

SW: The government says that the Nice Treaty is just about the enlargement of Europe. Why are you objecting?

ANDY STOREY: WE HAVE nothing against enlargement if that is democratically decided upon by people in the current and applicant states.

But if we are inviting other people to join our "club", then we should make sure it's in a fit state to receive visitors — building a military capacity behind closed doors, which is what's happening now, is not a good sign of what's in store for new members.

We should sort out issues like that before we invite others to join in such processes.

What is the link between a Euro army and NATO?

IT'S VERY close. There are four joint EU-NATO working groups thrashing out issues like how the EU will access

NATO equipment and intelligence resources.

A report from the December 2000 EU Nice Presidency Report specified that the NATO Secretary General should attend EU ministerial meetings.

All EU countries (except France) that are also members of NATO send the same representatives to the new EU military committee as they do to the NATO military committee. During discussions in March of this year on the crisis in Macedonia, the EU and NATO representatives were holding joint news conferences

Are there moves afoot to build up a European defence industry?

YES, BUT there are divisions here.

The UK, for example, is closest to the US, so they're not too keen on replacing imports of US armaments.

Whereas the French ruling groups are much more anti-US and enthusiastic about an independent European defence capacity.

Though defence is a bit of a misnomer here — because the European Rapid Reaction Force (the new European army) is designed for offensive operations outside the borders of the EU.

Some argue that you need a Euro-superpower to rival the US. What do you think?

IT MIGHT give poorer countries a little more scope to play off one superpower against another, but it's a helluva risk.

The likelihood is that the emerging EU military capacity will work alongside, not in opposition to, US interests.

And commercial pressures — from armaments companies, for example — mean that once a military capacity is built up it is going to be used to generate repeat-replacement orders.

So if you have this alternative Euro-superpower it's probably going to attack somebody — most likely "small fry" targets in Africa or elsewhere in the poorer parts of the world.

NO TO THE NICE TREATY

Speaks for. Questions are prompted by the largest union, SIPTU, take a position on the followed after divisions in the union at the high- against these forces are a mainly left wing move- ing from the Greens to Alliance. key opponents of the STOREY of the human Afri and Green MEP MCKENNA tell Socialist they are against the

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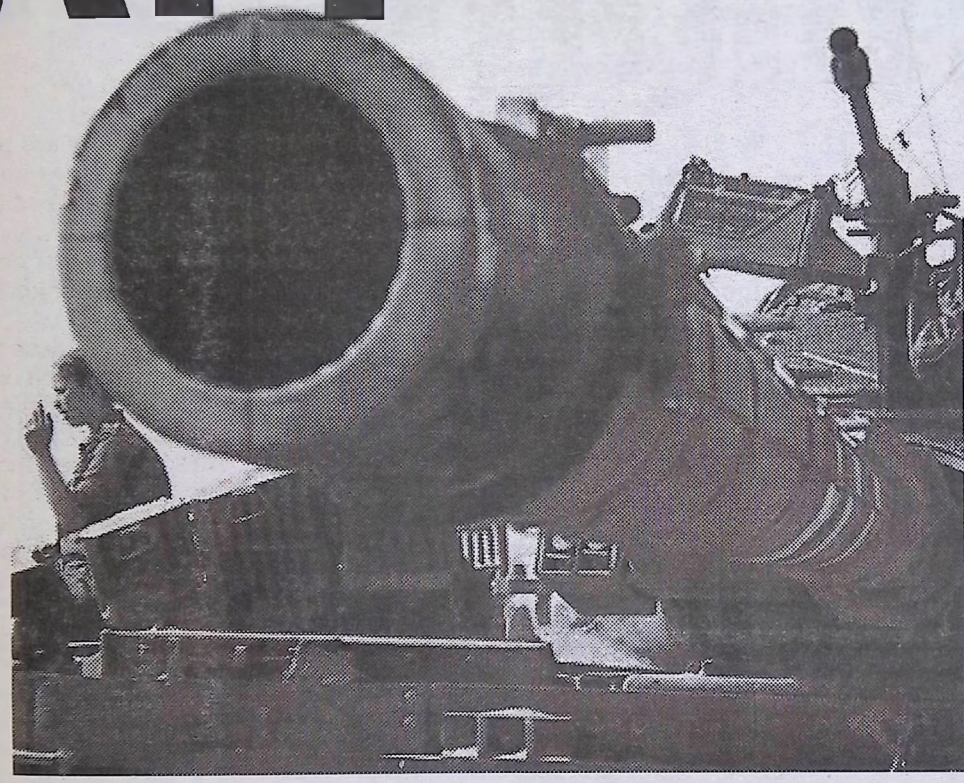
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The future face of the EU

But if this happens then why would not other blocs such as the ASEAN group of countries not try to follow the same path?

What do you think about the way the referendum is being conducted?

IT SEEMS that the government, with the apparent support of the two main opposition parties, will

go to any lengths to divert attention from the content of the Treaty of Nice.

Their plans to tie the forthcoming referendum on the Nice Treaty in with a number of other issues is a deliberate attempt to dilute the impact of the Supreme Court judgement in relation to fair referendum procedures.

If the government decides to put three or four constitutional amend-

ments to the people on the same day, it will mean a Referendum Commission will, according to the terms of the Referendum Act, have to publicise six or seven different arguments.

This will be a clear indication of the Government's desire to undermine the Commission's work and discredit it in the eyes of the public and the media.

JOIN THE SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN

THE NEWLY formed Socialist Alliance will be campaigning hard to win a NO vote against the Nice Treaty.

The alliance has produced thousands of stickers, leaflets, and fact sheets.

If you want to get involved or want to get leaflets or factsheets write to:

Socialist Alliance 26 Royal Terrace West, Dun Laoghríe.

Socialist Alliance Public Rally

No to the NICE Treaty

Thursday May 24th
ATGWU, 56 Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 7.30pm

Socialist Alliance

Saturday May 12
Connolly Day
Socialist Alliance Events.
3.00pm - 5.00pm,
Teachers' Club, 36 Parnell Square : Activists' Meeting
8.00pm till late Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Square
Table Quiz
£3 per person.

Report of Genoa Social Forum

Shut down the G8

THE GENOA Social Forum (GSF) met in Genoa at the beginning of May. The GSF is an umbrella group of over 170 organisations which is co-ordinating the anti-g8 protests next July.

About 250 people gathered, mostly from Italy, but the meeting also included some 60 delegates from other countries. Represented at the meeting were Italian rank and file union groups, environmental campaigners, anti-debt campaigners as well as Genoa mobilizing groups from France, Belgium, Britain, Spain, Germany, Greece and Ireland.

From the beginning of the meeting it was clear that the protests in July will be massive, and that while people are going to Genoa to protest for many different reasons, there must be unity in these protests. Simone from the Ya Basta! autonomist group in Italy said that "the number and unity will be what is decisive in the protests".

Activists from across Europe told of the excitement in their countries for going to Genoa. Representatives from ATTAC, which is organised in 8 countries, spoke of sending 10,000 people from France alone.

to discuss the ideas and politics behind our movement. On the 19 July a mass protest for immigrant rights will march along the 'exclusion zone' imposed by the Italian authorities around the G8's conference hall.

Much of Genoa's immigrant community lives within this area, and the authorities are using the G8 conference as an excuse to move them from their homes and harass them.

Following this, there will be direct action protests on 20 July. Because these will occur on a weekday, a number of speakers raised the possibility of a general strike. The GSF recognized the importance of trade unionists being involved in direct action and ended the meeting by issuing a call for work stoppages on that day.

Bruno Rossi, a shop steward from the powerful Genoa Dockers Union, said "many of us have dreamed of this day. We've often found ourselves in a struggle when an international company could easily close us down. Now with Italian, Greek, French and British Trade Unions coming together they'll no longer be able to do that."

The main march will be on the 21st of July and the organizers expect 100,000 people to join it. The initial route of the march was to be away from the exclusion zone, but it quickly became clear that everyone wanted to get as close as possible to the G8, and allow the protesters to show their anger.

Some people were conscious of the media hype about violence on the demonstrations but speaker after speaker echoed the argument of one GSF organizer who said "If the system is oppressing you it's right to resist. The violence? Bush, Blair and the rest of them - they're the violent ones."

Vanya, an activist from Slovenia said "We must remember that the whole underdeveloped world is hoping that we put forward our demands to the self-elected bosses in the G8. We should disrupt their peace in this town and inform the local ordinary people that they themselves are paying for a meeting that has huge maternal, human and moral costs for civilisation.

When the G8 meet in July there will be a powerful united protest that every activist and trade unionist should get too.

— GRACE LALLY

Protests

The possibility of a right-wing coalition led by Berlusconi winning in the Italian elections next week meant that many Italians were concerned that the protests would be met with bans and repressions, but others argued that the anti-G8 protests could be a real chance for the left in Italy to regroup and send a powerful message to the government.

Norma Bertrulacelli from Rite Contre G8 in Genoa was quite clear: "we're not going to present petitions or beg (to be allowed to protest) because they've got no legitimacy. For us it's like the mafia coming to town". The GSF are now calling for a day of action nationally, and internationally at Italian Embassies, on June 2nd to pressure the government into accommodating the demonstrations.

There are four main events to counter the G8's meeting in Genoa. The first is a week long 'Social Forum' where activists from across the world will gather

Globalise Resistance

Get on board for Genoa 20 - 22 July

Tell the G8: Our World is Not for Sale

For details of travel arrangements from Northern Ireland ring 0798 0071077

Rep of Ireland: enquiries to

Globalise Resistance 086 4098186 or globalise_resistance@yahoo.com or write to Globalise Resistance 31 Whitworth Rd, Dublin 9.

New book exposes fast food

A bad taste left
in your mouth?

PEOPLE ARRIVING at Dachau to visit the museum at the concentration camp are frequently given a leaflet in the car park: "Welcome to Dachau! Welcome to McDonalds!"

Opening a burger bar next to a holocaust museum is not the worst thing about the fast food business revealed in Eric Schlosser's fascinating book, *Fast Food. What the All American Meal is Doing to the World*.

It is a devastating exposé of the multinational corporations who control what we eat.

Preach

Americans now spend \$120 billion a year on fast food, more than on higher education, PCs, computer software or new cars, or on magazines, going to see films, recorded music, newspapers, videos and books combined.

Fast food firms, Schlosser argues, preach the values of consumer choice and democracy—as long as it is a choice between burgers, pizzas and microwaved slices of apple pie.

As Ray Kroc, a McDonald's founder, said, "We have found we cannot trust some people who are non-conformists."

"We will make conformists out of them in a hurry..."

"We have found we cannot trust some people who are non-conformists. We will make conformists out of them in a hurry... The organisation cannot trust the individual; the individual must trust the organisation."

—Ray Kroc,
McDonald's
founder.

"The organisation cannot trust the individual—the individual must trust the organisation."

Schlosser argues that "since the administration of President Richard Nixon, the fast food industry has worked closely with its allies in Congress and the White House to oppose new worker safety, food safety and minimum wage laws."

The McDonald's company operates about 28,000 restaurants around the world. It's America's biggest buyer of beef, pork and potatoes, and the world's biggest owner of retail property. McDonalds make more money



Part of the machine

from rent than from selling burgers.

The company is one of the country's top toy distributors and its largest private operator of playgrounds.

Identify

Ninety-six percent of American schoolchildren can identify Ronald McDonald.

Schlosser writes that "on any given day in the United States

about one-quarter of the adult population visits a fast food restaurant" and that "the typical American now consumes approximately three hamburgers and four orders of French fries every week.

"An estimated one of every eight workers in the United States has at some point been employed by McDonald's," he adds, and "the company annually hires about one million people, more than any other American organisation, public or private."

The McDonald's brand is the most famous, and the most heavily promoted, on the planet. "The Golden Arches," Schlosser says, "are now more widely recognised than the Christian cross."

As fast food franchises from McDonald's to Pizza Hut to Kentucky Fried Chicken go global, this dynamic has assumed an international flavour.

In Brazil, McDonald's has already become the nation's largest private employer. Classes at McDonald's Hamburger University in Oak Park, Illinois are now taught in 20 different languages.

Insinuating

The industry "both feeds and feeds off the young," insinuating itself into all aspects of children's lives, even the pages of their school books, while leaving them prone to obesity and disease as it hones its institutionalised exploitation of teenagers and minorities.

The fast food companies own satellites to look for locations for restaurants and seeking out potential developments.

Currently a multinational fast food restaurant open a new outlet once every two hours. Schlosser

says: "The profits of the fast food chains have been made possible by losses imposed on the rest of society"

Fast food is the symbol of

global capitalism. McDonald's spend \$2 billion dollars a year promoting themselves as such.

And as the symbol stinks so does the system it represents.

What's in the food?

AT A "fry factory" in Idaho, potatoes are washed and have their skins blown off by machines and are then fired through a Water Gun Knife — a hose that shoots potatoes, at 117 feet per second, through steel grillwork that cuts them into perfectly uniform fries.

These, of course, eventually arrive frozen at your local fast-food outlet.

The factory-like process that turns livestock into hamburgers means that "a single fast-food hamburger now contains meat from dozens or even hundreds of different cattle."

McDonalds has its own breed of poultry called the McChicken, which is of uniform size and has large breasts.

The chicken farmers never own the chickens—they are supplied by a processor as chicks and leased to them to be returned when fully grown.

Further, the fast food industry takes the better meat from these processes.

The worst goes into the public

school system.

Because most fast food is so heavily processed, it has lost real flavor and needs the help of the same companies that produce "the scent in shaving cream."

Scientists called "flavorists," cobble together chemicals to recreate the flavor of fresh cherries or grilled hamburgers, always keeping "mouthfeel" in mind.

A typical artificial strawberry flavouring found in milkshakes is a cocktail of more than 50 chemicals.

A 1996 US Agriculture Department study that found 78.6 percent of ground beef samples from processing plants around the country contained microbes that are spread primarily by manure.

The poor hygiene practices in abattoirs have led to a sharp rise in the spread of the pathogen E. coli 0157.

Cases of food poisoning in Britain have increased by 60 percent since the mid eighties. Every day in America 200,000 people get food poisoning, 900 are hospitalised and 14 die.

No unions, no rights

FAST FOOD is produced and served by some of the worst treated workers under capitalism.

Fast food firms manipulate a minimum-wage workforce (primarily young, unskilled, recent immigrants) by withholding medical benefits, perpetuating turnover to deter unionisation, while taking full advantage of government subsidies for nonexistent "training."

McDonalds, for instance, has a policy that if it can't break a union in a restaurant it will close it down and open another on down the street.

The fast food business invests large sums designing equipment so streamlined that it requires as little skill as possible to operate while accepting vast US government subsidies for teaching job skills to the poor.

The giant agribusinesses and abattoir chains that supply restaurants are driving America's small farmers off the land.

The companies have encouraged consolidation and centralised production. Global corporations control the vast majority of beef, poultry and potatoes.

Out of every \$1.50 spent on a large order of fries at a fast food restaurant, a meagre two cents goes to the farmer who grew the potatoes.

Those who suffer the most are the slaughter house workers.

Slaughterhouse workers injured on lines are encouraged to deny their injuries to keep production moving.

Injured

The slaughter houses were unionised and conditions improved at the beginning of the century.

So the slaughter houses moved into rural areas to break the unions.

The dangerous, injury-filled work —where job assignments have names like "first legger, knuckle dropper, navel boner"—is carried out by low paid immigrant labour.

Now conditions are more medieval than they ever were, with workers stuck on a production line of slaughter, covered in blood and manure hacking at meat for hours on end with dangerous equipment.

Fast food, What the
all American meal is
doing to the world
by Eric Schlosser
£12.50 published by Penguin



in my view

Their man in Panama

WHOSE STROKE of genius was it to put the film version of John Le Carré's *The Tailor of Panama* on general release on the day the Summit of the Americas opened in Quebec?

As the teargas wafted across Quebec City we cannot be reminded too forcefully that the invisible hand of the market only works with the mailed fist of armed force. There is no McDonald's without arms manufacturer McDonnell Douglas. And what better example than Panama?

It was here that George Bush Sr, Ronald Reagan's vice-president and previously Nixon's head of the CIA, created Panama's gangster dictator General Noriega. The same George Bush Sr, as US president five years later, sent in the troops and gunships that killed thousands in the removal of Noriega. The dictator had stopped obeying US orders after becoming super-rich and powerful from the drugs trade.

Today George Bush Jr is concentrating billions of US military "aid" on Panama's next door neighbour, Colombia, allegedly to stop the drugs trade. In reality this campaign is designed to put down popular opposition. Panama masquerades as a democracy despite its banks nicknamed "laundromats" and its skyscrapers called "cocaine towers".

As one character says in *The Tailor of Panama*, "When Bush came in and removed Ali Baba, he left the 40 thieves." So is it all business as usual, then? Not quite. The world's busiest waterway, the Panama Canal, is now formally under Panama's control. The US's 85-year occupation of the Canal ended in 1999.

Imperial

But is the Pentagon going to leave this vital route to the Panamanians? And what about the smaller imperial powers like Britain? Are they going to stop meddling? We all know the answer is no, and it is wonderful to see it so beautifully spelt out in *The Tailor of Panama*, directed by John Boorman.

The story is simple. Harry Pendel, a former small-time villain, has recreated himself as a Savile Row tailor making suits for the ruling elite of Panama. Getting deeper into debt, he is easy prey to the greedy, bullying MI6 agent Andy Osnard, who needs someone to supply him with intelligence. The MI6 agent's secret mission in Panama is to watch the political manoeuvrings in the lead-up to the US hand-over of the canal, and he hopes to amass a private fortune for himself.

The agent leans on Harry, who is so well liked by the 40 thieves, for information. Harry, though, is useless at getting the truth out of them. What he is good at is making it all up. So he fanaticises out loud about a "silent opposition" willing to overthrow the thieves and stop a dastardly plan to sell off the canal to a Japanese, French and Chinese consortium.

Osnard, the perfect antidote to the James Bond myth, sees his chance. He whips the "evidence" off to his bosses in MI6 who, dreaming of being once again in the big league, rush off to the CIA and Pentagon. After some undignified haggling, \$15 million in cash is supplied to fund the "opposition" and the air attack in support is launched. John Le Carré took the plot of *The Tailor of Panama* from Graham Greene's 1969 novel *Our Man in Havana*.

Le Carré has co-written the film script, and his contempt for our ruling class comes through beautifully in *The Tailor of Panama* film version. The film is great entertainment and should also help motivate people to prepare a hot reception for George Bush Jr in Genoa in July.

by GEOFF BROWN

film

Losing trust in the system

by DAVE
LORDAN

MULTINATIONALS are evil. Bribery of government, surveillance and thuggery against employees, outright murder when the going gets tough, are all part of the pursuit of profit.

That is the message of *AntiTrust*, a brilliant new Hollywood movie with Tim Robbins.

It is a wonderful irony that the movie is distributed by Rupert Murdoch's Fox Corporation.

Lavishness

Robbins plays Gary Winston, the mega-rich CEO of the world's biggest computer company, ironically titled NURV, which stands for Never Underestimate Radical Vision.

He lives a life of unimaginable lavishness and has, it seems, limitless power.

Winston hires Milo, a young, hip, computer genius, to work on NURV's new multimedia



Tim Robbins doesn't play Bill Gates in *Anti Trust*

product Synapse.

Winston has gambled billions on Synapse being ready in time for its launch date.

For the first third of the movie the audience is drawn into Winston's and his company's carefully wrought PR image.

Robbins is a self-made tycoon who gives millions to the arts, education and charities.

To his employees, computer whiz kids, he is

a guru, driving them on to unleash their creative potential in the name of the company.

But how have NURV and the cool CEO really got to the top?

Because, as Winston keeps repeating they are "prepared to do whatever it takes" to get there.

Robbins' movie is bound within the conventions of adventure stories.

The gender roles are

well worn with the female characters entirely secondary and stereotypical.

Removes

However it pulls no punches in making a direct link between the free market and evil.

It shows how capitalism removes all borders, economic and moral, in the drive to accumulate

profit, how it robs the wealth of the world and drains the brains of the young.

AntiTrust's message is overwhelmingly progressive.

No matter how big the multinationals are, no matter how small workers might sometimes feel we are, if we organise to fight them we can win.

As such, it is recommended viewing.

pamphlet

Class struggle in the classroom

AS A Leaving Cert student, I was very pleased find a pamphlet which deals so closely with an issue that has risen to the fore in recent public debate.

As the argument over education in this country reaches a new intensity, particularly on the issue of the ASTI strike and benchmarking, the government has remained adamant in their support of the neo-liberal agenda.

This situation requires a clear socialist analysis which Deirdre Cronin's *Class and Education in the Celtic Tiger* provides.

Not only does this pamphlet expose the deeply class ridden nature of Irish education, it also serves as an excellent tool in the current fight against the right wing policies of our Government.

I found the class analysis of the education system in this country, reflected my own experience as a student.

Even as a child one can discern

the obvious difference between pupils of a working class background and those of the middle class.

This is amplified in secondary school where I have seen my year size drop from about 54 students to about 30.

The poor funding crisis applies to my own school, where fund raising events are frequent and where subjects like music and PE are impossible because of lack of equipment yet across the road a wealthy school can boast of a swimming pool.

Market

This pamphlet also provides a thorough and in-depth critique of the introduction of the market into Irish education.

It clearly shows the consequences of the Benchmarking system that the Government seems to love so much.

The example of Britain shows that pay related productivity leads to more inequality, a falling teacher level and an undermining of teachers collective ability to fight for better con-

ditions.

Far from improving the standard of education for students, performance based pay systems have increased the levels of stress among students by forcing them to be assessed on a constant basis.

A fascinating part of the pamphlet covers education under socialism.

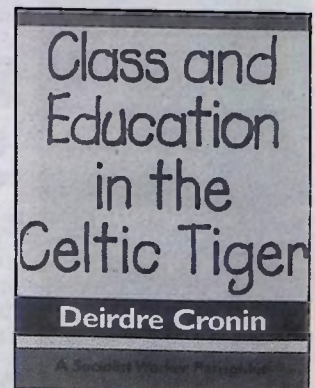
The example of occupied schools in France in 1968 showed how a thoroughly democratic institution could be so liberating. Students voted on the subjects that they would learn that day (explore might be a better word).

Teachers worked with students in organising the school and any administration was democratically elected.

Education after the Russian revolution could not be more different from the stifling education my fellow students and me are now enduring.

Education was about personal development and expression, in stark contrast with the rigid formulaic and de-personalising nature of education under capitalism.

This pamphlet provides an



antidote to the neo-liberal lies of the Government, a thorough analysis of education under capitalism and most importantly a socialist alternative to the false promises of the market.

I recommend this pamphlet to anyone who is sick of the rotten state of education.

● KEVIN MORAN,
Leaving Cert Student

Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

50p

inside

GENERAL STRIKE
IN GREECE

PAGES 4

SHUT DOWN THE
G8 — PAGE 7

WHAT'S IN THE BURGERS
FAST FOOD EXPOSED

— page 8

Solidarity price £1

VOTE Socialist Environmental Alliance

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE

THE NEW Socialist Environmental Alliance will be standing candidates in the local elections in Derry and Belfast on 7 June.

The SEA is a coalition of socialists, trade unionists, environmentalists and other campaigners who are aiming to challenge the pro-business agenda of the nationalist and unionist parties.

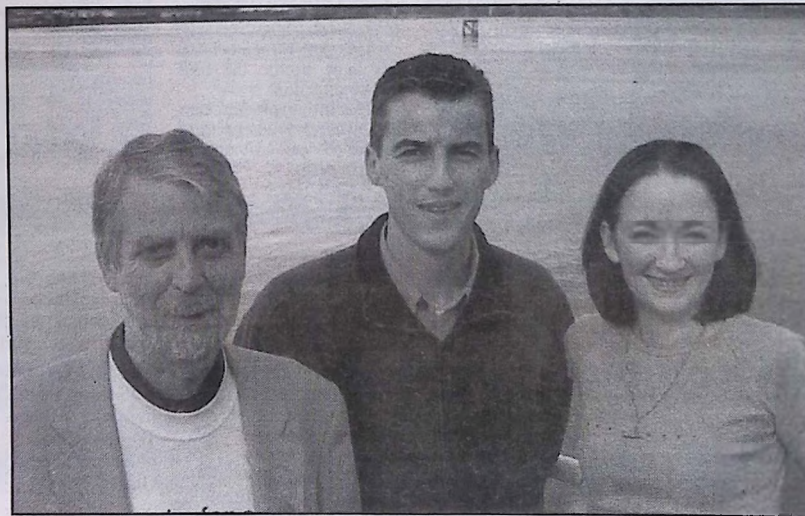
The SEA in Derry is fielding three candidates, Bill Webster, chair of the Derry Trades Council, Shana Deery 24 year old, a former factory worker who is now a youth worker in Creggan and Colm Bryce, a local socialist involved in the Ban the Burn campaign against an incinerator.

Campaigner

Belfast SEA was formed at the end of April and is selected Barbara Muldoon, a socialist and campaigner against the 11 plus, as their candidate.

To stand in a ward chosen to offer an alternative across the sectarian divide.

The SEA manifesto demands an end to incineration, expanded public transport, defence of public services and



SEA candidates in Derry, Bill Webster, Colm Bryce and Shana Deery.

opposition to privatisation, a £7 an hour minimum wage (starting with council workers), trade union rights, opposition to the arms trade and an end to secret negotiations with multinationals.

Colm Bryce outlined the need for these policies.

"Once you get beyond the endless bickering about decommissioning, you find that the whole political agenda in the North is being dominated by multinational corporations.

The Assembly and the local councils advertise the North on their websites as a low wage paradise for multinational investors.

"They boast that factory workers wages are 18 per cent lower here than in Britain, 35 per cent less than the US and half of what they are in Europe. "When the multinationals who are moving into Derry to take advantage of low wages include Raytheon, who make cluster bombs and Tomahawk missiles, they say 'Don't raise a fuss'. Raytheon was welcomed by every party on the local council."

"The corporations have been getting it their way far too long. We can't wait another four years to start to challenge this. It has to start now."

The SEA is also determined

to offer an alternative to communal politics. "It is so clear to see that the main divide is between rich and poor," said Barbara Muldoon. "If you look at an area like North Belfast, the poverty is terrible but there are very few resources."

Community groups are constantly chasing funding, but companies like the Halifax get handed £10 million in grants to build a new low-wage call centre. We want to use the election to highlight those issues."

"We're not saying that there are no problems with the whole set up in the North. But we are approaching it in a different way,"

A NEW SPIRIT

The SEA has attracted the support of large numbers of activists. Socialist Worker spoke to some of the people involved.

"We've only been going for a few weeks, but already there is a tremendous momentum in the campaign," said Goretti Horgan from Derry. "You can really sense that there are loads of people who want to see something new in politics."

Danny Brown, a socialist in Derry, agreed that the SEA is connecting with a new spirit. "The fact that 150 people turned up to our May Day protest outside the banks says that there is something new happening."

"You could see the impact it had on people passing by, who were taking SEA leaflets. It's been so invigorating and enjoyable working with people from different strands of what you might call anti-establishment politics. That's very refreshing and very challenging as well."

Barbara Muldoon says that the Belfast SEA is having the same effect. "It's only a small beginning, to stand in local elections. But already we are meeting so many people who are looking for a radical voice."

A few days ago we heard about a group of people outside Belfast who were looking to run in the elections in their area and who like what we are standing for. We're arranging to meet them this week to try to link up. You get a feeling that this could be the beginning of something very big."

Socialist

Bill Webster said, "I've been a socialist in Derry for 25 years and this is by far the most exciting thing I've seen here. There are so many young people involved."

Sandra Capper, a student at Magee University in Derry, said, "The SEA meetings are so fresh and exciting. There's so much energy, because the agenda of the alliance is so original and straightforward compared to any of the other political parties."

"I had been looking to get involved in politics and couldn't find anything that represented what I believed in. The SEA has been everything I was hoping it would be, it's really about making a difference, standing up for people and changing society."

To get involved in the SEA campaign phone 07771 781958 or email seaderry@hotmail.com.