

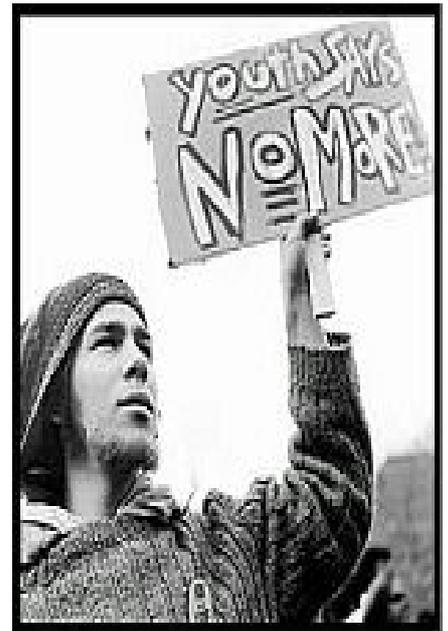
Young★ Socialist

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Bulletin of Socialist Youth

Spring 01

Youth say NO to low pay



On Tuesday 3rd April the Northern Ireland Assembly passed an End Low Pay motion calling for the minimum wage to be set to at least £5 an hour and for the abolishing of the youth exemptions. This is a very important step forward for those campaigning against youth exploitation and came after months of intense lobbying by Socialist Youth and the End Low Pay Campaign.

by Gary Mulcahy

The motion was officially sponsored by Billy Hutchinson, PUP and Dara O'Hagan, Sinn Fein. Socialist Party and Socialist Youth members had a lobby on the steps of Stormont just before the debate to hand in 30,000 signatures from across the North in support of an immediate rise in the minimum wage to £5 an hour for all workers over 16.

However, none of the Executive members were prepared to come out to us to accept the petition. Instead they sent representatives of David Trimble and Seamus Mallon to take the petition inside Stormont buildings where no photographs were allowed.

Just over 20 MLAs attended the debate and not one Minister bothered to show up. Low pay is obviously not high on the agenda of the Assembly.

No doubt MLA's had one eye on the upcoming elections when contemplating their position on our motion. Yet there were a few voices of opposition to a decent minimum wage. Esmond Bernie, UUP was the most outspoken MLA against the motion. He proposed an amendment to the motion that the Assembly carry out research into

INSIDE
Smash
the
FTAA
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The
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Fighting
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the effects of a rise in the minimum wage before voting on any change. Funnily, he didn't think twice about voting for a 30% pay increase for MLA's.

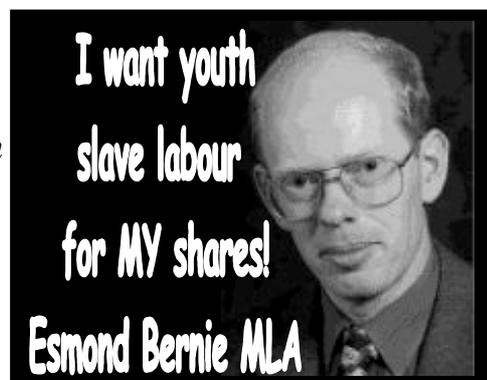
But he was especially opposed to young workers being entitled to equal pay with older workers. According to Bernie, young workers should get lower wages because they are not as productive as older workers!

This comes as no surprise after looking at the business interests this politician has-

"I hold 445 Shares in Viridian Ltd as well as small holdings (ie less than 500 shares each) in Abbey National, BAA, BT, Natural Power, PowerGen, Scottish Power, Scottish Hydro and Railtrack."

It would appear that Bernie is very productive in profiteering from rising electricity prices in Northern Ireland and the disastrous privatisation of the railways, but not very productive in delivering change for young people.

Because of the huge popular support for the campaign, most MLA's did not have the bottle to vote against the motion. While the powers to change the setting of the minimum wage lay in Westminster, the Assembly has the power to implement a £5 minimum wage for all workers employed by the Departments. The latest figures show that there are currently 4,825 workers being paid below £5 an hour. Socialist Youth and the End Low Pay Campaign will



be putting pressure on our politicians to enforce the policy of £5 an hour in all Departments, plus any contracts tendered must be given to companies paying at least £5 an hour. The Assembly should now lobby Westminster for the powers to raise the minimum wage. The campaign will step up its activities, 'Naming & Shaming' and picketing low pay employers until all workers receive a £5 Minimum wage.

Renegades of what?

A review of Rage Against the Machines album 'Renegades'
By Chris Loughlin, Belfast SY

Rage Against the Machine's latest and last album was a significant step for the four piece. After a space of three years between each of their last three albums, the years space between 'The Battle of Los Angeles' and 'Renegades', the last album was a celebration of Rages unique and special sound. With the emergence of all the non-political nu-metal bands Rage Against the Machines political viewpoint and their musical influence on the nu-metal bands should not be understated nor undervalued.

'Renegades' is a fast and furious collection of covers of classic songs such as 'Street Fighting Man' (Rolling Stones), 'Maggie's Farm' (Bob Dylan) and 'The Ghost of Tom Joad' (Bruce Springsteen). These covers are all total overhauls of the original songs, 'Maggie's Farm' being a prime example.

The songs are impressively done, the production being especially good, which was done by Rage and world renowned producer Rick Rubin.

All the songs on this album are uncompromising, you'll love 'em or hate 'em, this sound fits in perfectly with the overall attitude of the songs. They were all written by artists to be uncompromisingly revolutionary and Rage have stuck to the original writers of these songs ideals. Not one artist whose song has been covered can claim to have been hard done by Rage. Anyone with a passing interest should look into the album, with guitar playing at its most fast, furious and unforgiving. Anyone else would be advised to steer well clear, although the single 'Renegades of Funk' should provide quite a few people with a good impression of Rage. The album paints a very good picture of revolutionary black and white music through the eyes of a new generation. Rages politics are based around socialist ideas and thoughts, such as the rejection of today's world as the only way to govern the world. During their 10 years together



Rage Against the Machine fought against all ideals that music was everything but political. Rage have always offered a unique sound that has been copied by nearly all nu-metal bands although without any of the political undertones. Rage Against the Machine always were a lone musical voice fighting against the major labels (Sony, Warner Brothers, etc) although taking advantage of the increased exposure they got on Sony to get their music and ideas out to as many people as possible. Anyone interested in socialism can look at Rage as a way of getting across unfashionable ideas in a very positive and effective way.

International News

Quebec 2001

Tear gas City

Leaders from 34 nations from North, Central and South America gathered in Quebec to establish a new free trade zone- the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which will further impoverish millions of people on the continent and throughout the world.

Jason Baines reports from Quebec

The prospect of this so-called free trade zone has caused much anger, creating one of the most radical movements in recent Canadian history. Over 50,000 youth, workers, environmentalists, feminists and others gathered in Quebec to oppose it. Most insisted that they weren't there to reform the FTAA, as some union leaders advocate, but to abolish it. Quebec city turned into a battlefield- different sections of the city were engulfed in confrontations with police as 400 arrests were made.

Tear gas floated above the city hurting residents including one pensioner who was rushed to hospital. One resident had a plastic bullet ricochet in her house. Beyond the issue of the FTAA, was a general mood among youth and Quebec workers

that capitalism was the primary enemy. Anti-capitalist chants and a pro-socialist consciousness are clearly on the rise, mainly in Quebec among youth and workers but also spreading throughout Canada.

New sections of youth and workers are moving against capitalism. With sufficient numbers and mass support these demonstrations can even shut down capitalist conferences, such as in Seattle in 1999.

The anti-capitalist movement aims to 'Shut down capitalism'. The one group in society that can and have shut down the system is the working class. Along with the youth, the international working class provides the only means to shut down the capitalist system... permanently.

CWI members from North America and Europe intervened in the protests. One Canadian comrade was arrested. Over 270 people gave their addresses to find out more about the CWI.



Socialist Youth is the youth section of the Socialist Party. It is non-sectarian and open to all young people to join who wish to build a strong young socialist movement to see an end to the nightmare of global capitalism. We are affiliated to a socialist international organisation, Committee for a Workers International (CWI), which is organised in 35 countries on all continents.

SY fighting racism

Socialist Youth organised a very successful protest against deportations in Dublin on Saturday 7 April. Around 150 mainly young people turned up on a miserable day to protest against the government's racist immigration policy.

The day turned out to be a very colourful display of solidarity with refugees and showed the strong opposition of young people to the governments handling of asylum cases.

Socialist Party TD Joe Higgins highlighted the facts of the situation faced by refugees and that it was not so long ago that tens of thousands of young Irish people were forced to leave Ireland, many as "economic" refugees.

A refugee speaker gave a vivid account of the

reality of life for thousands of ordinary people who are forced to flee their homes. He described the horrendous crimes being committed in places like Nigeria and how it is not a choice whether to flee or stay, it is a matter of life and death. On the day over 20 people joined Socialist Youth and 14 people attended a meeting afterwards. We also got a huge response from passers-by, indicated by the fact that we raised over £100 at the stall.

In Cork SY organised a very successful protest against McDonalds racist policy of preferring to employ white immigrants to serve people.

Meanwhile in Swords 15 young people turned up to a SY meeting on the ideas of Che Guevara on 28 March and everyone there agreed to hold further meetings.

Mad boss puts foot in mouth

One of Northern Ireland's leading capitalists, Eric Bell chairman of the Institute of Directors, has recently told the Assembly's education committee that schools should be subject to the rules of the market. He wants schools which are underfunded (working class schools) to be closed down and for resources to be re-allocated to the richer schools. "The good should be allowed to get bigger and those who aren't so good should be culled" Remind you of the saying the rich get richer while the rest get poorer?

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No Sweat!

Global capitalism has massively increased exploitation of workers and youth through the world in order to make obscene amounts of money. Many of the high street shops and brands sold locally have been the most ruthless in profiting from making peoples lives a living hell.

Hundreds of young women in El Salvador, some underage, work long hours sewing shirts for such U.S. multinationals as The Gap, Liz Claiborne, J.C. Penney and Eddie

Bauer. They are paid less than 60 cents an hour (almost 75 cents counting benefits) - not enough to meet minimum living costs, even in El Salvador. Those who have children, for example, cannot afford meat or milk; their toddlers eat beans and drink coffee or sugar water. In 1993 workers attempted to unionize.



Mandarin (company subsidised by US government) responded by firing the union leadership and locking out the workforce. Workers were beaten by the free trade zone's security force, led by a former colonel in the Salvadoran army.

Our local call-centre industry has also been described as 'dark satanic mills' because of the sweatshop conditions workers find themselves in. Suffering from unreal targets, repetitive stress injury, acoustic shock, upper limb disorders and sight problems many workers can not cope with the inhumane conditions that bosses impose.

Socialist Youth are campaigning to organise workers in unions to fight back against sweatshops in Northern Ireland.

Join Socialist Youth today and get active!



Public Meeting

The politics of Che Guevara

8:00 pm

Thursday 21st June

Holiday Inn

University St

Belfast

All Welcome

*If you would like to join Socialist Youth, then fill in the form and send to:
Socialist Youth, 36 Victoria Square, Belfast BT1 4BQ*

Name.....

Address.....

..... Phone.....

e-mail.....

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