

# Socialist Worker

For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism

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# STOP THE WAR NOW!

# Bush's Killing Fields

# AND HE WANTS TO ATTACK IRAQ



A US backed Northern Alliance soldier kicks at a body at the scene of the massacre in Mazar-i-Sharif (above). Another member of the Northern Alliance pulls the gold teeth from another body (below)



# Criminalised; Exiled; Silenced

## Blood on the tracks?

THE £100 million contract for Dublin light rail LUAS is set to go to an Anglo-French company with a rotten safety record. Connex is owned by the French transport giant Vivendi.

In August of this year, Connex became the first rail operator in Britain to lose its

licence since privatisation following repeated complaints of late, dirty and over-crowded trains.

The franchise to run south-central trains -- mainly commuter services into London -- was withdrawn four years into a seven-year contract.

Last March, nine people were injured when two of its trains collided in a London suburb. Last June, two trains came close to a head-on collision when one passed a red signal.



Last year, Connex trains on the south-eastern service had 26 incidents in which trains passed red signals.

Last December, Connex was fined £2.38 million by the regulatory authorities for poor services.

THE FIANNA Fail/PD government are continuing to push through a bill to reverse the X-case judgement.

It is intent on continuing the hypocritical situation that means that abortion is not available here.

As a result over 7,000 Irish women have travel to Britain every years for abortions - that's 19 women every day.

Government ministers



claim the abortion bill proposals are a reasonable attempt to get con-

sensus on abortion law in Ireland.

But what reasonable person would want the courts to send a woman to prison for up to 12 years if she is so desperate that her only solution is to try and abort herself.

### Forced

What reasonable person would want a suicidal young woman - pregnant from a vicious rape (as in the 'x' and 'c' cases) - to face further risk to her life or mental health by being forced to go full term?

There is nothing reasonable in this bill. It criminalises Irish women who take desperate measures because of crisis pregnancies.

Trying to ensure there are no abortions on Irish soil is all that matters to the government and the anti-choicers.

The government's honest hypocrite - Noel Ahern - admits he would take his daughter to Britain if she had a crisis pregnancy.

But what about ordinary working class women who do not earn huge salaries like Ahern?

What if you can't raise £700 or get away secretly, what if your only solution is the callous moneylender?

Too bad says the government. It's one law for the rich and one for the poor.

But things are falling apart for the government. Ahern's much touted consensus is crumbling. Even anti-choice groups like the Mother and Child Campaign (also known as Youth Defence) and the Catholic Church who lobbied for years for this Referendum are opposing it.

### Torn

The only group to support it, the Pro-life Campaign, is torn by internal opposition to the Bill.

On the other hand the Alliance for a NO Vote (ANV), which is the major Pro-Choice campaign group are receiving growing support from people who are saying that women must have the right to choose.

If you would like to get involved with the ANV, contact Sinead at 087-2612634.

## Killer cops let off

THE GARDAI who killed John Carthy at a siege in Abbeylara in Longford will escape prosecution.

A Dail inquiry into the Carthy's death has been halted by the courts.

### Armed

Carthy, a building labourer with a history of depression, was shot in the back four times by officers armed with Uzi machine guns and assault rifles.

So far there have been two inquiries into the shooting. The coroner's inquest established only that John Carthy was shot dead by Garda. An internal Garda investigation concluded that the police were big-hearted, brave and blameless while John Carthy was bad, mad and sad.

The Garda report can only be seen as final proof that the Irish system of police accountability - Garda officers inquiring into the behaviour of fellow Garda officers - is less than useless.

It was in response to public outrage at the appalling police report into the shooting of Carthy that the Oireachtas Committee on Justice tried to inquire into events at Abbeylara.

Dail committees may not offer the best prospect of revealing the truth. All the same the committee began by questioning - in public and before live television cameras - the senior police officers who planned and participated in the bungled operation.

### Pressure

But now the courts have decided that nobody has the power to investigate the police.

They know that TD's, however remotely, feel the pressure of public opinion. And the public wants the truth.

However judges, unelected and unaccountable - just like the Gardai, are committed to putting the interests of State above the interests of truth.



## Usual suspects for dinner

Fianna Fail does n't change that much.

At the beginning of December Bertie Ahern held a fundraising dinner in Clontarf castle. A table cost a mere £1,400.

Those in attendance included:

- Ambassador account holder John Finnegan, who is under investigation by the Flood Tribunal over £10,000 of his money ending up in Ray Burke's account.
- Property magnates Ken McDonald and Sean Dunne.

- Building boss Bernard MacNamara.
- Hotelier Noel O'Callaghan

- Former Fianna Fail fundraiser Des Richardson.

- Michael O'Leary who claims to not need State support for his company.

He is keen to get a terminal just for Ryanair



and seems to have some influence in high places.

Ryanair's consultant PJ Mara, who is expected to become Fianna Fail's director of elections, sat in on a recent meeting between Ryanair chief executive Michael O'Leary and Bertie Ahern, to discuss the terminal.

Another Ryanair director, Ray MacSharry, has been lobbying for the anti-union airline. MacSharry is chairman of Fianna Fail's constituency committee, a key post in the party with responsibility for selecting candidates for the forthcoming general election.

## The government is reaching a new low

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice is attempting to deport families of asylum seekers with children born in Ireland.

Every child born in the state is supposed to be entitled to citizenship on an equal basis.

### Entitlement

But now John O'Donoghue's racist department says that doesn't include the child's right to be brought up by its own parents.

This flies in the face of the 1989 Fajujno Case when the Supreme Court ruled that the child had an entitlement to the "company, care and parentage" of its family.

The government is demanding that fathers take paternity tests and prove

that families have been in Ireland for "an appreciable time".

Whenever asylum seekers are deported, the government pretends they are being sent to a "safe country".

So how can it justify deporting pregnant women to Nigeria, which has an infant-mortality rate of 77 per 1,000.

The Onasanwo family is facing deportation in the next two weeks.

Elizabeth Onasanwo and her five children have lived in Ireland for two years.

Two of her teenage children attend school in Dublin and her seventeen-year old son is in psychiatric care in Wicklow, where doctors say he will be in no condition for release, let alone deportation, in two weeks time.

This case and hundreds like it exposes the hypocrisy of the government's "pro-family" rhetoric.

They are more than willing to break up families to pursue the racist agenda of deportation.

## Bolivia: Defend Oscar Olivera

On Tuesday 27th November at 7:30 am the police in Cochabamba, Bolivia, arrested Oscar Olivera, spokesperson for the Coordinadora, on his way to work.

The Co-ordinating Committee in Defence of Water and Life reports that Olivera now faces charges of "sedition, conspiracy, instigating public disorder, criminal association, and other charges."

### Reversing

These charges against Oscar and other spokespersons of the Coalition are related to their role in successfully reversing privatisation of local water systems.

The government filed charges against Olivera in July 2001. That same month Olivera was given direct assurances by the Minister of Government Leopoldo Fernandez that charges had in fact been dropped.

This is clear harassment and a blatant violation of basic civil rights to association and expression.

Oscar Olivera was

released from physical detention on the afternoon of 27th November, but the charges have not been dropped.

He must report every 72 hours to the authorities, and can be detained again at any time.

### Demanding

His sister and fellow activist Marcela Olivera is asking supporters to send a simple, direct message to those in power here, demanding that such abuses must stop. She is asking for faxes and emails to:

President of Bolivia, Lic. Jorge Quiroga Ramirez, Presidencia de la Republica, Fax: (591-2) 220-4213, Email: presidencia@caoba.entel.net.bo

American Ambassador, Bolivia, Sr. Manuel Rocha, Embajador de Estados Unidos en Bolivia, Fax: (591-2) 243-3710,

With a copy to: Cochabamba Federation of Industrial Workers, Federación de Trabajadores Fabriles de Cochabamba, Fax (591-4) 450-3530, Email: fabrlico@supernet.com

# what we think

# FF destroyed the health service

The Irish health system is in crisis and empty promises from Fianna Fail will do nothing to change anything.

The much-vaunted strategy on health is nothing more than a pre-election stunt.

It promises an improved health system but in fact there is nothing concrete other than pushing ahead with privatisation.

The Fianna Fail answer for the health system is to encourage more profit making private companies.

Government policy has been to cut back on public health spending and force people towards private insurance.

### Soared

Private insurance, seen as the way to jump queues, has soared to 45 percent today.

But there remains over 25 percent of the population who have neither medical cards nor private insurance.

Yet McCreevey is refusing to extend the medical card scheme.

It was Fianna Fail that brought the health service to its knees.

Chronic under-funding of the health service increased in the eighties under Charles Haughey. It has continued ever since.

One issue that highlights the horrific state of the Irish health system is the high mortality rate of women with breast cancer in this country.

OECD figures show a 45 per cent mortality rate in the Ireland. Compared with approximately the same breast cancer incidence, Australian women have a mortality rate of only 33 per cent.

Dublin has a lower proportion of hospital beds per head of population than any other city in the EU.

### Scandalous

The direct result of this policy is clear and scandalous: If you are poor, you die younger.

Among Irish men aged 55 to 64, higher professionals had a death rate of 13 per 1,000 compared to 22 for the semi-skilled and 32 for the unskilled manual workers.

Over 92 per cent of funding for the health service comes from the pockets of PSRI workers. At the other end of the scale are the 80 percent of Irish consultants who have a lucrative private practice.

Consultants can earn up to £86,000 from the state but they are also receiving an average of another £87,000 from private insurance sector.

This means they have an incentive to treat their private patients sooner and better.

Unless the wealthy are taxed heavily and the power of consultants is broken, Irish workers will continue to suffer a poor health service.

As workers come under attack as recession hits, it is Fianna Fail and the rich vandals who robbed the health service to save themselves tax who should be made to pay.

## Where now for the anti war movement?

Despite the media and even some sections of the left claiming at every opportunity that the war in Afghanistan is over, the anti war movement is growing.

The carnage and chaos in Afghanistan combined with the prospect of America attacking other countries has led to thousands of people seeing through the hypocrisy of the 'war against terrorism'.

The demonstrations against the war have been magnificent. The task for all anti-war activists is to strengthen and deepen the movement. We have made a great start, but now we can go further.

That means setting new targets. The anti-war movement is still not strong enough among, for example, postal workers, bus drivers, civil servants, and so on. There is nothing inevitable about this.

Workers suffer most directly from the redundancies and cutbacks which are being pushed through disguised as the result of September 11th.

We need to take up the issue of the war and have it discussed and debated inside every union branch. We also need to build more local anti-war groups in every locality and workplace.

From now local groups around the country need to be organising protests and other events for the National Day of Action for December 15th.

As well as this local groups should try to send a delegation on the Globalise Resistance contingent from Ireland to the protests in Brussels on Dec 13/14th which have been backed by the Irish Anti War Movement.

For more information of anti war activities contact Rory at 087 9890330



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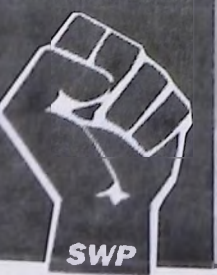
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**Burns report:**

# 11 plus replaced with selection by postcode

THERE HAS been a widespread welcome for the Burns Report on post-primary education in the North. But the welcome is based on an idealised—and in some respects inaccurate—version of the report's recommendations.

The welcome is based on the recommendation for the abolition of the hated 11-Plus and of academic selection generally, but also because its rhetoric advocates a more equal relationship between grammar and secondary schools.

**Achieve**

Generally, the report promises "equality of opportunity".

To achieve this, it proposes the establishment of networks of post-primary schools, called collegiates, with all schools in the collegiate having equal status.

This in theory is a good idea: schools working together, rather than in competition, sharing skills, expertise, specialisms and facilities could only be good for students and teachers alike.

The problem is that the rhetoric of the report is not backed up by practical proposals.

So, when the principal of Methody, acknowledged as Belfast's best resourced grammar school, was asked whether other schools in its collegiate would be able to use its swimming pool the answer was a clear NO.

The pool is used by its own pupils every hour of the school day, he replied.

The same would go for its top of the range computer suites, science labs, language labs and so on.

**Struggle**

Meanwhile, secondary schools in the same area struggle to provide basic lessons in science, computing etc.

## UDA decommission the UDP

**A UDP rally**

**The loyalist Ulster Defence Association formally announced last week the end of its political party, the UDP.**

The announcement merely confirmed what had been clear for the last two years, that the UDA was moving back into open sectarian warfare in an attempt to wreck the peace process.

Shortly after Johnny Adair's release from prison in 1999, the UDA set about rebuilding a sectarian fighting force.

Decades of under-funding of secondary schools and special status for grammars means there is no hope of "equality of opportunity" across schools unless huge resources are poured into the secondaries.

The real weakness of the report lies in its failure to even estimate what it would cost to bring secondary schools up to the same standards as grammars.

The report does talk about £45m being needed to implement the plan—but this money would be spent entirely on establishing the bureaucracy around the Collegiates, not on the schools themselves.

In this situation, grammar schools will

continue to be hugely over-subscribed.

Burns says this need not be the case, that parents will choose the school most suited to their child's needs.

But any parent considering where to send their child for second-level education is of course going to look to the best-resourced schools and those will continue to be the grammars.

Take the options open at present for children from Protestant families in the Derry area.

There are four options: Foyle and Londonderry College or Templemore Comprehensive on the cityside and Clondermott High or Faughan Valley High on the Waterside.

Despite the fact that they have to get several

open sectarian warfare, it was only two months ago that the British government formally declared that the UDA ceasefire was over.

But the UDA has still been allowed to openly organise marches and rallies with no interference from the police.

**Admitted**

Senior Unionist politicians, especially those from the anti-Agreement wing, maintain close relationships with the UDA leadership.

David Burnside, a leading UUP anti-Agree-

ment figure, admitted holding formal talks with the UDA ruling council two months ago, with the blessing of David Trimble.

Since then, the UDA's attacks have escalated. UDA members forced out of the Shankill Road during the feud were prominently involved in the intimidation campaign against the Holy Cross schoolchildren.

In recent weeks, the Red Hand Defenders (a UDA cover-name) have issued death threats against all Catholic building workers in Protestant areas of Derry.

buses and go through heavily nationalist areas to get to Foyle, most if not all of the children of middle-class Protestant families go to the grammar school.

Why do parents choose to force their children to leave home at 7.30 to get to Foyle when Clondermott High is within walking distance?

How will that change under the Burns proposals?

The answer comes down to resources.

**Resources**

Foyle has smaller classes and more modern resources than Clondermott.

Putting them in the same Collegiate will not persuade parents to send their children to Clonder-

**Eamonn****McCann**

## Covering up the Brothers' crimes

The "Prime Time" exposure of the savagery of the Christian Brothers drew a predictable response from politicians and media pundits. There were expressions of shock and pity. But no reckoning of the responsibility of political leaders, in the past or in the present.

Many will have had the unsettling thought that we've been here before. A child abuse scandal involving a Catholic institution... a flurry of outrage... stock words of concern from the usual suspects—and then, next to nothing.

We haven't had an apology from the Irish Labour Party for its role in promoting a false image of the Christian Brothers. And we aren't talking here of the distant past. It was only five years ago, in November 1996, that Labour Education Minister Niamh Breathnach led an all-party delegation to Rome for the beatification of Edmund Rice, the founder of the Brothers.

The depraved sadism of the Brothers had already been exposed in newspapers and television programmes.

In 1993, Irish newspapers had carried detailed accounts of the suffering of children in Brothers' institutions, North and South.

RTE, the *Sunday Tribune*, *Hot Press* and other outlets had dealt with the "export" of children to Australia, where Brothers subjected them to physical and sexual abuse.

The scandal of the Brothers' activities in Newfoundland had already sparked huge controversy in Canada.

**Tut-Tut**

In the midst of all that, a Labour Minister led 11 parliamentarians to Rome to hear the pope pronounce the founder of the organisation a saint.

This was a formal delegation, entirely State-funded. Not one TD raised an objection.

The same people now tut-tut at the "Prime Time" revelations.

A similar pattern is to be seen in the North. The brutality of Christian Brothers at the Brow of the Hill school in Derry—particularly to children from the nearby Termonbaca Home who didn't have parents to defend them—had long been exposed when the Brothers announced last year that they were pulling out of the city because of a shortage of personnel.

The announcement was greeted by hosannas of hypocrisy from the local Catholic bourgeoisie.

John Hume lathered public praise on the Brothers' contribution to Derry life. Not one SDLP or Sinn Féin councillor dissented.

In September last year, Nationalist politicians rushed to the Brothers' defence when a correspondent in the *Irish News* highlighted their vindictive violence towards vulnerable children. "Christian Brothers left legacy to be proud of" ran the headline above an aggressive defence of the Brothers by Sinn Féin MLA John Kelly. "We most certainly got the strap—but, with few exceptions, we deserved it", he intoned.

These examples could be multiplied and multiplied again. Despite the long succession of exposes of schools and orphanages run by religious orders, Nationalist politicians, North and South, have shown no willingness to bring

the perpetrators to book or readiness to recompense the victims or, even in general terms, to acknowledge the culpability of the State.

The 1996 trip to Rome wasn't a minor aberration. In the same year, Breathnach legislated to copperfasten Church control of State-funded schools. In the same year, too, her party colleague, Equality Minister Mervyn Taylor, exempted Catholic schools from key provisions of anti-discrimination law. The pilgrimage was an accurate indicator of where the State stood in relation to Church control of education, despite the exposure of the criminal misuse of its control.

Against that background, there is no reason to believe that the kerfuffle over the Prime Time story will amount to anything in the end. The experience of abuse survivors at the hands of the Lafoy commission bears this out.

The Church's moral authority may have been much diminished in the minds of the majority of the Irish people. But opportunist parties with no coherent ideology are still unnerved at the notion of direct confrontation. Whatever their travails in Canada, the US and Australia, the Brothers can still count on mainstream politicians in Ireland to ignore the scream of history and cover up their crimes.

**STOP THE WAR...STOP THE WAR...STOP THE**

# Victims of the US's bloodlust

## Afghan women freed?

**WE MAY never know how many women have been blown to pieces in Afghanistan by B-52s and cluster bombs.**

That has not stopped some people claiming that the war in Afghanistan is motivated

by the high ideals of women's liberation.

That will be news to the rulers of the West's traditional ally in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia.

Women there are forced to cover themselves, and are restricted from public activity in much the same way as

Afghan women under the Taliban.

The Taliban's religious police were an identikit version of the Saudis' monstrous Department for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice.

All that may be true but don't the images of Afghan women lifting off their burqas (all-encompassing veils) show that some good has come to women from this war?

Many women in Kabul and other cities do have hopes for the future.

But they are also deeply fearful. Observer journalist Chris Stephen described two weeks ago how foreign photographers were paying women to take off their burqas, only for them to put them back on again a few moments later:

### Suffering

"The fact remains that the Northern Alliance feels the same way about women as the Taliban did - they are chattel, to be tolerated but kept out of real life."

The suffering of women in Afghanistan is far deeper rooted than the five years of the Taliban regime.

The many ways in which Afghan women are terribly oppressed stem from decades of war and economic regression.

The Taliban could not have existed but for the wars which have devastated the country for the last quarter of a century. Those years of war left probably two million people dead.

### Creating

Liberation for women in Afghanistan depends above all on bringing immense material progress, and creating conditions where the

mass of poor women begin to fight for their rights themselves.

This is the very opposite of what all the powers which have been involved in the devastation of the country have brought.

How can there even be talk of liberation when in Afghanistan:

● 1,700 women out of 100,000 die giving birth—the highest figure in the world.

● No contraception means many women have eight children - two of whom will die before the age of five.

● Life expectancy for women is about 4 years.

The history of Afghanistan is testimony to the fact that free relations for women and men come only from free development from below.

The very best the West can pretend to offer Afghanistan today is the kind of chaotic integration into the world economy that has occurred in some developing countries.

### Precarious

Women and men in many parts of the Third World have been pulled away from the countryside (and traditional social roles) and into sprawling cities where they live a precarious existence.

Cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Bangkok, Jakarta, Mexico City and many others are full of women, girls and boys who are driven by poverty to prostitution.

Some women are lucky enough to find work, but only in sweatshops or special enterprise zones where they are exploited by multinationals and subject to the sexual harassment of foremen and managers.

This is a "modern" alternative to traditional village life. It is not liberation, but market-driven oppression.



A victim of US bombing

"WE ARE going to try and kill as many of the Taliban as possible." Those are the chilling words of US deputy defence secretary Paul Wolfowitz. The bloodbath the US wanted has happened.

With the fall of Kabul, George W Bush, Tony Blair and their media cheerleaders tried to give the impression that the war in Afghanistan was all but over.

The truth was that the killing had only just begun, and the US didn't care much whether those being killed were Taliban

or not.

The US defence department admits that it has now dropped over 10,000 bombs on Afghanistan.

The heaviest bombing yet came as the US pounded the southern Afghan city of Kandahar.

### Bombing

The bombing was far heavier than that inflicted on cities like Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif.

A glimpse of the horror brought by US bombs in the area around Kandahar came from journalist Robert Fisk, writing in the London *Independent*.

Fisk, reported the words of one refugee. "The Americans just destroyed

our homes," he cried. "I saw my house disappear. It was a big plane that spat smoke and soaked the ground with fire."

"For a man who couldn't read and had never left Kandahar province in all his life, it was a chilling enough description of the Spectre, the American 'bumblebee' aircraft that picks off militiamen and civilians with equal ferocity.

"And down the tree lined road came hundreds more refugees—old women with dark faces, babies carried in the arms of young women in burqas and boys with tears on their faces—all telling the same story.

"This is what it is like to be on the losing side in the American-Afghan bloodbath. Everywhere it was the same story of desperation and terror."

## Charade in Bonn

**THE WORLD'S media descended on Bonn at the end of November to cover the talks between the rival Afghan warlords.**

Another meeting was taking place thousands of miles away of people who have a far greater say in the fate of Afghanistan.

Representatives of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and of the bureaucracy of the United Nations met in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, to discuss Afghanistan's economic future.

## Fuelling their allies' attacks

**THE THE role that the US and Britain played in the bloody massacre of hundreds of Taliban prisoners in a fort near Mazar-e-Sharif makes George W Bush and Tony Blair guilty of war crimes.**

Hundreds of Taliban troops who had surrendered were taken by the forces of Northern Alliance warlord General Dostum. US and British forces on the ground in Mazar directed Northern Alliance fighters in the butchery of the prisoners.

A German TV station broadcast footage of a US soldier calling in air strikes on the fort. The bombs and rockets soon arrived as US Black Hawk helicopters and deadly AC130 gunships rained down death.

"The mission by the Americans and Northern Alliance is to kill every single one," reported eyewitness Alex Perry, a journalist for Time magazine. Many of the dead had their hands tied.

The CIA and SAS operatives ordered the Northern Alliance to pour oil in to the prison cellars and set it alight. When one prisoner had survived they fired rockets into his hiding place for half a day till he was dead.

### Massacre

It is now known that before the prison massacre hundreds of Taliban prisoners were killed in a school in Mazar when it was blasted by US war planes.

And the massacres are happening across Afghanistan. Associated Press correspondent Ellen Nickmeyer reported from the

northern town of Kunduz on the scenes that accompanied its capture by Northern Alliance forces:

"The opposition forces which have taken Kunduz from the Taliban after two weeks of siege exacted bloody reprisals."

She described how "100 Taliban have been killed".

She also reported that other prisoners "had been taken away with their arms tied" to an unknown fate.

The Red Cross reported that up to 600 bodies had been found in the streets of Mazar-e-Sharif in the wake of the "liberation" of that city.

It would not rule out that they had been victims of summary execution in the wake of the fall of the town.

The US has thrown its military power behind one gang of warlords in Afghanistan's civil war. Journalist Rory McCarthy reported

from near Kabul:

"Armed warlords operating in the hills of eastern Afghanistan have begun ambushing and looting cars and buses as large areas of the countryside slide back into anarchy."

### Carnage

There can only be more carnage brought by US bombs, the butchery carried out by its allies, and the chaos unleashed as local warlords seize the chance to carve out local fiefdoms.

"Some of the bodies lying on the streets had their big toes tied together so they could not run. They had been executed.

"All around the [Northern Alliance] soldiers' feet lay the Taliban they had massacred," said London *Independent* journalist Justin Huggler in Kunduz.

**STOP THE WAR...STOP THE WAR...STOP THE**

## CIVIL WAR LOOMS

# Is UN a solution for Afghanistan?

THE US and British bombing of Afghanistan has unleashed a bitter scramble for power between rival military commanders, mostly based on different ethnic groups. Each of them has support from the competing states which border Afghanistan. This has created turmoil.

### Destruction

Some people see the United Nations (UN) as being an independent force that can help bring peace to Afghanistan.

But any UN intervention will be Western destruction in another guise.

Deepening civil war was the outcome of the US-led intervention in Somalia, in east Africa, in the early 1990s.

That took place under the banner of the UN and involved US, Belgian, Canadian and Pakistani forces.

Ordinary people welcomed their arrival. So did rival warlords, who had been built up by the US and Russia during the Cold War. Yet within months UN forces alienated all sections of the population.

Their only answer to the grinding poverty and the complex political divisions was a combination of repression and siding with one armed group against another. So General Aidiid went from being the West's best hope for producing a stable government to being public enemy number one.

Somalis were treated as a brutal horde who responded only to force.

UN troops opened fire on a mass demonstration of Somali civilians, killing over 500 people. The UN left in 1994 with the country still in ruins and the warlords strengthened.

### Intensified

Pre-war commentators will not mention Somalia. They do claim *Kosovo* shows that a combination of US military action and UN political intervention can bring democracy to Afghanistan.

But the NATO war in the Balkans two years ago led first to intensified Serbian attacks on Kosovan Albanians and then, after the "victory", to the ethnic cleansing of over 200,000 Serbs and Roma Gypsies from Kosovo.

The UN administration brought in by the West to run Kosovo has brought the exact opposite of democracy.

The administration runs Kosovo in the manner of a colony.

All decisions are taken by Western-appointed bureau-

crats. The UN administration has been in the hands of a German, a Frenchman and now a Dutchman.

He is in charge of the judiciary, police force and public services. UN officials and troops live it up while Kosovo remains the poorest part of Europe.

The Dutch administrator blatantly interfered in last Saturday's general election by attending an election rally for the party favoured by the West, a trick learnt from colonial governors during the British Empire. And just like under the empire, the elections are to bodies which have no power.

Meanwhile gangsters run much of the economy (in collusion with the UN authorities) and Kosovo has become a centre for prostitution and heroin shipments into Europe.

The intervention in Afghanistan is already more disastrous than in Kosovo. UN rule will be even more brutal.

Afghanistan is more divided between warlords who fought each other in the early 1990s, killing over 50,000 people.

They have support among different sections of the population through shared opposition to other ethnic groups and military forces.

Any central authority in the capital, Kabul, will find itself either having to repress those bases of support or cutting deals with the warlords and, crucially, the states which back them.

### Invaded

Every government in Kabul over the last quarter of a century has done that. The Russians invaded in 1979 to set up a stable pro-Russian government. It took the cities, but fought (and lost) an eight year war against guerrillas who held the countryside.

Its attempts to make alliances with different leaders merely contributed to further chaos after it fell in 1992.

The divisions in Afghanistan are greater today.

The talk of "nation building" and a UN-brokered government conjure up all the images of 19th century European colonialism.

Now the big capitalist powers declare countries such as Afghanistan, which have been torn apart by the outside interference and the world market, "failed states".

Their solution is devastating US military action, followed by putting whole peoples under the jurisdiction of the UN.

It in turn operates completely undemocratically to try to produce a pro-capitalist, pro-Western regime and to meet the conflicting interests of the minor powers in the region.

Economic aid is at best pitiful and channelled into the hands of favoured corrupt leaders.

That has happened in Kosovo.

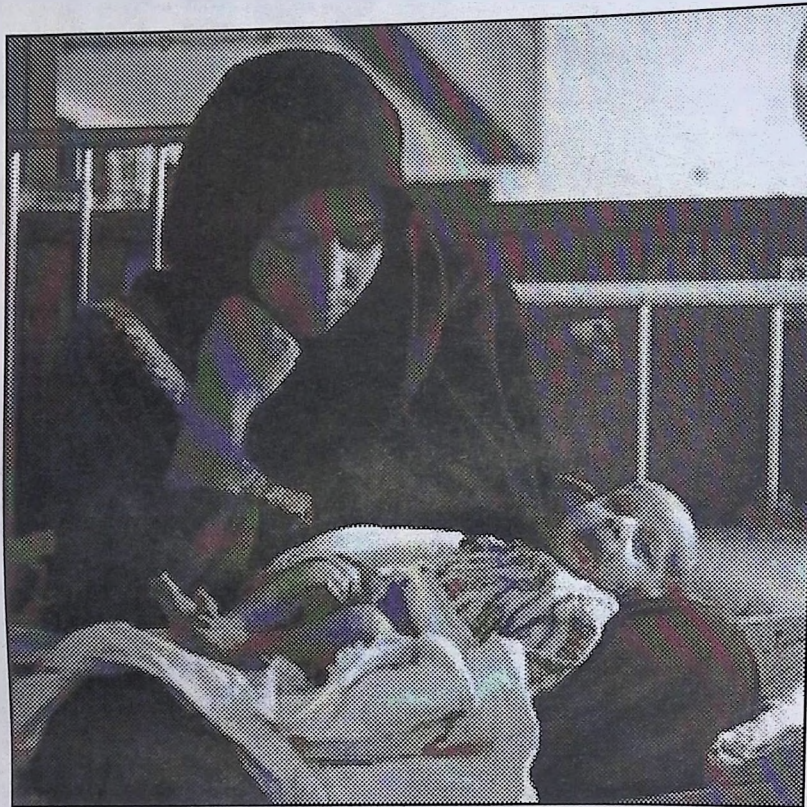
The handful of multinationals that are interested in the area have tried to grab its paltry resources.

The UN is not a counter to US power—it is the civil service of the new imperialism.

# Iraq and Palestine

# Bush's War

# the



600 children die each month because of US sanctions on Iraq

**A**FGHANISTAN IS just the start." Those were the words of George W Bush as he made a sickeningly violent speech to 15,000 troops, including the 101st Airborne Division—the aptly named "Screaming Eagles". Bush whipped them into a frenzy by chanting "Airborne assault!" as they pumped their fists in the air.

Having unleashed carnage and chaos on Afghanistan, Bush is now preparing to step up the US assault against Iraq. He said it was up to Saddam Hussein to "prove he's not evil".

He said Iraq would face the consequences if it refused to allow UN weapons inspectors into the country.

### Thugs

The thugs at the top of his administration will stop at nothing to assert US power around the world.

"We are going to turn the world into a pin cushion," was how one US intelligence source

put it.

Condoleezza Rice, the former Chevron oil executive who is now National Security Adviser, said recently, "We have said for a number of years that Iraq is a threat to the region and to American interests. We didn't need 11 September to tell us that. "We will deal with that situation eventually."

British sources have said that military action could come in late January. Another key figure pushing for an attack on Iraq is Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defence. He is a close associate of Condoleezza Rice and a fellow member of a Bush inner circle group known as "the Vulcans".

At a recent seminar former Reagan official Michael Ledeen said, "No stages. This is total war. We are fighting a variety of enemies and all this talk of first we are going to do Afghanistan, then we will do Iraq, then we will take a look around—that is entirely the wrong way to go about it.

### Total War

If we just let our vision of the world go forth, and we don't try to be clever and piece together diplomatic solutions, but just wage a total war, then I think we will do very well and our children will sing great songs about us years from now."

The US has been brutalising the people of Iraq for over a decade.

Sanctions on Iraq have killed over a million people.

According to UNICEF more than 5,000 children under five have died every month, because

of the "prolonged measures imposed by the Security Council and the effects of war" on the population.

Sanctions prevent food supplies, medical supplies, such as heart and kidney machines, and water pumps from going to Iraq.

Even agricultural supplies and safety and fire equipment are also banned, as they may contribute to the construction of

weapons of mass destruc-

As if Saddam Hussein make weapons of mass destruction from wheelbarrow

Disgracefully these supplies are supported by government.

In 1990 Iraq had one of the healthiest and best populations in the world with the lowest child mortality rate and the lowest. Today it is the highest on earth.

# At war w

Even before the suicide attacks of early December, Israel, with US backing, launched an all-out assault on Palestinians in the wake of September 11. Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon ordered gunships and troops to invade Jericho, Jenin and Ramallah, killing 24 Palestinians.

### Shelled

Since then scores of villages have been shelled, homes bulldozed, and killings of Palestinians have doubled as Israeli forces try to smash the year long resistance to brutal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian lands in the West Bank.

The Israelis "are just shooting at anything that moves—even dogs, cats or cars," said Maher Abu Amsha, a Palestinian whose cousin was killed in his home by a stray Israeli bullet.

For example near Nablus last month twenty-four year-old Maher Daghlas was shot in cold

blood as he marched home to break after sunset Ramadan.

Israeli forces then held injured man for hours, only to dead body to ar

The uprising in the Al-Aqsa

began in September. Ariel Sharon accused hundreds of troops marching to the Aqsa mosque

giant assertion of determination to Arab East

Palestinian protest with sticks and were gunned Israeli forces.

After nearly months of intifada 710 Palestinian Israelis have

at least 500 killed and dozens with me homeless.

### Attack

Nablus has been attacked with helicopters and G-16 fighter jets one-ton bomb

# Sharon's war crim

ISRAELI PRIME minister Ariel Sharon faces a renewed inquiry into his role in the slaughter of over 2,000 Palestinian refugees in Beirut in 1982.

The US state has ignored that war crime for 19 years. It is turning a

blind eye to Israel's ties today.

Instead it continues to c Palestine's resisting the b occupation, an which can co because of US military aid.

WHAT DO SOCIALISTS SAY ABOUT

# Imperialism and capitalism

**MANY PEOPLE in the anti war and anti capitalist movement say that Imperialism is what lies behind Bush's war in Afghanistan. But what does the Imperialism.**

Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* was written as Europe was plunged into the carnage of the First World War.

### Inevitable

In it Lenin sought to explain how war was not a ghastly accident or a mistaken policy but the inevitable outcome of imperialism, which was itself "a special stage in development of capitalism".

While most of the socialist parties of Europe rushed to support their own rulers in the war, Lenin argued it was the duty of revolutionaries in the imperialist powers to oppose the war, particularly the war efforts of the rulers of their own countries.

Some of the detail of world Lenin described has been overtaken by developments but the essence of his analysis remains as true today.

Capitalist competition between firms leads to the big gobbling up the small through take-overs and mergers and therefore the concentration and centralisation of capital into big monopolies.

### Dominate

It's the Exxons and Texacos that dominate the oil industry. Microsoft has famously driven nearly all its competitors to the wall as it practically monopolises the PC software market.

These huge monopolies are themselves more and more integrated with particular states which defend their interests.

Alongside this increasing national organisation of capitalism is the internationalisation of production and markets. National monopolies must compete at a global level for access to raw materials, investments and markets.

This leads to devastating consequences. Competition between capitals is less and less purely economic—who can supply goods at the cheapest prices—but increasingly involves military rivalries among nation-states.

Of course the various nation-states do not command equal amounts of economic and military clout.

The largest and most advanced states—the imperialist powers—are in a position to dominate economically and/or militarily the rest of the world.

### Conflicts

This inevitably leads to friction and conflicts—and wars—of two sorts.

One is the struggle of states, nations and peoples oppressed by the imperialist powers to break out of imperialist domination—national liberation wars.

The other sort of war is that of rival imperialist countries fighting among themselves over domination of the world.

It is also true that imperialism has not remained unchanging. In the period of classical imperialism, roughly from the last quarter of the 19th century to the end of the Second World War the Great Powers of Europe were continually either at war or on the brink of war as they rapidly expanded their colonies.

This was the period of the "scramble for Africa". After the Second World War until 1990 the world was dominated militarily by the two imperialist superpowers, Russia and America and other states were in practice forced to identify their interests with of

the two camps. A number of colonies were able to throw of the colonial powers and develop economically in the long post war boom, but others—even if formally independent—remained stagnant and impoverished.

Since the collapse of the USSR the old certainties of the Cold War have given way to a more multi-polar world in which the US is seeking to assert global authority.

### Accelerated

US military spending is greater than all the military spending of the next 13 countries combined.

At the same time the US share of world trade and manufacturing is less than it was during the Cold War.

Many of the states formerly dominated by the USSR—the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe and particularly Central Asia—are now up for grabs. And the US fears regional powers—especially China—could begin to become rivals for regional dominance.

That is why US military intervention has accelerated in the last ten years from the Gulf War of 1991 to the war today cynically dubbed "Enduring Freedom" with its unlimited objectives and potential target of 50 countries.

### Defend

The US ruling class today is seeking "full spectrum dominance" to prevent the emergence of any potential rival and pries open economic opportunities for its multi-nationals.

The war is the brutal face of a new imperialism that defends the profits of the system.

The US military is the armed wing US capital and the World Bank, WTO and IMF are its debt collectors. Stopping the war means tackling the system that caused it.

by KEVIN WINGFIELD

# War with the world

measures the Security effects of war

prevent food supplies, such as machines, and from going to

tural supplies fire equipment as they may construction of

mass destruction.

An Saddam Hussein might make waves of mass destruction from oil barrows.

Disparately these sanctions are reported by the Irish government.

In Iraq had one of the best-educated population in the world; its child mortality rate was one of the lowest. Today it is among the highest in the world.

Denis Halliday, the UN representative in Iraq resigned his post over the sanctions saying, "We are in the process of destroying an entire society. It is illegal and immoral."

### Dominates

The sanctions aren't there to bring down a tyrant but to ensure the US dominates the Middle East. Iraq has one of the

second largest proven oil reserves and some 11 percent of the world's oil.

The US has long attempted to dominate the region, not out of concern for democracy but with the aim of controlling the oil profits.

Up until its invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the US were quite happy to do business with Saddam Hussein, while he brutalised his population. But

when he stepped out of line with western interests, the US bombed Iraq back to the state of a pre-industrial society.

At least 100,000 Iraqis were killed during the Gulf war. The US and Britain continue to drop bombs on Iraq, while the UN sanctions are slowly strangling the Iraqi people.

Now the want to step up the attack.

# war with the Palestinians

ore the suicide army December. US backing. an all-out Palestinians in September 11. minister Ariel red gunships to invade Jenin and killing 24

blood in he made his way home to break his fast after sunset during Ramadan.

Israeli occupation forces then held the badly injured man for over three hours, only to return a dead body to ambulances.

The uprising, dubbed the Al-Aqsa Intifada, began in September 2000. Ariel Sharon accompanied by hundreds of Israeli troops marched to the Al Aqsa mosque in an arrogant assertion of Israeli determination to dominate Arab East Jerusalem. Palestinian protesters rioted with sticks and stones and were gunned down by Israeli forces.

After nearly fourteen months of Intifada at least 710 Palestinians and 188 Israelis have been killed, at least 500 homes bulldozed with many families homeless.

### Attacked

Nablus has been attacked with Apache helicopters and Gaza with F-16 fighter jets, dropping one-ton bombs on build-



ings in the centre of Gaza City. Tank and Infantry units have entered Beit Jala and Jenin, and Israeli death squads operate regularly in Tulkarm, Hebron and Ramallah.

At least forty-two people have been summarily assassinated. Palestinians have been under siege for months, and their economy has all but collapsed, leaving thousands to cope with grinding poverty.

The extensive restrictions on freedom of movement have not only prevented Palestinians from reaching hospitals and work but have also cut off access to drinking water in 218 West Bank villages while diverted water fills the swimming pools and sprinkles the green lawns of the Israeli rich.

In addition Amnesty has accused the Israeli forces of torturing prisoners.

Sharon is only able to carry out his terror because the US has given a total of over \$92 billion in aid, most of it military, to maintain Israel as its watchdog in the oil rich Middle East.

### Punish

Israel has carried out the role which the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz foresaw in 1951: "Israel is to become the watchdog.

There is no fear that Israel will undertake any aggressive policy towards the Arab states when this would explicitly contradict the wishes of the US and Britain.

"But if for any reasons the Western powers should sometimes prefer to close their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or several

neighbouring states whose discourtesy to the West went beyond the bounds of the permissible."

The US has backed Israel in its expansionist wars with Arab neighbours in 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973 as a means of preventing any regime hostile to Western interests gaining dominance in the region.

The US fears that its client regimes in the Middle East could be toppled by revolts which threaten US interests.

It is more confident about Israel, by far the world's biggest recipient of US financial and military aid.

Former US president Ronald Reagan put it simply: "Israel has a force in the Middle East that is of benefit to us."

## on's war crimes

IME minister on faces a inquiry into his daughter of overinian refugees 1982. state has war crime for is turning a

blind eye to Israeli atrocities today. Instead it calls for the Palestinians to cease resisting the brutal Israeli occupation, which can continue only because of US arms and military aid.

**'Sinn Fein did not have to become the party bringing the Private Finance Initiative into the schools and hospitals. They could have organised to oppose these measures.'**

# Left wing republicans speak out

**TOMMY GORMAN** served 13 years in jail for IRA membership. He was never a member of Sinn Fein but saw himself as part of the wider republican movement.

**ANTHONY MACINTYRE** served 18 years in jail for IRA membership. He took part in the blanket protests and joined Sinn Fein for three years after he came out of jail but later left the party.

Both are now ardent opponents of the direction Sinn Fein has

taken and have voiced their criticism on many occasions. They have had to stand up to considerable pressure to express their views. On one occasion Anthony MacIntyre faced a large picket on this house from republican supporters.

*Socialist Worker* interviewed them and LIAM O RUAIRC, a long time left wing activist who works with them publishing number of dissident magazines.

*Decommissioning has been described an event of major historic importance. How do you respond to this latest development?*

**TOMMY GORMAN:** I am neutral on it. Adams had already turned an effective revolutionary organisation into an unquestioning apolitical movement. The whole issue of decommissioning put the focus on the IRA as if they were the cause of the war and not freedom fighters. It was part of a pacification process not a peace process.

**LIAM O RUAIRC:** The real issue is not the decommissioning of weapons but the decommissioning of principles and that has been going on for some time.

**ANTHONY MACINTYRE:** It was a case of throwing out the bath water after the baby had already been thrown out. The main reason they got rid of the weapons was to offer a sop to Unionism.

People died to hold onto those weapons but there was no ripple of protest after decommissioning was announced.

I remember when senior IRA men in West Belfast were encouraging everyone to get out and wave flags when the ceasefire was first announced.

I thought it was a bit like turkeys waving for Christmas so there were no chance of me joining it. I was not against the ceasefire itself but the surrender of an independent stance.

*You are opposed to the current direction of Sinn Fein and you are against a return to armed struggle. So what is your alternative?*

**ANTHONY MACINTYRE:** People often say there is no alternative but there are plenty of alternatives. Sinn Fein could have gone into opposition.

They could have become the party of radical politics in the North rather than trying to be in government on both sides of the border.

Even at the level of nationalist politics, they could have done more. They could have stood out for full cross border institutions or joint authority as a minimum demand. There are always alternatives.

**TOMMY GORMAN:** Sinn Fein did not have to become the party bringing the Private Finance Initiative into the schools and hospitals. They could have organised to oppose these measures.

**LIAM O RUAIRC:** What difference has Sinn Fein made for working class people who use the Royal Victoria Hospital in West Belfast? No difference at all!

*The right wing press keeps telling us that September 11th changed the world. In what way has it changed Sinn Fein?*

**TOMMY GORMAN:** It only speeded up the process of compromise. Once you slaughter the first sacred cow, you get used to it. The Sinn Fein leadership now enjoys slaughtering their cows.

**ANTHONY MACINTYRE:** It gave Adams another opportunity to set about de-radicalising the movement.

The party has strong links with US big business and wants to keep them.

How can you be a radical party when you have links with people like Bill Flynn who runs the Mutual Life insurance or Chuck Feeney who has a big duty free business?

When Bill Clinton came here it took a young student, Andrew King, to stand up and heckle him.

The republican leadership were doing a Mexican wave of appreciation for Clinton. They probably joined in the hissing of Andrew King.

*How has the republican movement dealt with issues of class division in areas like West Belfast?*

**TOMMY GORMAN:** You only have to look at the building industry around here to get the answer to that. There is a major building firm in West Belfast which are seen as strong republican supporters.

They are paying their workers as little as £2.50 an hour.

They have connection into local politics and are starting to get contracts for big jobs.

They have a few politicians already in their pockets. They are the Rackman's of the building industry.

In 1995, we interviewed a few ex-prisoners who were working for this firm. We wanted to expose the scandal of how they were treating their workers.

But the republican press would not run the story. That firm had already helped Sinn Fein in some of their building projects.

**ANTHONY MACINTYRE:** You are starting to get a real disparity of wealth among republican supporters and IRA volunteers. At the top there are some who are into property speculation while others a living in poverty.

*You have talked about the betrayal of republican principles and have condemned the economic policies of Sinn Fein. So why do you think there is not more discontent in the ranks of the movement? Why are there not many more people criticising where Adams is taking the movement?*

**TOMMY GORMAN:** The republican grassroots are told they are the most political people in Europe. But they are denied the means of debating political



ideas and are dictated to from the top.

When we pushed for more education in the IRA, this was seen as a threat.

**ANTHONY MACINTYRE:** The grassroots are conditioned to view loyalty to the leadership as the same as loyalty to the struggle. There is a large body of theories and ideas in republicanism. But Adams has reduced all this to claiming that republicanism is what he says it is.

In the early seventies the IRA grew out of a people's insurrection.

Many looked to local leaders in their areas - people like Martin McGuinness in Derry or Tommy Gorman here in West Belfast.

As the struggle grew it imposed a need for centralisation. The fight against the Brits meant there was a need for some control. But Adams has used all this to build an ethos where there is little questioning.

*But the republican grassroots are not sheep. It is one thing to hold together a movement that is full of contradictions when they are engaged in armed struggle. The conflicts will start to emerge when the republican*

*grassroots find themselves suffering from the privatisation policies being imposed by Sinn Fein ministers in government.*

**TOMMY GORMAN:** You are dealing with a movement that has been built on blind loyalty.

I met a prominent republican the day before decommissioning was announced and he told me it could never happen.

The day after the same man was giving all the reasons why it was necessary. That is what you are up against.

**ANTHONY MACINTYRE:** We are dealing with a movement that has got used to selling its principles.

If there was a rise in racism in the South after the collapse of the Celtic Tiger, Sinn Fein would swing right and you could even have Adams operating like a Jorg Haider.

And you could not look to the republican grassroots to break from these policies.

*You are being very pessimistic. The leadership is extremely opportunist but if they are winning support in the*

*South by using left wing and anti-establishment rhetoric, they will have huge problems if they join a coalition with Fianna Fail.*

*58 percent of the last Sinn Fein Ard Fheis voted to stay out of coalition.*

*Surely the left should be appealing to republican supporters to get involved in struggles over issues like privatisation by backing the NIPSA rally against PFI on December 4th.*

*That way people will see from their own experience where the class loyalty of their leadership lies.*

**ANTHONY MACINTYRE:** Pessimists are always right! The unions are now seen as a sectional body and are often not able to mobilise wider public support.

That is one of the legacies of the Thatcher years.

The main thing is to establish an open discursive space where we can debate alternatives.

That is the only way politics will start to revive.



# in my view

## STARING REALITY IN THE FACE

JUST WHEN it appeared that television couldn't get any worse, it gave us *Popstars*.

Most people who actually like music have spent many a frustrating hour wondering at the fact that the bands the big labels are propelling to the top of the charts are churning out manufactured nonsense they don't write, don't sing - perhaps this is a blessing - and can't dance to.

Boybands, girlbands, teenbands - they're barely out of nappies and already they have a manager, PR agent and a credit card. Far from trying to hide this sham state of affairs, ITV and now RTE have made it into a point of pride.

Popstars shows the sordid workings of the music industry in the hunt for its next meal-ticket.

Thousands of children are invited to humiliate themselves on stage for a place in the next one-hit-wonder.

Each week, more and more people are eliminated until the producers have selected the next big thing.

And who is the great cultural mind behind this soulless assault on our eardrums? You won't be surprised to read it's Louis Walsh, the man who gave us Boyzone and Westlife and once declared on television that his favourite book was his cheque-book.

Also feeding at the trough are a former Eurovision song contest winner and someone else who no one's ever heard of.

A few years ago, they wouldn't have got away with making such a low-grade, second-rate, boring waste of airtime. But the last few years have seen the rise of the "reality" tv show - a misnamed genre that sells itself on its "rawness" - that's media speak for badly made and cheap.

### Event

A recent poll by US television network, CBC, suggests that since September 11th, 57% of Americans say they are less likely to watch "reality tv" shows.

The ability of television to exploit any event to turn it into a "television event" means many people initially thought that the Twin Towers collapsing was footage from a movie. Not so surprising, as what passes for news is increasingly about creating a spectacle.

The media likes to present itself as neutral - just passing on information to the viewer, when in fact it is closely connected to the political establishment and a key weapon of the ruling class.

All sane people were appalled and sickened at the sight of the mass murder of office workers and airline passengers on September 11th, but to the media, this is an event to be played over and over, simply a video clip argument in favour of the war.

The first reality tv programmes evolved out of the documentaries that - quite laudably - instead of interviewing politicians and spokesmen, focused on the lives and struggles of ordinary people, coping with illness, poverty, addiction, etc.

Then came a series of programmes set in work places - especially airports and hospitals - the "real life" equivalent of *ER* and *Casualty*.

The myth was that the workers became the focus, their trials and tribulations documented by the camera; in fact the programmes tended to ridicule and trivialise the staff - making drama out of minor incidents and never giving any sense of what it's like to work an eighty hour week in a hospital or a 16-hour shift throwing baggage onto airplanes.

But at least the people who made these workplace documentaries were trying to do something worthwhile. The real money in reality tv was earned by the voyeuristic peeps of *ER*, *Survivor* and *Fear Factor*. The first is based on exploitation, the second on brutality and the third on humiliation.

*Big Brother* sold itself on not interfering with its subjects - put ten people in a house, seal them off, point a camera at them and wait.

In fact, the producers were constantly interfering - when ratings started to flag due to a lack of anything much happening, a jacuzzi was introduced in the hope of generating some nudity! In the Netherlands, one contestant flipped out and attacked another. You must imagine this to be a bad thing, but to the producers it was just one more notch in the ratings.

Reality television is as manufactured as bands and the music *Popstars* will produce.

by PAUL McCARTHY

### film

# Tolkein about my generation

by JENNIFER  
FLYNN

RECENT POLLS by Waterstone's bookshop and others found that *Lord of the Rings* was the most popular book of the 20th century.

The book (or three books, whichever you like) has stayed in print for almost 50 years and sold more than 50 million copies.

The film—the first of three was made over the last two years in New Zealand—has an overall budget of £210 million, three times that of *Titanic*.

### East Timor

New Zealand is already gearing its tourist industry towards visitors who will come to "see" Middle Earth in the next few years.

The New Zealand army was heavily involved in the making of the film, only getting out of their orc costumes to go to East Timor.



Reactionary 'mythology for middle England'

The film industry's expectation is that a big budget film has to make three times its original budget to be considered a success and pundits are sure

this will be easily achieved.

The book has been a bible to environmental activists, Christian mystics and counter culture American hip-

pies in the 60's.

Tolkien described it as a "mythology for England" and created languages, a social and military history, religions, maps and

### book

## A flawed story of love and the Easter Rising

At *Swim Two Boys* is an unconventional Irish love story.

Unconventional because it is a story of the love that develops between two young men, and because it is set in the years immediately preceding the Easter Rising.

Doyler is a smart tough working class kid, proud member of the Citizen Army.

Jim is the more meditative character, striving to get a decent education which can help the family move up in the world.

### Characters

The book is peopled with characters who reflect their times.

Jim's dad is a former sergeant in the British Army, pursuing the illusion

that the family shop is on the verge of catering to customers more wealthy and prestigious than the impoverished community that surround it.

Eveline MacMurrough is an intelligent, ruthless aristocratic rebel, a synthesis of Countess Markiewicz and Maude Gonne.

Her cynical brother has recently been released from two years hard labour in an English prison, not for rebel activity but, like Oscar Wilde, for having been caught having an affair with a man.

Several real historical figures like Pearse, Connolly and Edward Carson make minor appearances in the book.

The title of the book is a reference to Flann O'Brien's *At Swim Two Birds*, and at times the narrative veers wildly off into giddy mocking,

strange language that suggests O'Brien, or Joyce in the more stream of thought parts of *Ulysses*.

But these episodes are not really the book's strength, which is the portrayal of love awakening out of the confusion of adolescence, under the severe circumstances of Catholic morality and state repression.

Refreshing though it is, to find such a story set amongst socialists and rebels, readers of *Socialist Worker* will be disappointed in how they are portrayed.

The overall impression that you get of the Rising is that it is the work of dangerously charismatic nationalists.

Connolly is portrayed as having reneged on socialism to become Commander-In-Chief of the Rising.

calendars for Middle Earth.

Tolkien constructed an alternative world, and put huge effort into creating the illusion of reality for it. This is no ordinary swords-and-sandals fantasy story.

The book is fundamentally a rejection of the post first world war England that Tolkien and his friends at Oxford hated so much.

Industrial development, the decline of the monarchy and religion, the spread of democracy and rationalism and the movement from the countryside to the city are all developments that Tolkien wrote out of his alternative world.

*Lord of the Rings* expresses a longing for a country life based on continuity, where everyone knows their place and there's a place for everyone, safe and secure.

The guardians of this "shire" represent tradition, authenticity and purity of blood and culture.

Tolkien was obsessed with documenting imaginary ancestral genealogies which show how a hero can be the king because of his ancestors.

### Feudal

It is the world of a feudal paradise, where despite some deaths (always of minor characters) good will triumph over evil, because that it is what good must do, the few will fight on behalf of the many, only the wise, adult types, will understand how the world really works.

Oh and there are only maybe five women (including elves) on the whole of Middle Earth.

The books represent the desire for an escape from the modern world into a simplified place of high romance.

There is nothing wrong with escapism. But as the fantasy writer Michael Moorcock puts it, "jailers don't mind escapism, it's escape

— CONOR KOSTICK

**where we stand**

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

**FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM**

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

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

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

**FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST**

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

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

**FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION**

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

We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry.

We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

**FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH**

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army.

Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class.

Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states.

We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only and when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

**FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT**

Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it. We support the leaders when they fight but oppose them when they betray workers. We stand for independent rank and file action.

**FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**

To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWP aims to build such a party here.

**Socialist Worker public meetings**

# Marx, Globalisation and Resistance



**BELFAST**  
Tuesday December 11th 7:30pm  
Peter Froggatt Centre, Queens University.  
**CORK**  
Wednesday December 12th 8pm  
Shandon Court hotel  
**DERRY**  
Tuesday December 11th 8pm  
The Junction Bishop St  
**GALWAY**  
Wednesday December 12th,

Currans Hotel Eyre Square 8pm  
**DROGHEDA**  
Wednesday December 12th 8pm  
Venue to be announced,  
**DUBLIN**  
Monday 17th December  
Wynns Hotel, Middle Abbey St  
Speaker John Rees SWP (Britain)  
**WATERFORD**  
Tuesday December 18th 8pm  
ATGWU Hall, Keiser St

**ISSUES FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT**

## Partnership after death Celtic Tiger

**ALTHOUGH the world economy was slowing down throughout this year, we are told September 11th is a watershed.**

From this date the word "recession" has been on everybody's lips.

The employers have been quick to jump in and use the new sense of impending crisis to argue for a reneging on some of the promises of the current partnership agreement, PPF.

In particular the ESRI has called for a new "more flexible model of national wage agreement". The model they want involves "reduced pay in an economic downturn".

This fits with the OECD report on Ireland that expressed "concern about a surge of wages".

Their recommendation that the Irish government cancels planned tax cuts might be seen as infringing on the demands of the wealthy.

But top earners have made their gains from tax cuts throughout the fourteen years of partnership agreements.

Next in line are the low paid, with a promise in the PPF that by the

end of the agreement the bracket for low income workers will be raised so that no one on the minimum wage will pay tax.

It is this tax break for the poor that the employers do not want to be implemented.

In the face of the employers placing question marks over the partnership arrangements, it is understandable that the trade union officials should rush to defend partnership.

As **Padraig Yates** wrote in the *Irish Times*, they see partnership as being more valuable since September 11th—as a means of providing job security.

The ICTU General Secretary Dave Begg has called for the creation of an emergency economic strategy group with the main social partners, to take measures in advance of a possible recession.

But trade union activists do not have to accept that the only option in the face of employers' desire to make changes is to defend partnership arrangements.

**Climate**

First of all, a proper reckoning of partnership should be made.

How did Irish workers do in the boom of

the 1990's—the best ever climate for workers wanting to improve living standards?

According to Des Geraghty the pay rises in PPF represented real gains in living standards for workers.

This is his main theme in recent articles and speeches. But the recent pay rises should be put in context.

**Share**

Over the last ten years the share of national income going to worker's wages has fallen 10 percent.

As MSF national secretary John Tierney said to his conference earlier in the year, average pay in Ireland is 28% below the EU average.

The pay increase that Des Geraghty is referring to represents an increase of 1, 2 or 3 percent above inflation.

However the official inflation figure does not measure the cost of living for workers.

It does not include rent rises, only partially includes mortgage rises and does not cover basic items that workers wages are spent on such as fast food.

Pay increases have been undermined by "the deterioration of the social wage" as even Geraghty admits.

The introduction of refuse charges or increases in those charges in areas which

already had them has often wiped out any gains working class households had made from wage rises.

Worse hospitals, education, transport and especially housing mean that the quality of life for workers has not been improved by the boom.

Furthermore productivity has risen by 2.5 times the wage increase. The employers gained much more from partnership than did workers.

*Partnership did not work in the boom, nor will it work in the face of recession. While workers will be asked to accept wage restraint, changes in work practices or minimal redundancy payments, the employers will not find their hands tied.*

Multi-nationals will continue to pull out of the country and management at companies like Aer Lingus will be allowed to impose mass redundancies on workers.

It is for workers to begin fighting. For all that the employers want to change partnership, they are not yet ready for confrontation with the unions.

As the ERSI put it, a free-for-all would be detrimental as it would be likely to result in more strikes.

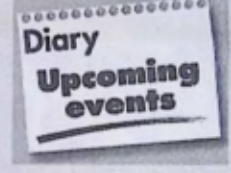
That is why we should not be conned into defending Partnership now.

**SWP activist meetings — all welcome**

**ATHLONE:** Contact 01-872 2682 for details  
**BELFAST CENTRAL:** Meets Tuesday at 8.30pm in Kitchen Bar, 16 Victoria Square, near Cornmarket  
**BELFAST SOUTH:** Meets Wednesday at 7.00pm in Queens Students Union  
**BELFAST WEST:** Contact 0777 for details  
**BELFAST QUEENS UNIVERSITY:** Wednesdays 4pm, Peter Froggatt Centre  
**BRAY:** Meets Wednesday at 8.00pm ring 08 for details  
**CLONAKILTY:** Phone (01) 8722682 for details  
**CORK:** Meets Mondays at 8.00pm in Telecom Eircom Club, MacCurtain St  
**DERRY:** Wednesdays at 8pm in Foyle Friend Centre, 32 Great James St.  
**DROGHEDA:** Meets Wednesdays 8:00pm Contact Kevin at 32 for details  
**DUNDALK:** Meets Thursdays 7.30pm phone 08 for details  
**DUN LAOGHAIRE:** Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the Christian Institute  
**DUBLIN BALLYFERMOT:** Meets Thursday contact 087- for details  
**DUBLIN BLANCHARDSTOWN:** Meets Thursdays 8pm for details  
**DUBLIN CABRA:** Meets Thursday at 8.30pm in Aughrim St Parish Hall, 13 Prussia St  
**DUBLIN CENTRAL:** Meets Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways Pub, Parnell St  
**DUBLIN RATHMINES:** Meets

**DUBLIN FINGLAS/BALLYMUN:** Meets Wednesday Phone Kevin on 08 for details  
**DUBLIN RATHMINES:** Meets Thursday at 8.30pm downstairs J O'Connell's (Pub) 5th, Richmond Street Dublin 2.  
**DUBLIN RIALTO:** Meets Wednesday at 8:30pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR  
**DUBLIN SOUTH CITY:** Meets at 8.30pm Tuesday upstairs Bowes (pub) Fleet Street Dublin 2  
**DUBLIN TALLAGHT:** Meets Wednesday at 8pm in Jobstown Community Centre  
**DUBLIN DCU:** Meets 2.00pm thurs in CG02  
**DUBLIN FENIAN:** Meets 1.00pm wed 08 for details  
**DUBLIN UCD:** Meets 1pm Wednesdays phone 087- or details  
**ENNISKILLEN:** Phone 01-872 2682 for details  
**GALWAY:** Meets every Wednesday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square (beside Cuba) 8.30pm  
**GALWAY UCG:** 7.00pm Meets Wednesday Contact 086- or details  
**LIMERICK:** Contact 01-872 2682 for details  
**LEIXLIP/MAYNOOTH:** Contact 08 for details  
**MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY:** Meets Thursdays 1.00pm Contact 08 for details  
**SLIGO:** Contact 08 for details  
**TRALEE:** Contact 087 for details  
**WATERFORD:** Meets Thursdays at 8pm in the ATGWU Hall, Keiser St.

**DUBLIN FAIRVIEW:** Meets Tuesday at 8.00pm in Smyths, upstairs, Fairview



**OTHER EVENTS**  
**DUBLIN:**  
Thursday 6th Dec: Globalise Resistance Rally  
**EUROPE FOR PEOPLE**  
7.30pm ATGWU Hall Middle Abbey St  
7th Dec 5.00pm Screening of *Injustice* at Irish Film Centre Temple Bar  
Until 21 Dec screening of *Apocalypse Now Redux* Irish Film Centre Temple Bar  
December 21-23 and December 27-31 Screening of *Kandahar* Irish Film Centre Temple Bar  
7th December: Anti Racism Gig The Point Contact: Amnesty on 01-6776361  
GALWAY: 10th December Anti Bins Campaign Protest at Galway City Hall 7.00pm

**BRUSSELS:**  
13-14 December **PROTEST AT E.U. SUMMIT**  
with **Globalise Resistance and Irish Anti War Movement contingents:**  
Contact Grace on 086-4098186



**REGULAR ANTI WAR ACTIVITIES**

**DUBLIN Weekly Vigil/Protest:** Saturdays 3.00pm College Green  
**RATHMINES:** Weekly Vigil Portobello Bridge every Friday Contact: 087-9890330 for details  
**UCD Weekly Vigil:** Thursdays 1pm The Lake  
**UCG:** Weekly Meeting of Students Against the War 8.00pm Mondays in Smokies

**OTHER ANTI WAR ACTIVITIES**

**DUNDALK:** Friday 7th December Protest Against Bertie Ahern's Visit 087-956947  
**DUNDALK:** Saturday 8th Dec Sat Peace Vigil 4-6pm, The Square  
**TRALEE:** Saturday 8th Dec Anti War stall at AIB on Castle St 12 noon  
**Saturday 15th Dec: National Day of Action Against the War:**

■ Protest at Shannon 087-9890330  
■ Belfast Anti War Protest EU Office at 2.00pm  
■ Other events on the day in Dublin and other cities.  
Contact 086-9890330 for details  
**DERRY: 22nd Dec Anti War March: Assembe GuildHall Square**  
Details: Contact Goretti 028-71264767

Upcoming event?  
Tell us: 01 8722682  
swp@clubi.ie

## Aer Lingus

Management  
smell blood

**AER LINGUS** workers still face a management assault even after 1,200 staff have accepted redundancies.

As well as the bosses, who are seeking over 2,000 cuts, workers have to deal with Mary O'Rourke, Minister for Privatisation, who is refusing to allow the airline to use its reserves to weather the downturn.

## Privatisation

This is part of an ongoing attempt to sell off Aer Lingus.

Management and the government are facing little opposition from the SIPTU leaders, who are playing the bosses' game and negotiating redundancies instead of providing leadership to those

workers who want to fight.

Keith works in the catering section of Aer Lingus:

"Everyone's angry about it, of course they are. It's not that people are happy about redundancies, but it feels like nothing can be done.

"I'd say it'll be a different story though when they start forcing people out.

"Voluntary is one thing, but they'll find it much harder to force us out."

A few years ago, militants at Aer Lingus were able to shut down the airport in solidarity with striking Ryanair baggage-handlers.

Similar action now could show the government that workers aren't going to pay for the collapse of the Celtic Tiger.

## Refuse charges

TV ads and hypocritical  
politicians can't stop  
non-payment campaignTHE Campaign  
Against the Bin  
Tax organised a  
lively and angry  
protest in Dublin  
last month.

The protest took place outside the City Hall where the Dublin Corporation met to consider the Book of Estimates—which included the Bin Tax for next year.

The Estimates were approved with 24 councillors in favour, 21 against and five abstentions.

## Pressure

Councillors are feeling the pressure of the

mass non-payment campaign.

Most of Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the two Greens supported the double tax.

And scandalously Labour split again this year with three councillors identified with Labour—Eamon O'Brien, Anthony McCreevey and Sean Kenny—abstaining to allow the vote to pass.

Labour's Mary Freehill, formerly Mayor of Dublin, didn't even bother to turn up.

Opposition to bin charges is massive.

In the Dublin Corporation and nearby Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Council areas a big

majority of householders are refusing to pay the tax.

The two councils have clubbed together to produce a television advertisement campaign suggesting people who refuse to pay the charges are anti-social and dumping on their neighbours.

In the past RTE have refused to run political adverts but this one-sided propaganda campaign has been screened because of the revenue RTE receive from the ads.

## Expensive

This expensive ad campaign is being paid from money that could go to paying for much-needed services in the councils' areas.

But these tactics are unlikely to defeat the campaign of mass non-

payment.

Anti refuse charges activists in Cork fought the refusal of Cork Corporation to collect rubbish from households which refused to pay the charges by dumping the rubbish outside Corporation meetings.

## Jailed

Several were fined by litter wardens and when they refused to pay the fines a number of protestors were jailed.

But in a major blow to Cork Corporation the Supreme Court recently ruled that it could not refuse to collect the bins of those who refused to pay the bins tax.

Behind the attempt to force through refuse charges is a privatisation agenda.

In Sligo the service

is privatised and costs over £300 per year for each household. In Mayo rural privatised collection services are demanding the council up the charge of £220 to £250.

Meanwhile the campaign is organising throughout the Dublin Corporation area to sustain the mass non payment campaign. As one anti bin tax campaigner in Ballymun told *Socialist Worker*, "The Corporation have sent out threatening letters and run a series of television adverts to try to get people to pay.

"But the campaign is strong with most people still refusing to be intimidated. If we stick together we can beat this unjust charge."

For details of the Campaign Against the Bin Tax in your area telephone 087-9090166.

## Public Private Partnerships -PPPs

UNIONS NOW NEED TO  
FIGHT PRIVATISATION

**CHARLIE** McCreevy and the present government are using the current talk of recession to introduce a wave of private sector investment into public services.

These include health, education and utilities such as water and sewage.

Just like the Blair government's PFI schemes in Northern Ireland, private companies and their fat-cat directors will be allowed to build and run schools and water schemes.

Education Minister Michael Woods has signed a £64m deal for British based company Jarvis PLC to build and maintain five new schools.

## Schools

The giant construction group Sisk will build the schools.

While Jarvis is supposed to maintain the schools they will be able to use the school for night classes to make money.

In Cork renovation of the School of Music will be carried out using Public Private Partnerships.

Parents of children attending these schools are worried that fees will increase and become unaffordable.

One parent told *Socialist Worker* she was disgusted at not being informed about any of the changes.

Recently SIPTU in Cork organised a conference on the issue of PPP's in Ireland.

Platform speakers spoke in favour of PPPs but delegates from many different unions and workplaces were very much opposed.

## Disaster

Every experience of PPP's recounted at the conference was that they were a disaster for both workers and the public.

A Labour councillor from Kent County Council in England described what privatisation had done to social services there with local offices being closed

and moved to call centres.

Delegates also strongly opposed privatisation of water treatment schemes and were cynical about Des Geraghty's opposition to it.

One IMPACT member said, "Nobody believed Des Geraghty when he said PPPs will just be used for infrastructure projects".

Michael Scanlon, a Cork Corporation worker, told *Socialist Worker*, "I'm alarmed at the number and scale of PPP's already existing which were being presented as something which was already done and dusted.

"While many of these projects will attempt to save costs by attacking workers' conditions, they will hire managers who will be paid at the top of the private sector scale.

"Des Geraghty is saying that we have no choice because people do not want to pay more tax, but companies and the rich in this country do not pay their fair share of tax."

## Peerless Rugs

Six months  
in occupationPEERLESS RUGS workers  
have been occupying their  
factory for six months.

The workers seized their factory in Athy, County Kildare last July after the owners closed the plant.

While the company still trades in two locations in Ireland, it is mysteriously unable to pay its workers statutory redundancies—this is the bare minimum an employer is legally required to pay.

To make matters worse, the management stole their savings scheme, and £80,000 of social welfare contributions went missing.

The company's bosses run two other factories, in Cork and Donegal.

Workers are furious that they have been completely abandoned by their unions and the political establishment who promised the earth to help them.

The workers are determined to prevent management removing

machinery and equipment despite the power being cut off.

The receiver came and went—the only time the workers saw him in weeks.

He claimed to have recovered the workers' savings for them—but the bank refused to cash the cheques they were given.

The entire system is stacked against them. The gardai seem uninterested in investigating the theft of their savings.

Local support remains as strong as ever. Workers from Tegral donated an hour's wages to them recently.

In the run up to Christmas the workers need contributions or messages of goodwill and support.

The Peerless workers are showing tremendous courage, and are an example to anyone facing redundancies as the Celtic Tiger crashes.

Send message of support via *Socialist Worker*, PO Box 1,48, Dublin 8

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Solidarity price £1

## Protests at the EU summit:

# EUROPE'S UNIONS MARCH AGAINST MASS SACKINGS

**TENS OF thousands of people are set to join major protests in the Belgian capital, Brussels. The protests will focus anger at the job losses mounting right across Europe as global recession bites. And they will also voice fury at European leaders' backing for the US-led war on Afghanistan.**

On Thursday 13 December, in what is likely to be the biggest of the planned protests, trade unions across Europe are urging workers to march.

They are demanding that European governments act to save jobs and protect public services. The following day, Friday 14 December, almost 150 organisations are backing a

"global peace and justice" march through the Belgian capital that will see tens of thousands of people voice their anger at the war.

The marches take place alongside the European Union leaders' summit, at which leaders such as Tony Blair and Italy's Silvio Berlusconi will gather to push their neo-liberal policies of privatisation and welfare cuts.

### Fury

At the heart of the union backed demonstration on the Thursday will be fury over job cuts as the global recession gathers pace. Workers from the national Sabena airline will be

at the centre of the Belgian workers' contingent, for which union leaders in the country have set a target of 50,000.

Over 12,000 Sabena workers have been thrown out of work after the airline went bankrupt last month. They have already staged a series of militant and angry protests, staging a 10,000-strong march.

*Sabena worker Michel Ronge gave a glimpse of the fury that swept Belgium in the wake of the mass sackings: "My wife and I both lost our jobs and our dreams. I have five kids. How do I explain to them that Santa Claus doesn't come to a house with no money?"*

French unions plan a major delegation to Brussels on 13 December, with the important

CGT federation setting a public target of taking 10,000 of its members.

Across Europe the bosses are pushing through attacks on workers but there is resistance.

*Workers at the Moulinex plant in Cornelle-le-Royal in Normandy occupied the factory after being told it was to shut. In Alençon in the south of France Moulinex workers clashed with riot police in a protest. The protests forced the government to intervene and promise a better deal for workers made redundant.*

The global peace and justice protest on the Friday will have an anti-capitalist theme, opposing corporate globalisation. But for most people the focus of that march will be anger at the

war on Afghanistan. The Friday protest is backed by a wide range of organisations in Belgium. Groups from right across Europe, including groups such as the ATTAC anti-globalisation movement.

Anyone who can join any or all of the Brussels protests should do so. Get a delegation from work, your college or local group. The Brussels demonstrations are a chance to raise a storm of protest against the mounting job cuts in the face of recession, and the privatisation, poverty and war that flow from our rulers' policies and their system.

**For travel details contact: Globalise Resistance: 086 4098186 or e-mail: [globalise\\_resistance@yahoo.com](mailto:globalise_resistance@yahoo.com)**

# ...AND THIS BRUTAL WAR AS WELL