

Socialist Worker

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WEF SUMMIT IN IRELAND

—PAGES 6&7

inside:

HEALTH CRISIS: MARTIN COULD SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH—PAGE 4

The real face of US 'liberation'



THE U.S. war of conquest against Iraq has entered a new phase—a Vietnam-style conflict where an occupying army goes on 'search and destroy' missions and meets guerrilla resistance.

It began on 9 June when the US launched its largest military offensive since the fall

of Baghdad.

The military spokespeople in Qatar and Washington claimed that the offensive was directed at the 'Sunni triangle' on the north and west of Baghdad, which was supposed to be a stronghold of Saddam Hussein loyalists.

However, it soon became clear that resentment against the US was far deeper than that.

On 18 June, hundreds of former soldiers of the

Iraqi army protested outside the Republican Palace, once Saddam's home and now the base for the US authorities.

Frightened

The soldiers used to receive \$37 dollars a month but have received nothing since March because they have been officially 'de-mobbed' by the US.

Within minutes, two of their number were shot dead by frustrated and

frightened US troops.

The initial focus of the new US offensive was the town of Falluja which 1,300 entered to quash resistance.

The US infantry shot dead 18 unarmed protesters there last month after people marched to a school they were occupying.

Since then, stonings and shooting of US troops have increased.

Planes and artillery opened fire on what the US claimed was a 'terrorist training camp' near the

town of Rawa in central Iraq. They killed at least 70 people.

Hassan Ibrahim walked past the graves and said, 'This town was safe before the Americans came here and made a lot of blood. Is this the democracy they were talking about?'

Marwan Alrawi, also from Rawa, said, 'If I get a chance, I would shoot an American, because they are now my enemies.'

Before this, one in every 10,000 Rawa citizens would fight the

Americans. Now, more than half would.'

4,000 US troops also launched an offensive against the town of Thulayia.

Residents

They seized 397 male residents and this prompted an ambush on a US column.

An ensuing gun battle resulted in seven Iraqi deaths—five of them civilians when US troops riddled their car with gunfire. Later a US officer came

and apologised to the family of the five dead civilians.

The *Independent's* Patrick Cockburn reports, 'The official American reports of the search operation chillingly resemble those issued at the height of the Vietnam War, with all the dead described as enemy combatants.'

NOW TURN TO PAGE THREE

HYPOCRISY ON SPECIAL OLYMPICS...

Why are you cutting care staff?

THE government is basking in publicity from the Special Olympics.

But the 200 people who took part in a recent Irish Wheelchair Association march know how their policies are wrecking lives.

The government promised that last year's 417 Community Employment Scheme workers would not be cut and that the jobs would be 'mainstreamed' and funded by local Health Boards.

They lied. CE places will be slashed to 194 by the end of December. Drivers, support workers and

personal assistants, who are crucial to the quality of life of people with disabilities, are being abandoned by the government.

According to Shay Ryan, care worker at the Mount Street Day Centre 'This latest round of cut-backs will have a devastating impact on our centre.'

'It's sickening that, at the same time as they are destroying an invaluable service, the government is using the Special Olympics as an international photo opportunity.'

Suffered

Tony from Ringsend said 'My wife Mai had a serious stroke 2 years ago and has suffered a lot since.'

'The staff in Mount Street have been invaluable.'

'We're here to add our strength to the march as we've had enough of this government's lies.'

According to Martha Smith from the Mullagh Centre said 'It's the same story all over the place.'

'The government promised no jobs would be lost and they've reneged on that promise. Services just won't be able to function with these cutbacks.'

The IWA is calling for an immediate end to cut-backs and a lifting of the three year cap on Community Employment until properly structured mainstreaming is put in place.

care staff?



STARS AND STRIPES LOWERED

KINSALE is host town for the Palestinian team for the Special Olympics.

Acton's, one of the premier hotels in the town, normally flies the US Stars and Stripes.

But for the duration of the games, the Palestinian national flag has replaced it.

Two months prison for blowing a horn

AN anti-blood sports campaigner has been sentenced to two months imprisonment in Waterford for sounding an air horn in public.

He has no previous convictions.

John Tierney was charged with engaging in threatening, abusive and insulting behaviour when he sounded the air horn at Waterford Foxhound's St. Stephen's day hunt.

About 40 people had congregated for a peaceful protest to show their oppo-

sition to bloodsports.

John Tierney was the chief steward of the protest and was blowing an air horn.

On the day, the Gardaí indicated they had no prob-

lems with the protest. However, two months later, John Tierney received notice of prosecution under the Criminal Justice Act.

He appeared before District Justice William

Hartnett and was sent to prison for two months.

Appealed

He served one night in jail but since then appealed the sentence.

He has been released on bail and will appear in court again in December.

Commenting on his appeal, Judge Hartnett said 'I hope that you are given an extra month'.

Ahern insults building workers

THE Metro link to Dublin airport was being held up by building workers because they were not prepared to work in bad weather.

This astounding claim was made by An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern.

Brennan and Ahern have taken to citing the example of the Madrid metro to show how construction projects could be made more affordable.

Ahern claimed that the building work took place on a 24 hour basis but the project in Dublin was much more expensive because of 'contingencies for wet days, dry days, frosty days, foggy days'.

It was a stupid, insult-

ing remark that revealed more Ahern's ties to the building bosses.

Price

The reality is that Irish building workers do work in bad weather—and pay

a heavy price.

Research carried out last year showed there was an alarming prevalence of rheumatism, arthritis and lumbago probably as a result of working in wet weather.

In other countries

employers are forced to take more care to protect workers from the weather.

It may also not have occurred to Ahern to think that the temperature in Madrid is a good deal dryer than Dublin.

Meanwhile, Ahern and his fellow TDs have started to enjoy large pay rises granted to them under the Buckley Review. Ahern's salary will rise by €2.078 this year.

Productivity

Ordinary public sector workers have to show high levels of productivity just to gain increases.

But no productivity rises are expected are expected from TDs—they can just keep on insulting building workers if they like.

CENSUS EXPOSES RACIST HYSTERIA

NEARLY six percent of the Irish population are now officially described as 'non-national'.

If you were reading the tabloid press you might think that most were asylum seekers from Africa or Eastern Europe.

In fact, the largest foreign-born population in Ireland are British and American. 103,000 people claim British nationality compared to only 9,225 from Nigeria.

Irish families are the smallest in Europe and the population is getting older. Immigrants are now playing a valuable role in keeping the economy going.

Privatised IRELAND

THE PD/FF government is determined to privatise every thing in sight.

Here we illustrate some effects of this policy

FEES TO FISH

THE Department of the Marine has introduced 500 percent-600 percent increases in harbour fees at fishing ports around the country.

This increase is part of their plans to privatise all ports and make them profitable to encourage multi-nationals to take them over.

A Dunmore East fisherman told *Socialist Worker*, 'This is going to drive the small fisherman out of business and leave the way open for big business which have no connection with the local communities.'

We will have to fight this, otherwise we will go out of existence.'

ESB SHOPS CLOSED

THE ESB is closing 27 of its 81 shops throughout the country.

The shops were often used by poorer people to pay electricity bills off on a longer-term basis.

However, the ESB is to be privatised by 2005 and the government already wants to drop 'unprofitable assets'. The company now has to declare a dividend, which the government takes—but after 2005, private capitalists will get it.

ELDERLY: SELL YOUR HOUSE FOR CARE

TWENTY thousand elderly people in long-term residential care are about to get a shock from this government.

From now on, they will have to either take out private insurance or sell off their property to pay for their care.

The government wants to punish more of the elderly into private residential care—so it has to be able to make a profit from them.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

ASYLUM seekers are being forced into hostel accommodation and banned from receiving rent allowances.

This disgusting policy will only benefit a number of wealthy businesses that specialise in running these hostels.

They include people like:

■ Noel C Duggan the millionaire business man who stands to gain 2.7 million euro in revenue from his centre in Mill Street.

■ Pheilm and Elizabeth McCloskey who run a 770 capacity centre in Mosney

■ The Flannery family in Galway who stand to gain 2.3 million a year in 'revenue'

Surveys of asylum seekers in hostels show they suffer from higher levels of stress and anxiety.

Refugee groups have also complained that these centres are run like cost efficient businesses with little 'home atmosphere'.

MOBILE PHONE BILLS ARE HIGHER

THE Communications Regulator has confirmed that Irish mobile phone users are being ripped off.

The average users pays 45 euros a month—compared to the EU average of 30 euros.

The bill, which is staggering one third higher, shows the nonsense that privatisation reduces prices.

GENDER PAY GAP GROWS

The average hourly earnings of women has dropped to 28 percent below men's.

The gap is widening and it has to do with discrimination.

In the retail sector, for example, 35 percent of men earn less than 18,000 euros a year—compared to 59 percent of women.

The reforms that Martin ignores

Maev-Ann Wren's brilliant new book *Unhealthy State* is essential reading for anyone who wants to cut through the PR about Michael Martin's reform package.

It documents the devastation that cuts have caused. In 1995, for example, the Department of Health claimed there were too many nurses and recommended a gradual reduction in student places.

Martin's reforms do nothing to address the sheer economic vandalism that was meted out to the health service by Charlie Haughey and his successors.

Not a penny is provided for extra doctors or nurses. Instead, there is a pretence that 'reform of administration' is all that is needed.

Real reform would mean banning private medicine so that everybody is treated based on their suffering rather than the size of their wallet.

Private health care does not deal with accident and emergencies. It does not train new doctors and nurses. It does not treat chronic conditions or acute illness.

It simply drains resources off the public service—so that the poor have to wait far longer for treatment.

The result is a horrible legacy of suffering unmatched in Europe. In Ireland at least 21 people in every 10,000 wait for over a year to be treated. Yet in

Not a penny is provided for extra doctors or nurses

Britain, even after the attacks on the NHS, it is only 3 people.

Successive governments—with the collusion of their social partners—developed this sick system whereby the poor queue while those who pay the most for private medicine get treated first, by trained consultants rather than junior doctors.

The cuts made matters worse as hospital managers gave over more bed space to private patients to earn money. Today, for example, a third of all day places are reserved for private patients.

Only the most basic of socialist measures can change this—a free health service run by doctors who work as employees not business people; huge investment in preventative care; a legal ban on private medicine; an end to intellectual property and use of generic drugs.

Michael Martin's 'reforms' are just slick measures to push through more of the same.

No answers from Unionism

WHATEVER Jeffrey Donaldson decides to do, it is clear that unionism continues to fragment. There are already five unionist parties in the Assembly:

the Official Unionists, DUP, Bob McCartney's lot, the split from McCartney and the PUP.

The reality on the ground in working class areas is that NONE of these parties represents the interests of Protestant workers.

The PUP showed some promise. But they have been pulled back into loyalist feuding and with it the bigotry they displayed in the Holy Cross school blockade.

While unionism tears itself apart, Protestant workers are seeing their jobs disappear, and face increasing attacks on pay and working conditions. Unionist parties offer them very little because they only try to put one over on the nationalist parties.

Over the last couple of weeks, while the headlines were about in-fighting in the Unionist Party, two major developments were underway.

Most of Harland and Wolff's site has been sold off to developers, which means it will not be possible for ships ever to be built there again, even if orders became available.

In addition, over one thousand Shorts' workers were threatened with redundancy for not accepting a four wage freeze. The different unionist parties had nothing to say to the workers involved.

Socialists, however, are hopefully getting together to give real answers.



■ Jeffrey Donaldson

■ Anti-capitalists protest at the EU Summit in Thessalonica



IRAQ: THE REALITY OF U.S. OCCUPATION:

A new resistance emerges

OCCUPATION authorities claim the assaults against US troops are directed at 'Saddam loyalists'.

This excuse was first manufactured by Donald Rumsfeld when he addressed US troops at Baghdad airport after the initial victory and told them they would still have to fight the remnants of Saddam's troops and terrorists.

However, Robert Fisk argues that there is a new resistance made up of a 'cross fertilisation'.

There are Shi'ites who are disillusioned, Sunni Muslims who feel threatened, former Saddam supporters, as well as Kurds who are disaffected.

He says 'it is the beginning of a real resistance movement and that's the great danger to the Americans now'.

The resistance has killed over 50 US soldiers and wounded scores more since Bush's victory speech on 1 May. Two US Apache helicopters were shot down last week.

The main oil pipeline between Iraq's northern oil-fields and Turkey was sabotaged at Kirkuk. US sources claimed the pipeline ignited on its own but

local residents in the village of Makhoul told reporters that 'some Iraqis came and blew it up to stop Americans taking oil to Turkey'.

Robert Fisk has reported that US forces

at Baghdad airport are coming under small arms fire every night.

It is not only in the areas populated by the minority Sunni Muslim population that hostility to the occupation is

growing.

Among other protests, over 10,000 people took to the streets of British controlled Basra, southern Iraq, to demand self-rule. It is Iraq's second

city and overwhelmingly Shia Muslim.

British military vehicles were stoned during the protest as people raised slogans such as, 'Answer our demands or you will regret it.'

'KILL AS MANY AS YOU CAN'

THE right wing English tabloid, the Evening Standard, has published a shocking interview with US troops serving in Iraq.

Sergeant John Meadows revealed the mind-set that has led to the killing of hundreds of innocents civilians, 'You can't distinguish between who's trying to kill you and who's not. Like the only

way to get through shit like that was to concentrate on getting through it by killing as many people as you can, people you know are trying to kill you.

'Killing them first and getting home.'

Corporal Michael Richardson described what happened in Fallujah where US forces murdered 18 people in a Bloody Sunday style operation.

Dilemma

'There was no dilemma when it came to shooting people who were not in uniform. I just pulled the trigger. It was up close and personal the whole time, there wasn't a big distance.

'If they were there, they were the enemy, whether in uniform or not.

'Some were, some weren't.'

Press censorship

THE US overlord for Iraq, Paul Bremer, has ordered his legal department to draw up rules for press censorship.

Newspapers that publish 'wild stories' or material deemed provocative will be threatened or shut down.

So what will happen to stories such as the statement by the German US arms inspector, Peter Franck, that Saddam 'couldn't have destroyed weapons of mass destruction without trace' and that Colin Powell's evidence to the UN was just 'one big bluff'?

BOMBARDIER:

It's right to resist

ON JUNE 6 Shorts workers stunned both management and their own 'big three' unions, by rejecting a deal that Bombardier had proposed in the light of £290m losses last year.

Bombardier Aerospace acquired Shorts in 1989 and is the largest manufacturing employer in the North.

It is based in Quebec although 90 percent of its revenues are generated outside Canada.

Bombardier management immediately retaliated by announcing over a thousand jobs would be lost, no new apprentices would be taken on and no further capital investment would take place.

Confirmed

This confirmed Shorts workers' belief that the multinational had been happy to take up to £1bn of tax payers money but had no long-term interest in the Belfast factory.

The Belfast newspapers, Unionist politicians and trade union officials are putting enormous pressure on the workforce to reconsider their opposition to a five year deal, one that includes a pay freeze for the first year.

But the workforce have so far refused to be blackmailed by the latest threat of major job losses.

They are absolutely right. Globally, Bombardier made \$58.6 million in profit last year.

They have used the blackmail trick on other workers. In Canada, workers accepted a wage-freeze and still ended up losing jobs.

Erosion

There is a long background to this latest crisis. When Bombardier took over the company, the workforce peaked at 9,000 in 1990. Ever since then there has been a steady erosion of jobs.

In 1993 for example, 750 workers lost their jobs, and in 1994 460 admin jobs went, even though the company made £36m profit and the

then President, Ray McNulty saw his salary double to £394,000.

That year the shop stewards and management

agreed a new scale of salaries based on job evaluation, with pay increments to be given for new duties.

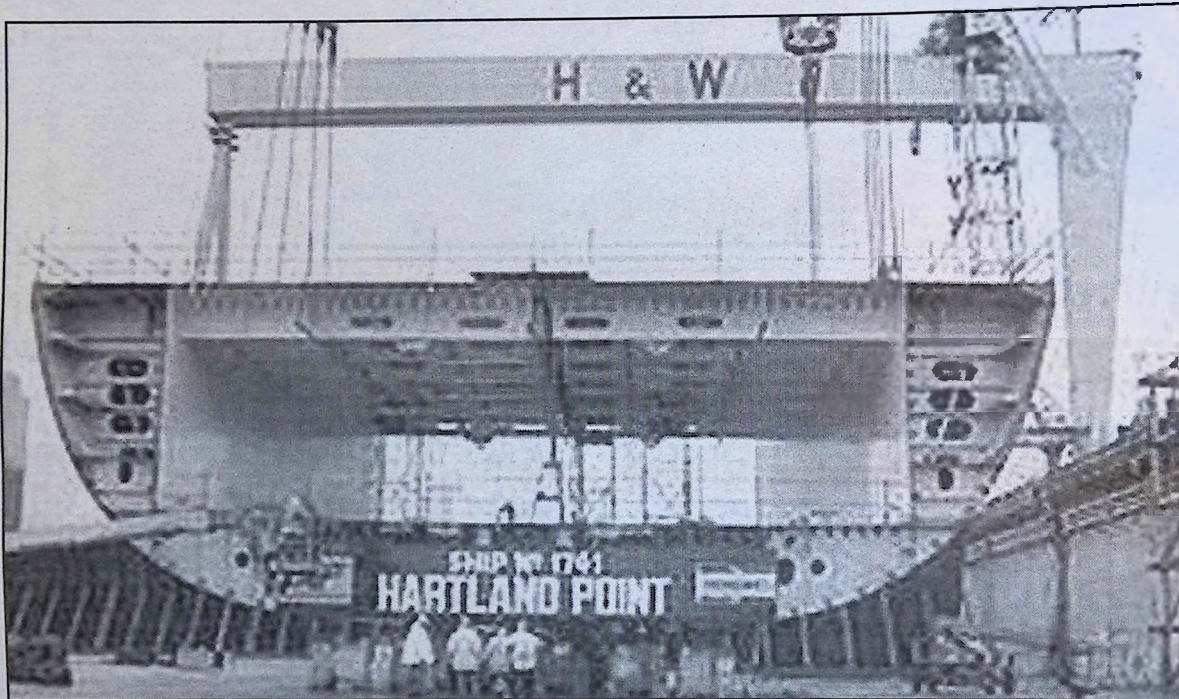
Even though productivity

has risen swiftly, ten years later only the management grades have received additional payments.

The workers had further

reason to mistrust the company in 2001—when they had to go to the courts to stop Bombardier from making illegal deductions from pay.

They're ripping the heart out of East Belfast...



■ Harland and Wolff owners Fred Olsen Energy proved they are more interested in speculation than shipbuilding.

THE DIFFICULTIES faced by the Shorts workers highlights the fact that workers from East Belfast are seeing their living standards decline, as skilled, better-paid jobs with strong trade union traditions are undermined.

As one East Belfast trade unionist explained to *Socialist Worker*.

"The shift in engineering jobs when they ran down Harland and Wolff was a slow, drip drip effect.

The impact of it was cushioned because there were still jobs at Shorts. Now there is nowhere else to go.

"The situation today is catastrophic because the workers at Shorts are going to be

attacked head on, and they have no support.

Bombardier are going to walk away with the subsidies, and what will the ICTU do about it? Nothing."

Peter Shirlow, lecturer at the University of Ulster, commented

"The East Belfast community is in long-term decline. Estates are being broken up, people are dispersing. Unlike Catholic working class areas Protestant workers have moved out.

"The attack on Shorts is less an attack on an Orange power base than it would have been thirty years ago say. Ballymacarett was once like the north of England, the heart of a real industrial power, now that's gone."

Similarly, Peter Moore, a

resident, said "East Belfast used to have a vibrant working class atmosphere thanks to Harland and Wolff and Shorts but that vibrancy is not in the area today. It is being replaced by feelings of uncertainty, fear and despair."

There is a huge sense of betrayal in East Belfast. The recent sale of 180 acres of land for £47m by Harland and Wolff owners Fred Olsen Energy, proved that the company was more interested in speculation than shipbuilding.

Again large public subsidies were given to attract Olsen, with backing from Unionist politicians like Peter Robinson.

"Robinson would have been the political voice of

"East Belfast" said Jim Barbour, the FBU official for N.I., "but he is sitting on the fence over Shorts because the Democratic Unionist Party have tied themselves to the businesses they are attracting to the province.

"There is a decline in the numbers voting in these areas because the average Protestant worker does not feel anyone is speaking up for them."

Peter Shirlow added, "The PUP have tried to reintroduce socialist ideas to the area. But whenever loyalists raise radical idea, fingers are pointed and pressure is put on. They can't sell them beyond a certain point. There is a suspicion that socialism is Republicanism."

The new radicals

AT THE same time as the traditionally well-organised working class jobs have declined, there have been a growth in service jobs, especially in part-time jobs for women—who since 2,000 have been the majority of employees in Northern Ireland.

"The unions are retaining members with very little effort," said the East Belfast trade unionist, "and this was shown at the May Day march, one of the biggest for years.

"But at the moment there is no connection with the 'new left'—the people who marched against the war on February 15th."

Peter Shirlow was optimistic about the emergence of new radicals, interested in environmental and sexual politics—"they are more liberal, more diverse than the old left."

Connection

Jim Barbour agreed but pointed out that "although the anti-war movement was diverse, it was also compartmentalised. People worked in their own spheres."

Bombardier themselves showed the fact that there is a connection to be made between the anti-globalisation campaigners and the East Belfast working class.

Only a week after announcing the massive redundancies, they put millions of dollars into providing the jets for the World Economic Forum.

"Flying by business jet presents many advantages to delegates including enhanced safety and security, access to remote locations, as well as precious time-savings—all of which are becoming increasingly important to the world's top business leaders," stated Dan Malden, managing director, Bombardier Flexjet Europe.

In their fight for jobs, the workers should look to the anti-capitalist campaigners in the North for support.

In their fight against the global superpowers, the left should be looking to the workers who are refusing to be bullied or blackmailed by global big business.

Union to back sacked airport workers

SACKED Belfast International airport workers are pleased at promises that their union, the ATGWU, is to resume support for their struggle to get their jobs back while maintaining union organisation and

recognition.

Before his election, new Deputy General Sec., Tony Woodley, had promised his support for the sacked workers.

Welcomes

When he met with them in Belfast in the middle of June, he told them he would 'look

into' their case.

Gordon McNeill, the workers' shop steward, welcomes this but says it is 'all a bit vague, nothing concrete', so they are not going to rely on Woodley.

Instead, they are going to lobby the union conference in Brighton on July 2nd where their banner will read "Bill Sir Lie-a-lot Morris".

The workers have been heartened by the T&G's recent call to the ICTU to take on the airport management and defend workers' rights in the airport.

Meeting

All 22 workers are to meet full-time officials at Transport House in Belfast on 25th June.

At this meeting, they hope to hear some concrete plans from the T&G on how the ICTU and affiliated unions might take on the airport and support the workers' fight to get their jobs back.

As Gordon McNeill told *Socialist Worker*, "we have no option but to fight and we won't lie down."

Iranian protests are not pro-Bush

PROTESTS in Iran have been growing in the past few weeks. They started in the main university area in the capital Tehran.

Then they spread to other cities—Isfahan, Shiraz, Ahvaz and Mashhad (a major religious centre).

In Tehran they spring out every night after 10 pm in different parts of the town and continue until 4 am. People often gather in squares, honk their horns and signal their hatred of the government.

As Mozghan Bahar put it: 'The Islamic Republic may seem in control of Tehran during the day light hours and even that is debatable but the people have taken the nights'.

Pretended

George Bush cynically pretended to back the protests saying: "This is the beginning of people expressing themselves toward a free Iran, which I think is positive."

But the trigger for the demonstrations was news that the government was considering privatising some universities and introducing tuition fees.

The hardliners in the Islamic regime have encouraged vigilantes known as the Bassiji to attack the protesters.

They government paid thugs operate in civilian clothes and attack protesters with knives, clubs and guns.

But the scale of the protests forced the authorities to change tack in an effort to defuse them. The reformist wing of the state, which controls the parliament and the regular police force, ordered the police to turn on the vigilantes.

Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a senior figure in the regime, told a congregation at Friday prayers in Tehran University that the students

were not "agents of the US" but had raised legitimate concerns.

For George Bush, however, they are an excuse to ratchet up his drive to extend US power across the Middle East. Rich Iranian exile groups have tried to take credit for the protests, claiming their satellite television broadcasts inspired them.

Supporters

These groups, based in the US and Britain, comprise supporters of the brutal Shah of Iran and his dynasty, which was overthrown in the Iranian revolution of 1979.

Their interests could not be further removed from those of students and young people taking to the streets of Iran. And theirs is not the

only message beaming into the satellite dishes that have sprung up across Iranian cities over the last decade.

The young people on the streets of Iran have seen people their age brutalised by the Israeli army in Gaza and the West Bank, and take to the streets in anti-capitalist and anti-war protests across the world.

And they have seen the pictures from Al Jazeera television (not shown by Western channels) of the suffering the US has brought to Iraq and Afghanistan, which both border Iran.

The students have cracked open the divisions within the Iranian state and have pointed towards the kind of mass movement that can win far reaching change for working people and the poor.



Iranian students at a protest meeting in Tehran

A powerful anger driven by poverty and inequality

by ELAHEH ROSTAMI POVEY

IT IS simply not true that protesters are pro-US. If you read the independent Iranian media or speak to people there, it is clear the students are not coming onto the streets to praise George Bush.

There is an ignorance in the Western media that borders on racism.

The protests in Tehran are centred on students living in dormitories. These are generally poorer students from small cities and towns.

Middle class students from Tehran tend to live with their families or in apartments in the northern suburbs of the city.

The calls for political change raised by the stu-

dents are for rapidly accelerating the process of reform that began six years ago when Ayatollah Khatami won the election for president.

The protesters include religious students who want to see greater choice for people over whether and how they practice religion.

But the protests are also driven by anger over economic conditions and that can make them explosive.

The university population has mushroomed as it has in countries such as Egypt and India.

An astonishing 64 percent of students are women.

Yet, graduate unemployment has also grown. So has inflation. Tehran is a very expensive city to live in. People say we get paid in rials, the Iranian currency, but face expenses in dollars, which are worth

much more.

As in every developing country, the population is young.

Despite the conservative social ideology the regime pushed in the 1980s under Ayatollah Khomeini, people's lives have been transformed.

Division

Women's participation in the labour market is now 2 percent higher than it was during the height of westernisation under the Shah in the 1970s.

The recent changes to family law—which give more liberal divorce rules than under the Shah—indicate the regime is being forced to recognise reality.

There is a sharp class division. It's very obvious for ordinary students who come across children of rich families or state

bureaucrats for the first time.

There is huge pressure on living standards for the poor, the working class, and even sections of the middle class.

They want a greater say over society and they want economic improvement. That does not make them pro-US.

The student movement is spontaneous, with people grappling for ideas. Some use the language of religion.

In countries such as Egypt the Islamist parties have had great influence on this layer of society. But Iran is a self declared Islamic state. So there are very sharp ideological contradictions when people take to the streets.

Elahieh is a socialist and writer on Iranian society who lives in Britain

FRANCE:

The wrong strategy in French pension strikes

FRENCH TRADE union leaders may have allowed their government to survive the mass protests over its attack on workers' pension rights.

Many activists and militants feel the movement is, for now, beginning to subside. The strikes and protests forced the government to make some concessions.

But if the government succeeds in pushing through its pension plans the responsibility will lie with the union leaders.

"General strike! General strike!" was the chant of around 100,000 people at a mass strike rally in the southern city of Marseilles recently. Bernard Thibault, leader of the powerful CGT union federation, could hardly speak to the rally over the crowd. But Thibault refused to back such a call.

The union leaders have been systematically working to stop the strikes spreading. These union leaders are terrified of provoking the kind of full scale confrontation which could have beaten the government.

Thibault now talks of continuing the fight through "other forms of action", such as petitions and appeals to MPs in the national assembly. Nick Barrett of Socialist Worker's French sister organisation Socialism From Below explained:

"The problem is a lack of a big enough network of organised activists pushing in every mass meeting for keeping up and spreading the strikes when faced with the union leaders behaving like this.

"The strikes have been driven and organised from below by the rank and file, far more so than in the last big eruption of strikes in France in 1995.

"And there is no doubt that there is a wide feeling that a general strike is needed among most strikers.

"But to turn that feeling into real action when the union leaders don't want it you need a big enough force which can organise and agitate in a coherent fashion throughout the movement."

Even if the government gets its way now, the fight is far from over. The detailed implementation of the pensions changes could see lots of sectional struggles. France's President Jacques Chirac in a speech in Toulouse made clear that in the autumn the government was preparing for a wider assault on welfare.

IRAN:

Galloway smear exposed

IN A bid to discredit the anti-war movement, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Christian Science Monitor* in the US ran stories in April that the Labour MP George Galloway received \$10 million from the Iraqi regime to promote their interests.

Galloway was one of the leading anti-war figures in the Stop the War Coalition and the allegation were widely reported in the Irish media

Now, however, the *Christian Science Monitor* has admitted its story was based on forged documents.

A leading US expert

on Iraqi government documents has confirmed that the Arabic text of the paper was inconsistent with known examples of Baghdad bureaucratic writing.

Analysis

In addition, a chemical analysis of the ink showed that the docu-

ments were written in the past few months and not in 1992 and 1993 as they were dated.

George Galloway was suspended from the Labour Party over the allegations.

He has refused to accept the apology of from the newspaper and is taking a libel case.



George Galloway

HIDDEN HISTORY OF EAST GERMANY 1953

The revolt that shook Stalinism

by IAN BIRCHALL

FIFTY YEARS ago, on 15 June 1953, sixty workers on a hospital building site went on strike. They were faced with a new pay deal which meant wage cuts of up to one third unless they increased output by 10 percent.

The employers insisted that "productivity" must come first. A familiar enough scene, repeated time and again around the world. But this was in East Germany.

Germany had been carved up by the victorious powers in 1945. Russia, under Stalin, had occupied East Germany and Eastern Europe. The West had taken West Germany and West Berlin. Officially East Germany was a "People's Democracy", marching towards socialism with the enthusiastic support of the working class.

To its enemies in the West, East Germany was a "totalitarian" state, where workers were so enslaved that it was impossible for them to rebel (just as we were told about Iraq).

They were supposed to await liberation from the West, which was frantically rearming. Those 60 builders proved them all wrong.

There was deep discontent among East German workers. Measured against prices, wages were lower than they had been before the war, under Hitler. Things were beginning to move. Stalin had died in March, and his successors were deeply split. They knew things must change, but they were terrified the whole edifice Stalin had built might collapse around them. Workers sensed their rulers' weakness.

The following day the strikers demonstrated, visiting other sites. Workers flocked to join them. One observer in an upstairs flat described how they "came running from all sides in their working clothes, attracted like iron filings to a magnet".

The movement became political. There were demands for free elections. The most popular slogan summed up the workers' sense of their own power. "We are workers and not slaves!" Within two days, by 17 June, there was a general strike. On the government's own figures, 300,000 workers were involved.

Revolutionary

Most major towns were affected. In Merseburg 10,000 workers marched from the Leuna factory singing revolutionary songs and invaded the police station. In Halle 8,000 railway workers occupied council offices and the party headquarters.

The strike developed far beyond the wages question. Workers attacked jails and released the prisoners. Police stations were attacked, judges beaten up and police lynched.

In some areas cracks appeared in the state machine. Police refused to fire on strikers. Some army units abandoned their weapons. In places it was only Russian troops who protected the secret police (Stasi) from workers' anger.

But 25,000 Russian troops were too much for workers. The rising was crushed. Casualty figures are hard to establish—at least 19 workers, and perhaps ten times that number—were killed. Some 1,300 were executed. Yet strikes continued into the autumn, and party officials who tried to address factory meetings were shouted down.

The government had to make concessions. Wage cuts were cancelled and some wages increased. Later these were reversed. The spectre of 1953 continued to haunt East Germany's rulers.

Archives show how the regime was obsessed with studying public opinion. As the old Russian saying puts it, they spent half their time finding out what people were thinking, and the other half trying to stop them thinking it.

It was clear there were too many critics for pure repression to be possible. In 1961 they had to build the Berlin Wall to stop workers running away from the supposed socialist paradise.

Blamed

The East German authorities blamed the rising on "fascist provocateurs"—very odd fascists, who defended workers' rights and built a general strike! Most Communists around the world believed them.

Equally repulsive was the hypocrisy of the West. Western politicians talked endlessly of "rolling back" Communism and bringing freedom to Eastern Europe. But they were terrified by the thought that such liberation might come through workers taking things into their own hands.

Strikers who sought arms in West Berlin were firmly refused—they had to fight tanks with bottles and crow-bars. A radio station, West Berlin, normally devoted to directing Cold War propaganda to the East, urged them to be "reasonable".

The mole of revolt went back underground. When it re-emerged three years later in Hungary it was in the form of a full-scale rising with workers' demands. Russian tanks responded with a massacre.

Communist Parties around the world were split. The long death agony of Stalinism had begun.

The sharpest comment on June 1953 came from playwright Bertolt Brecht, who lived in East Berlin (and publicly supported the regime). Noting the efforts of the government to regain popular support, he asked: "Would it not be easier... for the government to dissolve the people and elect another?"

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A Day to Remember



The World Economic Forum is coming to Dublin on 20th and 21st of October ('020' is short for October 20 to help you remember the date).

Thousands of anti capitalists are scheduled to hold demonstrations.

Here Socialist Worker explains what lies behind the closed doors of the World Economic Forum and why we are going to give this gathering of the rich and powerful a welcome they'll never forget.

What is the WEF?

According to Time Europe the World Economic Forum (WEF) is 'probably the closest thing globalisation has to a world headquarters'.

Set up in 1971 by Swiss millionaire Klaus Schwab, the WEF is an exclusive alliance run by and for the richest companies from the richest nations.

Membership is limited to just over a thousand of the world's top corporations who must each have an annual revenue of more than \$1 billion to join.

The WEF's official motto 'Committed to improving the State of the World', echoes an old General Motors' statement

'What's good for General Motors is good for the country'. The sole purpose of the WEF is to shape the global economy to suit its members' needs, that is, profit, exploitation and war.

The annual meeting of the WEF is held each January in the Swiss ski resort of Davos.

The event gives the world's leading corporations the opportunity to curry favours from world leaders and craft deals with other multinationals away from the critical eye of the public, the media and other parliamentarians.

What goes on behind the closed doors of the WEF has a profound impact on global policy.

It lobbies for greater economic liberalisation and deregulation, aiming to remove barriers to free trade such as workers' rights and environmental legislation.

Despite its name, the WEF is anything but global. Over 75 percent of the 2002 attendees came from Europe or North America.

Members of the WEF boards are overwhelmingly male, white and from the developed industrialised North.

In 1999, the total values of WEF member companies stock exceeded \$3 trillion - 25 times the amount required to provide the basic human needs for every human being in the developing world.

Amongst its achievements, the WEF is proud to take credit for the launching of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade which set up the World Trade Organisation.

Since the WTO went into operation in 1995, WEF income grew by 148 percent to \$104 million in 2001.

Core members include

such socially responsible corporations as Coca-Cola, Microsoft, IBM, Nestlé, Pfizer (and until recently Enron).

Members pay a \$12,500 annual membership fee, with further fees being paid by 'partners'.

A partner programme entitles a company to direct input into the agendas of the regional summits and the annual Davos meeting.

Partners pay \$250,000 each year in addition to the membership fee and \$6,250 annual meeting fees. Annual Meeting partners (co-sponsors of Davos) pay another \$78,000 to the WEF Foundation.

Why is it coming to Dublin?

In addition to the Davos Summit, a series of regionally focused WEF meetings occur annually, providing a more intimate opportunity for Chief Executive Officers to network with government leaders and challenge local regulations.

The European Competitiveness Summit being held in Dublin this year is one such event—bringing corporate chiefs together with European heads of State to discuss the full implementation of the neoliberal agenda throughout an enlarged Europe.

Where better to host such an event than Dublin?

Home to some of Europe's keenest advocates of privatisation and deregulation.



Anti capitalists demonstrate at previous WEF in New York

The Summit will be based around the Lisbon Strategy—a series of policies adopted by the EU in 2000 aimed at making Europe the 'most competitive ... economy in the world by 2010'.

The Lisbon Review will serve as the intellectual backbone of the Summit.

Among other things, it calls for the full liberalisation of gas, electricity and postal markets within the next 5 years.

The Summit will also examine how to 'manoeuvre' through European regulations and how to build stronger links between universities and businesses.

WEF - how it 'improves' the world



WEF member, Coca-Cola, doesn't just make a killing by encouraging teenagers to consume its unhealthy drinks.

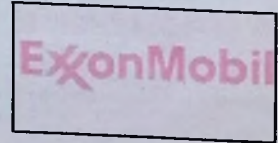
According to Colombian trade unionists, the company makes a very real killing by collaborating with death squads.

In a case being taken by Colombian trade unionists against Coca-Cola bottlers Panamerican Beverages Inc., significant evidence has emerged that Coca-Cola engaged paramilitary groups to terrorise and murder union leaders.

Colombia holds the distinction of being ranked number one in the world for the number of trade union leaders murdered each year.

In a similar situation in Guatemala in the early 1980's, Coca-Cola was forced by a consumer campaign to terminate its bottling agreement with a Guatemalan bottler who had used right-wing death squads to murder union leaders at that facility.

Exxon has been the most active company undermining Kyoto using its wealth and power to stop any international action on climate change. It funds multi-million dollar propaganda fronts to dismiss the case for action on global warming.



Exxon Mobil (E\$S), the gargantuan of the oil industry, is the number 1 global warming villain. It gave over \$1 million to George Bush for his 2000

election campaign. As soon as Bush became President he pulled the US out of the Kyoto Protocol, the only international agreement to address global warming.

The company pushes to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling and its plans for a major pipeline linking Chad and Cameroon threaten to replicate the devastation caused by Shell in the Niger Delta. The company is currently being sued by the International Labor Rights Fund over culpability in mass atrocities committed by the Indonesian Military in Aceh.

Remember 20 in Dublin



the RAND Institute) or corporate foundations.

NGOs who question the WEF's agenda are usually not invited back.

After criticising the WEF in 2001, civil society leaders Vandana Shiva, Jeremy Rifkin and Martin Khor were dropped from the invitation list in 2002.

According to a January 2000 *Financial Times* story, 'the Forum says it is not inviting organisations that contribute only negative views and do not support its "mission" to narrow global divisions'.

Organise now!

ALREADY, the Irish Social Forum has begun organising protests and counter-summits for 20 October and activists from across Europe are booking their flights to Dublin.

However, this summit is of local relevance as well as international importance. As we saw on 15 February, there are enough people on this island already to have a massive demonstration. O20, as it has been dubbed, has the potential to be a major manifestation of public anger at our own government's neo-liberal agenda, its support for war and its on-going campaign of cut-backs and lies.

This needs a little organisation though and for this we need the help of every reader of SW and all your friends.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Read the Irish Social Forum website.
- Ask for leaflets and information from the protest organising group, for this contact Rory at 086 1523542.
- Download leaflets and Frequently Asked Questions about the WEF from the Irish Social Forum website and distribute them.
- Hold information meetings for activists.
- Raise a resolution in your union, community or campaign group against corporate globalisation and in support for the anti-WEF protests.

E.U. CONSTITUTION:

What does it mean?

by KEVIN WINGFIELD



■ Solana and Schroder

As the EU leaders summit met in Thessalonica on June 20, besieged by anti-capitalist demonstrators, they were presented with the draft constitution.

This will be the subject of horse-trading by EU ministers in the Inter Governmental Conference starting in October.

If all goes to plan, the agreed constitution could be ratified sometime next year and a referendum in Ireland as well as a number of other countries could be called.

In reality the draft is another step on the road to creating a centralised European superstate with its own army and imperialist ambitions. It proposes:

■ For the first time the EU would have a 'legal personality', essentially becoming a state in its own right, able to sign international treaties and conduct a foreign policy.

■ The dominant position of the large states would be increased by allowing only half the states a vote in the European Commission.

■ The requirement for unanimity would be reduced with more decisions being taken by majority vote, with the possibility of the remaining areas of taxation and foreign policy falling into this category later.

German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, said he would press for the abolition of the national veto on foreign policy.

■ A new EU President or Chairman would be chosen by the European Council of national leaders who would also appoint an EU foreign minister.

■ There would be a common foreign and defence policy with commitments by member states to greater military spending.

■ Articles 40.3, 40.6 and 40.7 mean Ireland would have to increase military spending and could join a 'common defence' without a referendum.

■ A 'solidarity clause' would require member states to provide mutual assistance in case of 'terrorist attack', and member states could sign up to a 'mutual defence clause'.

These clauses open the way to overseas military operations and 'resource wars' such as we've seen recently. The US justified its actions in Afghanistan and Iraq as being responses to the 9/11 attacks.

There is no reason to believe that EU leaders might not also cover their own imperialist ambitions in a similar way in the future.

EU supremo, Javier Solana, has already spelled out the implications on the eve of the Thessalonica summit: "The EU is, like it or not, a global actor. It should be ready to

share the responsibility for global security."

Solana went on to demand that the EU mount 'pre-emptive engagement' against rogue states to force them into line. States standing outside the 'international community' will have 'a price to be paid'.

The *Irish Times* reported that "a source close to Mr Solana suggested the 'price to be paid' could involve regime change."

Apart from the difference in pronunciation, these could be the words of Donald Rumsfeld.

Solana also proposed the EU extending the zone of security around Europe by promoting "a ring of well-governed countries" to the east of the EU and on the borders of the Mediterranean.

Stripped of diplomatic Euro-speak, these proposals amount to a manifesto for an imperial European superstate, devoting larger and larger proportions of its economy to arms-spending, surrounded by a ring of buffer states, and conducting a series of foreign wars.

Ignore

However, Proinsias De Rossa chooses to ignore this and focuses instead on what he calls 'a constitution for social justice in Europe'. De Rossa and the Labour Party want to build up Europe as a counterweight to the US.

They fail to see, or perhaps do not wish to see, the militarist implications of this road and concentrate instead on the rhetoric about 'social rights'.

But in any case we should not expect much from the 'EU Charter of Fundamental Rights' which may or may not ultimately be included in the EU Constitution.

For example, it speaks of trade union rights in the context of national laws, laws which themselves include prohibitions on solidarity action. Nowhere is the right to trade union recognition upheld in the Charter.

A much more explicit 'Bill of Rights' than one envisioned for Europe is enshrined in the US Constitution.

But this doesn't prevent the rulers of that country incarcerating millions and holding people indefinitely without trial. More black males are in jail than in college in the USA.

Opponents of war would be making a big mistake in allying themselves with Euro imperialism in the vain hope of counter-balancing the power of US imperialism.

The idea of a 'good imperialism' is as ridiculous as good racism, or good sexism. We need a movement to fight all varieties of imperialism.

Who's coming to dinner?

According to the WEF website, 400 business leaders, select heads of government, ministers of finance, industry and labour, key media leaders, top academics and civil soci-

ety representatives will all participate in the Summit.

However, accredited members of the media are kept out of many events and journalists are generally selected for those who reflect support for the status quo of corporate globalisation.

The NGOs (non-govern-

mental organisations) invited to participate are also likely to be those which are the least critical of the ravages of capitalism.

Typically, NGOs make up less than 2% of the attendance at the events. Of that small percentage, a high number are think-tanks with corporate leanings (such as

oves' the state of the world



US courts have recently ruled that Microsoft is a monopoly which has repeatedly used its power to suppress competition.

Indeed, Bill Gates has been compared to the most aggressive of drug-pushers - flooding markets with free copies of new software, then pushing up the price and enforcement conditions once dependency has been established among users.

At the 2002 WEF summit, Gates announced a major fund to help combat AIDS in Africa.

However, previous 'donations' have come with many strings attached. For



■ Bill Gates has been compared to a drug-pusher

instance, a donation of \$2,000 worth of licenses for its MS Office software to a project trying to link up Namibian schools to the internet, was conditional on the project spending \$9,000 to pay for the 'operating system'.

More recently, Gates donated \$550,000 to Peru's

national school system. The donation was well-timed, as the Peruvian government is considering the use of 'open source' software in all government systems.

This decision terrifies Microsoft because of the potential cascading effect if other states took similar decisions.

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HEALTH WORKERS WARN: MARTIN COULD SERIOUSLY DAMAGE YOUR HEALTH

BY DR.
JULIET
BRESSAN

Michael Martin is launching yet another dramatic plan to dodge his responsibility for health care in the guise of a Health Service Reform Programme.

His current strategy is to scrap the local health boards and completely centralise all health policy, budgeting and management.

The health boards were originally set up in order to remove health care from the monopoly of the church, and to apply local democracy to the planning of hospitals and other services.

Health boards later became a convenient political tool for corrupt politicians and councillors: but their elimination will not automatically result in better care for sick people.

What bothers Martin is not the layers of managers and bureaucrats which dominate the health service—only five years ago millions were spent creating three extra health boards in Dublin.

But the government feels threatened by increasing popularity of hospital and health service candidates, like Katherine Sinnott and Jerry Cowley who have made local health care a political issue.

So the Health Reform Programme states, "There will be no one agency that is directly responsible and accountable for the management of the health system as a national service". In other words, no matter what tragedy happens, the Department of Health will not be responsible.

When Bronagh Livingstone died from premature birth shortly before Christmas, the Minister for Health was quick to wash his hands of any responsibility, stating that the hospital closure in Monaghan was a decision of the local health managers, and nothing to do with central government.

This reform programme plans to "remove any confusion within the broader system about the role of the Department and create room to analyse and evaluate the performance of the delivery system".

When another blood bank tragedy happens or there is a public health crisis, the Department of Health can divorce itself completely from the problem.

Removing the local health board allows hospital closures to take place without any local politicians or councillors getting in the way.

It prevents local people from being able to lobby by removing all financial planning from the regions.

It is just another step in eroding democracy—like Martin Cullen's Protection of the Environment Bill.

Michael Martin also wants individual doctors and nurses to take responsibility for rationing out medicines and treatments for patients by making them individually responsible for spending.

The Health Reform Programme



■ Micheal Martin spoofing to nurses in Clare

will "move to devolving responsibility for care budgets to the people actually in-charge of delivering that care".

For health care workers this will spell more stress, worse patient care relationships, and more cut-backs.

It is bad enough to have to work in overcrowded conditions with too few staff and patients who are far

sicker than they need to be.

Now doctors will have to think about the cost of every tablet and injection they give in case their hospital runs out of money.

This inevitably results in some patients being refused treatment and operations.

But the judgements over who gets treated and who doesn't, will be down to individual nurse and

doctors, with the Department of Health blameless.

Lindsay Tribunal showed that making clinical decisions on the basis of money savings schemes results in suffering and deaths.

For the past decade, GP's have been taking part in a penny-pinching scheme to under prescribe med-

icines.

Every time a GP under-prescribes and saves money on his allocated "budget", he or she is given 50 per cent of the savings back as a cash grant for the practice.

This means that doctors are forced to avoid giving patients medicines that they need, in order to fund the maintenance and staffing of their practice.

Michael Martin's current set of reforms plans to spread this kind of unethical healthcare right throughout the system.

During the recent SARS epidemic, public health doctors were left on the picket lines for eight weeks. Michael Martin even threatened to scrap the Special Olympics rather than pay the doctors.

However when a few sheep had foot and mouth disease, the government moved mountains to protect the profits of the big food companies.

Despite all the celebrity hype of the Special Olympics, Ireland's services for the handicapped are the worst in Europe.

Handicapped day-care services in Galway have recently been scrapped, and there is a two-year waiting list in Dublin to have a child with learning difficulties assessed.

Blaming health care structure is a convenient diversion for a government, which has no time for sick people.

We need a system, which addresses the needs of the sick rather than the needs of the politicians.

A meeting where no-one tells the truth

WERE you ever at a meeting where nobody was telling the truth? I was when 150 workers from the various different grades in Cherry Orchard Hospital turned up to hear the new health strategy, the Brennan Report.

We were shown very complicated slides on how the new boards structure would look after the old one was abolished.

A lot of information was given out in vague management speak. But no one could figure out how it was going to affect them.

Every time you asked a question we were told management did not have the answer because the Hanley report which deals with contracts of employment in the public sector has not been finished and won't be ready for three months.

And that a whole raft of legislation will have been brought in within the next three years to back up the

BY A HEALTH WORKER

Hanley report.

You just got the impression they are going to privatise the health services.

They intend to flatten structures and get rid of services.

Staff will end up re-applying and attending an interview for their own jobs. This process has all ready started and is happening very quickly.

The rehabilitation unit in Ballyfermot that only opened up last year for recovering drug users has been shut

down. And cut-backs in services for the blind have been agreed.

No additional financial resources are being given to back up the new strategy. Playing with structures will not give better value for money for the patients; it will just reduce services.

Cost

The cost of implementing this strategy will be far more than any savings it will make.

A 52 hospital beds unit for infectious diseases has been closed in Cherry Orchard hospital.

This was done in the midst of the SARS virus crisis and

the winter vomiting bug was bouncing around various different hospitals.

We are now going to have a policy on fraud in the health board, which means that if you make a phone call home on a work phone you could be sacked for mismanagement of resources.

Charlie Mc Greevey and the rest of the Sopranos have no business lecturing the rest of us on fraud.

Doctors will be responsible for budgets and this will have a huge affects on service delivery.

When hospitals were privatised in Britain, they were closed down once they were

bought and turned into supermarkets by Tesco.

The community was left without hospitals.

An identical strategy was implemented in Eircom, which use to be part of the state sector and is privatised.

Half of the staff's conditions, wages and employment are at 1984 levels.

The consultative meetings that are going to happen over the next three-months will be used to popularise the health reforms, but staff are not allowed to make any decisions at the meetings and the vague language that is being used is designed to conceal.

book

Fantasy pulls no punches

by COLM O RIAIN

AT midnight, Friday 20th June 250,000 copies of JK Rowling's latest book went on sale in shops around the country.

The book moved into the bestsellers' list immediately. Newspapers have already spent many column inches explaining the phenomenon of "Pottermania".

Faced with the prospect of new Potter merchandising and the inevitable McDonalds Happy Meal "Potter" toys many will be cynical about Rowling's latest money spinner.

Is this another marketing campaign with little substance behind it, another Tellytubbies designed to cash in on a lucrative children's market?

Leaving aside the enormous publicity and profiteering of its launch, the book has much to recommend it.

In the last few years a number of excellent "children's" books have emerged, combining cracking plots with adult themes.

Philip Pullman's *Dark Materials* trilogy—the third installment *The Amber Spyglass* won the Whitbread Prize in 2001—and the Harry Potter series were equally enjoyed by children and adults. Reading *The Order*



■ The entire magical community faces a threat from the return of the dark wizard

of the *Phoenix* its not hard to see why.

The plot may seem incredible, but it all makes sense when you read it. Harry is now 15 and the entire magical community faces a threat from the return of the dark wizard Lord Voldemort. Harry, having faced Voldemort before, is understandably concerned.

Voldemort and his followers were in ascendancy years before and everyone in the Magical Community still speaks fear-

fully of that time. Those not of "pure blood"—"mud bloods" have most to fear—extermination.

Harry meets with members of the Order of the Phoenix, a group not unlike the partisans in World War Two, who are dedicated to fighting Voldemort and his supporters.

Resistance

Their task is made all the harder as the authorities at the "Ministry of Magic" and Tabloid news-

papers dedicate their time to rubbishing Harry's claims that Voldemort is returning rather than organising any resistance.

The use of fantasy in literature, from Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* to Iain Bank's science fiction allows authors to take on serious topics from a different angle.

The Order of the Phoenix is in this tradition, tackling fascism and racism without patronising the reader.

One of the characters

(a particularly malevolent portrait) screams lines such as "filthy half breeds, blood traitors, children of filth" at those without pure wizard blood in their veins.

The book doesn't pull any punches on prejudice and racism. That it does this without ruining a great story is extraordinary. Ignore the distasteful hype attached to its launch. Definitely worth reading.

■ *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* Bloomsbury €22

book

A year in the life of a sports hack

by DEIRDRE CRONIN

TOM Humphries is one of the best sports journalists in Ireland.

His columns in the *Irish Times* are always informative and entertaining.

His recently published book *Laptop Dancing and the Nanny Goat Mambo* chronicles a year in the life of a sports writer.

The year is 2002, so the World Cup figures prominently as does the Winter Olympics, athletics, and the Ryder Cup.

We get a taste of life on the road, the big events and the tempo of the writer's life: hotel rooms, sleepless nights, looming deadlines and the pursuit of stars.

Humphries is honest in his portrayal of the problems inherent in all this and quite critical of his

own profession.

'We live in the era of breaking news.

'Too much, too quick, all the time.'

He contrasts the pre-television days when

sports writers had to create pictures in people's heads with today, as journalists are herded from dressing-room to press conference in pursuit of the obligatory quote—or nanny goat.

He implies it is a profession that has lost much of its greatness.

Tiresome

While sometimes Humphries' self-deprecat-

ing humour gets a little tiresome, and the book could do with more opinion and analysis, at times he really hits the spot.

In a piece on the 2002 European Cup final in Glasgow, he manages to sum up very simply how the corporate takeover of football has put the game way out of reach of ordinary fans.

He is scathing in his account of the Bertie Bowl debacle and uncompromising in his disdain for drug cheats.

This book illustrates his passion for sport and cynicism for his own profession and the sporting world.

While it does not surpass his great writing in the sports pages of the *Irish Times* it is still a very entertaining and interesting read.

■ *Laptop Dancing and the Nanny Goat Mambo*

film

The Crime of Father Amaro

by THERESA URBAINCZYK

IF YOU want to see the best, blttest, darkest, funnest and most political film so far this century, go and see *The Crime of Father Amaro*.

It is based on a Portuguese novel by Jose Maria Eca de Queiros from 1875 which has been updated to 21st century Mexico and is directed by Carlos Car-

tera.

Its main star is the stunning Gael Garcia Bernal who was also in *And Your Mother Too* and *Love's a Bitch*.

The story is of a promising young priest, Father Amaro, who is sent out by his bishop to a small community only to find that the resident priest, Father Benito is not only having sex with the local restaurant owner but also launders money for the local drug

lord.

The only priest in the film who is not corrupt is Father Natallo who is excommunicated for siding with the peasants against the drug barons and church hierarchy.

The film opens with a startling sequence and doesn't stop startling the audience until the final frame where we learn just how promising Father Amaro really is.

Don't miss this.

in my view

Sell it like Beckham

by MARTIN SMITH

DAVID Beckham has finally gone to Real Madrid for a deal worth £18 million up front. For weeks every tabloid newspaper was asking about his future plans.

In the chase to get the latest scoop, the exploitative world of big business and football was exposed.

One friend of Beckham says he feels Manchester United have betrayed him. He feels he is being "traded round like a piece of meat".

I can hear the groans already: "Surely you are not going to ask us to sympathise with one of the world's richest football stars?"



■ Beckham

Of course football has always been about making money and buying and selling players on the open market.

But now with the transfer of Beckham, football agents have gone one step further. They openly boast on TV of selling "The David Beckham Product". He is no longer seen as a footballer or a person. He is a commodity, a brand for multinational corporations to buy and sell.

If you are so inclined, you can now get reports on Beckham's marketability and the estimated share price increase of any club he joined.

Some jumped-up stockbroker has even worked out Beckham's different market values as an individual, married or divorced.

Just imagine. There are financial analysts praying that he doesn't get a divorce. Why? Because they will get a bigger return on their investment if he remains married!

You see, multinational corporations have a problem. If a suited fat cat from Shell, GlaxoSmithKline or even Manchester United plc came knocking on your door asking for your money or support, any sane person would slam it in their face.

Therein lies the strength of Beckham. He is the respectable face of corporate football.

Manchester United has an annual turnover of £146.1 million a year. Merchandising accounts for around £10 million and yes, you guessed it, Beckham products dominate.

Markets

Analysts believe the club's base is something in excess of 50 million people. The club has its eyes firmly set on foreign markets. The United brand has a 79 percent name awareness in China, which could add another 20 million supporters to United's fan base.

The club wants to open up this market. Its 2002 business strategy document states: "With 50 million fans worldwide, our twin-track business strategy is to grow existing and new domestic revenues while also unlocking the substantial commercial potential represented by the club's global fan base." Beckham is the man who can unlock doors.

In the wake of his recent much publicised tour of the US and the Far East the promotion men follow in behind. They are searching out new markets, selling television rights and football merchandise as they go.

So why did United want to let Beckham go? They now fear that Beckham is becoming bigger than the club, and that is a dangerous thing.

For the last few years the club has been preparing for his departure and making sure that it is carried out on the club's terms and at the same time protecting its profits.

Beckham's huge popularity meant that in November 2000 United were able to sign a deal with Nike worth £300 million over 13 years. The whole business of shirt sales has been handed over to Nike. The club now receives a guaranteed income rather than depending on the popularity of their players.

Added to the £30 million price tag on Beckham, that represents judicious business.

Management have now decided that they have exploited Beckham to the limit and they want to cash in on their investment.

But no one should feel sorry for Posh and Becks. They will go on living the high life. At the last estimate they were worth a staggering £125 million and live a life of luxury.

C.I.E.:

'No fares day' to stop privatisation

THE FIGHT is on to stop the privatisation of CIE. Transport Minister Seamus Brennan is planning to begin privatising by contracting out 25 per cent of Dublin's bus services at the beginning of 2004.

Earlier this year, CIE workers balloted by over 90 per cent to strike against Brennan's plans. Unions in CIE then formed a joint Action Committee to organise industrial action.

A number of days of

action have been called starting on July 18th when no fares will be collected on Dublin Bus, Iamrod Eireann or Bus Eireann services. Passengers will be allowed to travel free.

Union members will hand passengers leaflets putting the case against privatisation instead of collecting fares and checking tickets.

This will be followed up by a day of strike action and protest demonstrations on August 18. Strike days are

then planned for September and October and December and if necessary escalated action in the New Year.

Stepped Up

The unions have let it be known that if Brennan makes any moves to prepare for contracting out services, such as appointing a regulator or awarding contracts, the action will be stepped up.

Owen McCormack, of the Busworkers Action Group told *Socialist Work-*

er, "This is a fight we have to win. If Brennan has his way, workers' conditions and wages will suffer along with the service to the public."

"There is a general recognition among CIE workers and unions that we need to get the travelling public behind us on this fight."

"We need the support of fellow trade unionists and community groups who will all suffer under privatisation."



■ Brennan hopes these will be a thing of the past

CIE workers explain their case

CIE workers in Dublin organised a public meeting in Dublin in June to highlight the fight and to build support. Around ninety people turned up—transport workers and passengers—to hear the arguments and organise.

Mick Faherty, Assistant General Secretary of the

NBRU, told the audience that contracting out has been presented to the public as bringing choice.

But, he pointed out, Dublin Bus will not be allowed to apply for any of the routes being contracted out.

"There will be no choice for consumers on a particular route. The only person getting a choice is the

Minister who will choose which private company should be given a monopoly to run a route," he said.

Bill McCamley, SIPTU Worker Director, explained how in Britain very quickly bus services came to be dominated by the three major concerns: Arriva, First Group and Stagecoach.

He called for a People's Forum

against privatisation which would bring together workers and passengers, activists and community groups.

Safety

Dave Manningham, a member of the T&GWU and a bus driver in the English city of Norwich, told of the experience of privatisation in Britain.

The working day for drivers is over 12 hours and health and safety of workers has suffered so that the companies could make maximum profits.

He told of one example where a bus was leaking dangerous fumes which made the driver ill.

Managers said the bus would be put right, but the next day

it was on the road again and another driver had to be hospitalised after being overcome by the fumes.

Concerns

Dave himself has suffered intimidation from management for raising basic health and safety concerns.

From the floor a taxi driver told how the recent deregulation

of the taxi industry had damaged his livelihood.

"CIE workers are facing deregulation, just like us."

He called on all workers to stick together in this fight.

The meeting heard a call for the setting up of support groups and Anti Privatisation Forums across Dublin.

We can win

THIS IS a fight that everybody should get behind.

If the privatisation agenda of Brennan is not defeated passengers can expect huge cuts in services on "unprofitable" routes and in off-peak services.

We need to make these events big displays of solidarity with CIE workers involving local community groups, residents and trade unionists.

Help build the solidarity. Get in touch with local Anti-Privatisation Forum action groups in your area or contact Anti Privatisation Forum c/o 123 Balcouris Road Dublin 11, 086-3074060.

Marxist Forums

Big ideas discussed in informal settings



Ballyfermot

The hidden history of revolt in America Thursday 3rd July 8pm Ruby Finnegan's Pub

6pm Thurs 3rd July, Donovans Pub, townsend St

Ballymun:

Lula and Chavez - Can they deliver for Latin America? 8.00pm Thursday July 3rd Axis Centre Ballymun

Blanchardstown:

Contact Paul Smyth 087-9163246

Bray:

Che Guevara and the politics of revolution. 8pm Thurs 3rd July, Lenehan's Pub, main st, Bray.

Clondalkin:

Che Guevara and the Politics of Revolution Thursday 3rd July 8pm Oakfield Lodge Hotel, Clondalkin Village

Crumlin:

Drugs, the Global Aids Crisis and Big Business Wednesday 2nd July 8pm Cashel Hall, Cashel Road, Crumlin

Dublin South Inner City:

Lula and Chavez - Can they deliver for Latin America?

Dun Laoghaire:

Palestine - Is peace possible? 8pm Thurs 3rd July, Farrells Pub, Marine Rd, Dun Laoghaire

Harolds Cross

Chomsky, ideology and the corporate media. 8pm Wed

2nd July, Rosie O'Grady's Pub, Harolds Cross.

Lucan/Leixlip:

The Hidden History of Revolt in America, Wed July 2 8.00pm, Parish Hall, Maynooth

Rathmines:

Palestine: Is peace possible? 8pm Wed 2nd July, Grace's Pub, Rathmines Village.

Rialto:

Noam Chomsky, Ideology and the Corporate Media Wednesday 2nd July 8pm The Andrews Hall, SCR

Ringsend:

Che Guevara and the politics of revolution. 8pm Wed 2nd July, The Committee Room, below the Ocean Bar, Charlotte Quay, Ringsend.

Tallaght:

The Hidden History of Revolt in America Wednesday 2nd July 8pm The Tallaght Welfare Society (beside Molloys), Tallaght Village

■ For details of other Marxist Forums contact (01) 872 2682

Chavez, Lula, Zapatistas... LATIN AMERICA



A CONTINENT IN REVOLT

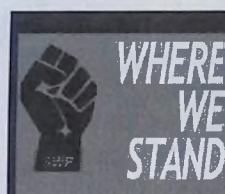
Speaker **MIKE GONZALEZ**
(Author and Lecturer in Hispanic Studies and Delegate to WSF in Porto Alegre)
Friday June 27th 8.00pm
Central Hotel Exchequer St

Organised by the Socialist Workers Party

Irish Anti War Movement END OCCUPATION OF IRAQ AND PALESTINE

**US Independence Day 4th July
DEMONSTRATION
US Ambassador's Residence
Phoenix Park Dublin 6.00pm**

**Independence for All Day 5th July
Celebration of US counter Culture
Isaac Butt (opp Busaras)
Dublin City Centre
Starts 12 noon-All Day**



SION

We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Blair government. Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction' We want to see an Irish workers republic where all workers gain. Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc. We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet. A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

REVOLUTION

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy. To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based much greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth. Bush's "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance.

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WATER CHARGES:

'We won't pay!'

THE campaign to stop the privatisation of the Water Service and the introduction of water charges has got underway.

Meetings of Communities Against the Water Tax—a combination of trade unionists, anti-poverty and community activists—were held in Belfast, Derry and Strabane in the run-up to the closing date of the 'consultation' process.

All of the meetings were well attended and resolved to fight what Frances Dowds of the Northern Ireland Anti Poverty Network described, as "a tax which will hit the poorest hardest and which will plunge thousands of families into even deeper debt and poverty."

She reported on research conducted by Save the Children in England which highlighted the negative impact of water charges, particularly metering, on families with young children who live on low incomes.

Cut Down

Many families tried to cut down on water usage through measures such as sharing baths, not washing clothes as often as they'd like and telling children not to flush the toilet.

The privatisation of water in England and Wales in 1989 is held up as a model for the privatisation of water supply systems across the world.

Oxfam say that the pri-

vatished water companies Severn Trent, United Utilities and Yorkshire Water made £12 billion in pre-tax profits in their first ten years and paid out £8 billion in dividends.

The privatisation of water is perhaps the clearest example of how corporate globalisation really sees everything as for sale.

There should be a campaign of mass non-payment of the water charges if we don't succeed in stopping their introduction.

Some, however, fear that

the memory of the Payment of Debt Act, which was abolished some years ago, would make a non-payment campaign difficult.

Refuse

Debt Recovery legislation means those on benefits cannot prevent the water charges being taken from their benefits at source, but those who are employees can refuse to pay in solidarity with those who have no choice.

Several speakers at the

meetings in both Strabane and Derry said they would happily go to jail rather than pay.

The Payment of Debt Act was originally aimed at penalising the nationalist community for the rent and rates strike following internment.

Today Protestant working class families are as likely as Catholic ones to be in debt and brought before the County Court.

Harold McBride, an ATGWU rep in the Water Service, told *Socialist*

Worker "The only new staff being taken on are on temporary contracts.

"They are also pouring money into the infrastructure, preparing it for hand-over to whatever private body.

"In the meantime, 'contractor-isation'—the use of private contractors for work that used to be done by directly employed Water Service workers—is already under way, pulling wages down and undermining terms and conditions."

IMPACT:

Anger at pensions failure

TOP UNION officials in IMPACT are facing a revolt over the manner in which they have failed to protect their members' permanent and pensionable status.

Delegates at the recent Local Government Divisional conference directed heavy criticism at the leadership for allowing aspects of the Local Government Act 2001, which threatens the permanent status of workers in Local Authorities, to go unchallenged.

The Act removes the right of appeal to the Minister for the Environment in the case of dismissals and allows the permanent status of local authority workers to be scrapped.

Managers in Local Authorities are now required to issue new contracts to all salaried workers and some have taken the opportunity to introduce lay-off and short-time clauses in the new contracts.

This is a huge attack on the conditions of employment of workers in the public service and again shows the fraud of partnership in the workplace.

IMPACT official Al Butler has vowed to sanction strikes if County and City Managers press ahead with plans to have lay-off clauses included on all contracts.

Shop stewards in the Cork Branches are seeking sanction for strikes and are organising regional meetings on the issue.

—MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN, IMPACT Rep

Taxi drivers demand proper regulation

THOUSANDS of taxi drivers took part in a protest in June against the effects of the governments de-regulation of the industry in the capital.

Assembling at Phoenix Park, the drivers then drove in convoy to the Dail where they held a rally.

One taxi driver told *Socialist Worker*, "Since deregulation it has become a free-for-all. A few years ago there were three and half thousand taxis on the roads of Dublin. That was increased to 7,000 and now there are more than 10,000. Anyone can now get a taxi licence.

"There is not enough business for all those taxis. Where you could get a living wage working eight to ten hours a day, today you need to work sixteen. The cab companies take ?70 to ?120 a week for the radio, on top of that we have tax, insurance, the licence fee and wear and tear on our vehicles.

"The three taxi unions, NTDU, ITF and SIPTU got together in a joint committee to call action to demand that the issuing of new plates is suspended and a proper regulator is appointed.

"We have now been promised a regulator but the taxi unions will take action again if our grievances are not met."

BIN TAX:

Government stumbles

IT NOW looks as if the Protection of the Environment Bill will not be passed before the Dail summer break.

This is the Bill that will bring EU environmental policy into law.

It will allow councils not to collect the bins of non-payers and it will give the City or County manager the power to set the refuse charge.

In a highly embarrassing episode for the PDs and FF, the debate on the bill had to be adjourned when

a quorum was called by the Labour Party.

This meant that at least 20 deputies had to be in the Dail to allow the debate to continue.

Suspended

All Opposition TDs left the Chamber and the government parties could only round up 11 TDs.

The proceedings were suspended as a result.

TDs are on salaries of almost €50,000 before expenses but many don't even bother turning up for

work.

The anti-bin tax campaign is organising meetings to face down the threats against non-payers.

At a meeting of the bin tax campaign in the Liberties in June local people expressed their outrage at double taxation.

Alternative

When local Fianna Fail TD Michael Mulcahy demanded to know what alternative there was for councils to raise money he met with an avalanche of

suggestions.

They all agreed with the same theme: tax the rich and start providing decent public services.

We need to keep the pressure on the TDs and build the strongest possible mass movement against these charges.

■ For information, contact: Richard Boyd Barrett 087 6329511 (Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown), or Brid Smith 087 9090166 (Dublin city).

DCU Contract Cleaners win jobs back

DOLORES O'Hagan and Margaret Godfrey have worked for ISS contract cleaners in DCU for 14 and 11 years respectively.

A new company, Knights Contract Clean-

ers, obtained a contract in DCU and both workers were assured that this would not affect their jobs.

Yet on 3 June, when they showed up as usual at 5 am in the morning, they were told that they had lost their jobs.

They were marched off campus.

Working Hours

Subsequently they were offered a change of working hours and a change of block, neither of which they could accept.

On Monday 16 June the two women picketed the front gates of DCU.

Building workers at Paul's building site next door refused to go into work.

Many deliveries also did not cross the picket.

On the Monday, the DCU section committee of SIPTU suggested that staff should show their support on the picket line at lunch-time, which many did.

They met with DCU management and asked that ISS settle the issue with the two women and threatened

to escalate the strike.

By Wednesday Dolores and Margaret were back working in their old jobs in the same buildings and with half an hour extra work.

When workers stand up for themselves, they can and do win.

PROTEST FOR HEALTH

Minister for Health, Michael Martin, announced this week that the South-East is not to have a radiotherapy unit.

So far, four major protests have been called in Waterford with attendances of several thousand at each.

Three of these protests were called by the Waterford Council of Trade Unions including a two-hour work stoppage in support of the campaign.

The WCTU are now setting up a region-wide shop stewards meeting to discuss stepping up the campaign with the possibility of a half-day stoppage.

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WEF SUMMIT IN IRELAND

—PAGES 6&7

inside:

SHORTS BELFAST: WORKERS RIGHT TO RESIST

—PAGE 4

BUSH SAYS Eat your GM food up



THE US government has organised a huge conference on the 23-25 June to save the embattled GM industry in Sacramento, California.

More than 120 ministers from seventy-five countries will attend. The fares are being paid by the US government.

Thousands of anti-capitalist protestors will be joining them.

The US is trying to use the World Trade Organisation to force GM foods on EU consumers. The gathering in Sacramento is the US attempt to lobby other countries to win this argument.

Bush sees the battle over GM foods as important for the long-term goals of US imperialism.

Of the total area of cultivated land in the world, less than 10 percent grows GM seeds and that occurs mainly in three countries, the US, Canada and Argentina.

Increasing opposition to GM foods is creating problems for giant US multi-nationals.

Strategy

Monsanto has lost more than one million dollars and its stocks fell 27 percent last year.

Bush's strategy for saving the US agribusiness is to push GM foods on developing countries. US

aid to poorer countries is now tied to their acceptance of GM foods according to a new act, 'The United States Leadership against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act'.

Pushing

So Bush's much vaunted \$16 billion dollar aid for HIV in Africa, so praised by Bob Geldof, contains a clause which forces countries like Angola to accept GM food.

The US trade representative Robert Zoellick, a

former Enron consultant, is also pushing the argument that GM food is the answer to world hunger.

However, peasant leaders in these countries see it differently,

Joao Pedro Sterile from the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement explains that multi-nationals such as Monsanto, Cargill and Du Pont are trying to 'gain control of Brazilian agriculture and to secure a monopoly over seeds, in particular soya, maize, wheat, sunflower and cotton'.

The multi-nationals patent particular GM seeds so that they can exert control over the crops at every stage of production.

'Farmers are reduced to their sub-contracted agents,' says the environ-

mental campaigner George Monbiot.

Withstand

GM crops are engineered to withstand applications of weed-killer such as Roundup or 2 4-D.

In Canada farmers have found that GM crops cross-pollinate which results in other crops becoming resistant to all other modern pesticides.

The result is that they are forced to rely on one product—2 4-D.

Once farmers are hooked to a dependency on the GM companies, the price goes up.

Bush's aim is to spread GM crops to as many areas of the planet as possible so that regulation becomes impossible.

The humble 'Protato'

THE 'protato'—the generically modified potato—is being held up as the answer to hunger in India.

The claim came from Dr Padmanaban, the former director of the Indian Institute of Science. What he did not tell people is that he has a secret financial deal with Monsanto.

The protato is a potato with genes from the grain amaranth added in.

It is supposed to give a higher protein yield and so alleviate hunger.

However, India already has a huge food surplus. Food rots in warehouses.

Pulse crops like lentils, peas and beans are a far higher source of protein than potatoes.

However, pulses have been driven off

the land in favour of grain monocultures, which are cash crops for the world markets.

Cash crops

These cash crops are grown by the larger farmers. In the Punjab region, the area devoted to pulses has fallen from 14 percent in the 1960s to 3 percent today.

Amaranth is also grain, which grows abundantly in India and in many other countries.

It has around 12 times the protein content of the GM potato.

Encouraging its production would certainly help reduce malnutrition.

The neo-liberal, right-wing Indian gov-

ernment has another agenda.

India is the world's third biggest potato producer, and wants to be an even bigger player in a global potato market worth £116 billion a year.

It wants to align itself with US imperialism to carve out a new niche in the global food market.

Big profits from dodgy grub

FIVE companies, Pharmacia (Monsanto), DuPont, Syngenta, Bayer and Dow dominate the global GM business.

They also dominate the \$45 billion a year global seed market.

However, 80 percent of the world's farmers are still out-

side this market and save or exchange seed with fellow farmers each year.

The big five want to change this.

Dependent

GM crops are often hybrids (and therefore sterile) so farmers have to buy new seeds from the corporations each

year. They are also dependent on chemicals and fertilisers supplied by the same corporations.

The brave new genetically modified world envisioned by Margaret Atwood in her latest novel 'Oryx and Crake' is getting closer, unless the protesters win out.

What's wrong with GM?

GM food will do little to alleviate world hunger—but it could damage human health.

■ Soya beans engineered by Monsanto contain a higher level of glyphosate. In 1999, the Journal of American Cancer Society reported that exposure to glyphosate led to increased risks of non Hodgkin's lymphoma cancer.

■ Tests on GM Flavr Savr tomatoes resulted in lesion in rats.

■ An experiment by Dr Arpad Pusztai showed that animals fed with GM potatoes had severe gut problems. Despite attempts to discredit him, Dr Pusztai's research was reviewed by six of his peers.

■ In GM chickenfeed experiments, twice as many chicken which were fed GM maize died as those fed with conventional crop.

The truth is that proper experiments on the effects of GM crops on human health are comparatively rare. This is because the giant food companies are more interested in profit than in safety