

# Socialist Worker

## INSIDE:

Poverty and alienation cause of unrest in France



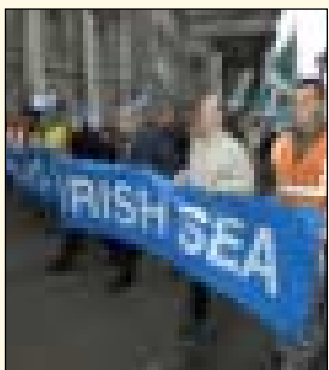
Page 6&7

More privatisation in transport plans



Page 2

10,000 march on Irish Ferries protest against 'race to the bottom'



Page 4

Sinn Fein and Coalition; "It's only a question of when"



Page 8

## Postal workers expose partnership fraud

# PAY THE AN POST WORKERS NOW

## NO PRIVATISATION OF AN POST RANK AND FILE ACTION CAN WIN

As we go to press the National Implementation Body are due to release their report on the costing issue at the heart of the dispute in An Post.

The figures submitted by management as an argument for what they would have to pay out for the partnership deal to over 10,000 workers range from 12 million to 32 million euro.

The CWU claim that these figures are way off and believe that once again the company are lying.

So it looks like the union will be back to the drawing board to re-ignite the dispute to force the company and the government to pay up what is owed to their members.

After just one day of action with pickets on the GPO and a ban on overtime, workers are still 100% committed to fight for their rights. Pickets at the GPO received brilliant support from the public.

The overtime ban has disrupted the service because the company relies hugely on extra working hours.

But, seemingly out of spite, An Post have outsourced the work of the Customer Service Help Line.

The workers involved are still employed by An Post but the speed of the company to out-source is an indication of the vindictive nature of this management.

The CWU is delivering their own leaflet to households all over Ireland to explain the just cause of the workers.

This is what has to be done



An Post workers on the picket line

Pic: Paula Geraghty

when the mass media ignores the real issues involved for real people.

And, true to form, An Post management threatened that if any worker delivered these leaflets in working time they would be disciplined.

But it is perfectly acceptable for management and their PR agents to spend all their waking hours trying to undermine the CWU and its members.

Workers in An Post have sent a very clear message to their union leaders that they want their pay without the productivity that the company is seeking.

And this can be achieved with

strong determined militant action.

All over the country union representatives have been organising and meeting to coordinate a response if there is an attempt to link the pay to work practice changes.

As the union says – they want consultation not confrontation. But how can you get that when so much is owed to so many and when management blatantly award themselves huge increases and bonuses each year?

The next period is crucial for post office workers. Coming into the Christmas period is the best chance they have of winning this

dispute. If it is long fingered yet again it will be the same outcome as last year – a lot of pain and no gain.

What sort of partnership is it when one side consistently bullies the other. The An Post issue shows very clearly that social partnership is a myth.

The only side to gain from it has been the government, the employers and their profits.

A strong united rank and file in An Post can be an inspiration and guide for all workers who are being robbed and cheated and vilified by their bosses.

**>>Rank and file action can win. See page 9**

# TRANSPORT 21: Government plans privatisation Rip-Off

By Rory Hearne

The government recently unveiled its Transport 21 strategy.

It involves plans to spend €34.4 billion on roads, railways and metro lines over the next 10 years.

There will be two new metro lines, seven new Luas tramline projects and an underground station in Dublin city centre. However, the new Luas lines, the metro, and many of the new roads will be constructed and operated as public-private partnerships (PPPs).

This is another example of the Fianna Fail/PD government pushing its Thatcherite free-market agenda of giving away our public services to private companies.

Everyone knows that PPPs are a blank cheque for private companies to rip-off the public through inflated construction prices, tolls (with the added bonus for motorists of huge traffic jams!), increased charges and reductions in pay and conditions for workers.

The winners from the government's transport plan are not the public but large construction companies like Cement Roadstone Holdings (whose share prices jumped significantly following the announcement of the Transport plan); companies who specialise in PPPs like National Toll Roads (NTR) and Connex (operates the LUAS); and the public's favourite friends, the private consultants.

National Toll Roads owns the East Link and West Link toll bridges in Dublin.

They also own Greenstar waste, have a 51% stake in Airtricity, and a 38.5% stake in Celtic Anglican water (operates Dublin Bay wastewater treatment).

Profits from the Tolls alone yielded NTR a profit before interest and tax of €15.4 million last year, €4.4 million up on the previous year.

The government, private consultants and IBEC claim that PPPs represent a significantly better method of delivering public services than traditional direct state provision.

However, the evidence from LUAS



The privatised LUAS network

and other PPPs used in housing regeneration, the construction of schools and universities, and in the provision of recycling services, paints a very different picture.

For instance, the Railway Procurement Company has held back payment to the consortium that built the LUAS due to on-going problems.

Indeed from the start the LUAS involved disruption, delays and cost overruns (the project exceeded its budget by a sizeable amount, costing over €700 million).

For passengers the cost is considerably more than the bus fare, the minimum LUAS fare being €1.30. Scandalously, the workers on LUAS trams had to sign a no-strike clause.

Many people point out that what is required is not more PPPs but a sustainable and integrated public transport system that puts the interests of the transport public and public sector workers ahead of the profit needs of private companies.

This would involve a substantial public investment in buses, cycle lanes, trains, trams and metros.

However the government has shown that it has no intention of following such a strategy.

It has already starved Dublin Bus of funding and put forward plans for its privatisation, it has broken up Aer Rianta, decided to privatise Aer Lingus, and is planning to break up CIE.

"One can only hope we do not end up like New Zealand or Britain," says Noel Dowling, National Organiser from SIPTU.

"There the true cost of privatising essential transport services is only now being realised. We should be learning from their mistakes, not emulating them."

If the PPP madness is to be stopped in its tracks, then urgent action is urgently needed.

Actions such as the protests organised by Irish Ferries workers, and the inspirational action by the local community in St Michael's Estate where residents campaigned until adequate social housing was included in a proposed PPP regeneration of their estate.

If the PPP madness is to be stopped in its tracks, then action is urgently needed, such as the protest organised by Irish Ferries workers, and that of residents in St Michael's Estate to include adequate social housing in a proposed PPP regeneration of their estate.

## QUOTES OF THE FORTNIGHT

**"I felt it was inadequate as a response to the revelations... It chilled me to the bone that when children were screaming the men of God apparently didn't hear it"**

*Fr Gerard Galvin, curate in Clonakilty explaining why he refused to read a letter from the Bishop of Cork and Ross to his congregation following the publication of the Ferns Report*

**"Make no mistake about it, this (coalition government) is a nettle that Sinn Fein will grasp. The only question is when. The only party we would absolutely rule out are the PDs".**

*Caoimhin O Caaolain, Sinn Fein TD*

**"This is May 1968- but in the banlieues"**

*A young protestor in the North East of Paris*

**"Wow! Brazil is big."**

*George W. Bush, after being shown a map of Brazil by Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva*

**"George Bush is a murderer. I'm going to head the march against him stepping foot on Argentine soil."**

*Diego Maradona, speaking out against the visit of the US president to South America for the summit of the Americas*

**"Mussolini never killed anyone. Mussolini used to send people on vacation in internal exile."**

*Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi*

**"Despite the fact that we are absolutely confident this installation complies in all respects with the relevant safety guidelines, the OPW is aware of a continued level of unease over such installations being sited in the vicinity of schools for young children."**

*Tom Parlon, the minister in charge of the OPW which has finally suspended the erection of mobile phone masts near schools until a review of radiation has been carried out by officials.*

**"Let me be absolutely clear...every euro spent on this is going to be accounted for....This is taxpayers money and it is not going to be allowed to be abused by anybody."**

*Minister Martin Cullen 'reassures' the public on the announcement of his government's transport plan which contained no costings for individual projects*

**"Yes I do ring All Hallows. I will ring All Hallows... My house is called All Hallows. It is on the lands of All Hallows so I am going to make apologies to nobody..for being in touch with All Hallows"**

*Bertie Ahern defends the close relationship between the Irish State and the Catholic Church*

## INSIDE THE SYSTEM

**☠** Latest tax receipts are €100 million a day greater than what the government expected. Government spending however was running €1.1 billion behind target by the end of October.

**☠** A new poll commissioned by the British military has found that 82 percent of Iraqis strongly oppose the continued presence of foreign troops. Less than 1 percent of the population feels foreign troops have helped improve security in Iraq. The poll also found 45 percent of Iraqis feel attacks against US troops are justified.

**☠** The level of personal indebtedness is rapidly rising. The ratio of credit to disposable income will have increased from 112% of disposable income to 133% by the end of 2005. It is caused primarily by spiralling house prices.

**☠** Having left Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council with an extremely generous financial package, former manager Derek Brady has immediately taken up a senior position with property development company, Alburn. Brady granted planning permission for a controversial 24 storey Alburn development in his council area just last July.

**☠** Anti war protestor Fintan Lane- who was jailed for seven weeks in 2003- is going to the High Court to seek payment for prison work undertaken while in Limerick Prison. Fintan will claim that at least the minimum wage should be paid to prisoners for any work undertaken while inside.

**☠** Trinity College received €100,000 from the US air force to conduct research that may have a military application.

**☠** The latest Justice Department statistics show the U.S. prison population grew by nearly 2 percent last year to nearly 2.3 million. There are more people behind bars in the United States than in any other country, according to the International Centre for Prison Studies in London.

**☠** 200 elderly residents of Charlemont Court sheltered housing had their fuel allowance of €12.90 per week taken away. The Department of Social and Family Affairs claimed they were not entitled to it as they had low cost heating in the complex.

**☠** Despite government promises to reduce class sizes, which are among the highest in Europe, the INTO teachers union has pointed out that class sizes are actually increasing. In North Dublin for example, 37% of pupils are in classes of thirty or more.

**☠** Dublin City Council is planning to charge disabled people for parking in the city centre. Using the abuse of the system as a pretext, the Council is planning to rake in yet more revenue by charging people who have no option but to bring a car into the city. The lack of decent accessible public transport options make cars essential for many disabled people.

**☠** US forces used chemical weapons indiscriminately against civilians when they besieged the Iraqi city of Fallujah one year ago this week. A recent Italian television documentary interviewed US troops describing how they were ordered to drop white phosphorus on the city. Phosphorus burns the human body on contact, melting skin right down to the bone. The programme also provides evidence of MK77, a new form of napalm, being used in Iraq. The use of such chemical weapons is banned under a United Nations treaty signed by the US in 1996

## Protest/Reports/Struggle

email to swped@eircom.net Phone 01 8722682

### CHESHIRE HOMES

#### Residents face 125% increase in charges

By COLMÁN ETCHINGHAM

Disabled residents of Cheshire Homes face a 125% increase in accommodation charges.

This will leave them only 35-55 euro a week to spend. The situation has echoes of Eddie Hobbs' 'Rip-off Republic'. In this case, moreover, the victims are captive and defenceless.

Residents of Monkstown Cheshire Home, in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, must pay for nursing and other special services such as counselling. They also have regular needs, like clothing, and ask how can they meet such unavoidable expenses from the fraction of their allowance that is left to them. Will they be denied any quality of life, such as newspapers or a night out?

Last year it emerged that charges imposed on residents of state-funded care homes since the 1970s were illegal. The Minister for Health, Mary Harney, acted quickly, not to repay what had been stolen, but to protect 'the taxpayer' against the cost of doing so. She tried to make the charges legal retrospectively. This proved impossible, but future charging was made legal.

Charges have increased since, with the government apparently clawing back what must be repaid to those illegally charged. There are already 20,000 claims for repayment, mostly by elderly residents of care homes. Residents of Monkstown Cheshire Home have so far received no repayment.

Apologists for charging say that residents of care homes should be forced to contribute. Mary Harney, signing the Health (Charges for In-patient Services) Regulations, 2005, said: "Most people accept that those who can afford to pay should make a contribution towards the cost of their maintenance." This is rich, coming from a Minister and government that require little or no 'contribution' from wealthy tax exiles or corporations.

The Cheshire Homes residents are not all elderly, but all suffer from varying degrees of disability, and most are wheelchair-bound. They reject their description as 'patients', a label that implies a temporary stay in care. They are permanently dependent on the state. Is it Mary Harney's policy to condemn disabled people in residential care to permanent, abject poverty?

The Cheshire Homes staff has sided with the residents and has refused to co-operate with the Health Services Executive, so the new charges are so far just a threat. Residents in Monkstown have approached Richard Boyd Barrett of the Socialist Workers Party, who is now mobilising residents of Cheshire Homes across the country to demonstrate in Dublin on 30 November.

The cases of the Cheshire Home residents are extremely harrowing and their testimony moving to the point of tears. What is also striking is their courage in speaking out, despite their vulnerability. This treatment of some very disadvantaged people is but one spectacular example of the priorities in Celtic Tiger Ireland.

Contact Richard Boyd Barrett at 087-6329511.

### DÚN LAOGHAIRE

# Housing Action Group launches Housing Rights Charter



Housing should be a right, not a privilege

By COLMÁN ETCHINGHAM

Under the banner 'Housing is a right, not a privilege', the Dún Laoghaire Housing Action Group is launching a charter of housing rights.

Prompted by the recent cases of two homeless women, Margaret Watson and Antoinette Tate, the group aims to tackle, at a political level, homelessness and the public housing shortage. These issues are relevant beyond Dún Laoghaire.

Among the problems encountered are the following:

Over the last ten years the housing boom has seen huge profits for developers. Over the same period, the number on the housing list in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has almost doubled to 3,800.

In 2004, 1,777 homes were built in the locality. Government policy is that 20% of all new houses should be 'social and affordable'. If this were enforced in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, 177 new council homes and 177 new 'affordable' homes would have been built in 2004. Instead, only 50 council homes (3%) and 20 'affordable' homes (1%)

were built.

What is effectively social cleansing obliges less well-off young people to move out of Dún Laoghaire to live.

In Dún Laoghaire, homeless people sleep in cargo containers and young homeless people have no hostel. Temporary emergency accommodation offered to homeless people is poor and curfews and restrictions on visitors are imposed.

Council officials dealing with the homeless and those on the housing list are often discourteous, disrespectful, downright intimidatory and manipulative. Sadly, some mainstream public representatives themselves manipulate such vulnerable people for their own ends, while doing little or nothing to solve their problems.

Among solutions proposed in the Dún Laoghaire Housing Action Group's charter are the following:

Immediate implementation of the 20% 'social and affordable' housing in every development, with 'affordable' homes to be truly affordable for people on low and middle incomes.

Fair rents for both council and private tenants.

No more sale of public land to private developers.

private developers.

A faster supply of council homes by compulsory purchase of land and by directly employing more council workers to build, maintain and renovate council homes.

Housing policy to be explicitly based on keeping existing communities together and not on social cleansing.

Good quality shelters for the homeless of all ages and needs.

Temporary emergency accommodation to be of decent quality, with no curfews or visitor restrictions.

An independent appeals procedure on housing issues.

A transparent code of conduct, to ensure respectful treatment of the public when dealing with the council on housing matters.

To further these aims, the Housing Action Group is holding a public meeting in the Portview Hotel, Marine Road, Dún Laoghaire, on Wednesday, 16 November, at 8 pm. Speakers will include well-known champion of the homeless Fr Peter McVerry, John Dunne of the Housing Action Group and Richard Boyd Barrett (Socialist Workers Party).

Contact Christopher Potts at 085-1555224.

### BRAY

#### Family must be housed

Jackie Smyth is a mother of three; her children are 2, 5 and 11 years old. Her second child is being treated for stomach cancer. She and her family are being forced to live on the streets.

Both the council and social welfare are refusing to accept responsibility for her situation and provide her with emergency accommodation. Jackie is reliant on social welfare and has no means to secure private accommodation.

Jackie fears losing custody of her children due to being homeless. Social welfare has already indicated concern over the children's situation. There are serious health questions for both Jackie and her children if they remain homeless.

Jackie is currently living in a tent on Bray's Main St, outside the council offices. She feels this is the only way to get the council to provide some form of accommodation for herself and her children. She has already suffered an assault while living on the street, and hostel accommodation would mean her losing custody of her children. This is obviously an urgent case they council must deal with.

Jackie is asking for your support in her claim to be housed. The council has not offered her any emergency accommodation even though she risks being separated from her children and their being taken into care.

Please support Jackie by signing the petition at the council offices and by phoning your local councillor and Bray town council.

For more information contact 0857042645 or 0877807838

### BALLYMUN

#### Councillors roasted

Up to 100 Ballymun residents attended a debate with local councillors organised by Ballymun Welfare Rights on November 11.

Councillors came under heavy pressure over their failure to hold Ballymun Regeneration to account over issues like building works, local job opportunities and the failed privately run swimming pool.

Tony Greene from Ballymun People Before Profit (BPBP) drew applause when he argued that jobs on the sites should be filled through the local Job Centre instead of shady agencies.

Kevin Wingfield from BPBP and local SWP rep demanded that schools, youth clubs and local groups be allowed exclusive booking in the new swimming pool and young people be allowed access in their own right. Failing that the old Council Pool must be re-opened.

He denounced the big-business agenda that put profits above the needs of local people.

The meeting voted unanimously to demand the swimming pool be taken off Crunch Fitness and instead run by the Council.

Contact Ballymun People Before Profit on 086-4058789 and Kevin Wingfield on 086-3074060

### ANTI CORRUPTION IRELAND

The newly formed group, Anti Corruption Ireland [ACI] has issued a statement deploring the behaviour of solicitors involved in inappropriate and totally unacceptable financial impropriety, especially those engaged in systematic theft from one of the most vulnerable sectors of society, the victims of institutional abuse.

Furthermore, it also deplores the Law Society's inaction on the subject - despite the scandal having been reported in the Solicitors Gazette last August - and calls on the

Minister for Justice to ensure that the full rigours of the law are brought to bear upon offending solicitors.

The statement reads: "This cover up by the Law Society demonstrates the mockery of allowing it to police its own members.

There are hundreds if not thousands of cases where the general public has been intimidated in its efforts to bring complaints against solicitors. These must all be reopened and dealt with by a body that is independent of the Law Society.

ACI will be seeking to engage with all strands of the legal sector, in order to bring fundamental change to the way justice is administered in Ireland. Initially, ACI demands that a separate and independent Ombudsman style office be set up to deal with complaints against solicitors both retrospectively and in the future.

We are in the run up to the next general election and politicians should be aware that ACI will not waiver in its demands for a more transparent, independent and consumer oriented

judicial system.

ACI are organising a public rally in the Mansion House, Kildare St., Dublin 1, on Saturday 19 November starting at 2pm.

The rally will address the institutional and endemic corruption in the Gardaí and in the Irish judicial system. Speakers at the rally will include Frank McBrearty Jnr, Paul Hill and Nicky Kelly as well as representatives of political parties.

For confirmation contact Seamus Maye 087 648 5600 Donal Mac Fhearraigh 0876838746

# AS THE CELTIC TIGER FADES: The first whiff of militancy

By Kieran Allen

The Irish trade union movement is stirring with a new spate of strikes and protests.

The spark for the revolt has come from a renewed employers offensive to reduce wage costs.

The main tactic has been to casualise staff by replacing permanent workers with agency workers. The vast majority of the new 'contingent' workers are migrants who are vulnerable to employer pressure.

Eastern European workers, for example, are denied social welfare for two years even though they pay taxes and make social contributions. This means they can be more easily trapped into low pay jobs.

These developments explain the significance of the Irish Ferries dispute. The issue of displacement of workers has hit a raw nerve.

Irish Ferries is a hugely profitable firm, making in excess of €16 million last year. It has benefited from a special tonnage tax introduced by this government which has cut its tax bill to one tenth of what it once was.

But it is still determined to reduce wages to just €3.50 an hour and to keep workers on board its ships from 24 hours a day, for seven days a week.

The story is being repeated in Doyle concrete in Kildare, where the company has declared redundancies and then cut the starting rate by half to €8.50 an hour. They have refused to implement the terms of a Labour Court recommendation.

These attacks on workers are not just coming from a gung-ho faction of the employer class. The Irish state itself is deeply implicated in fomenting the new strategy.

Key Ministers like Mary Harney was involved in encouraging GAMA to come to Ireland to seek to reduce wage in the Irish building industry. And even after the revelations of the pay fraud, Gama has continued to win state contracts.

More generally, the Revenue Commissioners are facilitating a legal fiction whereby over 50,000 workers in the construction industry are supposed to be self employed.

As one activist from SIPTU's construction branch put it, 'You can have just a bucket and a brush and be classified as a sole trader'

In Bus Eireann, management are contracting out services to operators who pay less than the unionised staff.

In the universities, top management award themselves exorbitant salaries while other staff face casualisation.

However, there is a growing mood to resist these developments.

## UNION GRASSROOTS TAKE THE LEAD

From the every start, the spark of resistance has come from the union grassroots.

During the recent SIPTU conference, Irish Ferries workers made it clear that they wanted a one day strike. But the union leaders preferred to make approaches to Bertie Ahern to bring a solution.

Despite this slowness, SIPTU activists got behind their leadership when they announced they would defer entering a new round of social partnership.

Then the Local Authorities branch took a further initiative and called a magnificent protest which involved over 8,000 workers. They were backed by the union leaders but it would have been far bigger if there had been a clear call for a stoppage.



10,000 marched in support of Irish Ferries workers in November  
Picture: Rob Bremner

The Irish Ferries has been a signal for thousands of other workers to join the battle.

Two unofficial stoppages have hit Bus Eireann over the management strategy of contracting out.

In Kildare, trade unionists are rallying behind the strikers in Doyle Concrete and are holding a mass rally on November 20th.

In UCD, staff staged an early morning protest outside their workplace and then 300 employees came to a 'speak out' to give witness to how new managerial changes were affecting them.

In An Post, the beginning of a rank and file network are emerging to challenge the union bureaucracy ( see accompanying story)

After many years of defeats, a new pattern is emerging. An over-confident employer class believe that the union have become paper tigers and want to impose US style labour relations.

However despite the incorporation of important layers of union activists into a social partnership mode, this is a bridge too far for the vast majority of union activists - including, it has to be said, the union leadership.

Yet there are also clear tensions in the response. The union bureaucracy increasingly looks to the machinery of the state to deal with the changes. They focus of on the rhetoric of Ahern and point to his concern about Irish Ferries. But they 'forget' that his same government is backing a services directive in Europe which will fully legalise the current strategy of Irish employers.

The vast majority of workers would like their government to impose labour standards on employers.

But they also have to good sense to know that they will first have to impose their will on their own government. Solutions will not come from 'complex' legal discussions led by barristers - but from the mobilisation and actions of tens of thousands of workers.

Only when displacement and casualisation is made politically unacceptable though 'people power' will any Irish

governments be forced to turn on the very corporations who pull their strings.

The stakes are very high. Today the mood amongst many Irish workers is one of unity with migrants in the battle against employers. Nationality does not come into it - it is a fight of all workers against a ruthless employer class.

However, under conditions of defeat this could change and the focus could shift from class to nationality and colour.

This is why, as the Celtic Tiger fades, these are battles we must win.

## A FADING TIGER-BUT THE BUILDING SITE REMAINS

The mainstream press continue to trumpet the Celtic Tiger but the economists they rely on are far from objective.

Take for example, Dan McLoughlin, who regularly cheer leads the property boom. He is the chief economist of the Bank of Ireland which has a strong vested interest in the maintenance of that boom.

Or look at the case of Daniel McCoy, the former top economist of the ESRI who has just moved over to take key role in IBEC, the employer's organisation.

Short term conventional economic forecasting has a very poor record. One former forecaster, Jim O Leary recently looked back on forecasts for the years 2001 to 2004. He found that ' the evidence from recent years is that (forecasters) get it wrong more than they get it right, and they all get it wrong together'.

Most capitalist economists do not want to talk about the death of the Celtic Tiger - but this is precisely what is happening.

The Celtic Tiger refers to the huge growth rates that occurred in Ireland between 1993 and 2000. These were based on a surge of US investment which sought a base inside the EU market. They came to Ireland because it offered a tax haven and comparatively cheap labour.

In those years export volumes increased by 17 percent a year and

Ireland became a world centre for the export of pharmaceuticals and computer equipment.

Since 2001, this particular engine has been slowing down. The volume of merchandise exports - physical goods, mainly - has fallen, 34,000 workers have lost their jobs in manufacturing and Foreign Direct Investment fell from €21.6 billion in 2003 to only €9.1 billion in 2004. By contrast US investment to Eastern Europe is rising.

Put simply, the Tiger has died and has been replaced with a different beast.

Since 2001, the main source of Ireland's growth has been construction and financial services.

The Irish financial services sector has been driven by a host of tax scams and the country has won a reputation as the Bermuda of Europe where speculators and even criminals can enjoy 'light regulation'. How long this can last is an interesting question.

The construction boom has been driven by rising houses prices and deliberate government policy to favour road construction rather than rail. House prices doubled over the past six years and a yuppie layer has emerged which sees property and the rental market as an easy source of money. The banks have stoked up this boom by offering high loans and are now addicted to the continuing growth of this sector.

However, a classic capitalist problem of oversupply has developed. So many apartments are being built at exorbitant prices that the rental market is not keeping up with the inflated prices. This is why the OECD has been warning that Irish property is over-valued by 15 percent.

This then is the background to the new round of industrial struggles. The employer class know that the Celtic Tiger is fading - and they want workers to pay the price. But workers who have seen the huge fortunes that were made are not willing to make more sacrifices.

The stage is being set for major confrontation.

**The vast majority of workers would like their government to impose labour standards on employers.**

## Appalling treatment of immigrants in Northern Ireland

By Barbara Muldoon

The total inhumanity at the heart of Britain's immigration policy was exposed recently in the appalling treatment of an Eritrean family living in Northern Ireland.

The case only came to light when a sympathetic prison worker phoned someone in the ARN (Anti Racism Network) to say that one of the transport vans had returned to the prison with a distressed driver who said that an immigration detainee had attempted suicide in the back.

A number of ARN members together with a sympathetic journalist spent the day trying to obtain information and piece together what had happened. What emerged was a damning indictment of a system that cares nothing for the rights or lives of immigrants and refugees.

In the early hours of that morning immigration officers had went to the home of the Eritrean family. The mother had been forcibly separated from her two young daughters and removed from the house. She was placed in a prison van bound for Dungavel, the notorious detention centre in Scotland. She had not seen her daughters again, nor did she know where they had been taken. In what could have only been utter desperation as the prison van was about to board the ferry for Scotland, the woman fashioned a noose around her neck and attempted to hang herself from a bar in the prison van.

Having intervened in the suicide attempt, immigration officers continued with the removal as if nothing had happened. By the time the ARN was able to establish fully what had happened, the woman had been locked up in Dungavel for 24 hours and was due to be removed to Eritrea. She had received no medical treatment or counseling or help in any way. She was still unaware where her daughters were.

The ARN then contacted a number of children's and human rights organisations who publicly condemned the actions of immigration and called for the woman's return. A case was taken in the High Court in Belfast to prevent her removal to Eritrea. After a great deal of effort and pressure on UK Immigration and over a week after her desperate suicide attempt the woman was reunited with her daughters at their home in Belfast.

While anti racism activists quite rightly see this as an important victory; it relied on the conscience of one individual to bring the events to light. Unfortunately we are all too aware that this case merely exposed the utter brutality that is part and parcel of the actions and policies at the heart of UK Immigration Policy.

Barbara Muldoon is an Immigration & Asylum Practitioner and ARN member

## PETER HAIN'S BUDGET: The privatisation of everything

By Gordon Hewitt

A few weeks ago Peter Hain gave a significant speech outlining his vision for Northern Ireland. It was a vision of brutal attacks on working class people in Northern Ireland in order to make us "battle ready" for the new European and world economy.

His argument was straightforward yet little of it was reprinted in either of the local community papers in Belfast. Perhaps it was because a good many of the business people and the politicians here agree with Hain's arguments.

Hain stated that Northern Ireland is under great pressure; the pressure of international competition, particularly the emergence of low wage/high productivity economies like India and China as players on the world stage.

Competition also from the newly expanded Europe, where the addition of the Eastern European countries has expanded the market and increased the intensity of the competitive pressures, and finally these pressures are made more intense because of the shape of the Northern Irish economy.

According to Hain, the Northern Irish economy is beset by imbalances.

The public sector's dominance over the private sector has created an uncompetitive and inefficient imbalance; there is an imbalance between the lack of an entrepreneurial culture as witnessed in the Celtic Tiger and the large number of welfare recipients being paid for economic inactivity, there is an imbalance between what NI taxpayers contribute to the Westminster purse strings and what is returned in funding, £509 here as to £1200 in England, yet NI gets 40 per cent more per capita than is given in England. There is a further imbalance between what is accessed in terms of public services and what our contributions are.

So far few have taken on these arguments with any degree of clarity. There is no evidence anywhere that privatisation



Hain: 'Beset by imbalances'

increases efficiency.

Privatisation gives us job losses and greater workloads on fewer staff. There is plenty of evidence that this creates services of a weaker standard and particularly with the privatisation of water and transport, services which can be life threatening. Hain may proselytize about the benefits of privatisation, but there is no proof to sustain it.

The argument about developing an entrepreneurial culture must be fought also as this is code for driving people off welfare particularly incapacity benefit, which is the government's bugbear at present. The low unemployment rate that the government claims is evidence of a thriving economy is sustained through forcing people on to next to useless jobskills programmes or incapacity benefits.

Already the argument about welfare dependency comparing welfare to drug use is doing the rounds. This a vile attempt to blame the victims of the inability to create decent jobs. Finally people in Northern Ireland pay more, approximately 33% more, for fuel, gas, electricity, groceries and clothing. If there is less contributed in rates

it is more than made up for in lower wages and higher prices.

The recent draft budget papers are the beginning of the process of Hain driving through the "reforms". On the surface few could complain about the increases in funding for pre and after school care for school-children, actually this was one of the areas where cutbacks were being imposed because of the crisis in education funding at the end of last term. Few could complain about the additional spending to tackle youth unemployment or even the additional funding for the health service.

It is the sting in the tail which reveals the significance of Hains pre-budget speech and his intention to drive through the restructuring of the Northern Irish economy. The money for these initiatives and many more contained within the draft budget papers will come from three places.

The first is a substantial increase in rates of 19%. This is double the increase already forecast. The second is the civil service where a 3-4% efficiency drive will see cuts to a range of services and jobs. This is on top of the already forecast civil service job cuts which run into the thousands, and finally the Review of Public Administration which will include within it a sell off of public sector buildings.

Beyond that Hain intends to restructure welfare, education and health with an even higher degree of private sector involvement, and of course the introduction of water charges and the privatisation of the service.

This is a substantial attack on working class people in Northern Ireland. It is about putting profits before people in the crudest possible way. The government has planned consultation meetings over the next month, in Belfast the meeting is in the Wellington Park Hotel on December 1st. Global Justice is calling for a protest against privatisation at lunchtime on that day as the beginning of the process to reverse the Hain agenda, maintain public services and put people before profit.

## Dublin City Council to increase bin tax again

By Joan Collins

Surprise, surprise, Dublin City Council has announced that it will be increasing bin taxes by 5% in the Estimates for 2006.

This means that if you pay the bin tax and you put your bin out every week, the bin tax will have increased by 79% over a two-year period.

This increase is way above the 8.5% wage increases negotiated in the so-called Social Partnership's inaptly named sustaining progress.

The reality is the bin tax is equivalent to practically one weeks wages for a post(wo)man whose basic starting pay is €371.

It is Postal workers and thousands of low paid workers in the city who are feeling the brunt of this and other stealth taxes.

The other reality is that for many families in the city the option of putting out their bin less frequently is not a real one. We are still the waste receivers of plastics etc and in many areas of the city there are no accessible recycling facilities.

For example, in Drimnagh, an area of the city that has over 5,000 houses, the shopping centres on the Crumlin Road and on Walkinstown avenue are the nearest bottle bank facilities. The green bin collection throughout Dublin is still only fortnightly.

Recent figures from DCC show that Dubliners are still not paying.

Out of 140,000 targeted households, 50,000 have waivers and 54,000 have not paid a penny or have part paid.

In the run up to the estimates meeting of DCC, the Dublin Anti-Bin Tax Campaign is organising to pressure councillors to vote against the estimates, which include the bin tax.

We are calling on people to ring/email/text/visit their local councillors, and there will be a protest at City Hall at 6.15pm on Monday 21 November.

Last year, councillors from all parties fudged the issue by not supporting a role call vote.

This year myself and the other independent councillors will be making every attempt to ensure there is a role call vote so that the people of the city can clearly identify who supports stealth taxes.

Joan Collins is an Anti-Bin Tax Cllr & Ind Socialist

## Labour Party Councillor refuses to stand for Rabbitte

By Conor Kostick

Sligo Labour Party Councillor and former TD, Declan Bree, has ruled himself out of contesting the next General Election as a Labour candidate.

Pat Rabbitte and the leaders of the Labour Party have alienated one of their most respected members and now face the prospect of Bree running as an independent in the next election.

The cause of the split runs far deeper than any personal antagonism between Rabbitte and Bree; it is a question of principle.

The issue of Travellers' rights has more than once exposed fault lines in reformist organisations, as those more concerned with votes than with assisting Travellers to overcome the disadvantages they face clash with those genuinely attempting to implement policies that help the Travelling community.

In February this year, while Declan Bree was Mayor of Sligo, the council ducked out of implementing a Traveller Accommodation Programme.

Two Labour councillors voted with two Fine Gael and three Fianna Fail councillors to prevent the new facilities from being constructed. Bree's response to the decision was to point out that 'the disgraceful decision to vote down Sligo's Traveller Accommodation Programme compels traveller families to continue living in appalling and intolerable conditions.'

He asked how anyone who claims to share the values of the Labour movement, or how can



Declan Bree and Pat Rabbitte: At loggerheads

anyone with an ounce of compassion tolerates such a situation.

In this principled defence of Travellers' rights, the Labour leadership saw an opportunity to attack someone on the left of the party. Rabbitte opened an enquiry to investigate Bree having brought the party into disrepute and wrote a letter to the Irish Times in which he made the allegation that Bree had, in the past, opposed a halting site in his own ward.

But as Bree then pointed out, this statement was scurrilous and unfounded. That the leader of the Labour Party should publicly attack one of its most respected members in public in this way is extraordinary and Bree has drawn the logical conclusion, that he cannot stand for Labour while this attitude persists among its leadership.

The timing of the attack on Bree was significant, the Complaints Committee was



himself expressing a preference for Enda Kenny's Fine Gael.

A confidential National Executive document shows that Labour strategists did not believe they had any chance of a seat in Sligo-North for two elections.

Are senior Labour figures already discussing a transfer alliance with Fine Gael? Is Sligo-North marked for Fine Gael? Is the attack on Bree an attack on someone who would never give up the fight for the seat in advance?

Bree's stand means that a different perspective is now on offer, that of proving there is a left seat in Sligo-North and in doing so, energising a body of activists who can campaign on issues like Travellers' rights, whatever the outcome of the election.

### IN THE COLLEGES

#### NCAD

Students from the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) have organised two demonstrations against proposals from the College Board. The NCAD management has suggested moving the college from its existing site on Dublin's Thomas Street to the UCD campus at Belfield.

The only notification that students received about these plans was through a Sunday Times article on October 23rd. Under the proposed plans, the college would get new facilities at UCD through the sale of the Thomas Street campus. The campus site would then be

redeveloped as lucrative apartments.

The students have already vented their anger by staging two protests - one outside the gates of NCAD on Thomas Street and a further demonstration on the Belfield campus. The Students union at NCAD have said that they are determined not to let the deal go ahead.

For further information about the campaign, email NCADSU at ncadsu@gmail.com

#### UCD PROTESTS

Over 60 members of staff were joined by students when they demonstrated against the further commercialisation of UCD. The protest, organised by SIPTU and

supported by IFUT, Amicus and students, was later followed by a 'speak-out' in a packed out lecture theatre where staff were able to highlight their concerns about the future of the university.

Staff from all levels aired their worries about the effects that the market is having on education in Ireland in general and in UCD in particular. Cases of cronyism were raised where positions were being awarded without competition or advertisement. Many people were concerned about the future of those workers placed on casual contracts while money is squandered on outside consultants to look at re-branding UCD and management of the university.

**Socialist Worker**

To contact us or send letters, reports, etc:-  
email: swped@eircom.net  
phone 01 8722682  
Write: Socialist Worker, PO  
Box 1648 Dublin 8

# FRANCE: RAGE OF

## Simon Assaf reports from Paris as days of rioting have engulfed French cities

The slums of France have risen in revolt.

Young people have burned cars, and attacked police and government buildings. Their rebellion has engulfed towns and cities from the Mediterranean coast to the German border—and now threatens the survival of the government.

Night after night, rioters have confronted the forces of law and order in what the French police have labelled a “civil war”. The chief of police has even called for the army to intervene.

The right wing minister of the interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, who has made no secret of his presidential ambitions, has staked his political career on taming the riots. His failure to rapidly quell the violence has led to growing pressure for him to resign.

The rebellion began on Saturday 26 October. Two teenagers in the Parisian banlieue (suburb) of Clichy-sous-Bois were electrocuted when they tried to hide from police in a power substation.

Their deaths sparked off a night of rioting. On Sunday the CRS riot police flooded the area and fired tear gas into a mosque causing panic among Muslim worshippers celebrating the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

The CRS attack unleashed years of pent-up anger.

In Clichy-sous-Bois and the neighbouring banlieue of Aulnay-sous-Bois the whole community rebelled.

Hanane is a young Muslim woman from Seine-Saint-Denis, which includes the sink estates of Clichy and Aulnay.

“Before, if a young man was picked up by the police, his parents would say, ‘You must have done something,’ or ‘It’s your fault for hanging around the streets at night.’ But now parents are telling their sons ‘Get into the streets and defend our neighbourhood,’” she said.

### Poverty

While the media and the politicians are blaming “vandals” for the riots, Hanane says on the first day of the riots in Clichy-sous-Bois the whole community was behind the youths. “During the height of the riot both old and young were leaning over their balconies pelting the police with anything to hand.”



Residents march through Clichy-sous-Bois to remember the two young men who died while hiding from police in an electricity substation, the event that sparked the French riots

The banlieues of Seine-Saint-Denis have come to represent the belts of misery and grinding poverty that exist on the edges of many towns and cities across France.

In some areas of Clichy-sous-Bois half the population are unemployed. This is an area with no station, bypassed by all the major roads and bus routes through Paris.

Antoine is a teacher who has worked in the run-down schools of Seine-Saint-Denis for seven years. “The sons and daughters of Arab and African immigrants face terrible dis-

crimination,” he said. “Often their CVs would be set aside simply because of their names.

“This racism has bred despair and these youngsters find it difficult to find a route out of poverty.

“Meanwhile they face daily harassment by the police, especially from the anti-criminal brigade, or Bac, plain-clothes policemen who rule the banlieues like an army of occupation.”

“The Bac are like cowboys,” said Hanane. “They are the hotheads of the police. They hang around the entrances to tower blocks harassing any youth

they see. They are cruel and violent.

“They stop you and ask for your ID papers. If you say anything you get a slap in the mouth. If you resist you get a beating and end up in jail. One lad I know was stopped ten times in one day by the same policemen.

“They knew who he was and they knew he had done nothing but they just provoked him then they pounced on him. This is not an isolated experience. This is unfortunately the daily reality for many people.”

Through the first week of November the government’s response

to the troubles was mass arrests and increased repression.

Over 1,000 CRS riot police descended on Seine-Saint-Denis in a massive act of intimidation, but the focus shifted to other towns and cities.

Over the following ten days riots spread to Marseille, Lille, Dijon, and Saint-Etienne. Even the resorts of Nice and Cannes were touched by the revolt.

The increased repression has fuelled deep mistrust and anger among the peoples in the banlieues, Hanane said. “The Bac act with impunity, they know that if they shoot you nothing will

## Unrest shows the need to resist th

“Riots are the voice of the unheard,” said the great black civil rights leader Martin Luther King in response to the uprisings that swept US cities in the 1960s.

Then it was black ghettos that burst into flames of anger at racism and poverty. In Britain in the early 1980s it was young black and white people who rioted in the inner cities.

In France over the last two weeks it has been impoverished and ignored estates that are home to large numbers of young people whose parents or grandparents came as immigrants from Africa.

On each occasion the establishment and its defenders have sought to bury King’s

fundamental truth often through citing openly racist stereotypes.

They argue that the violence is simply the result of “mindless thugs” who hate what we are told is a fundamentally decent society.

There then begins a desperate search by hiring commentators for some explanation, any explanation so long as it ignores the fundamental causes of the riots.

So after the disturbances in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley four years ago, and again after the recent communal violence in Lozells, Birmingham, we were told that it was not racism and poverty but “multiculturalism” that was to blame.

New Labour and even figures such as the chair of the Commission for Racial Equality came up with measures to impose a “national identity”, to emphasise “shared values”, which just happened to be the values that suit the rich and powerful.

Alienated But that is exactly the approach taken by the French elite through its “republican” model of attempting to contain social unrest.

In 2002 interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy co-opted more pliant Muslim figures into a Council of the Muslim Creed and excluded those deemed too “radical”, just as New Labour is attempting to do in Britain.

They were to be a transmission belt for spreading respect for the French state among alienated young people.

The French parliament banned young women from wearing the Muslim headscarf at school, claiming that it creates divisions, where presumably none existed before.

Mainstream parties of the right and centre left have for decades ignored the institutional disadvantage African and Arab immigrants suffer. They have pretended there is real equality for all citizens, marred only by a few individual hardened racists.

And the result of this French

model of enforced assimilation? The kind of urban riots that were supposedly only a feature of a Britain where “political correctness has gone mad”.

So now many of those who said France and its headscarf ban pointed the way to “better race relations” are revealing their true colours.

For them it has never been tokenistic policies by the government and local councils that are the problem—it is immigrants, especially Muslims, who they view as an alien threat.

The conservative press in Britain and the rest of Europe is warning of further unrest across the continent

# THE POOR



answer is to invite the chief of police and right wing politicians for 'dialogue'. But it is these people who are behind the racism. Why are we having a dialogue with them?"

## Immigrants

She added that Sarkozy was appealing to supporters of the fascist Front National in his bid to win the 2007 presidential election, and that he was sending the Bac, the "political children" of Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, onto her estate.

Aziz al-Jawari runs the Tawhid cultural centre in Seine-Saint-Denis. He dismissed out of hand any suggestion that the young rioters were driven by fundamentalist ideas, a frequent accusation in the media.

"They say we are trying to build an 'alternative France', and the banlieues have become hotbeds of Islamic radicalism," he said.

"They say the Arab youth are under the control of 'foreign forces'. Their logic runs: 'Islam means terrorism, so all Muslims are terrorists.'

"The young are not rioting because they are immigrants, or because of Palestine, the war on Iraq or even Islam. They are rioting because they are French.

"Their parents may have been immigrants who came to live in a new country.

"They expected little and received even less. But this generation were born here and went to school here. French is their mother tongue.

"They are angry because even though they are French, they are treated as second class citizens."

"We don't live in the banlieues out of choice," said Hanane. "Our parents did not come here and say, 'We want to be poor and live in ghettos.' We are forced into these areas by the deep racism in French society.

"I don't travel into the centre of Paris because I wear a veil and I'm sick of the dirty looks I get. There is an unofficial curfew for young blacks and Arabs.

"If they are caught in the centre at night they will be get trouble from the police. So we have no choice, we have to stay in our areas.

"It is the racists who want a divided France, not the immigrants or the children of immigrants.

"No matter how many generations have lived here, we cannot change the colour of our skin. We cannot become white, so for them we will never be acceptable."

happen to them.

"It is for this reason that the two young lads tried to hide in an electricity substation—they were terrified of the police."

The nightly rioting has almost become a personal battle between Sarkozy and the young "casseurs", or vandals, as they are known. "This scum," Sarkozy declared in one of his provocative visits to a banlieue last week, "will be washed off the streets."

For the youth, the tally of cars torched or buildings attacked has become an affirmation that Sarkozy

and the police no longer control their estates.

"But the young are fighting on their own doorstep," warned Hanane. "The political parties have abandoned them. It is easy to say that these lads are simply destroying their communities, and although I think it is wrong just to torch cars, no one is providing them with an alternative."

Hanane said that the "community leaders" have no solution to the despair.

"Now the rebellion is not just against the police, but also against the elders in the community, whose only

rather than at its margins.

The French government hopes to repress the riots into submission, just as the US state eventually regained control of its cities four decades ago.

But the 1960s ghetto uprisings took place alongside the growing movement against the Vietnam war and, a little later, a resurgence of organised working class struggle. The combination forced major concessions and can do so again.

That places a huge responsibility on the forces of the radical left that have made such advances in elections and referendums in much of Europe this year.

The left, and with it basic union

and community organisation, have been absent from the impoverished areas around Paris, London and Berlin for far too long.

The message of hope carried by the anti-war and anti-capitalist movements needs to reach those areas if they are to be drawn into a collective resistance that is far more effective than rioting.

That means ferociously opposing the attempt to demonise Muslims and immigrants. And it means saying loudly that the only meaningful "social cohesion" is based on the common class interests of the poor against the elite.

[www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk)

## Despair behind the French riots

by Simon Assaf

Anger over poverty and racism has been building up for decades on the sink estates surrounding Paris and other cities in France

Seine-Saint-Denis, on the outskirts of Paris, is known as the Banlieue Rouge, the red suburb.

This traditional working class area has a history of militancy and is one of the few areas still dominated by the French Communist Party.

It has undergone profound changes since the 1970s. The working class area was settled by new groups of foreign workers from France's former colonies.

These workers were drawn into the large factories that ring French cities, many of them joining trade unions and integrating into the working class.

They looked towards the Communist Party and the Socialist Party as their natural political homes.

The arrival of the new immigrants coincided with a severe economic crisis in 1974. The crisis left its mark on the immigrant workers and their families. Faced with racism and low paid jobs, they became trapped in sink estates.

There was a similar pattern in other cities across the country.

The ghettoisation of black and Arab migrants became unofficial government policy. The generation in revolt today are the children of these policies.

Many of the new migrants hoped they would eventually integrate, as did those before them.

But instead they found themselves marginalised, while their children found it almost impossible to break out of the deepening cycle of poverty.

These problems led to the first serious riots in the southern industrial city of Lyon in 1982.

These riots prompted the Socialist Party government to invest in run down neighbourhoods. But the programme fell far short of

expectations.

In the 1990s the focus shifted towards internal investment with the establishment of tax free zones that would encourage companies to set up in the areas.

This new programme succeeded only in creating a few poorly paid jobs.

Today there are high levels of unemployment. Over half the population is under the age of 25, educated in sink schools with few prospects of decent jobs after graduation.

The state has responded to the deprivation and social problems by increasing police powers.

The Bac anti-criminal brigades, the "community police" and the feared CRS riot police have put many areas under siege. Ostensibly sent in to fight crime, the police have marked themselves out by their brutality and racism.

One French teacher described how the riot police shouted abuse at Muslim women as they fled a mosque that had been tear-gassed in the first days of the disturbances: "As [worshippers] left they were met with insults from the forces of law and order, who shouted 'Whore, bitch'."

Attempts to speak to the police proved futile. Those who dared to try were ordered to move on.

The government has responded to the riots with calls for more repression and more neo-liberal policies. Poverty and unemployment, they say, can only be tackled by the creation of "entry level" jobs.

This is a euphemism for two-tier employment, with some workers enjoying better wages and conditions, while the children of black and Arab immigrants remain ghettoised in low paid jobs with few prospects.

[www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk)

## Mass protests and strikes greet Bush in Argentina

by Marina Rivero, Socialismo Internacional, Uruguay

Mar del Plata was practically militarised during the summit, and security fences separated the presidents from the people.

On our side of the fences, thousands of students, workers, religious leaders, indigenous campaigners and human rights activists congregated in a People's Summit. Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel said, "We reject the growing militarisation of the continent. We need resources for health, education — for life not death."

Ecuadorian indigenous leader Blanca Chancoso said, "Bush is a terrorist. Don't allow him to move freely in our America."

Hugo Chavez expressed the feelings of many people at the People's Summit, saying, "Each of us brought a gravedigger's shovel, because we will bury the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) here in Mar del Plata."

On Friday of last week, tens of thousands took to the streets in protests that crossed the city.

Civil service workers and teachers went on strike. The FTAA is not yet dead, but the events of Mar del Plata are a major blow to Bush's plans for the continent.

The protestors were led by the football star and broadcaster Diego Maradona. A People's Summit was also held in Mar del Plata, the location of the Summit. The next World Social Forum takes place in four cities around the world, the Latin American Forum will take place at the end of January in Caracas, Venezuela and will be an important step in uniting the international anti-privatisation and anti-capitalist movements.

## The elite's agenda

by this "enemy within".

If there are more riots, they will have nothing to do with some imagined Islamic insurgency.

They will be because large numbers of German, French, British, Spanish and Italian young working class people are corralled onto sink estates, subjected to systematic racism, their lives disfigured by the same neo-liberal capitalism that is crushing all but a tiny elite.

Struggle

There will be riots for the same reasons there have been mass strikes across Europe by those who do have the collective power and organisation that comes from being at the heart of capitalist production

# Socialist Worker

## Editorial

Web: www.swp.ie Email: swped@eircom.net Phone: 01 8722682

# The Celtic Tiger is in trouble

Foreign Direct Investment into Ireland has fallen by 50%, from \$26.9 billion in 2003 to \$14.1 billion, in 2004.

In the past three years levels of personal indebtedness have risen dramatically, exports have fallen, the current account has registered a deficit, and consumer prices have grown by 22.5%.

The establishment plans to overcome this through attacking workers' conditions, outsourcing, and the super-exploitation of migrant labor. The Irish Ferries protest was a good beginning; however strike action and much more is needed if we are to stop the race to the bottom.

## Criminal justice bill

McDowell plans to push the Criminal Justice Bill through the Dail before Christmas.

If passed, this Bill will increase Garda powers at a time when the results of the McBrearty and Rossiter cases suggest instead that such powers should be reduced.

Opposition to the Bill will hopefully be at the top of the agenda of the forthcoming anti-corruption meeting at the Mansion House. The Bill proposes an increase in detention periods without charge from 12 to 24 hours, and the introduction of on-the-spot fines, electronic tagging and Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs).

But the Bill is an attempt by the government to side track criticism away from the root causes of "anti-social behaviour", such as the under-resourced education system, and the lack of playgrounds, public swimming pools, non-alcoholic venues and youth clubs

As with the Public Order Act, McDowell claims to be targeting drunken jobs. However one of the earliest applications of the Public Order Act involved targetting striking Dublin Airport workers.

This Bill will strengthen McDowell and FF's powers to smash emerging struggles such as the An Post dispute and the Shell to Sea campaign.

## Anti-Traveller Bigotry

The sympathy for Mayo farmer Pádraig Nally—who shot the Traveller John Ward—in the mainstream media reflects the institutional racism against Travellers in this country.

There was little sympathy for Marie Ward, the widow of John Ward, who said: "My youngest son keeps asking—where's Daddy, when is he coming back?" She has also been receiving hate mail.

The infant mortality rate for Travellers is 18.1 per 1000 live births compared to a national figure of 7.4, male Travellers live 9.9 years less than settled men, and traveller women 11.9 years less than settled women.

Nearly 1,000 Traveller families still live on the roadside in appalling conditions without access to water, sanitation and electricity. The treatment of Travellers is one more example of the exclusion, poverty and racism at the heart of the Celtic Tiger.

## Bush & Blair in Crisis

Public support is at an all time low for Bush and Blair. This crisis has been precipitated by ongoing mobilisations against the Iraq war and by opposition to their plans for privatisation.

Bertie Ahern could face the same crisis if the Left hold him to account. However, Sinn Fein are too concerned with keeping the door open to coalition with Ahern, and Labour's 'radical' voice has been left trailing behind FG.

The onus is on the social movements and radical left to create an alternative.

## COMMENT

# Sinn Fein for coalition?



Ahern and Adams: Soon to be partners?

By CONOR KOSTICK

'Make no mistake about it, however, this is a nettle that Sinn Féin will grasp. The only question is when. The only party that we would absolutely rule out are the Progressive Democrats.'

Sinn Féin TD Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin recently told the Irish Times that the party was contemplating entering coalition after the next election in the Republic. He also signalled to prospective partners that it was the health portfolio that they were looking at.

This is a significant development.

Revolutionaries have long understood the value of participating in elections and utilising the platform provided by parliament to champion causes such as the Rosspoint 5 or Irish Ferries workers. But entering into government with Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael is an entirely different perspective that cannot be justified by reference to tactical manoeuvres.

Most Sinn Féin members will go along with the idea of coalition. For the same reasons that Labour Party members, each time the opportunity arises, wrestle with their conscience, then allow their TD's to join with

Fianna Fail or Fine Gael. The argument seems irresistible: 'you can't make a difference on the outside.'

The Sinn Féin leadership have an additional argument, not one stated to the Irish Times but one that is very well known to their members. In a few years it is possible to envisage a situation where Sinn Féin are in government both north and south of the border. The opportunity to begin 'joining the dots', that is, to further 32 county structures, will seem to be a fulfilment of their belief that the political process alone can lead to an end to sectarianism.

These perspectives only seem convincing in the abstract. Imagine for a moment the actual compromises that would have to be made for the sake of a Fianna Fail / Sinn Féin government to function, compromises that will begin on day one. Whatever ministry occupied by Sinn Féin, their partners will be implementing their privatisation-by-stealth policies in all areas. Having formed a government do you leave it at once because bin services are being privatised? Because the postal service is being privatised? Because the US Military continues to require the use of Shannon airport? At what point and

on what issue do you leave?

Fianna Fail and Fine Gael are the political opponents of the working class that largely makes up Sinn Féin's electoral base. To join with them in government will be to betray that base.

Furthermore, even the idea that any party could transform the particular, limited, services it was responsible for -within a global capitalist framework- is wishful thinking. The experience of ministries in Northern Ireland should have taught Sinn Féin that.

Far better to be outside government leading the resistance, than partner to a party that implements right-wing policies.

Those activists who want to see genuine progress for working class people do have an alternative: that is to build and support the campaigns that challenge the right wing Fianna Fail / Fine Gael / PD consensus. It is through the growth of such campaigns, as that over our health services, the Rosspoint five and An Post workers that a powerful new left can appear, one which rejects on principle any idea of alliance with the right wing parties.

## LETTERS

### Disgraceful Deportations

What is happening today in Ireland is like that which happened in Europe under Nazi occupation, or Apartheid South Africa; and it is happening in our name.

Over the last number of years, people fleeing persecution, war, hunger and deprivation have been arriving in the European Union seeking asylum. In Ireland the majority are from Nigeria and Eastern Europe. Forced to flee without documentation, many of their friends have not survived the journey. The bodies of some have been washed up on the Mediterranean Coast or on the Canary Islands, and others have been shot by either Spanish or Moroccan border guards in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla.

What becomes of those who survive their journeys and arrive here to claim asylum? After being processed they are put in the direct provision system. This means they are given the princely sum of €19.10 per week to survive on. They are also denied the right to work. So much for the Ireland of the welcomes.

Eventually and without warning the dreaded day of deportation arrives. People are removed and their personal possessions are taken, possessions that include mobile phones so that friends and family cannot be contacted. Often families are separated, and mothers are deported

without their children, people guilty of no crime other than the colour of their skin.

So far this year there have been 3 mass deportations of Nigerian people, including children born here who are entitled to Irish citizenship. These took place in March, July and October. Each flight is accompanied by Gardaí and medical staff. Their role is to restrain those who try to resist.

The outrage of deportation carried out in our names has to stop. History will not judge us kindly. There is an onus on Socialists, anti-racists and all those who oppose injustice to ensure that there are no more deportations and let us, as the music group Asian Dub Foundation say "tear down the walls of Fortress Europe".

Joe Moore Cork

### Shannon Warport

Look at any advert for Shannon airport and you will see a host of destinations listed at reasonable prices. What you won't see advertised anywhere are the flights from Shannon to Baghdad direct; cost? only 100,00 Iraqi lives.

To highlight the issue of Shannon airport being used by U.S. military, the Galway Alliance Against War (GAAW) has erected 25 new road signs throughout Galway city and county directing the way to "Shannon Warport". A spokesperson for GAAW explained the reasoning behind

them. "The signs mark the unofficial renaming of Shannon airport to Shannon warport. Shannon is no longer simply home to an airport, it is home to a warport. Thousands of US troops pass through this warport every week en route to illegally occupied Iraq. It is a warport that is regularly used by CIA torture jets. It has been conclusively proven that suspected opponents of the US government have been kidnapped and transported on these jets to countries such as Egypt to be tortured. The UN Human Rights Commission is now to investigate Ireland's role in these kidnappings.

The signs are also a modest attempt to highlight the fact that the Irish government willingly colludes in an illegal war in Iraq which has cost the lives of at least 100,000 people."

However, Galway City Council were not too pleased with the new road signs and told a local newspaper, "Putting up posters on telegraph poles or outside certain areas without permission is considered littering". Rather a lame objection! Subsequently some of the signs were taken down: some by those in authority, one or two by souvenir hunters, others by the wind. But the remaining signposts are still pointing the way. Indeed GAAW hope to ensure that they will remain in place until the US troops and the torture planes are removed from Shannon.

Detle Mc Loughlin  
Galway Branch SWP

contact 5dette@eircom tel: 086 3366525



# 'WE STRUCK, WE SPREAD IT — AND WE WON'

## Lessons from British postal strike

REMEMBER THE British postal workers strike in 2003! That should be the response whenever someone says it is impossible to beat the employers or anti-union laws.

The strike was based on militant action involving as many people as possible, not confined to a small section. The strikes were unofficial and might have been deemed illegal. But neither the union nor its activists were prosecuted.

The strike was also more effective because Royal Mail did not have time to prepare for them. Management would have had weeks to prepare their scabbing operations if workers had followed the government's balloting laws. It demonstrated that open-ended strikes are much more effective than one-day or similar strikes.

If management had known the post strikes would end after a set period they could have waited for the return to work.

Open-ended strikes can achieve results much quicker than one-day actions. Some 2,000 postal workers were out for two weeks but the rest of the 35,000 who took action were out for less than a week.

A series of one-day strikes could have seen just as much action but it would have had far less impact.

The strike showed the bosses are much weaker than they pretend. The threat that other companies would take over postal services was a bluff. The strike was not held back by the desire to keep in with Labour. Far too often union leaders have cancelled action because of their links with the Labour Party.

In the post many of the activists who led the strike rightly saw no reason to be loyal to a party that has betrayed working people.

The government's strategy of stamping on any sign of a fight-back in order to prevent the example spreading suffered a severe setback.

**The strike showed the bosses are much weaker than they pretend. The threat that other companies would take over postal services was a bluff.**



An Post workers on the picket line in November. British postal workers showed it is possible to win in 2003

Pic: Paula Geraghty

## It was a victory for the rank and file

Rank and file organisation hurled back the bosses' offensive. It was because people held the line and stuck together.

Strikes began at two offices but they would have been isolated and hammered were it not for the solidarity and decisive action of other postal workers. That support and the original strikes were illegal and unofficial. They were also extremely effective.

The strikes first spread across most of London, then large parts of Essex and Kent. But the real test was yet to come.

Management had planned this offensive and had a strategy to get other offices to do strikers' work. They hoped this would demoralise the strikers and crack the union nationally.

The bosses' plan-detailed in the Guardian after it was discovered by an ordinary postal worker-included harassing, following, spying on and photographing union reps.

But very quickly other offices showed they would not scab on their colleagues. Out came Slough, Oxford, Stansted and Milton Keynes.

Soon afterwards it was Portsmouth, Swindon, Cambridge, Warrington, Hatfield,

Gravesend, Coventry and Stoke.

A brief walkout at the Wishaw office near Glasgow also shocked Royal Mail. Some stopped because they were asked to do London work-others through simple solidarity. Management had relied on divisions in the union and the lie that the dispute was about London weighting. Now they found they were uniting the workforce in a militant fightback.

Royal Mail's chief executive, Adam Crozier, who had arrogantly sent only underlings to meet the union, was suddenly pitched into the talks over the strike.

Management were on the rack. Tens of millions, perhaps as many as 180 million letters, were stockpiled in offices around the country.

Businesses were screaming that their bills were not going out and that they could not get payments in.

The special delivery service had to be suspended in most of London because there were not enough managers to cope.

Newspapers such as the Financial Times were demanding that the union be dragged before the courts.

This seemed likely to cause a national strike and a major

confrontation with the anti-union laws where the outcome was far from certain.

"The strike is making us look stupid," said Royal Mail chairman Allan Leighton. Trade and industry secretary Patricia Hewitt attacked the unofficial strikes. But the strikes rattled the government and she said management should move away from "megaphone diplomacy".

Bosses began to offer concessions in talks.

But there was still another twist to come. Management bent over backwards NOT to force working offices to do London work or to give reps any excuse to lead their members out.

In one major office a rep walked round selling the rank and file paper Post Worker while being paid overtime-and the manager did nothing.

In another mail centre a manager was suspended for harassing a rep-just as it was revealed that Royal Mail had a national policy of harassing reps!

It was a different attempt to isolate the striking offices.

For a few hours it seemed to be having some success. But then came news that Edinburgh and Glasgow were preparing to walk

out. Other major centres were ready to go.

Pickets planned to go out from London on Monday afternoon if necessary to campaign up and down the country and put their case.

It was enough to tip the balance. Fearing an even more powerful strike, Leighton and Crozier got the nod from their political masters to make the deal, even at the bitter cost of retreat.

Leighton then intervened personally in the talks to get agreement. The postal workers would have lost without the tremendous courage and defiance of the rank and file and the union reps.

They put their livelihoods on the line, gave up hundreds of pounds in wages and suffered long hours on the picket lines.

What made it effective were the networks of the rank and file, many around the rank and file paper, the Post Worker.

They coordinated a response to management provocation, gave encouragement at difficult moments, and made sure the strike did not lose momentum.

The postal workers made a massive contribution to reviving working class struggle in Britain.

## REVIEWS

BOOK REVIEW:

# Into the heart of the darkness of the Northern Irish state

By **Conor Kostick**

According to Marxist theory, the core of any state is an armed force that will, when necessary, fight on behalf of the ruling class.

This generalisation does not mean that everyone who joins the modern state's police force or army, wishes to play such a role.

It can happen that someone who is committed to the ideals of peace, justice and community welfare - the ideals which the forces of the modern state invoke to justify their existence - may accept such ideals at face value and join up.

Jonty Brown is one such person. He joined the RUC on 30 January 1972, coincidentally the day that would become known as Bloody Sunday.

It was the day that the British Army revealed the lengths to which it was prepared to go in defence of the Northern Ireland authorities by killing thirteen civilians on a civil rights march in one afternoon.

Jonty Brown's book, *Into the Dark* makes fascinating reading. It is the story of a member of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) at the height of the troubles.

What the book is about, above all, is how his efforts to arrest loyalist criminals and murders were sabotaged by Special Branch.

The most important revelations in the book have been asserted by socialists, republicans and human rights activists for some time now, but it is nevertheless very striking and instructive to read the testimony of someone at the heart of the darkness of the Northern Irish state.

The RUC are shown to have consistently colluded with loyalist paramilitaries, allowing them access to police information, to



RUC roadblock

obtain arms and to roam estates freely at nights to intimidate Catholics.

Those within the Protestant community who might have wished to come forward with information about the criminal activities of these gangs soon learned that they could not safely do so as some of the police were taking their orders from UVF leaders.

The operations of the Special Branch were more sinister. Jonty Brown clashed with Special

Branch throughout his career and several times his life was in danger from those who considered him to be a 'Proddy basher.'

Special Branch is shown to have worked with and guarded 'informers' even while they were committing brutal senseless murder upon murder.

Special Branch prevented the arrest of leading loyalists. They made sure that raids on loyalist arms dumps were foiled. They fabricated evidence so that investiga-

tions into the police system of Northern Ireland, such as those conducted by John Stevens, failed to obtain information that would have been used to argue for reform.

Perhaps the most shocking incident in the book is Jonty Brown's description of the meeting with UVF leader Ken Barratt.

Barratt wanted to become an informer with a view to relocating to Canada. He met Brown while in the company of a member of Special Branch, who secretly

recorded the meeting.

Barratt revealed that it was he who had murdered Catholic lawyer Pat Finucane, relishing in the story. Jonty Brown immediately decided to pursue a prosecution against Ken Barratt but Special Branch had other ideas.

They had known for years that Barratt was the killer and now they moved to defend him. Brown was kept away from Barratt and there was a clumsy attempt by Special Branch to have Brown moved out of Belfast altogether.

His security system was tampered with and Special Branch 'informers' within the loyalist movement began agitating for Brown's killing.

When Stevens convened an enquiry into the Finucane killing, Brown's testimony was initially disregarded because the tape of the meeting with Barratt provided by Special Branch showed no trace of a confession to the murder.

Brown's testimony was only taken seriously after that submitted tape was proven to have been a substitute for the original.

Brown did meet some Special Branch members who were not involved in murky dealings with the loyalist paramilitaries and who had some decent qualities.

But as he himself wrote 'I knew from bitter experience, however, that these same personal traits would vanish one by one as he sunk deeper into the abyss that was Special Branch.'

Exactly. No Marxist could better make the point that this collusion was not a case of individual sectarianism but a structural feature of the most powerful part of the Northern Ireland security forces.

**Johnston Brown, *Into the Dark*, Gill and Macmillan, 22.99 Euros**

## CINEMA REVIEW: PAVEE LACKEEN

By **Thomas Kador**

A few caravans parked on the side of a road near Dublin's Poolbeg Docks, constantly shaking under the thunder of articulated lorries speeding by, provides the setting for Perry O'Gden's Pavee Lackeen (*Traveller Girl*).

The film follows several days in the life of Winnie, the central character who is played by thirteen year old Winnie Maughan. She lives in one of these caravans with her mother, brothers and sisters. Beyond depicting the daily reality of their lives, however, the film makes no real attempt to create a story line.

Instead it focuses on portraying the everyday issues arising in the lives of modern Irish travellers. It shows the difficulty, for example, involved in making a cup of tea - a task which necessitates a ten minute

walk along a dangerous road to the nearest drinking water. Then there is the continuous intimidation by the authorities as they seek to move traveller families on, away from their jurisdiction and into 'someone else's backyard.'

Although the film does not, overall, focus strongly on the issue of discrimination, it does highlight the manner in which the education system discriminates against traveller children, for no other reason than their mobile lifestyle.

It also touches upon other issues such as the role of alcohol and solvent use, literacy problems and conflict with the law.

Yet, the most striking images remaining in most people's minds will be the little hamlet of caravans, the children playing outside on a busy road and the crowded conditions inside.



Winnie, played by thirteen year old Winnie Maughan.

In short, anyone who has experienced Ireland's many socially deprived neighbourhoods, its run down housing estates and neglected halting sites dotted around the country will not find many new insights in

Pavee Lackeen. The film merely reinforces the realities of the enormous inequality existing on the margins of Irish society.

On the other hand, an audience largely made up of people living in

the parallel universe of 'full employment', a booming economy and property prices will leave the auditorium stunned at the difficulties many modern Irish travellers face in meeting their most basic needs.

Its success in creating a feeling of empathy with Winnie, her mother and siblings is Pavee Lackeen's strongest achievement. It is therefore not surprising that the film has received a range of awards and been widely acclaimed at the London, Toronto, Venice and Galway film festivals.

The large participation of members of the travelling community in the cast constitutes another of the film's strong points. One has to wonder, however, whether a movie written, directed and produced by Irish travellers themselves would have received the same attention. Probably not.

# EVENTS

## Socialist Worker Public Meeting

Latin American In Revolt

Short screening of Bolivia revolt

Plus discussion led by Rory Hearne (participant in World Social Form)

December 2nd, 7.30pm, Central Hotel

## SWP Forums:

La Haine Film showing Urban Intafada In France

Tuesday 15th Nov 7.30pm, Senior Citizen Centre, Swords

Wednesday 16th Nov 8pm, Upstairs Chaplins Bar, Hawkins St

## Anti-Corruption Public meeting

Speakers: Frank McBrearty, Frank Connolly, Eamon McCann, Joe Higgins, Sinn Fein TDs and many more  
Nov 19th, 2pm  
Mansion House, Dublin

## Dec 3rd: International action on Climate Change

Protests in Dublin (3pm Parade from Garden of Remembrance to Central Bank for live link up with Montreal Protest), Cork and Belfast  
For info check out [www.globalclimatecampaign.org](http://www.globalclimatecampaign.org) or contact Paddy Finnegan [coord@grian.ie](mailto:coord@grian.ie)

## INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE

Saturday, 10 December 2005, Royal Horticultural Hall, 80 Vincent Square, London  
With delegates including Tony Benn, Cindy Sheehan, Jawad al Khalissi and many others from Iraq, USA & UK

The grave threat to international peace posed by the invasion and continued occupation of Iraq is now clear for all to see. The people of Iraq and the citizens of Britain and America have time and again insisted that they are opposed to war and occupation. We believe it is now time for representatives of those people to meet together face to face, to renew our bonds of solidarity and to express our joint opposition to war.

To that end a broad and representative conference attended by a delegation of Iraqis drawn from all those sections of society rejecting the US and British occupation will meet in London on 10th December 2005. We call on all peace campaigners, trade unionists, the congregations of all faiths, non-governmental organisations, progressive campaigns, community organisations and political parties to send delegates to this conference.

# LET'S GIVE THE US/UK WAR EFFORT ITS FINAL BLOW!

By Thomas Kador



Pitstop Ploughshare activists Claron O'Reilly and Damien Moran

The recent collapse of the second attempt by the state to prosecute the five pit stop ploughshare activists who damaged a US warplane at Shannon airport in February 2003 has highlighted a number of issues regarding Ireland's special relationship with the US neo-con administration.

The fact that Judge Frank O'Donnell a former PD member, had held personal and political bias against the defendants which eventually led to the collapse of the first trial is not surprising.

However the intimate association of Judge Donagh McDonagh with the Bush

administration, which caused the second trial to collapse, should raise eyebrows. McDonagh apparently attended functions hosted by George W. Bush prior to becoming US president as well as his inauguration of 2001 and is said to have been invited for Bush's second inauguration.

This clearly illustrates the strong affinity between Ireland's ruling elite and the current rightwing administration in the White House.

Moreover it shows that this relationship is not confined to economic need due to a reliance on US multinational investment, as often argued, but that there are much stronger personal and political links between the top layer's of Ireland's and the United State's society.

This may go some way towards explaining our government's insistence on supporting the US war efforts, through facilitating US warplanes to stop at Shannon as well as the transport of US torture victims to Guantanamo Bay, and further serves to reinforce the accusations of complicity with the continuous

killing of Iraqi civilians.

The recent comments by British based Muslim lawyer Anjem Choudary that Ireland is no longer seen as neutral in the Arab and Muslim world should therefore come as no surprise.

Another issue the two unsuccessful trials of the Shannon five have brought to the fore is that protests work.

This is not just because of the enormous support they have received for their actions and the international outcry their trial has caused but also due to the two judges ruling that if they had inflicted greater damage to US war planes their case for a lawful excuse, on the basis of saving Iraqi and American lives would have been stronger. In other words, the larger the action, the more justified it is.

At a time when both Bush and Blair are losing their grasp on power at home and with public opinion rapidly mounting against their imperialist project this should be seen as encouragement to step up the mass anti war movement again. Finally the families of US and British troops in Iraq are finding a public voice as they will gather at the International Peace conference in London on Saturday 10 December to share their experiences.

Now is the time to start mobilising to give the stalling US/UK war efforts their final blow.

## No More Deaths on Our Streets Protest Rally

The Homeless are Revolting! Join Them!  
No More Deaths on Our Streets Protest Rally  
Saturday 26

November 3pm  
Assemble @ Garden Of Remembrance, Parnell Square, Dublin

## Comhlamh discussion groups

Using Boycotts as an Activist's Tool  
Comhlamh Global Education Group invites you to the first in a series of discussion meetings, featuring topical and interesting issues that you might like to learn more about - or

share your ideas on!  
Tuesday 15th November  
Comhlamh Office, 55 Grand Parade, Cork at 7.30pm.  
<http://www.comhlamh.org>

## For a new paper reflecting the new movements:

Support the Socialist Worker financial appeal: please subscribe now

**S**ocialist Worker is your paper. It's the alternative voice, the voice of socialism and struggle.

Whether it's nurses protesting against underfunding, asylum seekers on hunger strike against their deportation, campaigns against the Bin Tax or support for the Iraqi resistance and opposition to the US use of the Shannon 'Warport', Socialist Worker is giving the

real opinions, the real voice of those movements.

The lack of a political alternative both North and South to oppose privatisation, war and racism has never been more obvious.

Socialist Worker is committed to building such a new alternative left voice, building support for the movements from below, and building toward a world without capitalism, the other world that we believe is

possible and more necessary in 2005 than ever before.

Currently Socialist Worker is a completely voluntary production. We get no advertising finance and it is funded completely by sales.

In order to fulfil the potential that exists in this current period and build support for the projects outlined above we need a higher quality paper and ultimately much higher sales. Central to this will be

raising the finance to cover a salary for a person to work full-time on the paper.

With this in mind we appeal to you to take out a subscription for Socialist Worker, donate whatever sum of money (large or small) to the paper fund, and if possible take extra copies of the paper to sell to work colleagues, friends, class-mates etc.

It's your paper; together we can make another world possible.

Never miss an issue! Receive each issue of Socialist Worker by post

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I would like a six month regular subscription (€20/£14stg)

I would like a six month solidarity subscription (€30/£20stg)

I would like to donate \_\_\_\_\_ to Socialist Worker

Return to PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, with a cheque/postal order or a bank lodgement receipt. Bank Details: Socialist Workers Movement, AIB, 37/38 Upper O Connell St, Dublin 1. Account No: 85173469. Sort code: 93-11-36

## WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

**Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet.**

A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

### REVOLUTION

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy.

To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based on much

greater political and economic democracy.

### AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth.

Bush's "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance.

### END RACISM AND OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the

working class.

We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

### FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Blair government.

Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction'

We want to see an Irish workers republic where all

workers gain.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

### FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party.

This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system.

We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc.

We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

## Join the Socialists

Fill in the form and send to  
SWP PO Box 1648 Dublin 8

Name.....

Address.....

Email.....

Phone.....



# Socialist Worker

## December 3rd:

# International action on Climate Change

Interview with **George Monbiot**, Environmental campaigner

We need to call for the restraint and regulation of business. This would make it much easier for us to live in a climate friendly way — while making it more difficult for companies to push technologies that destroy the environment.

I am currently working on identifying politically feasible means of cutting 80 percent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. That is the order of cuts we need if we are to avoid the catastrophic climate change that could bring a humanitarian disaster.

What I'm trying to do is work up a programme that would be applicable to any developed country. That would give a clear set of objectives that we can campaign for, so we know whether or not a government is moving towards the sort of cuts that are necessary.

The plan mostly includes the increase of energy efficiency and cuts in the amount of energy we use. You can make far greater changes that way than you can from building up renewable energy.

If we try to continue to live as we do, but power it with wind turbines or bio-fuel, then we really substitute one problem for another.

Take the example of bio-fuel. There's a lot of talk now about everyone running their cars on bio-fuel, and even our aeroplanes on bio-kerosene. But in order to grow sufficient crops to produce that fuel, you would have to take up the entire land surface of several planets.

So in reality you create competition between feeding cars and feeding people. And there's no question about how that question will be

resolved, because food follows the money rather than following the human need.

We need to put the burden on business not people — make it an indirect political cost rather than a direct one. It will also quite deliberately set the corporations against the people, so that we have a clearly defined set of enemies.

One of the key points is that we have to respond as citizens rather than consumers. The whole idea of "consumer democracy" is a complete distraction from the political fight we need to engage in.

What you find is that people will consume as much as their credit card will allow.

We need to put massive pressure on governments to actually introduce the sorts of regulations that ensure that we're not destroying the climate, whatever our consumer preferences might be.

That means the change is going to take place on the streets and not the shops.

We have an extraordinary situation at the moment which reminds me of the Spanish inquisition at the height of its powers. There's a deliberate policy, on the part of the Bush administration and certain big business — especially Exxon — to attempt to deny the fire they've made.

### Freedom

They want to prevent scientists from carrying out the research needed into climate change. We're up against a concerted effort here to prevent accumulated knowledge and to prevent attempts to find out

exactly what is happening and why.

This is a major threat to freedom of thought and freedom of speech, as well as to freedom in an environmental sense.

We need to put climate change right at the top of the political agenda — it is by far the biggest threat to humanity.

The last time the climate changed by six degrees in a short period of time, it wiped out every species that was longer than three feet. That would include us if it happened again.

Six degrees is at the top end of the estimates for climate change in the next century.

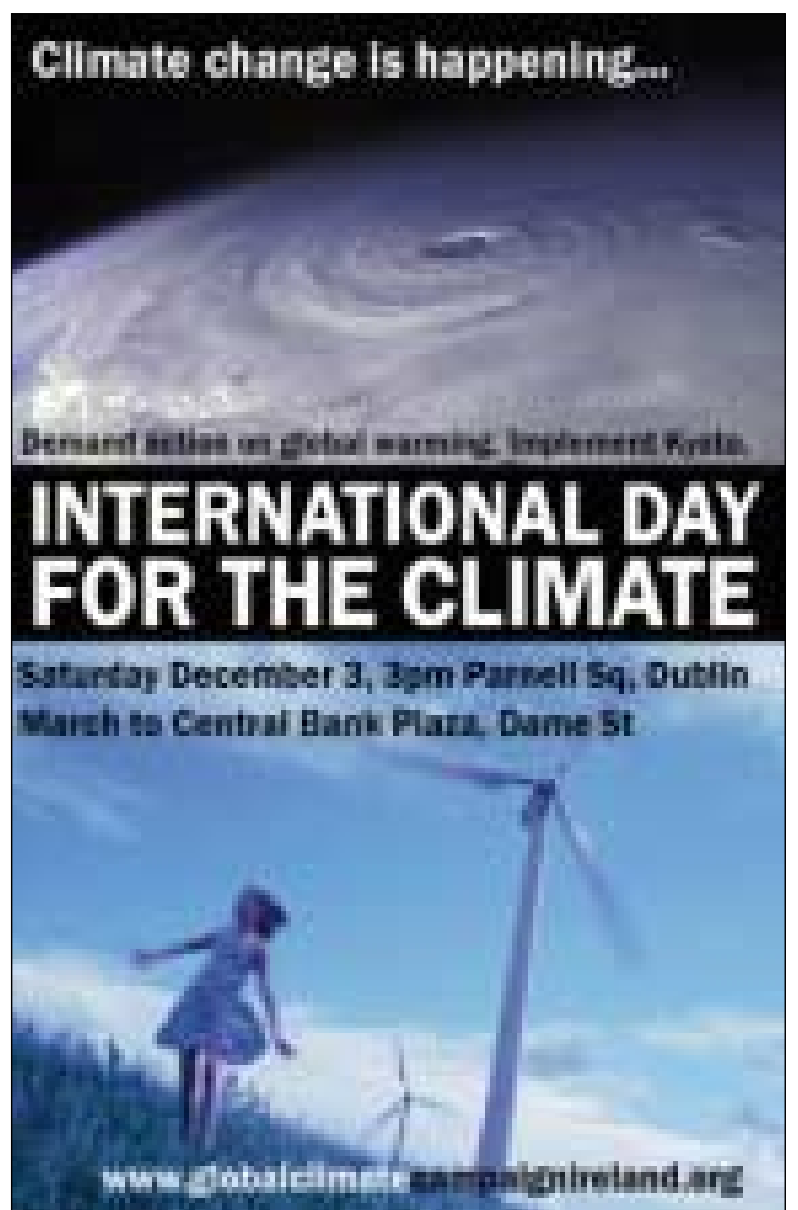
As activists we need to recognise that unless we deal with this, it will be very difficult to meet any other goals to do with human rights or welfare.

We have to turn this into the primary political campaign. That means keeping on the streets, keeping up the demonstrations and putting an enormous amount of pressure on our politicians.

Climate change has got to be a component of every campaign we get involved in now. If we are trying to help end poverty, that aim is completely destroyed by climate change.

Research has just shown that the massive increases in droughts in Africa is as a result of climate change — and so is the huge amount of poverty that those droughts create. You cannot deal with poverty unless you deal with climate change.

From [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) George Monbiot's website [www.monbiot.com](http://www.monbiot.com)



## Build the protests for December 3rd

Protests will take place across the world on December 3rd to coincide with the UN Climate Conference (the First 'Meeting of Parties' to the Kyoto Protocol) in Montreal, November 28th to December 9th.

The US government won't even sign the Kyoto climate agreement on cutting carbon dioxide emissions. In any case,

Kyoto does not go anywhere like far enough and the countries that have signed Kyoto are not living up to what they have promised.

There is an overwhelming need for international demonstrations on climate change both to put pressure on the US to ratify Kyoto, and to highlight the urgency of the climate crisis, in general.

We need to create a groundswell of global opinion to push for the urgent and radical action, without which we risk a global catastrophe of unimaginable proportions.

We need to build a movement so strong that it can force the governments of the world to act.

We have to start somewhere. The World Social Forum social

assembly in Brazil called for international action.

There is a call for coordinated national demonstrations around the world on Saturday 3 December.

We want to establish the principle that people will march and fight over this, that we will build a global movement. In time, the demos will be massive.

★ There will be protests in Dublin (3pm Parade from Garden of Remembrance to Central Bank for live link up with Montreal Protest), Cork and Belfast on December 3rd

For info check out [www.globalclimatecampaign.org](http://www.globalclimatecampaign.org) or contact Paddy Finnegan [coord@grian.ie](mailto:coord@grian.ie) and Conor Kennelly