

# Socialist Worker

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For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

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# NO REFUELLING AT SHANNON

# STOP THIS WAR NOW

**The US and Britain are raining down cruise missiles on the half starved population of Afghanistan. No one should believe the lie that these bombs will not kill countless civilians.**

These civilians are just as valuable and as decent human beings as those who died in New York.

It is a disgrace that the Foreign Affairs Minister Cowan is bending

the knee before George W Bush's bloody war of vengeance on Afghanistan.

In a speech to the UN, Cowan said "There could be no neutrality in the fight against international terrorism."

Shannon Airport and Irish airspace is to be opened to US military aircraft on their way to bomb and strafe Afghanistan.

But the Irish government has never spoken out nor lifted a finger to oppose the terrorist actions of

the US themselves.

● In Central American in the 1980s the US government set out to overthrow the government of Nicaragua.

The Contras were created, trained, armed and financed by the US, and unleashed on the in the 1980s. The Contra campaign cost at least 17,000 lives directly, with many thousands more maimed

Key figures behind the terror are now at the heart of George W Bush's regime. They include Secre-

tary of State Colin Powell and his deputy Richard Armitage, US ambassador to the United Nations John Negroponte, and George W Bush's "human rights specialist" Elliot Abrams.

● The terrorist training camps the Bin Laden's recruits from were established with the backing of the US government. Then Bin Laden was a "freedom fighter" because he was taking on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

● Throughout the 1980s the US

helped arm the right wing UNITA force in Angola, which waged war on the elected government. In 25 years over one million people have been killed.

● This war will not bring an end to terrorism but make atrocities like those on September 11th more like again. Its aim is to prop up Western strategic and economic power in the region.

We say No refuelling at Shannon. No use of Irish airspace for Bush's dirty war.

★ IT'S NOT just the anti-war movement that is making links between the interests of the oil multinationals and the aggressive foreign policy of the US in the Middle East and Central Asia.

US paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade have just had their website closed down. The Italian-based paratroopers' website featured the game "Bash Bin Laden." Among the expected racist stereotypes of Arabs and Asians, the game included a map of the Middle East.

All the countries were renamed after US oil companies!

.....

★ KILDARE's county manager has overruled planning officials to allow Michael Smurfit, one of Ireland's richest businessmen, to build an £8m mansion at the exclusive K Club.

Sean McCollam, an assistant planner with Kildare county council, recommended that Smurfit be refused permission for the three-storey residence, which is to be designed in the style of a French chateau.

The planner pointed out that Smurfit already has a house at the K Club, the estate owned by the Jefferson Smurfit group.

The location and scale of the mansion and its "inappropriate design and general appearance" were contrary to the objectives of Kildare's County Plan, McCollam added.

But Niall Bradley, the county manager, disagreed with the objections and has given the go-ahead.

Intended as a private residence for Smurfit, it includes a swimming pool, gymnasium, steam room and extensive staff quarters.

According to Brian O'Halloran, Smurfit's architect, "It will be of French Loire valley chateau style."

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## Naked Chief

CHARLES Haughey attempted to let his island, Inisvickillane, as a nudist colony recently.

For £10,000, Haughey told potential clients of an exclusive London letting agency, they could "live like a noble Celtic chieftain for a week".

A brochure on Inisvickillane, supervised by Haughey, just months after the McCracken tribunal reported, highlights the facilities the island has to offer. "Clothes optional (Well it is a private island!)," the brochure reads.

# Ireland's war profiteers

Raytheon Systems, an American company with a subsidiary in Derry, has seen its share price jump by 40 per cent since the attacks on New York and Washington on September 11.

In 1999, Raytheon and Shorts Aerospace were awarded an £800 million contract for the British Ministry of Defence Airborne Standoff Radar (ASTOR) programme.

The radar provides 24-hour all-weather imagery of ground conditions over a large area—technology which would be central to any attack on Afghanistan.

Raytheon is one of the world's largest arms companies and produces the Patriot surface-to-air missile as well as the

Sidewinder and Sparrow missile systems.

Adtec Teo in Navan, Analog Devices in Limerick, Ardee Sports in Louth and US-owned Moog (Ireland) in Cork are among the other Irish companies involved in supplying equipment to the arms industry.

### Control

Ardee Sports supplies guns to military and police forces around the world and is the exclusive supplier of US-made Beretta, Winchester and Lasermax weapons and equipment.

The company also supplies crowd control technology and the Czech-made Ceska Zbrojovka automatic rifle.



# Passport-for-sale man funded bin Laden

REMEMBER the passports for sale scam? Well the Saudi sheikh who was given 11 Irish passports by Charles Haughey in 1990 was an investor in President George W Bush's oil company

while at the same time providing funds to Osama bin Laden.

An audit on the National Commerce Bank in Saudi Arabia — owned by Sheikh Khalid bin Mahfouz before he was placed under house arrest last year — showed that the bank had funnelled millions of dollars into companies

linked to Osama bin Laden.

The 1998 audit confirmed that \$3 million from a Saudi pension fund and an undisclosed amount—believed to be tens of millions of dollars—were deposited in bank accounts in New York and London.

Mahfouz was also an investor in Harken Energy, a US-controlled oil corporation which won a contract in Kuwait soon after the end of the Gulf War. George W Bush was a director of the company before becoming president.

It is believed that Harken Energy won the contract because of contacts between Kuwait and the president's father, George Bush senior.

## Are you a terrorist?

THE FBI's definition of terrorist includes the following:

"Left-wing groups, generally profess a revolutionary socialist doctrine and view themselves as protectors of the people against the 'dehu-

manising effects' of capitalism and imperialism.

"They aim to bring about change in the United States through revolution rather than through the established political process."

### Burke

Mahfouz and several members of his family received 11 Irish passports at a lunch in Dublin in December 1990. Former justice minister Ray Burke assisted with the processing of the passport applications, ignoring procedures.

The sheikh bought a house in Meath in order to fulfil residence requirements, but never stayed or lived there, according to locals. Mahfouz promised investments of £20 million in Ireland, although it remains unclear what happened to the money.

## Waste hypocrisy

# 71 year old jailed but 1 in 4 businesses break law

71 year Anton O Hannrachain has become the latest person to be jailed in Cork for not paying his refuse charges.

He spent three days in prison because he argued that the services charges were an unjust double tax.

The Lord Mayor of Cork, Tom O'Driscoll has appealed for an end to the protest and then claimed that his council had nothing to do with the jailings.

### Courts

These he claimed were a "matter for the courts".

Yet as Anton O

Hannrachain was sitting in jail, a report was published by Repak, the national organisation with responsibility for recycling.

It claimed that one quarter of Irish businesses were not disposing of packaging waste in accordance with the law.

Andrew Hether-

ington, the chief executive of Repak admitted, "These businesses are in effect law breakers.

"Only two prosecutions have taken place

under the regulation because the local authorities, responsible for enforcement, do not have sufficient resources."

Neither of the prosecutions that Hetherington mentions led to a jail sentence.

### Turnover

The companies involved all have a turnover of more than £1 million and created more than 25 tons of waste last year.

Yet here are the biggest offenders of waste creation getting off scott free while 71 year old pensioners who have paid taxes all their lives are jailed.

## Shut down Sellafield

The British Government is using the din of war drums to smuggle in a decision to allow a dangerous new nuclear plant to start operating.

The Mox plant at British Nuclear Fuel's (BNFL) Sellafield site in Cumbria has been mothballed since it was built in 1996 because of safety fears.

The plant reprocesses dead-

ly plutonium to make fuel for nuclear power stations. It was at the centre of a huge scandal in 1999 when safety data on a trial batch of fuel exported to Japan was found to have been falsified by the company.

Laurence Williams, the government's official chief inspector of nuclear installations, said, "I make no bones about it. Sellafield is probably the most hazardous site in the UK."



## Cashing in with toys

TOY makers expect the run-up to Christmas to bring a boom in sales of products with a rescue theme.

Fisher Price has responded to recent events by increasing production of its special New York firefighter toy, a version of its "Billy Blazes" rescue hero.

### Aimed

These toys are aimed at pre-school children.

There are already reports by the giant supermarket Wal-Mart of a boom in firefighter and police costumes for Halloween.

Hasbro Inc spokesperson Wayne Charness said the company would not abandon war toys: "GI Joe or an action figure—it's good versus evil, and it's been around for centuries."

## what we think

# Stop this war!

**“WE ARE ready to go. Everything is in place”. This is how Tony Blair signalled that war against the impoverished country of Afghanistan was about to be unleashed.**

For the past few weeks, Blair and Bush have been working to shore up their coalition with filthy deals to appease dictators.

### Welcomed

Oman has been offered a £1 billion arms deal. Pakistan, which has begun building a nuclear bomb, has been welcomed back into the “international community”.

Uzbekistan, has been told there will be no criticism about its 7,000 political prisoners as long as it makes available bases to US bombers.

All of this is to inflict yet more suffering on the people of Afghanistan.

In a cynical propaganda ploy the Western powers dropped 400 tons of food on Afghanistan in bags emblazoned with “USA”.

This is less than a thousandth of what is needed to avert starvation on a massive scale. Afghanistan desperately needs 580,000 tons of food as more than five million of its people are facing famine. It needs more food and not bombs.

### Attacked

When the US bombers and troops storm into this country, they will find the after-effects of US government support for terrorist policies in the past.

Their helicopters will be attacked with Stinger missiles. They were supplied to the Taliban, who were praised by the US as “freedom fighters” in the war against the old USSR.

The invading troops will also have to cross a country where 8 million mines have been laid as part of a proxy war between the US and the USSR.

Despite all this, the Irish foreign minister Brian Cowan assures us that the war will be “targeted” and “focussed” with few civilian

deaths.

This is his excuse for throwing open Shannon airport to US bombers who will drop their deadly load on some of the poorest people on earth.

But Cowan's excuse is nothing more than a lie.

In 1991, Bush's father launched the Gulf War claiming that he would take out the “new Hitler” Saddam Hussein. More than 100,000 civilians and conscript soldiers died in that war—and Saddam Hussein is still in power.

The US has already set aside £25 billion for this new war.

That is three times more than the G8 leaders agreed to spend on fighting AIDs in Africa when they met in Genoa this summer.

What we are witnessing in Afghanistan is a filthy colonial war to assert the dominance of the Western powers. It will not eradicate terrorism but rather sew the seeds for yet more terrorist attacks.

### Stationed

After all the talk about eliminating terrorism is over, we will find US troops permanently stationed in Central Asia—just as they are still in Saudi Arabia, ten years after the Gulf War.

This time their aim will be to protect the new sources of oil in the Caspian Sea which will be transported to US oil companies via a pipeline that runs through Afghanistan.

It is a crying shame that the Irish government is associating us with this filthy war. It is time to stand up to them and build the anti-war movement everywhere.

## Thousands march in Washington against war



## No coalition with warmongers!

**THE LABOUR Party, the Greens and Sinn Fein are the main electoral parties voicing the growing discontent with the Celtic Tiger.**

**But they have one major weakness in common—they all want to join a coalition government**

either FF or FG.

Of course, none of their leaders say it as directly as this.

They want instead to “keep their options open” or to decide “after the next election”.

In the past, Labour Party conference delegates accepted this line—and every time they found themselves

steamrolled into coalition after an election.

### Steamrolled

The truth is that any party that enters a coalition with the war supporters of FF and FG will pay a heavy price.

In Germany, for example, the Greens are on the brink of a

split because their government ministers—who started out as pacifists—have now joined the consensus for war.

What is clearly needed is a strong revolutionary socialist party that does not want to join in running the system but rather wants to overthrow it.

### **Socialist Worker price increase.**

Due to increased costs we have had to increase the price of **Socialist Worker** to 70p. This is the first price increase in over 6 years.

# Marxism 2001

## Global crisis, Global resistance

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**Jonathan Neale John Gormley Kieran Allen**

**Bernadette McAliskey Luke Choto Brendan Ogle**

**Brian Manning Marnie Holborow Andy Storey**

### Highlights:

- Intifada: Can Palestine be liberated?
- No Logo—Naomi Klein and the tyranny of brands
- Green and Red: Do they mix?
- Columbia, FARC and the US
- After Genoa and Washington: Direct action and the Anti Capitalist movement
- Cuba: The last island of socialism?
- The revolt last time: Forum on the sixties
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# New abortion referendum means Women condemned to forced pregnancies

**THE FIANNA Fail-  
PD government's  
proposals to hold  
another abortion  
referendum have  
been presented in  
the media as the  
outcome of a con-  
sensus process.**

In reality the govern-  
ment is ganging up  
with right-wing anti-  
abortionists to roll back  
the gains made after the  
X-case on abortion.

## Roll Back

Ahern's referendum  
which will take place  
probably in the Spring of  
2002.

The mechanics of the  
referendum are compli-  
cated, involving refer-  
ence to a piece of legisla-  
tion to be passed through  
the Dail after the referen-  
dum has been passed.

But there is no doubt  
about its effect.

The wording specifi-  
cally excludes the danger  
of suicide as grounds for  
abortion—rolling back  
the effect of the X case.

## Prevented

A suicidal young rape  
victim was prevented  
from travelling to Britain  
for an abortion by an  
injunction obtained by the  
Attorney General.

As a result of the scan-  
dal a referendum estab-  
lished that it was lawful  
for a suicidal woman to  
obtain an abortion in the  
State.

But all governments  
refused to legislate to give  
effect to this verdict of the  
people.

Despite the fact that

three-quarters of the pop-  
ulation support abortion  
in limited circumstances,  
the government wants to  
close even this small door.

The wording of the  
proposed amendment  
states that a termination  
will be allowed only "at  
an approved place ...  
where the procedure is, in  
the reasonable opinion of  
the practitioner, necessary  
to prevent a real and sub-  
stantial risk of loss of the  
woman's life, other than  
by self-destruction."

**This means:**

● **A suicidal woman  
or girl will be refused  
an abortion in the  
State;**

● **A rape victim will  
be told she must con-  
tinue the pregnancy  
to full-term**

● **An incest victim or  
under-age girl will be  
given no help.**

But the proposals go  
even further than this. In  
the "C"-case a young girl  
who was under the care of  
the local authority was  
taken to England for an  
abortion, despite the fact  
that her parents objected.

## Entitled

The courts ruled she  
was entitled to an abor-  
tion as she too was sui-  
cidal.

If this constitutional  
amendment is passed any  
suicidal young girl in care  
would be left to continue  
the pregnancy.

The local authority  
would have no legal basis  
to take her abroad.



## An attack on the Left

**AHERN'S manoeuvres  
on abortion are a deliberate  
attack on the left—  
and that is why the  
upper class liberals  
of the PDs are  
going along with it.**

The political estab-  
lishment is alarmed with  
the No vote on the Nice  
Referendum and the ris-  
ing social discontent.

They want to use the  
abortion issues to frag-  
ment the opposition and

strengthen right wing  
politics by an appeal to  
traditional values.

Most of those oppos-  
ing the Nice treaty were  
concerned with privatisa-  
tion and the neo-liberal  
agenda of the EU single  
market.

## Importing

But a minority were  
from the right, fearful of  
Europe importing godless  
practises into Catholic Ire-  
land.

By pandering to this  
minority the government  
hopes to decisively weaken  
opposition in a re-run of the  
Nice referendum.

The new referendum was  
announced days after the  
rank and file of the Labour  
Party voted for a right to  
choose position against he  
wishes of their leaders.

Ahern wants to use this  
vote to launch the type of  
attacks that Charlie Haugh-  
ey launched on the left in  
the early eighties.

Then Fianna Fail worked  
closely with SPUC at local  
level to target left wing

politician like Michael D  
Higgins and Jim Kemmy by  
claiming that they condoned  
"murder".

The answer to these  
attacks is not to run for  
cover but to stand up clearly  
for a woman's right to  
choose.

There is a huge differ-  
ence between Ireland today  
and 1982 when the bigots  
won the abortion referen-  
dum.

Tens of thousands of  
Irish women have travelled  
to Britain for an abortion  
and many have asked: why  
did we have to pay so dear-

ly just to protect hypocrisy?  
Abortion has become a  
class issue.

## Easier

It is much easier for  
wealthy women to travel to  
the best clinics in Britain  
while working class women  
have huge difficulties rais-  
ing £500 in travel and  
accommodation costs.

If the left stands up for  
these women it will make  
huge gains against Fianna  
Fail.

**EACH YEAR more than 6,000 women  
travel to Britain for an abortion. Their  
voices are rarely heard above the  
clamour of Youth Defense and SPUC.  
Here are some of their stories.**

## MIRIAM

**"WHEN I got the posi-  
tive result I was in  
complete shock...I felt  
awful, dreadful, panic.  
The idea of going  
ahead with the preg-  
nancy, it just wasn't a  
possibility..."**

I told my boyfriend immedi-  
ately. He was very shocked...it  
was clear the relationship wasn't  
going anywhere. He was plan-

ning to move away from Ire-  
land...

It was a very distressing time  
for me and it was difficult for me  
to separate out the issues.

Being pregnant; the break-  
down of the relationship; con-  
sidering abortion—all were dis-  
tressing for me. The traumatic  
part for me, if you like, was that  
I felt really betrayed by the rela-  
tionship...

My memory of it is a bit  
hazy. We stayed in a B&B. I  
remember finding it very hard  
not to smoke, and having to fast.  
I hardly knew how I felt. I just

wanted it over, finished...

I think that afterwards I was  
certainly very sad and I had a  
sense of loss, but loss of poten-  
tial. I never had regret. I have  
never regretted what was for me  
the right decision. It felt quite  
ok that I could feel sadness and  
loss, natural feelings, and still  
not regret the decision."

## CATHERINE

**"I'D BEEN separated  
about four years then,  
with three small chil-  
dren. My relationship  
with my husband had  
been emotionally abu-  
sive...I was just back  
on my feet, with some  
stability and routine in  
our lives. The kids  
had had a hard time**

**and it still wasn't easy  
for them.**

I was going out with  
Thomas about a year when I  
discovered I was pregnant  
and I was devastated. I'd  
been using contraception...I  
couldn't believe it was real, it  
felt so unfair.

Every time I thought of con-  
tinuing the pregnancy I pan-  
icked.

My precious job/finance/child-  
care balance, my children's reac-  
tion. My husband's reaction....

Two weeks later I decided to  
terminate the pregnancy.  
Thomas and my sister suggested  
I tell my best friend and she trav-  
elled with me.

We went over and back in the  
shortest possible time, for all the  
practical reasons...

They were very supportive at  
the clinic but it all seems slight-  
ly unreal now...I've never

regretted the abortion.

It was the right thing for me  
to do."

## RACHEL

**"I THINK from the time  
I found out, even in  
shock, I knew what I  
wanted to do.**

I realised, even though I  
knew I had to go through all  
my options first, that I could-  
n't go through with the pregnan-  
cy.

It felt, it was, totally the  
wrong time for me. I had just  
finished my first year at college.  
I was twenty and had no finan-  
cial stability...

I went to counselling for  
about eight months, starting  
shortly after the termination.

I found this helpful to work  
through the whole ordeal, as

well as other issues in my life.

I found it hard for a few  
years, especially at the time I  
would have been due.

I've never regretted my deci-  
sion—I knew and know I did  
what was right for me at the  
time.

Six years later I became  
pregnant again with someone I  
was in love with.

There were some tears and  
adjustments but there was no  
hesitation in my choice to go  
ahead with the pregnancy...par-  
enthood is a huge commitment  
and responsibility, full of joys  
and tears.

I needed to grow up a bit,  
myself, first."

● **All stories taken from  
the Irish Family Planning  
Association's book: *The  
Irish Journey: Women's  
Stories of Abortion***

# Eamonn McCann

## Provos to join global coalition?

Was the attendance of US ambassador Richard Egan at the Sinn Fein ard fheis a propaganda coup for the party? Or was it more a case of Bush's representative making it clear to Republicans what's required of them if they want Washington's good-will?

Was Egan a dupe, or delivering an ultimatum?

What's certain is that the picture of Egan and Adams grinning at one another was the image Sinn Fein was most anxious to project from the gathering. The swarm of party officials involved in escorting journalists in batches into an ante-room for the "picture opportunity" dispelled any doubt that this was the Big Moment of the weekend from the Shinners' point of view.

While establishment commentators ask why Egan facilitated SF, socialists ask the opposite: how could a party, which sometimes styles itself "socialist", prostrate itself before the Bush administration in this way?

Prior to the ard fheis, anti-Provo commentators had been arguing that SF should be shunned, as part of the post-September 11th push against "supporters of terrorism". The SF leadership, on the other hand, was desperate to retain credibility in establishment circles. Adams' sound-bite phrase declaring terrorism "ethically indefensible" was a signal to the US administration, through Egan, that Republicans pose no challenge or threat to their strategy.

The Adams-Egan picture showed Sinn Fein signing up to the "global coalition" which Bush and Blair envisage dominating the new world order. That this could happen with no show of dissent from delegates says a lot about the political basis on which Sinn Fein has been built in recent years.

### Gestures

Sinn Fein's unwillingness to rule out coalition with Fianna Fail after the upcoming Southern election tells the same story. Occasional radical gestures aside, this is not a party of the Left. It is a Nationalist organisation, ready to adapt to whatever audience it is addressing, but certain in the end not to come down against ruling class interests.

**This is not to deny there are genuine socialists in Sinn Fein. It is to say that they are in the wrong party.**

Derry delegate Daisy Mules successfully moved a resolution committing Sinn Fein to "actively oppose" State aid to companies which fail to meet a number of conditions, including recognition of trade unions, compensation for workers and the local community in the event of closure, and pledges of no involvement in the arms trade.

Mules told the ard fheis that the motion had been unanimously supported by the SF organisation in Derry. She went on to refer to the arrival in Derry two years ago of high-tech US arms manufacturer Raytheon, and complained that "Sinn Fein presented no cohesive public policy position...A number of leadership figures imposed what was described as 'SF's line on Raytheon'.

There was no internal party consultation or debate. "SF's line" was tacitly to support Raytheon.

The fact that Mules' motion was passed shows that on this issue, as on others, many in the SF rank-and-file don't go along with the line "imposed" by "leadership figures". The key question, however, now that the motion has become party policy, is whether the line of the ard fheis will be accepted by—or imposed on—"leadership figures".

The policy, on its own, would rule out coalition with Fianna Fail. More pertinently, in the part of Ireland where SF has already served in coalition it has gone along with the centre-Right economic strategy of its partners, letting the free market rip through health and education. Many SF rank and filers are unhappy about this. But there has been neither internal party debate, nor show of dissent from the disgruntled membership.

The track record suggests that Mules' motion will be ignored—and that no grass-roots revolt will arise as a result. Socialist energy channelled into Sinn Fein will, again, have been wasted. Sinn Feiners who are serious about socialism should get out and join a serious socialist party.

## North Belfast:

# Tackle sectarian poison

**THE LAST few months have seen an increase in the sectarian tensions in north Belfast. Socialist Worker talked to some of the people who live and work in north Belfast.**

The anger directed between the two communities is largely misdirected. As one taxi driver told *Socialist Worker*, "The poverty up here is outrageous.

"There are very few differences between a Protestant area and a Catholic area—the only real difference is the colour of the flags that fly from the lamp posts.

### Poverty

"It is horrible to see the poverty, north Belfast has some of the worst deprivation in the UK.

"There are some streets where nearly every house is bricked up, apart from maybe the odd house. It's extremely sad to see."

One bus driver in North Belfast talked about his colleague who was attacked during rioting.

"Last week, a driver was driving up by north Belfast and the Shankhill road.

"Three men came on the bus, they produced a handgun.

"The men forced him to pick up more hijackers.

"They then told him to drive the bus over a fire. He refused and had a gun pointed at his throat.

### Nervous

"They let him go, and he was walking to police lines when the men threw a pipe bomb or shot at him.

"The driver is a nervous wreck, it is doubtful that he will come back to work.

"Every night we are attacked up in north Belfast, it ranges from kids throwing stones to the hijacking of the bus at gunpoint.

### Attacked

"I have been attacked. Three blokes threw a breezeblock through the window at me.

"My family keep telling me to leave, and bloody hell I agree with them.

"This is no way to live."

Already teachers are calling on their trade unions to take action against the month long "protest" against Catholic school children getting to the Holy Cross Primary School.

John, a teacher from west Belfast, helped organise a petition with teachers from other areas of the city to call on the teachers to act.

He told *Socialist Worker*, "I have been



**Sectarians on the march at the beginning of October**

getting a great response from the teachers at my school.

"Its brilliant to see how many people are opposed to this crass form of sectarianism.

### Petition

"In two hours we got over 110 signatures, I had Catholic and Protestant teachers stopping me in the car

park trying to sign the petition."

Mark, a teacher in a state school in east Belfast said, "I got a whole lot of teachers supporting the petition.

"We have sent it to loads of schools around Belfast and have received a brilliant response from most of the teachers."

John again said, "I am astonished that the

trade unions have not acted against this. Anyone would want to act when it comes to those poor kids.

"The banging of drums and the blowing of whistles must be terrifying for them, those kids will have a lasting image of going to school.

"We need some action now to stop this bitter sectarianism."

## Yet Another Crisis in Peace Process

**IT SEEMS likely that the Stormont Executive is about to collapse and Direct Rule from London will return to the North.**

To some extent, the collapse was inevitable. Although the Good Friday Agreement was widely supported in the hope it would end inter-communal conflict, the Assembly structures it set up actually institutionalised sectarianism.

### Interests

The set-up in Stormont ensured that the main parties continue to present the interests of their "own" communities as in opposition to the interests

of the "other".

According to most opinion polls, the Unionist obsession with decommissioning is not shared by the vast majority of the population, including a smaller majority of Protestants.

While there is general agreement in republican areas that "the cement is mixed" ready to fill a few IRA arms dumps, the Unionists have done everything to stop the IRA finding the opportune moment in which to pour it.

Through all of this, the Blair government has pandered to the Unionists. They sacked Mowlam to satisfy them, joined in setting deadlines, gave in on police reform and played down the

level of loyalist attacks on Catholic homes.

According to the Good Friday Agreement, the Unionist seats on the Executive should be divided out between the remaining parties under the d'Hondt system. But Blair is unwilling to call Trimble's bluff and so will allow Reid to suspend devolution.

### Services

Working class people hoped local politicians would improve health, education and transport services and bring in more decent jobs. They have been greatly disappointed.

The bickering about policing, flags and decommissioning make headlines almost daily.

But behind the scenes, both Green and Orange politicians have no problem agreeing to introduce the Private Finance Initiative, privatising the jobs of thousands of public sector workers already and threatening the jobs of many more.

Uniting from below to keep our services out of the hands of the profiteers would not end sectarianism, but it would act as a counterforce to its growth.

The collapse of the Executive must not signal the collapse of peace. It is up to ordinary working class people to make sure that our politicians do not lead us back to war.

NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...

PAKISTAN

Guns not education

AS THE US prepares for war in Afghanistan, the military junta in Pakistan headed by General Pervez Musharraf is being welcomed back into the "international community".

In a bid to shore up Pakistan's shaky economic situation, the US has lifted the sanctions imposed after the India-Pakistan nuclear tests in 1998 and provided some limited financial assistance.

The US has a long history of supporting military dictatorships in Pakistan in the name of strategic imperatives. And it was the US which pressed Pakistan to become embroiled in Afghanistan in the first place.

Pressed

During the Cold War, the US backed a string of military dictatorships in Pakistan as a counter to the diplomatic relationship of India with the former Soviet Union. It also used Pakistan as a base of operations to support Islamic fundamentalist guerrillas against the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan.

The war against the USSR in Afghanistan could not have been fought without the help of Pakistan. Now the US wants its support in overthrowing the Taliban regime it created.

The origins of Pakistan lie in colonialism. Britain had controlled all of India. The colonial masters exploited and oppressed the population, and divided people along religious lines so that they could rule more easily.

After the Indian Mutiny of 1857 the British deliberately promoted communalism through separate electorates and job and educational reservations for Muslims from the late 19th century.

They placed Hindu lords to rule over Muslim peasants and vice versa. When British imperial rule in India came to an end in 1947 it left behind a divided country — a totally Muslim Pakistan and a mainly Hindu India.

The boundaries between the two new states were not declared until after independence, only then to reveal their complete absurdity. Pakistan supposedly a "homeland" for India's Muslims was composed of two wings over 1,000 miles apart.

Around one million people were slaughtered with the creation of the state of Pakistan, and over ten million people were made into refugees.

Since then the military has ruled Pakistan for over half the country's existence. Even when elected governments have been in office, the military has carefully circumscribed their field of action.

The army has funded, promoted and armed the right wing religious factions, has been complicit in the drugs trade, and has siphoned off half the national budget for decades.

It is only under military rule that Islamic fundamentalism has flourished in Pakistan. When ordinary Pakistanis have been given the chance they have voted overwhelmingly against fundamentalism—the right wing religious parties have never captured more than 7 per cent of the vote.

Two years ago General Pervez Musharraf took power in a coup. While the US and other major powers accepted the coup, they were briefly critical of Musharraf's failure to carry out the IMF's economic measures, and defuse the conflict with India over Kashmir. But the build up to war has seen a return to favour for the regime.

Spends

The reality of the Western-backed military regime means that Pakistan spends only 2.7 percent of its GDP on education and less than 1 per cent on health, which taken together amounts to less than the 4 per cent spent on the military. Yet poverty levels have doubled from 17.3 percent in 1987-88 to 33.5 in 1998-99. A government study published last July estimated that, "50 per cent of the urban population lives below poverty line". Around 40 per cent of people are illiterate and 35 to 50 per cent of the population live in slums.

Eighty-five percent of Pakistanis live on less than \$2 a day. More than half of the population over the age of 15 is illiterate.

Though the US has re-scheduled loans worth \$3 billion, the country's total foreign debt is about \$37 billion. Repayments, along with defence spending, consume the bulk of the budget.

Over the last year the price of sugar, wheat flour and tea has trebled and the cost of other basic household consumer goods has risen by 30 per cent. IMF imposed cuts saw strikes at the beginning of the year.

The combination of war and economic chaos mean that Pakistan is inevitably going to be destabilised in the coming weeks.

Movement against war takes off

YOU WILL not have heard it on the mainstream media but a massive peace movement is taking off in Ireland.

One of the first signs that there was huge opposition to the handing over of Irish airports to US bombers occurred when over 400 people turned up at a public meeting in Dublin.

The venue, Wynn's Hotel, was soon full up and an overflow meeting down the road was soon jammed full to capacity.

Most signed up to get involved in local anti war groups.

On the next Saturday over 1,000 people demonstrated from the Central Bank.

The march set off with lively chants and sat down on O'Connell Bridge for a minute silence to remember the victims of the September 11th attacks and the victims of US imperialism policy around the world.

Whipping

One protestor told Socialist Worker, "I am sick of the war fever being whipped up."

"Half starved people in one of the poorest countries on the planet are to be killed so the US government can assert its world supremacy. I say No!"

Another said: "This protest is brilliant but it's only the start. "This needs to go into every corner of Irish life if we are to stop this coming war."

Out of these events an umbrella campaign—the Irish Anti War Movement—was set up and a number of local action groups were set going around the Dublin area to organise local activities.

Marched

In Belfast 250 people marched to the city centre and a 40-strong broad based anti war movement was set up in late September.

Since then weekly petitioning and leafleting is

ongoing and a major rally is planned and demonstration has been called for October 13.

"The meetings are really lively and everyone wants to do something."

"It is a sign that something different is happening here," said Barbara Muldoon.

Urging

In Derry about 250 also turned out to an anti war rally.

Colm Bryce, a local anti war campaigner noted, "This was a very good turnout. People came

despite the DUP mayor, Mildred Garfield urging people to boycott it as it was 'insensitive' and 'inappropriate' to talk about peace at this time."

Protests have also been organised at Shannon airport, the likely site for US bombers to re-fuel.

As one local activist told Socialist Worker, "There was a turn out of about 70 people at Shannon Airport on Saturday evening by my estimation."

"We are now meeting with the aim of organising regular Saturday demonstrations."

"It's something I can see growing and I think it would

be worthwhile to organise groups to travel down to it from other parts of the country."

Following a protest of 250 people in Eyre Square, a Galway Alliance Against War was set up and has organised street stalls and petitioning.

Announced

It has called for a demonstration in Eyre Square as soon as any attack is announced.

In Cork, a hundred anti-war protestors marched to the Labour Party conference held in the city.

TEACH-INS ARE BACK

DURING THE anti-Vietnam protests in the sixties, there were often Teach-Ins in colleges so that activists could educate themselves about the issues.

In early October a number of lecturers at Maynooth College organised a Teach-In against the war.

Four hundred students and academic staff came to hear the argu-

ments and discuss anti war activity. One of the organisers told Socialist Worker, "The response was great and the debate very enthusiastic."

Organising

"Nine lecturers introduced discussion on topics around the war. We are now organising activity and protests on October 27th which is International Day of Action in Colleges."

We are not alone

● ANTI-WAR demonstrators took the streets in many countries at the end of September which one estimate put at 116 actions up to 200,000 people.

● ROME: 50,000-70,000 people marched through the Italian capital. Many chanted "No to the globalisers' war," and some of the feeling of the Genoa demonstration against the G8 in July could be felt on the march.

● WASHINGTON: Over 15,000 people protested in Washington against the war over the same weekend. A 2,000-strong march called by the Anti-Capitalist Convergence group defied police intimidation and a miserable "counter-demonstration" by a couple of hundred

rabid supporters of Bush's war. At midday the march joined the start of 10,000-strong demonstration called by the ANSWER anti-war coalition. The following day 2,000-3,000 people attended a peace rally.

● ATHENS: Over 10,000 people marched through the Greek capital on a Thursday evening.

Militant

"It was a militant protest," says Maria Styliou from the Socialist Workers Party in Greece.

"We stopped outside the parliament building, but many people wanted to go on to protest outside the US embassy.



Thousands protested against the build up to war including in Japan (above)

Voices against the war

"Our government is heading in the direction of violent revenge, with the prospect of sons, daughters, parents, friends in distant lands dying, suffering... It will not avenge our son's death. Not in our son's name. Our son died a victim of an inhuman ideology. Our actions should not serve the same purpose"

● Phyllis and Orlando Rodriguez, whose son was killed on September 11 in the World Trade Centre.

"The US state does not have the right to decide the guilt or innocence of other people, nor does it have the right to mete out punishment on the basis of such a determination. No single state in the world has such a right, and the US state — because of its support for terror throughout the world — has perhaps the least right of all."

● Andy Storey, Chairperson of Action from Ireland (Afri).

"If the US responds with attacks on possible suspect countries, they too will be killing more innocent people just like those who died so tragically... and they will also be encouraging further counter attacks. Two wrongs never make

a right... "It is essential that [these] tragic events are not used as an excuse to push through proposals that have not been properly thought out or debated and that would threaten the civil liberties and basic human rights of ordinary law-abiding citizens."

● Patricia McKenna, MEP, Green Party

"The September 11 attacks were a monstrous calling card from a world gone horribly wrong. The message may have been written by Bin Laden (who knows?) and delivered by his couriers, but it could well have been signed by the ghosts of America's old wars."

● Arundhati Roy, Indian writer

"While talks are on for the extradition — can India put in a side request for the extradition of Warren Anderson of the US? He was the chairman of Union Carbide, responsible for the Bhopal gas leak that killed 16,000 people in 1984. We have collated the necessary evidence. It's all in the files. Could we have him, please?"

● Arundhati Roy, Indian writer

Voices against the war

Socialist Worker explains ...

Who are the Taliban?

"TALIBAN" means students. The movement originated in schemes by the US and Saudi Arabia to prevent Afghan refugees who fled to Pakistan during the war against the USSR falling under the influence of the Islamic regime in Iran, then hated by the US.

Saudi money was used to build hundreds of religious boarding schools, madrassas, in and around the refugee camps in north western Pakistan. They taught a version of Islam similar to the ultra-puritan Wahhabist creed of the Saudi royal family.

Only three years ago the Western media showed pictures of Taliban units destroying some opium poppy fields.

But for peasant farmers in a shattered economy there is no other way to survive.

Uprooted

The madrassas took in thousands of poor young men from the camps.

They had only recently been uprooted from their villages, and hurled into the uncertainty and misery of refugee life.

The only continuity for them, and for many people in Afghanistan, was religion. Pakistani military intelligence saw the Taliban, graduates of these schools, as a force that could impose order on Afghanistan and bring it under Pakistani domination.

Pakistan's ally, the US, went along with the plan. US backing, Pakistani military support and Saudi money followed.

The Taliban pledged to deal with the "bad Muslims" who had reduced much of the country to banditry.

After they seized Kabul in September 1996, the US oil multinational Unocal entered discussions with the Taliban about building an oil pipeline through the country.

But by the end of 1997 it was clear the Taliban could not conquer all the country and make the pipeline possible.

Now Western governments want to blame their own Frankenstein's monster for the whole tragedy of Afghanistan.

Extracted

THE US claims that the Taliban are "forcing peasants to grow opium"—from which heroin is extracted. This is a staggering lie.

There is opium production in Afghanistan. It took off in 1979 as the country descended into war and the whole economy collapsed.

Afghanistan outstripped Burma as the world's largest producer of opium in the mid-1990s—before the Taliban controlled most of the country.

Ahmed Rashid, one of the most knowledgeable journalists about Afghanistan, writes, "Ever since 1980, all the

Mujahadeen warlords had used drugs money to help fund their military campaigns and line their own pockets.

They bought houses and businesses in Peshawar, new jeeps, and kept bank accounts abroad."

The CIA knew about this and undermined the efforts of the US Drug Enforcement Agency to counter the trade. Officers in Pakistani military intelligence grew rich on the proceeds of the drugs trade. So did state officials in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to the north of Afghanistan.

In 1994 former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif admitted that the army chief of staff and the head of military intelligence had proposed "large scale drug deals" to raise funds for their favoured groups in Afghanistan.

Only three years ago the Western media showed pictures of Taliban units destroying some opium poppy fields.

But for peasant farmers in a shattered economy there is no other way to survive.

Oppression

Some liberals argue that the war is to free women from oppression in Afghanistan.

Life for women under the Taliban is appalling. But it will not improve by dropping bombs on men, women and children.

The Taliban's treatment of women reflects both the underdevelopment of the villages the Taliban had come from and the trauma of the war years.

Like every other guerrilla group, they were composed of men who had spent years in fighting units.

Taliban leaders feared that their soldiers would behave as some previous Mujahadeen groups had on taking a city.

The war years had seen repeated abuse and rape of women.

They said that forcing women into seclusion was a means of protecting them.

Of course, it meant appalling oppression.

But the oppression is copied from the Western-backed regime in Saudi Arabia. It too is a viciously oppressive society towards women.

Women are excluded from the vast majority of jobs, they are forced to study separately from men in universities, and are not allowed to study abroad.

They are not allowed to drive or to travel alone.

They are only considered half as worthy as a man in the eyes of local courts.

Their treatment of women does not stop Bush and Blair seeing the Saudis as an important part of their "coalition" today.

Bush is not a champion of women's rights.

He is a right wing bigot backed to the hilt by anti-abortionists.

NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...

**NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...**

# The last great crusade for civilisation

**by Conor Kostick**

**I am confident of the superiority of our civilisation" over Islam. So said the Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi.**

He was quickly told to keep quiet by Blair and Bush who were anxious to pull Islamic countries into their global "coalition against terrorism".

But they were only embarrassed because Berlusconi had revealed the deep-seated colonial mentality that is at the heart of the new war effort.

George Bush himself has talked of a "crusade". He was evoking memories of a "clash of civilisations" when the Christian Church conveniently set aside the fifth commandment.

## Ignorance

These comments were made in utter ignorance of the real nature of the original crusades.

From the seventh century onwards, at the time that Islam was growing among Arab peoples, the peaks of human culture were at Constantinople, Baghdad and Cairo.

Without the work of Arab scholars at this time, much of Greek and Roman literature would be lost.

Western cities like Paris, and even Rome, were considered by the Arab world to be occupied by barbarians.

In 638 Caliph Omar captured the city of Jerusalem for a growing Arab empire.

When visiting the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the most revered site of Christian worship, the time for Muslim prayer approached.

## Zealous

The Caliph was urged to stay and pray, but he left and used the porch, saying that he did not want to set a precedent which would encourage his zealous followers to claim the church for their own.

This incident illustrates the fact that for centuries after Jerusalem fell into Islamic hands, there was religious tolerance in the city.

Under Arab rule, Christians and Jews retained their places of worship and could use them without hindrance.

In fact they paid less tax than under the previous Christian administration.

A ninth century letter from the Patriarch of Jerusalem says of the Muslim authorities, "they are just and do us no wrong, nor show us any violence."

There is no evidence for large numbers of Arabs entering Syria and Palestine in these centuries, so the people who are called "Arab" today are largely the descendants of a formerly Christian and Roman population who adopted Arabic and Islam - which at the time was considered to be merely an advanced and more rational form of Christianity.

**However, at the end of the eleventh century a movement was unleashed that destabilised the status quo of the Middle East and led to bitter religious conflict - the "Crusades".**

At Clermont on 27, November, 1095, Pope Urban II made an appeal to his French audience to cease fighting one another and turn to the East against non-Christian enemies.

He had unleashed a massive movement which aimed at the capture of Jerusalem.

## Tapped

The Pope had tapped the energy not only of genuine religious fervour, but also that created by the circumstances of life in Northern Europe.

For the peasantry, the idea of a crusade came as an opportunity to escape from servitude and a land suffering from drought, plague and famine.

Following itinerant preachers, thousands of peasant families put all their belongings onto a cart and headed east.

Women joined the movement seeking freedom from the strict control of feudal society over their lives.

For the nobility life had become more restrictive during the eleventh century.

The customary way for a young prince to make his way in the world was through war, against neighbours, family and peasantry, until a suitable realm

was won or he had died in the attempt.

But this route to the ownership of land was being squeezed, from above by the power of the great kings and dukes, and from below by popular mobilisations of villagers in the "Peace of God" and "Truce of God" movements.

## Rallied

As a result, many knights rallied to the idea of the crusade. Here was a chance to earn fame and fortune in the east and at the same time earn the blessings of a Church which had been hostile to their local plundering.

By 1096 thousands of people, from all layers of society, were heading for Jerusalem.

As they travelled they proved to be an incredibly destructive force, both to Christians and non-Christians.

One German contingent only got as far as Worms and Mainz, dispersing after they had massacred the local Jewish population.

In 1099, after immense hardship that had seen most of the poorer crusaders die from starvation or be taken away into captivity as slaves, the First Crusade reached Jerusalem.

When the city was captured, it was with an orgy of destruction.

The entire Muslim and Jewish population of the city was wiped out, blood flowed through the streets to such an extent that crusaders were soaked to their knees in it.

A contingent of Muslims had been offered refuge at the mosque of al-Aqsa but early on in the morning, the day after the capture of the city, soldiers forced their way into the mosque and slaughtered everyone.

Many of those in the building preferred to leap do their deaths from the roof than be put to the sword.

**The violence was so great because the surviving crusaders had no intention of returning to Europe and had only agreed to storm the city on condition that they could take over homes there.**

The massacre at Jerusalem shocked the civilised world,



**Medieval CNN propoganda of the crusade**

and the nearby Muslim populations were never to forget it.

For nearly a century a small Christian kingdom based on Jerusalem existed in the Middle East.

That they were able to survive was largely because they formed a useful buffer state between two great rival Arab empires based on Cairo and Baghdad.

The crusaders themselves began to adapt to local conditions.

## Integrate

They inter-married with the local population, learned the language, began to dress, eat and behave like Arabs.

It might have been possible for the crusader state to integrate with the Arab world but for the constant influx of fanatical Christian warriors.

The military-religious orders of Hospitalars and Templars saw integration as treachery and destabilised the efforts of the kings of Jerusalem to form treaties with local Arab rulers.

As a consequence, the great general Saladin was able to unite the Arab world against the Crusader states.

**In 1187 Jerusalem fell to Saladin's army. By contrast with the crusaders, Saladin was relatively generous with his defeated enemy and few buildings were looted. Saladin posted patrols to keep the streets peaceful.**

Saladin offered the rulers of Jerusalem a chance to redeem the 20,000 Christian captives before they were led away to slavery.

He set a price which he knew the authorities could well afford.

But the Patriarch of Jerusalem paid just ten dinars for his own ransom and left the city, unmolested, with a large train of carts laden with gold, silver and carpets.

The plight of the remaining Christians was so pitiful that Saladin unconditionally freed all the elderly men and women and several thousand others.

The Papacy and the European nobility did not give up on the idea of recapturing Jerusalem, but over the years the idea of a crusade became discredited as crusading armies attacked fellow

Christians.

In 1204 a crusade directed against Christians of the East sacked Constantinople.

It was followed soon after by a crusade against the heretics of southern France and later against the German Emperor.

The spiritual system of indulgences and heavenly reward was debased. The concept of Holy War became a farce.

## Arrogant

It is this background, which is much better remembered in the Middle East than in the west.

Many know that that Bush's talk of a "crusade" is both arrogant and inflammatory.

They know that Israel could not pursue its occupation of Arab lands without huge military and financial backing from the US.

Bush may be already paying a price for these policies as even his puppet regime in Saudi Arabia is publicly saying that it will not allow the US to use the country as a launch pad for an attack on Afghanistan.

As the war escalates, we will inevitably see more visible expressions of Arab anger at the US government.

**NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...NO TO WAR...**

# in my view

## Soundtrack for a movement

IN AFTERMATH of the World Trade Centre bombing, American radio stations banned a range of songs including John Lennon's *Imagine*. In a way it isn't as crazy as it seems. Music and opposition have always gone together. During the First World War one anti-war song included these lyrics:

*Onward, Christian soldiers! Duty's way is plain;  
Slay your Christian neighbors, or by them be slain,  
Pulpiteers are spouting effervescent swill,  
God above is calling you to rob and rape and kill,  
All your acts are sanctified by the Lamb on high;  
If you love the Holy Ghost, go murder, pray and die.*

At the same time "I Didn't Raise My Boy to be a Soldier" and "Don't Take my Darling Boy Away from Me" were best selling songs as America entered the War. In the Second World War, Louis Jordan had hits with anti war lyrics and songs against the draft.

The sixties are often seen as the high point anti war music. Dylan's "Masters of War" and "With God on Our Side" sharply condemned those who hid behind a respectable façade while setting in motion the death machines of war.

Jefferson Airplane's album "Volunteers", Barry McGuire's "The Eve of Destruction," and John Lennon's "All We Are Saying is Give Peace a Chance." Are just some from the endless list.

Even Creedence Clearwater Revival sang against class division in the draft in "Fortunate Son": *It ain't me, it ain't me, I ain't no senator's son, son. It ain't me, it ain't me; I ain't no fortunate one, no,*

Country Joe and the Fish in their song "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin' To-Die-Rag" cajoled: *Come on Mothers throughout the land / Pack off your boys to Vietnam / Come on Fathers, don't hesitate / Send your sons off before its too late / Be the first ones on your block / to have your boy come home in a box.* Just in case it was too much of a joke: twenty seconds of gunshots were placed at the end of the song.

### Screamed

A year before Marvin Gaye changed the image of Motown with his ground-breaking album *What's Goin' On*, Edwin Starr screamed:

*War is something that I despise / For it means destruction of innocent lives / For it means tears in thousands of mothers' eyes / When their sons go out to fight to give their lives / War! What is it good for? Absolutely nothing!*

Written down it's almost vacuous, but with Starr's booming voice and the anger of a movement behind it is still powerful today.

It wasn't just pop music, the great saxophonist Archie Shepp said, with some justification, that jazz "is anti-war; it is opposed to [U.S. military intervention in] Vietnam; it is for Cuba; it is for the liberation of all people."

One of the things about music is that it isn't static. It can be interpreted. The Animals' "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" originally about teenage angst and urban tedium became an anti-war anthem and a favorite of GIs in Vietnam. But it works both ways.

That's why Neil Young who once co-wrote the anti war "Ohio" was allowed to sing *Imagine* on the television event *Tribute for the Heroes*.

And Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A." is another case in point. Ronald Reagan wanted to use the Boss' hit as campaign theme song. But the song was about a Vietnam veteran and his struggles through middle-class society. Its chorus is a cry of anger, far from a shout of American pride.

The growing anti-war movement will march to a great soundtrack from songs of Joe Hill to Rage Against the Machine.

As a song by Kris Kristofferson which starts *They're killing babies in the name of freedom/ We've been down that sorry road before*, puts it, the soundtrack of the anti-war movement should "Try to tell the truth and stand your ground. And don't let the bastards get you down."

by SIMON BASKETTER

## Film

# Powerful portrayal of struggle

by HUGH  
O'CONNOR

Films on the Northern conflict tend to fall into four types. Some, such as *Resurrection Man*, based on the Shankill Butchers, are brutal and harrowing accounts of suffering. Others, such as *In the Name of the Father and Some Mothers Son* focus on tales of heroism and bravery.

A third category is the comedy style, such as the excellent *Divorcing Jack*, or the recent *Most Fertile Man in Ireland* tend to make light of the situation, or at least laugh at it. The fourth category is Hollywood brain candy for Irish America, such as *The Patriot Games* or *The Devils Own*.

*H3* is firmly in the second category, but its sheer visual power also puts it in the first group as well. Sometimes a difficult film to watch, it is worth it in the end.

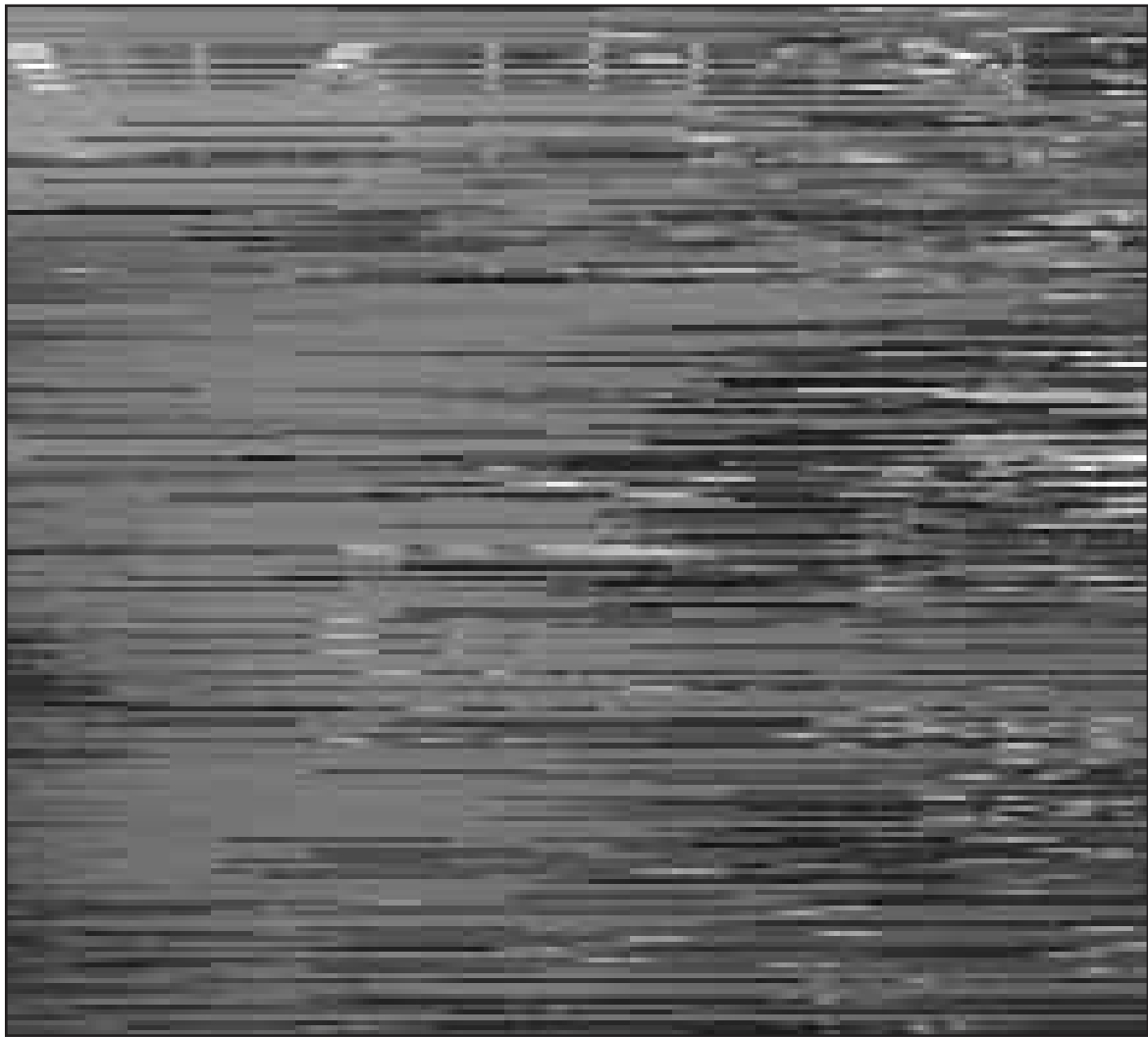
### Protest

Released to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of the hunger strikes, it is billed as a story about the "greatest ever prison protest".

The script was written by two former "blanket-men", Laurence McKeown and Brian Campbell.

This is an immensely powerful, emotional film.

The story is entirely based around life in a prison wing in the infamous



**The brutality of prison life and the naked sectarian bigotry of some officers is plain to see from the movie.**

H-Blocks in January 1981.

The IRA and INLA prisoners are involved in a struggle with the prison authorities and British Government to regain political status.

This was stripped from them as part of Thatcher's policy of "normalising" the North in 1976.

The blanket-men are refusing to wear prison uniforms, work and even wash themselves or their cells.

*H3* deals with the period from the treachery of the British Government in relation to negotiating with the prisoners over an end to the blanket protests to Bobby Sands' death as an MP.

The film is centred on a prisoner, Seamus Scullion, who is the leader of the prisoners in the wing he is detained in.

Picked by Sands to find replacements for him if he died on Hunger Strike, he has to come to terms with the immense power he is given over his comrades' and friends' lives.

*H3* is centrally a humanist film. The blanket-men are not portrayed as "criminals" "terrorists", or even freedom fighters.

Their politics or actions are not explored, only their faith in their beliefs.

They are human—men with fears, frailties, frustration and courage in taking on the state and the authorities.

We see naked men trying to deal with maggots and excreta on the walls of their cells, while being beaten for amusement by bigoted screws.

We see a group of young men trying to wrestle with their consciences about whether to put their families through the pain and anguish of watching them die.

We see pride in their struggle and the election of their leader, Bobby Sands to Westminster.

There are occasional flashes of humour as they try to survive the harshness of the regime.

The brutality of prison life and the naked sectarian bigotry of some officers is plain to see from the movie.

The film is excellently acted and shot. I challenge anyone not to be moved. *H3* is highly recommended.

## pamphlet

# The case against war

THIS SHORT pamphlet *No to Bush's War, The Military face of Globalisation*, by Chris Harman (editor of *Socialist Worker* in Britain) and Kevin Owendon is a must for every anti-war protestor.

It points out that Bush's "war on terrorism" is really a war to ensure the grip Western interests — including the massive oil companies that bank-rolled Bush's political campaign — is tightened on the



region of Central Asia and beyond.

It traces the career of Bin Laden and the Taliban from allies of the US in a dirty civil war to being "enemies of civilisation" today.

It notes that "A top

US commentator wrote that the Taliban's 'most important function was to provide security for roads and, potentially, oil and gas pipelines that would link the states of Central Asia to the international market through Pakistan rather than through Iran.'"

The pamphlet clearly explains how socialists ought to approach Islamic fundamentalism and the Marxist position on Terrorism and the bitterness and defeat that creates it.

"If we can build a movement to stop

Bush and Blair, we can do something else as well. We can show there is a way to confront the pain suffered by so many throughout the world without resorting to the methods which Bin Laden learnt from the CIA."

■ *No to Bush's War, The Military face of Globalisation*, by Chris Harman and Kevin Owendon, £1 from *Socialist Worker* paper sellers, branches or PO Box 1648 Dublin 8.

—KEVIN WINGFIELD





SIPTU conference report... SIPTU conference report... SIPTU conference

## Discontent but leadership wins through

**FOUR HUNDRED and fifty delegates from SIPTU—Ireland's largest union—attended the biennial conference in Tralee in early October.**

The conference showed strong levels of discontent with the way the union is run and the underlying problems of social partnership.

### Tacking Left

But ultimately the union leadership maintained high support through its strategy of verbally tacking left.

The discontent surfaced quickly in a closed session on the union's rules when an attempt was made to deprive members of the right to vote in elections for the National Executive Committee.

A former left winger, Mick Halpenny, argued that the electorate should be confined to a more "informed" constituency of delegates to Regional Conference. At the same time he proposed that the numbers attending these conferences be cut down.

Speakers from the Education, Electrical Engineering and Chemical branches of the union opposed this proposal vigorously. They pointed out it was an attempt to restrict rank and file candidates such as Carolann Duggan.

### Suffered

The leadership won the vote by 200 to 150 but lost the argument for cutting back the delegates to Regional Conferences.

The left also suffered a heavy defeat when conference voted not to allow the anti-partnership lobby an opportunity to have its case presented to all members.

But while many delegates had not broken from the idea of social partnership, there were clear signs of unhappiness with its actual results.

In a workshop on future industrial strategy several speakers called for a more vigorous resistance to redundancies.

"Why isn't the union encouraging workers like those in Peerless Rugs who are occupying their plant", asked Carolann Duggan, a delegate from Waterford, as she pressed for an immediate collection to raise funds for their struggle.

Eamon Thornton from the Chemical branch condemned the union's decision to accept a clause under a revised partnership deal, which ruled out strike action against employers who refused to pay up.

"It is the thin end of the wedge to dilute the fundamental right to strike. That right is not for sale even for union recognition."

John Finney of the Docks and Marine Branch

told how employers tried to obtain an injunction against dockworkers who refused to co-operate with working a bridge during the National Toll workers' strike.

### Demanding

"We told them where they could put their injunc-

tion. But my branch wants to know clearly where the union leaders stand on the use of the Industrial Relations Act".

A resolution from the Laois branch was passed demanding that no partnership deal exceed two years.

And in a dramatic shift, the conference accepted a resolution from the left

wing Education Branch calling for the corporation profits tax to be raised to the EU average.

Moving the motion Kieran Allen said, "We should stop this race to the bottom where we try to cut taxes for the multi-nationals. If we want decent public services the rich are going to have to pay up."

## Wanted: action over the health service

**THE SIPTU conference voted to call regional protests over the state of the health service.**

Several speakers, including the union's Vice President Jack O'Connor, pointed out health spending in Ireland was much lower than other EU countries.

But there was also a

strong feeling that the union could not simply pass a resolution to express outrage—action was needed.

This came in the form of a resolution from the Education Branch which called for regional demonstrations to mobilise SIPTU members and the wider public.

If these demonstrations go ahead, they will provide a major focus for the deep-seated anger.

But the SIPTU leadership will have to be watched.

The previous conference passed a resolution calling on the ICTU to hold a national demonstration to demand the jailing of corrupt politicians but nothing as done.

SIPTU's Vice President Jack O'Connor weakly explained that the ICTU thought this was too strong and agreed to a petition.

## SIPTU fights racism—but a stronger stance needed

SIPTU has launched a major publicity campaign against racism at workplace level with posters and well produced leaflets.

Activists at rank and file level described how they are carrying out this fight against racism in practice.

A delegate from Roscommon described how they have been pressing employers to provide funds for language and education services for immigrants.

Paul Hansard, from the Construction Branch described how

employers are using agency workers to undermine trade union conditions.

### Agencies

"Some of the biggest names in the Construction Industry Federation are using agencies who hire immigrants who are paid £3 an hour below the union rate.

"McNamara's has got a huge number of state contracts but they are fast becoming an agency—only employer. Workers are now queuing for daily work in the vicinity of Liberty Hall."

Paul Bell from the Health Service Branch

spoke of contractors in the health service who were employing Romanian immigrants and forcing them to stay in over-priced accommodation, which the contractors owned.

"There is one contractor who is raking in £31,000 a year from the rent of his house—and he has six of them"

### Tackling

All agreed that the union had a key role to play in tackling this racist abuse.

But the weakness of the union leadership was shown up when Helena McNeill of the

State Services Branch moved a resolution calling for an amnesty for asylum seekers who are already here.

"There is an unjust policy of deportations and many people have been sent back to repressive regimes where they face being tortured or imprisoned. The unions should take a stand on this."

But Regional Secretary Mike Jennings opposed the call for amnesty and won the vote. This was a weak and cowardly position particularly as all refugee organisations have called for this amnesty.

## ATGWU

### Union officials still on suspension

**ATGWU OFFICIALS Mick O'Reilly and Eugene McGlone are still out of work on the suspensions imposed by their union's General Secretary Bill Morris.**

championed on behalf of ATGWU members is now silenced.

The Irish Executive Committee of the ATGWU has condemned the suspensions and called for their immediate reinstatement.

### Ignoring

The District Committees of Belfast, Dublin and the Southern Area have backed this decision but the union's top officials are simply ignoring this.

What is now needed is a Special Delegate Conference of lay delegates from every district committee in Ireland to demand that the voice of the members be listened to.

### Prohibited

Both have been prohibited from attending at any of the union offices or from speaking to the union members or speaking publicly on any matter.

They have lost their positions on the ICTU Executive which means that the anti-partnership position which Mick O'Reilly has

## Waterford Crystal

### Workers reject lay-offs and short time programme

**MANAGEMENT in Waterford Crystal have announced a short-time programme.**

Their plan means the factories will shut down for one week and have a series of three-day weeks from now up to Christmas.

This is the Company's first reaction to the effects of the US recession.

A mass meeting of the workers rejected the short time programme. Instead the workers demanded the early retirement, voluntary redundancy and redeployment packages that were promised in return for the introduction of new technology.

Workers are also demanding the return of

out-sourced products to the Waterford and Dungarvan factories. Waterford Crystal directors have taken millions of pounds in record profits out of these factories—about £100 million over the past few years alone.

### Pressure

But as soon as their profits take a dip they immediately turn up the pressure on the workforce.

More and more employers are going to try to dump the effects of recession on to Irish workers over the coming months.

Their solution will be lay offs and closures. Our solution must be to refuse to have the recession dumped on the workforce.

SIPTU conference report... SIPTU conference report... SIPTU conference

## Teachers

# No to supervision deal

**THE TEACHERS' union ASTI are balloting again. This time the ballot is on a new deal for supervision.**

Unlike other workers, teachers have not been paid for leaving their own lunch breaks to supervise noisy teenagers on school breaks. Instead they have done these duties voluntarily.

This scandalous situation only came to light during the dispute about pay last year.

Now the government has come up with a derisory offer on the issue.

Teachers are to be paid £27 an hour for these duties. But this figure does not include any recognition that the teachers are on overtime duty.

Once the new deal comes in teachers will be compelled to do duties which were previously voluntary.

In other words their working day will have been lengthened.

### Withdrawing

Yet despite this, the payment is not to be included for pension purposes.

In the background of this is the wider issue of teach-

ers' pay.

Nothing has changed on pay and the assurances of the ICTU president Joe O'Toole that teachers can look on the benchmarking process as if they were withdrawing cash from an ATM machine now looks pathetic.

Leaked reports to the *Sunday Business Post* indicate that the government is going to use the oncoming recession to claim that it cannot give substantial pay rises through benchmarking.

The handling of the issue is leading to greater conflict in the ASTI between the full time bureaucracy, grouped around ASTI general secretary Charlie Lennon, and a

majority of the members of the Central Executive Committee, which is a lay body elected by rank and file teachers.

The union's head office has rushed through a ballot on the supervision issue hoping to win a Yes vote by frightening teachers over the implications of withdrawing from supervisory duties.

### Walked Out

At the last Central Executive meeting the full time leadership walked out after delegates insisted that the full issue of pay and condition be discussed.

Despite the fact that the microphones were turned off, the meeting continued without them.

Eventually the full time bureaucracy came back out of fear that they might be by-passed completely.

Seven branches have now tabled resolutions to remove the divisive figure of Charlie Lennon and a number of schools have also signed petitions seeking his resignation.

ASTI activists need to take full control of their union to prevent a small clique pulling them back into the ICTU and into consensus with the political establishment.

## Cork anti racist day

**AN ANTI-RACIST Day of Action has been called by Cairde this month. It will take place on October 20th at 2pm on Shandon St.**

The call comes after Sile Ologundolu, a Nigerian man, was

arrested and charged in relation to what his solicitor has described as a race riot where a number of local people fought with three Nigerians on the street.

For more details on the Anti-Racist Day: contact Willie on 087 9386088.

## Cork mass trespass

**A FOURTH major mass trespass took place on Kinsale Head recently in protest against attempts to close it off to members of the general public.**

An attempt was made to stop the trespassers but it failed because of the large numbers of demonstrators.

The campaign is now due to take a break over the winter but will be back in the New Year with a bang.

As many of those involved noted, "We have not gone away, you know".

# Socialist Worker

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Solidarity price £1

## ● Over 2,000 jobs to go at Aer Lingus

# FIGHT THESE JOB CUTS



*A Swissair employee protesting to save her job*

**THE GOVERNMENT and the management of Aer Lingus are using the terrorist attack on America to change fundamentally the conditions of their workers.**

Over 2,000 jobs are due to be slashed and workers have been told that they will not get pay rises due to them under social partnership.

Because of the scale of the savage cuts, the bosses are looking for compulsory redundancies.

### Explained

But the *Irish Times* explained the real nature of the crisis when it noted that, "At present Tom Mulcahy, the Aer Lingus Chairman would appear to capitalising on the airline's difficulties to force through a re-organisation that would not have been dreamt of before September 11th."

Fianna Fail Minister Mary O'Rourke is deliberately holding back on state help to Aer Lingus. This is the despite the fact that it is

competing with US carriers who are sharing a \$13 billion payout from George W Bush.

### Prevented

Worse, Aer Lingus is also being prevented from using its cash reserves to overcome the crisis.

The company has £650 million in reserves but O'Rourke is letting them use only £30 million.

FF ministers have always had a cosy relationship with Ryanair. Ray McSharry, a former Minister sat on its board. This government wants to see state industry run down so that their fat cat friends can get lucrative routes for the future.

Ryanair is offering cut price fares—but when they get a private monopoly they will push them up.

The truth is that Aer Lingus workers are being sacrificed to a global re-structuring of the airline industry that is going to see a few carriers dominate.

The time for social partnership with the bosses is over. Airline workers need a plan of full-scale resistance to these terrible attacks.

## A crazy system

**ACCORDING to most of the media, the suicide pilots of September 11th, in crashing their planes, also destroyed most of the airline industry, and brought recession to our flourishing economies.**

### Sacked

It is not true. The airline companies, which have sacked 150,000 workers worldwide, are only using the issue for a crisis that had begun anyway.

According to the *Economist* magazine, "In May, air travel fell in the US and

Europe for the first time in a decade".

802 planes were on sale on the global market in June.

Three problems had long troubled the industry: first, there was over-capacity.

There were too many seats and not enough passengers, witness the cheap tickets this summer.

Secondly, the general economic downturn, which was well underway before September, affected business. Lastly fuel prices had risen.

All of these problems reflect the crazy unplanned nature of capitalism.

The market forces are not always clearly visible in this industry since airlines have to be owned by nationals in the country where they are registered.

This is sometimes why they get propped up, at least for a while.

So the Swiss government put together a £190m aid package for Swissair and the Belgian government £78m for Sabena.

Ryanair denounced these measures as a "flagrant breach of EU regulations".

Ryanair, of course, wants the market to operate in the way it always operates.

### Denounced

The big companies get bigger and costs are cut at every corner to reduce prices, even if this threatens safety.

Proper planning would ensure that more and not less jobs would be needed to cater for the millions who want to fly around the globe.