

Socialist Worker

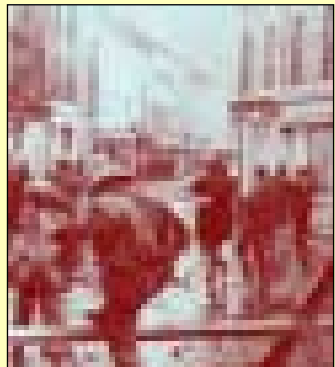
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SHANNON USED AS TORTURE EXPRESS



When Dermot Ahern was asked about CIA planes using Shannon airport, the Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern said: "If anyone has any evidence of any of these flights please give me a call and I will have it immediately investigated."

Here is the evidence.

Six planes used by the CIA for renditions have made some 800 flights in European airspace including 50 landings at Shannon airport in the Republic of Ireland.

The information contradicts assurances given by the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that Ireland's Shannon airport had not been used for "untoward" purposes, or as a transit point for terror suspects.

Amnesty international has obtained flight records for six CIA-chartered planes from September 2001 to September of 2005.

According to the US Federal Aviation Administration over this period, these planes landed 50 times in Shannon and took off

35 times, suggesting that some flights were kept secret.

Although Shannon airport is used as a re-fuelling stop for the US military, none of the planes were military transport planes. In total for this period, the six planes made some 800 flights originating or landing in Europe.

The planes include:

■ **Boeing 737-7ET**, call sign **N313P** (later re-registered as **N4476S**).

The largest of the six planes, with 32 seats, is owned by Premier Executive Transport Services, a CIA front company that also owns N379P. N313P has been frequently seen at US military bases, including in Afghanistan.

■ **Gulfstream V**: call sign **N379P** (later re-registered as **N8068V** and then as **N44982**).

This plane, which has made more than 50 trips to the US detention centre in Guantanamo Bay, has been nicknamed 'The Guantanamo Bay Express'. It was also used in the CIA ren-

dition of Ahmed Agiza and Mohammed al-Zari from Sweden to Egypt.

■ **Gulfstream III**: **N829MG** (later re-registered as **N259SK**).

This plane took dual Syrian-Canadian national Maher Arar from the US to Syria where he was detained for over a year without charge, during which time he was tortured. He was finally released in October 2003.

■ **Gulfstream IV**, call sign **N85VM** (later re-registered as **N227SV**).

This plane took Abu Omar to Egypt from Germany after his kidnapping in Italy, turned around and flew to Shannon. The plane's flight log also shows visits to Afghanistan, Morocco, Dubai, Jordan, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, Azerbaijan and the Czech Republic.

On 17 Feb 2003, the Gulfstream IV, N85VM took Abu Omar from Ramstein to Cairo, then turned around and flew to Shannon, arriving at 0552 on the 18th.

The latest information confirms other persistent and reliable reports in the media and by non-governmental organisations that CIA-chartered flights are used for renditions.

Amnesty International only has partial flight logs for six planes whilst the CIA has been reported to use some 30 leased aircraft.

Under the Human Rights convention, all states are supposed to cooperate to bring to an end any serious breach of the prohibition of torture and other preemptory rules of international law.

They are also supposed to refrain from aiding or assisting those carrying out such breaches.

The Human Rights Commission has called on the government to inspect the planes to ensure that no one is being taken to a torture centre. But in the words of Noam Chomsky, Bertie Ahern is too busy shining Bush's boots.

THESE TWO MEN WERE TAKEN ON THE TORTURE EXPRESS FROM SHANNON



Agiza before his detention.

Ahmed Agiza was an Egyptian asylum seeker who was thrown out of Sweden in a CIA plot. He travelled via Shannon airport to a torture centre in Egypt. His mother gave the following testimony about what happened her son after she visited him in prison in Egypt. "Agiza seemed pale, weak, seemingly in shock and near breakdown. His eyes, cheeks, and feet were allegedly swollen, with his nose larger than usual and bloodied. He said that he had been tied and hung

upside down while transported to the prison, and then being constantly blindfolded and subjected to advanced methods of interrogation, including electric shocks. "He was held in solitary confinement for about ten days. His arms and legs were tied behind his back and he could not relieve himself. He stated that officers had told him his wife would be returned soon, and they threatened to assault her and his mother sexually."

From Shannon to a Syrian Torture Centre

The beating was very intense for a week, and then less intense for another week. That second and the third days were the worst. I could hear other prisoners being tortured, and screaming and screaming. Interrogations are carried out in different rooms.

One tactic they use is to question prisoners for two hours, and then put them in a waiting room, so they can hear the others screaming, and then bring them back to continue the interrogation.

They hit me with a black electrical cable, about two inches thick everywhere on my body. They mostly aimed for my palms, but sometimes missed and hit my wrists they were sore and red for three weeks.

They also struck me on my hips, and lower back.

They used the cable on the second and third



Maher Arar

day, and after that mostly beat me with their hands, hitting me in the stomach and on the back of my neck, and slapping me on the

face. Where they hit me with the cables, my skin turned blue for two or three weeks, but there was no bleeding.

DETAINED FOR TAKING A PICTURE

Ed Horgan, the international secretary of the Peace and Neutrality Alliance, was detained by Gardai at Shannon for taking a picture. Here is his account of what happened.

"My latest detention at Shannon occurred on Thursday 22 December 2005 as I was about to catch a flight to Gatwick, because I allegedly took a photo of US troop Carrying aircraft at Shannon. At least 30 minutes after I was alleged to have taken these photos I was approached by airport police inspector John Martin, in a very public manner as I was purchasing coffee and sandwiches just beyond the Duty Free area.

"He was backed up by two Gardai. I was forcibly removed from the Duty Free Area, and brought back through the Arrivals hall to the Airport Security office where I was questioned and where Airport security then requested the Gardai to arrest me under the Air transport and Navigation act. I warned the Gardai at this point that they would be contravening the law by doing so, and advised them to contact their superiors before tak-



Ed Horgan

ing any action.

"They then contact the Sgt in charge of Shannon Garda station, and the Gardai (police) decided to refuse to arrest me, and I was released, and I subsequently managed to catch my flight to London. Both my camera and my mobile phone were forcefully removed from me during this time and interfered with.

"This incident occurred exactly 48 hours after I had addressed the Oireachtas Joint committee on foreign affairs at Leinster House, Dublin, and specifically complained about my having been previously arrested and my cameras impounded at Shannon.

International Conference calls Global Protest

Well over 1000 people packed packed into the Royal Horticultural Society Hall, London for the peace conference in December.

They came from the US, Iraq, Iran, as well as from Pakistan, India, the Philippines, Canada, Poland, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Spain and many other European countries, to share experience and plan activity and organisation for the future.

It was one of the biggest conferences of its

kind and definitely the most diverse, with many different nationalities represented, young and old, students, school students, peace activists, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews and Christians.

They came to hear the Iraqi delegates - although the British government refused to allow entry to the al Sadr representative, Hassan al Zargani. They were joined by Sheikh al Khallisi from the Iraqi Foundation Congress, Hanna Ibrahim from the Women's Will

Organisation, and Hassan Jumaa from the Iraqi Oil workers' Union, and to hear from US visitors, including Cindy Sheehan, Judith le Blanc from United for Peace and Justice and Phyllis Bennis.

Richard Boyd Barrett, from the Irish Anti-War Movement, said, 'The conference was a rally cry for resistance to this terrible war. We will be working on building a huge demo in Ireland'

STATEMENT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

This international conference, embracing representatives of the Iraqi, British and American and many other peoples, drawn from all parts of society, declares that the crisis caused by the invasion and occupation of Iraq is the central problem in world politics today and demands urgent resolution.

It affirms that the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was unlawful, in breach of the Charter of the United Nations and justified by the invading powers with lies designed to manipulate public opinion.

It declares that the occupation of Iraq by US and British military forces has brought misery and suffering to the people of Iraq. The occupation represents the denial of their national rights, impedes social, economic and political development and threatens the wider peace in the



End the Occupation

Middle East and the world. It has accounted for the loss of tens of thousands of lives of the Iraqi peoples, as well as more than 2,000 soldiers from the occupying armies.

This conference therefore demands an immediate end to the occupation of Iraq, as called for by the majority of the Iraqi, British and American peoples. It

demands the withdrawal of the occupying military forces and the return of full sovereignty to the Iraqi people, who should be allowed to determine their own future free of external interference.

We salute the struggle of the Iraqi people for national freedom and the worldwide movement against the war and the

occupation. We pledge to step up our campaign against the occupation until it is ended. To this end, we call on the anti-war movement in all countries to:

Organise international demonstrations on March 18-19 2006, the third anniversary of the war and invasion, calling for the immediate withdrawal of troops and an end to the occupation.

Campaign for a full international public inquiry into the assault on Fallujah last year.

Give full support to the campaigns of military families in the US, Britain and the other occupying countries.

Develop an international coordination from this conference to plan further events.

Campaign against the privatisation of Iraqi oil.

Oppose any attack on Iran or Syria

CINDY SHEEHAN: 'STOP THESE TORTURE FLIGHTS'

Cindy Sheehan, whose son Casey was killed in Iraq after he travelled through Shannon, spoke at an Irish Anti-War Movement meeting in Dublin. Before that she met Dermot Ahern.



Cindy Sheehan

'I met with that country's equivalent of Condi Rice, the dignified Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern. As a matter of fact, he had just met with the "steely" Condi the week before. Incredibly, he accepted assurances from her that the CIA airplanes (up to 60 documented by peace activists) that are landing in Shannon airport are not transporting prisoners for extraordinary rendition (i.e., torture).

That's like accepting a pirate's assurance that he's

not going to steal your boat as he's boarding it with a drawn sword! I tried to impress on Mr. Ahern that the leaders of my government are known pathological liars, and can't be believed on this or anything.

The torture planes are landing on Irish soil, so Ireland should inspect them for human rights violations.

Protest/Reports/Struggle

email to swped@eircom.net Phone 01 8722682

CIVIL LIBERTIES

Dublin City Council's poster ban breaches human rights law

By Rorry Hearne

Civil liberty groups and politicians have criticised Dublin City Council (DCC) management for censoring the freedom of expression of groups and campaigns in Dublin City.

For over a year DCC has refused to grant permission to campaigns and community groups to erect posters advertising public events and meetings. For example, DCC refused permission to poster to the anti-Bin Tax campaign, the Shell to Sea campaign, Frank McBrearty's campaign against Garda Corruption, homelessness campaigners, the Irish Anti-War movement and many more.

It is legal (according to Section 19(7) of the Litter Pollution Act 1997) to put up posters for a public meeting once they are removed seven days after the event. However, Tom Loftus, head of waste management at Dublin City Council and Owen Keegan, former Director of Traffic, both admitted that the blanket ban on poster "is a management decision". However, the ban does not extend to poster by DCC itself to advertise Smithfield on ice, which its operates with BUPA. (see photograph of posters erected on Dublin City parking meters).

DCC's ban on poster violates the European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003 ("ECHR Act"), according to the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL).

The ECHR Act 2003 came into force in 2003 and requires "every organ of the State [to] perform its functions in a manner compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights".

Article 10 of the convention states:

"Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers..."

The Convention provides protection to political speech and the right to engage in public debate about matters of public interest.

Cllr Joan Collins (Independent) and Cllr

Dessie Ellis (Sinn Fein) have put down a motion to reverse the ban for the next meeting of Dublin City Council on January 9th and are appealing to all parties in the Council to support it.

If all the 'left' councilors (from the Labour Party, Sinn Fein, Green and Independents) vote in favour of the motion it will be passed. The Campaign for Free Speech in Dublin is organising a protest to pressure the councillors at City Hall at 6.15pm on January 9th while the meeting takes place.

This poster ban is only the tip of the iceberg of government agencies' and local authorities' clamp down on civil liberties. Just look at the treatment of the Centre for Public Inquiry, the terrible injustice being meted out to the people of Rosspoint, Co Mayo and the plans to introduce Anti Social Behaviour Orders.

At any opportunity we must stand up and defend our civil liberties, you could be next.

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HEALTH

HARNEY PLANS FOR ELDERLY

By Dr Peadar O Grady

Mary Harney is using old people's wish to live at home to cut back on nursing home beds. Most people will opt to live at home if there are adequate home services like meals on wheels, home helps and respite care.

As we age we become less able to manage some everyday tasks of care like cooking, cleaning and shopping, though the vast majority of older people are able to carry on active and independent lives. Less than 5% of people over 65 are in a residential home.

Harney plans to push more elderly people out of nursing home beds and onto family carers by driving up the fees for care and making empty promises of 'Home care packages'.

A report from a government interdepartmental group in December 2005 states:

"These packages should comprise services such as public health nurse, daycare, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, home help services and respite care, whether drawn from the existing pool of services or any additional resources which might be put in place."

There is no guarantee these packages will be adequately funded but Harney has been quick to emphasise the responsibility of the elderly and their carers to pay for nursing home care.

The main plank of her plan is to charge "co-payments" or fees for nursing home and home services. This will be based on means-testing for income or assets of the elderly person or their family. Charges will be deducted from pensions or even from the person's will. The government even plans a scheme to force those owning their own home to sell part of it to a finance company in order to pay co-payment fees - so called "equity release".

Paltry increases in subvention payments have left nursing home charges at an average €1000 a week which is beyond the ability of most families to pay. Harney has also legalised the robbery of 80% of meagre pensions to pay for care.

She is also keen to make sure that care is in for-profit nursing homes and to limit public beds. Private homes are given tax-breaks to build and the state then pays for many of these beds for public patients. Recent plans to build public units with 850 high-dependency beds were shelved because staffing them would breach the governments self-inflicted ceiling on staff recruitment.

Endless reports, political failure
Writing in the Irish Times Paul Murray of Age Action Ireland outlines the neglect of older people in Ireland:

"In the North, 17% of older people get home help. The Republic's rate is 7%. In the North too 26% get meals on wheels, while the Republic's rate is 18%.

All of which is a horrible indictment of domiciliary (home) care provision and the political failure to follow through on endless reports that have highlighted the need to keep older people in their own homes as long as they wish."

The risk of poverty in old age is highlighted by the fact that half of Irish people have no occupational pension and rely on the state pension which is only a third of the average wage.

Carers under strain

Carers are already stretched to the limit. A survey in the Northwest counties by the Old Age Psychiatry service found that 21% of carers suffered from depression and that many more were under "significant strain".

The average age of carers is almost 60 years old. Two thirds of carers are women. More than half are receiving no statutory support from public services such as home help or respite. Four out of five said their needs were not being met. Of 150,000 carers in Ireland, only 22,000 qualify for the carers' allowance.



Mary Harney

SHELL TO SEA

Rosspoint: New confrontation looms

One hundred people turned up at the gates of Shell's construction site in North Mayo on New Year's Day. It was tribute to the tremendous determination that has driven the Shell to Sea campaign from the start.

This time last year, Shell officials were walking all over the land, pegging out the area for construction work but the huge campaign of solidarity with the five men who were jailed drove them back.

The company are now hoping that two government initiatives will give them the space to resume their operations.

The first is the safety review conducted by Avantica consultants which recently issued their first draft.

However, Shell to Sea spokesperson, Maura Harrington, said that their campaign rejected the terms of reference of the review.

'It just dealt with the pipeline as it passed overland. There was nothing about the well-head or about the wider impact of the development on the area'.

The second government initiative was the appointment of Peter Cassells as mediator. Cassells is close to the present government and backed a Fianna Fail candidate in Meath.

He has not conducted many formal meetings with key campaigners. His report was supposed to be on Minister Dempsey's desk in mid



A previous demonstration in Galway for Shell to Sea

December but little has been heard of it since.

Shell are hoping to look reasonable in order to diffuse opposition to their plans and may try to start removing peat from the site in the spring.

But campaigners are ready for them

'As far as we are concerned Shell has done enough damage to this area already,' said Maura Harrington, 'they won't do anymore'.



NO SALE!

Resisting Commercialism in Irish Schools

By Joseph Fogarty

Each year Irish schools receive a deluge of commercially produced material, enticements to participate in incentive schemes and invitations to enter high-profile competitions sponsored by a variety of companies.

This article addresses three questions about this current and growing trend. Firstly, what motivates corporations to seek to establish themselves in Irish schools and classrooms? Secondly, what is the character of the many commercial schemes found within schools today? And thirdly, what are the dangers inherent in introducing a commercial element into an educational sphere and what options are available to schools?

Why companies target schools.

In today's advertising-saturated culture, marketers face a difficult task of making their products appear distinctive to children amidst the morass of jingles, billboards and television commercials. Schools, therefore, may be considered as virgin territory for cheaper or even free advertisement of a particular brand or product. Schools also represent a mass audience unrivalled in any other institution with more than three quarters of a million students attending school daily in this country. Apart from addressing students en-masse, advertisers may engage in "narrowcasting" or customised messages targeted at pre-designated sections of the school body based on gender, class and curriculum. A third factor is the deeply ingrained cultural perception of schools as places of learning. The potential of teachers to be effective salespeople, coupled with the powerful influence of peer relations makes school, in the words of one in-school marketing firm: "the ideal time to influence attitudes, build long-term loyalties, introduce new products, test

A basic computer purchased through Tesco's Computers for School scheme (13,960 vouchers) translates into almost €140,000 worth of sales at the supermarket.

market, promote sampling and trial usage and, above all, to generate immediate sales." (Consumers Union Education Services, 1990, p. 8)

The following is a sample of the many commercial schemes found in Irish primary and secondary schools between 2003 and 2005.

Sponsored Educational Materials.

Beginning with Sponsored Educational Materials (SEMs), we find several examples of sponsored classroom resources giving prominence to company logos and offering a clear association between the sponsoring company and some wholesome aspect of the school curriculum. The Seatbelt Sheriff, produced by the National Safety Council in association with Renault, features that car manufacturers logo on posters, handouts and badges for children, as well as an endorsement for "Renault. The safest cars you can drive." The GAA / McDonald's Catch and Kick scheme issued 3,000 primary schools with equipment and coaching materials displaying the McDonald's logo on bibs, footballs and pumps. That the world's largest producer of junk food could turn Irish children in 3,000 schools into walking billboards is testament to just how easy it is for the big corporations. Last year Samba Soccer, a company running soccer camps at €95 per child, brought their Roadshow 2004 to schools throughout the country. This involved a company representative performing football tricks and discussing Brazilian soccer before the assembled school children for up to 45 minutes and donating a Samba Pack to be raffled in the school.

Competitions and Incentive Schemes.

A sample of sponsored recent competitions and incentive schemes is seen

to be equally commercial in its orientation. In January 2004, the Irish Daily Star and Nike launched "Ireland's biggest sports giveaway ever", offering 500 schools the chance to win a soccer kit in exchange for collecting 250 mastheads from their newspapers. Schools were obliged to include mastheads from the company's newly launched Sunday edition. The Independent Newspapers Building for the Future competition also requires a quota of 30 tokens per child, collected from the company's newspapers, if a school is to enter a project. Perhaps the largest single incentive scheme in Ireland is the Tesco Computers for Schools programme which sees primary schools collect between 10 and 15 million vouchers annually. At a time when Irish primary schools have "a lot of ground to cover to catch up" (National Centre for Technology in Education, 2004, p. 7) with their European neighbours in terms of Information Technology it is salutary to note that a basic computer purchased through the Computers for School scheme (13,960 vouchers) translates into a school accounting for almost €140,000 worth of sales at the supermarket.

Arguments against commercialism.

Objections to the promotion and marketing of commercial products through schools may be grouped under two headings. The first is that referred to by the Department of Education in its three circulars on the subject (Circular 23/84; Circular 7/87; Circular 38/91) and argues that parents should not be "put under undue pressure to purchase a particular commercial product." The INTO and Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA) concur that, "These campaigns consume much of teachers' time and can impose considerable undesirable pressure on school going children, parents,

and teachers." (INTO, 1987, p. 34)

Secondly, it is imperative that schools, as centres of education, ensure that they provide the kind of child-centred, discovery based learning expressed in the curricula. This emphasis on questioning and critical thinking, is diametrically opposed to the restricted, product-focussed nature of advertising messages. Placing marketing messages before school children distorts the education process and means that ideas, concepts and attitudes are for sale to the highest bidder.

Curren has written that "Corporations are well informed of the schools' need for revenue, yet school administrators are ill informed or do not fully comprehend their value of exclusive access to the children". (Curren, 1999, p. 534-5) The Campaign for Commercial Free Education was founded in 2005 to resist the growing commercialisation of our schools. It is comprised of teachers, parents and others who refuse to allow time and space in schools to be colonised by commercial interests. The Campaign works to raise awareness, assess commercial schemes and support schools that are commercial-free.

Readers may contact the Campaign at info@commercialfreeeducation.com, while its website will be formally launched at the end of January 2006.

Joseph Fogarty is a primary school teacher in Glasnevin, Dublin and is a founder member of the Campaign for Commercial Free Education.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

What now after Morales Bolivian election victory?

"When we speak of the defence of humanity... I think that this only happens by eliminating neo-liberalism and imperialism.

"But I think in this we are not so alone, because we see, every day that anti-imperialist thinking is spreading, especially after Bush's bloody 'intervention' policy in Iraq...

"If we want to defend humanity we must change the system, and this means overthrowing US imperialism."

With these words Evo Morales encapsulates the hope generated by his presidential election victory in Bolivia, the poorest country in Latin America.

In a three-person election, Morales had been tipped to win the highest vote but not a majority as required by the Bolivian electoral system. His 51% victory has surprised observers.

Morales' victory came after a sustained and heroic period of struggle against neo-liberalism in Bolivia. A movement grew when it defeated water privatisation in Cochabamba. - privatising water was a major item in the World Bank's June 1999 report on Bolivia. What was most impressive about the movement was that it gathered into a single stream a whole range of currents of resistance that had grown up, mainly around local issues, in the preceding years. Since then further struggles calling for the nationalisation of the country's natural resources have forced two presidents to resign and flee the country.

The question raised in all major struggles of 'who rules?' was strongly



The media scrum around Morales following his election victory

posed. The calling of the presidential election was clearly an attempt to answer that, and force the movement down the road of constitutionalism. A road, Morales, despite radical rhetoric, has not been hesitant to travel along.

Even before his election, Morales urged caution, "If I'm elected president, unfortunately it will be my duty to

respect those neo-liberal laws. Some changes we will be able to make by decree, others through the legislature, but immediately there aren't going to be great changes because these are 20 years of neo-liberal laws - that can't be erased in one swipe." His running mate, Garcia Linera suggested, "We should admit that Bolivia will still be

capitalist in the next 50 to 100 years."

An alternative answer to the question was outlined by Oscar Olivera, leader of the Cochabamba movement, at a seminar in La Paz in June 2000.

"For the true nation not to be supplanted by the market or the state, the working class, both urban and rural, and the marginalized and economical-

ly insecure of the nation - in other words, the overwhelming majority of society - must assume control over the wealth embodied in hydrocarbons. And they must do so through assembly-style form of self-organisation at the neighbourhood, regional and national levels. The nation must enact a self-presentation - it must self-govern through autonomous structures of participation that socialise responsibility for public life."

Many in the social movements believe that Morales is not going far enough to represent their interests.

Giselle Gonzalez, a member of the Coordinadora in Defence of Water, the leading group in Cochabamba's fight against water privatisation, stated "You can feel in the air a certain air of hope, but still I don't believe that they'll part ways with the multinational corporations."

Abraham Delgado, another water activist agreed, "they talk about nationalisation, but in reality it's not nationalisation - 80% stays in the hands of the corporations...we stay in the same system, the same model."

"What the social movements need to do now," argued Oscar Olivera, "is to continue accumulating popular forces, as we have been doing since 2000, to build up our ability to pressure whatever government that comes. A Morales government would be less difficult to move, but it will still be difficult."

For further information and detail check International Socialism Journal 108 (www.isj.org.uk) and www.znet.org

Under the Shadow of Occupation

By Eoin Murray

During the January 2005 elections for a new Palestinian President, I remember standing on a small grassy hill watching a stout Palestinian woman joyously bringing her six daughters along to the polling station to vote - she had a smiling commitment to expressing her view at the ballot box.

This month, despite the Israeli unilateral redeployment from the Gaza Strip a far darker shadow will hang over the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council.

A number of factors could have a considerable destabilising impact on the elections - these include the internal power struggles within the Palestinian national and Islamic factions.

However, significantly, if elections do take place it remains uncertain what impact the Israeli occupying forces (IOF) will have on them. During the Presidential election killings of civilians, checkpoint closures and the siege of Palestinian towns continued throughout.

In Occupied East Jerusalem many thousands of voters were deprived of their rights by the occupation authorities.

Over the past few months IOF have launched a series of arrest raids across the West Bank targeted, primarily, at Hamas activists but also at a number of Palestinian human rights defenders. In one week, 22nd to the 28th of September, 311 Palestinian civilians were arrested by IOF.

The effect of targeting Hamas



Israeli "settlers" attack Palestinian woman

activists is the subject of some debate - some observers suggest that it will deprive Hamas of influential local figures who could help them swing extra votes. Others suggest that Israel's policy is likely to benefit Hamas in the West Bank as it will add to the percep-

tion that Hamas is under attack because of their 'success' in fighting the occupation.

Simultaneously the instability within Fatah, rooted in internal power struggles over access to appointments and resources, has led to a perception

among many Palestinians that Fatah has been in power for too long and that it is no longer serving the national cause. Lawlessness has erupted on the streets of the Gaza Strip manifesting itself in the form of family feuds, kidnappings of internationals (with spe-

cific threats against election monitors) and street fighting with Hamas - it all appears to be an orchestrated attempt to defer the elections by some elements in Fatah who fear reform.

Israel's expansion of settlements will also continue to play on the minds of voters in the West Bank and Occupied East Jerusalem. In the same period in which 'disengagement' from Gaza took place Israel appropriated far more land for settlement expansion around East Jerusalem than it gave back in the Gaza Strip. In July 2005, alone, Israel appropriated 23 sq miles around East Jerusalem while, in August, it gave up around 19 sq miles in Gaza.

These, elections, once again taking place under the shadow of occupation, are surrounded by uncertainty and the results - whichever way they go - are unlikely to settle that uncertainty. Until such time as the international grassroots and political communities take significant action to boycott and pressurise Israel the occupation will continue to negatively impact on the lives of Palestinian civilians.

Eoin Murray is National Coordinator of the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign (ipsc.ie). He is the author of a number of articles, field reports and human rights research on the Israeli occupation of Palestine which have been published in the Sunday Times, on pchgaza.org, OpenDemocracy.net and on electroncintifada.net.

http://www.pchgaza.org/files/W_report/English/2005/29-09-2005.htm

WHY THE TRUTH STILL MATTERS



BLOODY SUNDAY

In an exclusive extract from his new book, Eamonn McCann tells the story of the 30 year campaign for justice by the victims' families

THE SMOKE hadn't cleared from the Bogside when Captain Mike Jackson, second-in-command of the First Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, standing in the lee of the Rossville Street flats, began pondering the notes that the Bloody Sunday families believe were to become the basis for a cover-up of murder.

Huddled in the houses and flats into which they had fled, looking fearfully out on the scene, neighbours of the dead were already resolving that, however long it might take, there'd be a reckoning.

In the Methodist Central Hall in Westminster more than 31 years later, in October 2003, General Sir Michael Jackson, as he now was, Chief of the General Staff, Britain's number one soldier, was explaining to Michael Mansfield, barrister for the families of some of the victims, that he could remember next to nothing about compiling the Bloody Sunday "shot list" and could not explain why none of the shots described in his list appeared to conform to any of the shots actually fired.

This is the Bloody Sunday families' account of how they succeeded in forcing Jackson and his soldiers and superiors to explain, if they could, in public and under oath, how and why they had killed or wounded 28 unarmed civil rights marchers in Derry on 30 January 1972.

The campaign which emerged in the early 1990s and which was to lead to the establishment of the Saville inquiry intrigued some and angered others. Why Bloody Sunday? There have been bigger death tolls in single incidents in the Troubles. Fifteen Catholics died in the Loyalist bombing of McGurk's Bar in the New Lodge area of Belfast in the month before Bloody Sunday.

Eighteen paras died in an IRA ambush at Warrenpoint, County Down, in 1979. And, numbers apart, was not the IRA killing of 11 Protestants as they stood in reverent silence around



Jean Hagarty (second from right), now 55, is still fighting to get justice for her brother, Kevin (second from left) pictured in happier times. Kevin had just turned 17 when he was killed as he tried to crawl away from danger along Rossville Street

the Enniskillen war memorial on Remembrance Sunday in November 1989, for example, as wicked and cruel as the Bogside massacre?

A number of things made Derry different. Part of the motivation for the massacre may have been to shore up Unionist rule. Northern Ireland prime minister Brian Faulkner was under mounting pressure from supporters of Dr Ian Paisley and from within his own Ulster Unionist Party to secure a much tougher law and order strategy from the British, swiftly to put an end to illegal marches against internment and to smash the Bogside no go area, from which state forces had been excluded since the internment raids of the previous August.

But all key decisions relating to Bloody Sunday were taken by British political and military chiefs.

Unionist input was minimal. Blame for the Bloody Sunday killings could not be ascribed to the communal hostilities of Northern Ireland. This was a very British atrocity, and the biggest single killing by state forces in the course of the Troubles. The resultant affront was compounded by the fact that the British

state at the highest level, in the person of the lord chief justice, Lord Widgery, had then proclaimed that the killings were neither wrong nor illegal.

In every other atrocity with which Bloody Sunday has regularly been compared or likened, the victims are acknowledged, more or less universally, as having been wrongly done to death and the perpetrators damned as wrongdoers.

But the Bloody Sunday families were told, in effect, that while they might personally, reasonably, lament the loss of a loved one, they had no wider ground for grievance or legitimate expectation of the killers being punished.

The state stood by its own. All the dead were thus diminished. Liam Wray, brother of Jim, 22, shot in the back at point blank range as he lay wounded in Glenfada Park, commented, "It said that my brother was less than fully human."

Communal

The fact that this second injustice had been inflicted by the official custodian of constitutional truth drove the insult deep. Bloody Sunday, moreover, to an extent that isn't true of any other atrocity, proved a pivotal plotpoint in the narrative of the North's Troubles. Generally, communal heartache in the wake of mass killings has tended to dissipate over time, the lives of individuals left behind likely shattered forever, but public life not discernibly changed.

In contrast, a consensus among commentators and historians holds not only that the paras' action in Derry had an immediate political motivation—to shore up the Faulkner government by reasserting the rule of British law—but also that the plan spectacularly backfired. Far from bringing the Bogside back within the Queen's Writ, the killings catapulted the area, and other Catholic-Nationalist districts across the North, outside all notions of constitutionality.

The Northern parliament, which had

operated at Stormont since partition in 1921, was abolished by order of the Westminster government eight weeks after Bloody Sunday, three weeks before publication of Widgery's report.

No other major change in the last 35 years can be seen as having stemmed so directly from a single incident. This fact, that Bloody Sunday had a clear and lasting political significance to match its magnitude as a human event, helped give the families' campaign for the truth an added capacity many years later to reverberate in the wider political world.

Bloody Sunday differed from other atrocities, too, in that it was perpetrated in full public view. Most killings in the North, as always in conflicts of the kind, happen with thunderclap suddenness, on lonely roads or in the dead of night, typically by stealthy ambush or furtive bomb.

Bloody Sunday unfolded over a period of perhaps ten minutes in a built-up area in broad daylight and in circumstances in which thousands of the victims' friends and neighbours were crowded into the immediate vicinity. Every killing and wounding was witnessed, some at very close quarters.

Within hours, even as Jackson was transmitting his fraudulent account to Whitehall, which was to be disseminated by British Information Services (BIS) to deceive the world, people in Derry were piecing their memories of the day together and assembling their unshakable truth.

Estimates of the numbers on the Bloody Sunday march varied wildly at the time, from the BIS's 3,000 to Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association's 25,000. Perhaps 12–15,000 would be near enough. Of these, four fifths, at a minimum, will have been from Derry. A sizeable percentage of the town's population, then, including a high proportion of the 30,000 residents of the immediate Bogside-Brandywell-Creggan area, had been involved personally in the event

'This was a very British atrocity, and the biggest single killing by the state in the course of the Troubles'

'The soldier who shot me hadn't the guts to look at me'

JIMMY DUDDY

"WHEN THE inquiry was announced, a lot of us had great hope that through the passage of time these men would all be family men and have grandchildren and that remorse would have dug into a few of them.

"But it wasn't to be. Some of them wore their paratrooper ties or had their emblems on. One of them, who was a shooter and an animal, wore a white T-shirt so we could see his paratrooper tattoos around his arms—"brotherhood" and all written all over them. He blatantly was showing these, boasting if you like.

"That came out very strong to me from the soldiers. The man that shot Johnnie was brave enough to shoot a 59 year old, and his mate shot a 15 year old, but he wasn't brave enough to sit in the security of the Methodist Hall in sight and of me and the rest of the families."

JOHN KELLY

"IT'S ABOUT achieving what we set out to achieve and we are not there yet. If we do walk away with satisfaction, I will throw the words



Joe Mahon, now 49, was shot in the hip (left) as he fled from soldiers in Glenfada Park. When he heard soldiers approaching he tried to get up, but he heard a woman's say, "No. no, son, lie still son, let on you're dead"

back on Sergeant O's face and say, 'It was a job well done.' I remember that expression when he was asked about the killings on television. He said it was a job well done."

MICKY BRIDGE

"TO SAY that the soldiers were lying is a statement of fact. In the flats car park where I was shot, we are dealing with an open space and a distance of a maximum of 20 yards in broad daylight.

"They didn't see a man lying on the ground, or a group of people gathered around him, nor two men running out. And they all swore they didn't see me. I must have been totally invisible or they must have been totally blind. Christopher Clarke summed it up well.

"If none of the soldiers giving evidence shot us, some other soldier must have, because there is no doubt we were shot by soldiers. But not only did none of them admit to shooting

us, none of them bore witness against any of the others."

DAMIEN DONAGHEY

"THE SOLDIER who shot me hadn't even the guts to turn around and look at me. At lunchtime, he had to walk past us. He couldn't even look at me. Some of the soldiers' statements were unbelievable. One soldier said he wouldn't drive the car Gerald Donaghey was in because he seen nail bombs but the boy that did drive the car said he saw no nail bombs.

"Like the man says, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to see the lies. Like the soldier who said he fired 23 shots, 19 at the one window, you could even see barristers that represented other soldiers looking at him. But he has kept up that story for the last 30 years.

"How did he fire 19 shots at a window and the window didn't break? The soldier who shot me said he shot a bloke

with blonde hair, 5'6", which couldn't be me. And then no one admitted to firing at Johnny Johnston, but he was shot too. No wonder they couldn't look at you, and us sitting there."

JOHNNY CAMPBELL

"ONE GOOD thing was that it dragged in Edward Heath. That was rubbing their nose in it. That was satisfying. I was happy about that. And the higher echelons of the British army having to sit and be cross examined, I enjoyed that too.

"It didn't matter what they said. It was the fact that they were being put through the mill. That sort of thing had been unheard of before, but here it was. I enjoyed sitting and listening to our barristers giving them a grilling. They were lying, but it didn't matter. They all lied. Heath is just a liar, full stop.

"The fact that he had to lie shows that Bloody Sunday went to the top. He knew it and the rest of them knew it and they had to try to lie their way out of it. It was the soldier done it on the street, but he was only the tool, the man carrying out the order."



Johnny Campbell's father, Patrick, a docker, was shot in the back and wounded as he tried to find shelter at Joseph Place



Alana Burke was crushed by an armoured personnel carrier in the car park of the Rossville Street flats on Bloody Sunday

ALANA BURKE

"BEFORE THE inquiry I might have accepted things I saw on TV, but not now. When Bloody Sunday happened the British were saying, 'They were terrorists, they were holding guns, they fired first, we went in after them and took them out.'

"But that is not the way it was. There was a thing in Iraq when the Americans went in and shot 13 people. They tried to say they were gunmen. You can see the parallels.

"It will never go away. Sometimes sitting in the Guildhall, the evidence was so strong and so sad and so cruel and so damning that I couldn't go back for a couple of days.

"But there were families there that never left, morning, noon and night. I couldn't do that. You couldn't even though you wanted to.

"I'm glad I wasn't in London when the soldier admitted to killing Barney McGuigan because Barney's body was thrown into the ambulance on top of me. I don't know how I would have handled that."



Mickey Bridge was shot and wounded when he remonstrated with the soldiers who killed Jackie Duddy

which was to climax in the killings.

There were few local people who didn't know some member of the families of the dead. Bloody Sunday had the character not merely of a politically inspired state atrocity but of one that inflicted shared, communal injury and a mass sense of bereavement.

The community thus marked could not consign the experience unassuaged to the past. This aspect of Bloody Sunday was crucial in ensuring that Saville would have to hear hundreds rather than scores of Derry witnesses, and therefore a commensurate muster from the military, extending the length of the inquiry and setting the taxi meters of the legal teams a whirring for years. It was the brazenness of the atrocity, more than any other single factor, which dictated the cost of the inquiry.

'Our Sharpeville'

The communal aspect of the injury didn't prompt the Bogside to turn its face entirely away from the world and nurse its grievance to itself.

Minutes after the shooting, Bernadette McAliskey (then Devlin) declared, "This is our Sharpeville." The identification with the South African township where 69 demonstrators had been gunned down by police in 1960 was more than a facile flourish.

In a speech a few months earlier in Derry, she had made lengthy comparison between Long Kesh in Antrim—which held the internees whose release was to be the sole demand of the 30 January march—and Hola Camp in Kenya, where thousands of Kikuyu had been brutalised during the 1952-60 "Emergency".

Oppression in Northern Ireland was of an altogether lower order of intensity than in colonial Kenya or apartheid South Africa. But in the terror and rage of Rossville Street on the day, the parallels were pertinent.

The tendency of those who came



Gerald Donaghey (left) was 17 when he was shot dead in Abney Park. His niece Geraldine remembers the day the inquiry was launched. "We marched up the Strand Road to let the people of Derry know that it had happened, that we'd got the inquiry"

through Bloody Sunday to see the experience reflected in conflicts elsewhere, past and present, was to be a continuing feature of remembrance of the massacre in years ahead.

Conservative voices in Britain and Ireland regularly argued during the course of Saville's inquiry that the elaborate enterprise was likely to prove futile because "people have already made their minds up". They had a point, although not the point they thought they had.

Campaigners in Derry hadn't demanded a new inquiry because they wanted to be told the truth, but because they wanted the truth to be told. They didn't need a report from Lord Saville to find out what happened, but to find out whether the state would acknowledge what happened.

The fact that lies have been substituted for a known truth doesn't make the search for acknowledgement of this truth futile, but on the contrary lends it an insistent urgency.

The Bloody Sunday Inquiry, The Families Speak Out, edited and introduced by Eamonn McCann is available from Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to www.bookmarks.uk.com

'Most killings in the North, as always in conflicts of the kind, happen with thunderclap suddenness'

'Hugh lay there dying'

BERNARD GILMOUR

"I'M RELIEVED that my mother and father didn't have to go through it. If they had had to sit in the Guildhall, with the photos coming up on the screen, and Hugh lying there, they would have died anyway.

"When they put that photograph up on the screen the first time, him covered in blood... I was looking down on him from the flats when that happened.

"Hugh lying there dying and me standing there looking at him. I think about it all the time. And then it changes the way you think about other things.

"You would see them on the news, Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, and you would think about them. And you'd say, 'That's what happened to us. There, look. That's exactly what happened to us. It's happening to them people now'."

PATSY McDAID

"THE BRITS shot innocent protestors in the street on a peaceful march in India. Not one of the civilians was armed when they marched up towards this army place.

"I forget the name of the army boy who was in charge at that place. He lined his soldiers up and told them to open fire. He killed over 400. It was the same policy in Iran, where the Shah's army was being advised by Brits.

"When the protestors came down the street, they opened fire, killing so many. But it blew up on them. If you go back to the 17th century, workers in England were on strike and marched into a town where the



Patsy, now 58, had just helped carry a casualty to safety when he was shot and wounded

Brits were all around at the windows waiting for them.

"They said that one person opened fire on them so the army fired back, killing so many again. That's the way I look at Bloody Sunday. This old story about the IRA is all rubbish.

"They saw the marches getting bigger so what they did was try to scare them off the streets. They are the most devious crowd in the world to work with when it comes to politics.

"Bloody Sunday to me was not an attempt to bring out the IRA, it was a policy to put people off the streets. But people still came out. It was the same in India. The people still marched. March on.

"You have to battle on to highlight throughout the world that the Brits have lied again.

"We've been doing it for over 30 years, marching every anniversary for the truth. We can keep on until the truth comes."

COMMENT

Noam Chomsky visits Dublin

Readers of Prospect, the political and current affairs magazine, voted Noam Chomsky the most important public intellectual alive in its 2005 Global Intellectuals Poll.

To many activists around the world this will come as no surprise. Chomsky, the US academic and political activist, has been an important contributor to intellectual and political life, especially within the United States, for over five decades.

It was as a linguist that Chomsky first came to prominence in the mid 1950s with the development of his theories concerning the inner structure of languages. He also helped spark the cognitive revolution in psychology through his review of B. F. Skinner's Verbal Behavior, which challenged the behaviourist approach to the study of mind and language dominant in the 1950s. He was appointed Professor of Linguistics at M.I.T. in New York, a position he has held continuously for the past 50 years.

However, what confounded and puzzled mainstream commentators far more than Chomsky's complex theories on syntax and semantics was why this young professor, who was embarking on such a shining academic career, was publicly speaking out and participating in direct action against the Vietnam war. Right from the beginning Chomsky set himself apart from the vast majority of the War's critics who saw Vietnam as a 'tragic mistake', rather than an instance of US imperialism.

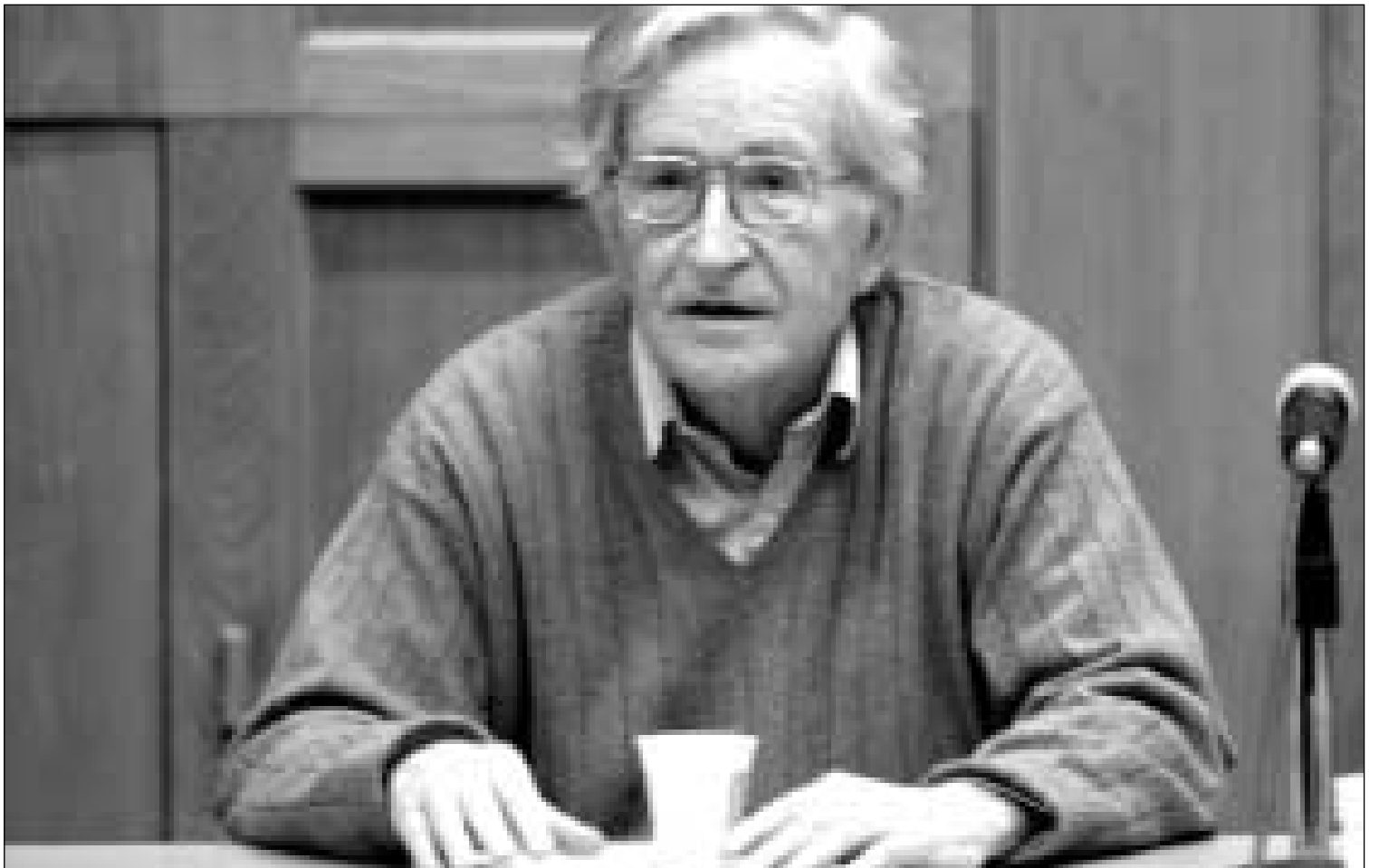
"It is easy to be carried away by the sheer horror of what the daily press reveals" Chomsky wrote in 1965, "and to lose sight that this is merely the brutal exterior of a deep crime, of commitment to a social order that guarantees endless suffering and humiliation and denial of elementary human rights". He began participating in the early protests against the war and in 1967 helped form Resist, an anti-war movement with close connections to the Black Panthers.

Chomsky also made an important contribution to the international effort to raise awareness of the struggle to free East Timor after the 1975 CIA-backed invasion by the Indonesian military and 60,000 people – almost 10 percent of the population – who were murdered. Chomsky spent much of his career in the 1970s and 1980s travelling the world, highlighting what had happened and was continuing to occur in East Timor at a time when most of the world was turning a blind eye.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the US ambassador to the UN at the time took particular pride in blocking any international reaction to the slaughter. He later wrote, "The United States wished things to turn out as they did and worked to bring this about. The Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook. This task was given to me, and I carried it through with no inconsiderable success."

Chomsky has also devoted much time to the plight of Palestinian people, writing in 1983 one of his most influential books, *Fateful Triangle*, which more than twenty years later remains an indispensable study of the history of the Israeli state terrorism and the extensive US government support for "an Israeli Sparta as a strategic asset". This book is a rigorous dismantling of official Zionist version of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its outspoken support for Palestinian self-determination still stand out.

It was because of books like this, that according to the Arts and Humanities



Noam Chomsky: Below: As a young linguistics professor and anti war activist; Above: Keeping up the fight



“What the U.S. wants is ‘stability’, meaning security for the upper classes and large foreign enterprises.”

Citation Index, between 1980 and 1992, Chomsky was cited as a source more often than any living scholar, and the eighth most cited source overall. Throughout the 1990s Chomsky's far-reaching criticism of US foreign policy and the legitimacy of US power continued but also made him an increasingly controversial figure, particularly after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

In response to U.S. declarations of a "War on Terrorism" in 2001, Chomsky has argued that the major sources of international terrorism are, in fact, the world's major powers, led by the United States. He uses the definition of terrorism from a U.S. Army manual to make his case against Bush administration, highlighting, their hypocrisy and double standards in the process.

Terrorism is described as, "the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological." Arguing that terrorism is an objective description of certain actions, regardless of whether the agents are state or non-state, Chomsky writes in 9/11 that "wanton killing of innocent civilians is terrorism, not a war against terrorism."

Chomsky has been a consistent and outspoken critic of the US government, and criticism of the foreign policy of the United States has formed the basis of much of Chomsky's political writing. However, many of his critics have argued that Chomsky focus on the US is his major source of weakness and allows him to overlook many atrocities and injustices committed by other regimes.

As recently as November 2005, The Guardian newspaper published an interview with Chomsky, ostensibly in response to the fact that Chomsky had been voted the world's top public intellectual by Prospect magazine. The article written by Emma Brockes following her interview with Chomsky accused him of supporting the Srebrenica massacre by attributing to Chomsky responses that were made to a different question posed during the interview.

The Guardian, which claims to pride

itself on its journalistic standards, refused to apologize or correct the inaccuracies, despite repeated requests by Chomsky to do so. It was only when they were inundated with more than 2,000 complaints from readers around the world, that they were forced, more than three weeks later, to issue a half hearted apology.

But Chomsky gives two principle reasons for his focus on US foreign policy. Firstly, he believes that his work can have more impact when directed at his own government. Secondly, the US is the world's sole remaining superpower and tries to organise the world around itself using both military and economic means. He has repeatedly emphasised his argument that much of US foreign policy is based on the "threat of a good example".

The "threat of a good example" is that a country could successfully develop outside the US sphere of influence, thus presenting a model for other countries, including countries in which the US has strong economic interests. This, Chomsky says, has prompted the United States to repeatedly intervene to quell "independent development, regardless of ideology" in regions of the world where it has no inherent economic or safety interests. In one of his most well-known works, *What Uncle Sam Really Wants*, Chomsky uses this particular theory as an explanation for several of the US interventions in South America throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

For Chomsky the cold war was less about Communist paranoia and more about preserving the US as a dominant ideological and economic force in the world. As he wrote in *Uncle Sam*: "What the U.S. wants is 'stability', meaning security for the upper classes and large foreign enterprises."

Chomsky is brilliant at exposing the lies, evasions and hypocrisies of ruling class double-think. His work, taken as a body, is unparalleled and has earned him the hatred of what Marx called "the intellectual prizefighters of the world's oppressors".

If Chomsky has a weakness, it is that, his often brilliant critiques of capitalism leave you with the sense that there is not a lot that we can do to change things. He is hostile to the Marxist tradition and when asked about concrete steps that could be taken to change the system we live under, he is deliberately vague. Even Barsky, his sympathetic biographer, argues, "that there remains, [in Chomsky's writing] at the end of the day the problem of 'how to take out the bastards'."

This is not to underestimate the importance of Chomsky for socialists. However as socialists we need to create strategies for victory that will put an end to the crimes of capitalism and create a world organized in the interests of people not profit. Chomsky's work is a vital weapon in that struggle.

CHOMSKY TO SPEAK IN DUBLIN

Chomsky will speak in Dublin at meetings organised by the School of Philosophy in UCD and at Amnesty International

■ Tuesday, 17 January @ 7pm, O'Reilly Hall, UCD "Democracy Promotion: Reflections on Intellectuals and the State" Public lecture for School of Philosophy and Clinton Institute of American Studies

■ Wednesday 18th: 2006 @ 7pm Amnesty Lecture entitled "The War on Terror" at the Shelbourne Hall, in the RDS, Ballsbridge . Contact the Amnesty Office: phone 01 - 677 6361 or email info@amnesty.ie

■ Thursday, 19 January @ 7pm, Theatre L UCD "Stark, Dreadful, Inescapable: The Question of Survival" Lecture for the UCD Literary and Historical Society and UCD Philosophy Society.

REVIEWS

What's in store for 2006?

After a year that saw both highs and lows in the cultural world – the death of Arthur Miller and the awarding of Nobel Prize for Literature to Harold Pinter, to mention just two – Sinead Kennedy previews the upcoming cultural highlights for the months ahead in 2006.

FILM 2006

It looks to be a good year for Irish film with 2006 seeing the release of two important Irish films. Filmmaker Neil Jordan and novelist Patrick McCabe have teamed up again to create *Breakfast on Pluto*.

The pair had previously collaborated ten years ago to produce one of the most stunning films in Irish cinematic history, *The Butcher Boy*. *Breakfast on Pluto*, based on McCabe's novel, tells the story of a young transvestite living in a boarder town and his series of misadventures.

The film features a remarkable performance from young Irish actor Cillian Murphy and also features some of Ireland's finest acting talent including Brendan Gleeson, Liam Neeson and Stephen Rea. Opens January 13th.

The War of Independence is the subject of Ken Loach new film, *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*.

This is not the first time that the controversial left-wing filmmaker has journeyed into the difficult terrain of Irish history, having previously ruffled many feathers with his 1990 Northern Ireland film *Hidden Drama*.

Loach has said that the film will deal "the human drama, the heroism and what people were willing to sacrifice, which seems extraordinary to us today".

Shot entirely on location in Cork over the Summer it is scheduled for release in early Autumn.

Other films to look out for include Stephen Spielberg's controversial wading into the Israeli- Palestinian



Prisoners marched away by British soldiers in Dublin after the 1916 rising

conflict with Munich, a film dealing with the 1972 bombing of the Munich Olympics.

How Spielberg will handle the Palestinian issue remains to be seen but the film has already been widely criticised after its US release.

Two of the year's most political Hollywood films star George Clooney. *Syriana*, a complex moral and political drama, is set in the midst of the global oil industry and exams the close ties between governments and big business.

Goodnight, and Good Luck, Clooney's first screenplay, deals with the relationship between the media and Senator Joe McCarthy during the Communist witch-hunt of the 1950s.

Throughout January, the Irish Film Institute will hold a retrospective of left-wing filmmaker Mike Leigh TV films. Check out *Meantime*, Leigh's tale of unemployment and urban discontent in Thatcherite Britain.

THEATRE 2006

After one of the most difficult years, both artistically and financially, the Abbey Theatre has undergone a complete restructure.

Fiach MacConghail has been appointed artistic director and he has appointed three associate directors, two of which are writers whose work will feature in the New Year.

Paul Mercier's *The Homeland* opens on January 14th is billed as a play about money power, and the Ireland of today. Mercier has based the play on the legend of Oisín and *Tír na nÓg* to provide a critique of modern urban Ireland.

Also at the Abbey, *The Bacchae* of *Baghdad* written and directed by Conal Morrison opens on March 4th. This is a modern version of Euripides' *Bacchae*.

Both Morrison and Seamus

Heaney have in the past translated and reinterpreted Sophocles' *Antigone* to present a politicised antiwar polemic and, given the title of Morrison's new play there can be little doubt about the political direction of this play.

The Gate Theatre continues with the policy of producing classic plays with an international star in the lead role.

Brian Friel's *Faith Healer* opens on February 7th with Ralph Fiennes as the main attraction.

Faith Healer is Friel's most Irish and probably his most dramatic presentation.

First produced in 1979 this is one of Friel's most difficult plays to direct.

There are only three characters and the play contains four long monologues directed at the audience where each character gives his or her

own version of what is essentially the same story.

The play has never travelled well and flopped in New York and London before its triumphant success at the Abbey in 1980.

Whether Fiennes can reach out to an Irish audience to create the shared experience that *Faith Healer* demands remains to be seen.

Other events to look out for are *Rough Magic's* version of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, a modern interpretation set in wheeler-dealer world of modern rural Ireland at the Project Theatre from March 6th.

OTHER EVENTS IN 2006.

Following on from their wonderful James Joyce's *Ulysses* exhibition, the National Library of Ireland will present a similar exhibition, this time focusing on the work of poet W. B. Yeats.

The exhibition opens in May and if you still haven't had a chance to see the *Ulysses* exhibition, you still have time.

The 250th anniversary of classical composer Mozart is also something to look out for, with a programme of events throughout the year at the National Concert Hall and free concerts around the country.

2006 also marks the Eightieth anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising with a series of official planned.

How Fianna Fail and the PD's will deal with it, remains to be seen.



Ken Loach



James Joyce

DARWIN DAY

Charles Darwin was born on 12th February 1809. His most famous book *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859. An international day of celebration has been organised on the 12th of February in recognition of his contribution to science. As part of this celebration the Natural History Museum in Dublin have organised a weekend of events to explain what Darwin said and how it has helped our understanding of nature.

Up to half of the American people accept the biblical version of creation and many local states in America are now insisting that this view should be thought in schools as part of the science curriculum. The Christian fundamentalists, the political base of the Republican Party, have seized



Charles Darwin

on this issue to extend their influence in American schools and society.

Science should be able to furnish us with an explanation of the world without political or religious interference. Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection has always been contentious, as it is in conflict with the biblical version. Today few scientists seriously contest his view other than for political reasons. We must reassert the primacy of science, which is why this international event is so important.

The weekend of events in the Natural History Museum on 11th and 12th of February also have lectures and tours for children as part of the programme. For details see museum website: www.museum.ie

HIGHLIGHT OF THE YEAR!

The year's cultural highlight has to be the celebration of the centenary of the birth of playwright, Samuel Beckett.

Beckett transformed twentieth century theatre with *Waiting for Godot* and his influence extends into literary fiction, the visual arts, even film.

The Gate Theatre, who have long been synonymous with Beckett's work, will present a selection of his plays simultaneously in Dublin and the Barbican in London.

Beckett's work will also be brought to the streets of Dublin with performances by street artists inspired by the plays, and projections of quotations from Beckett's writings onto some of Dublin's landmark buildings by American Artist Jenny Holzer.



Samuel Beckett

IRISH FERRIES

SIPTU versus Irish Ferries: Draw in the first round of battle against outsourcing

By Kieran Allen

'People power' forced the bosses of Irish Ferries to make significant concessions to their workers.

Thanks to the mobilisation of the wider trade union movement, the new Latvian workers who come onto Irish Ferries will be paid the minimum rate of €7.65 an hour.

The company originally wanted to pay them €3.50 an hour.

Then at the last moment they tried to deduct 80 cents an hour for board and lodging on the ship – a deduction of €56 a week – but they did not get away with it.

These workers will be brought into the 'threshold of decency' set by the Irish labour movement.

Existing workers who decided not to take redundancy will also have their rates of pay and condition protected.

None of this would have happened if SIPTU – and particularly the grassroots trade unionists in Irish Ferries – had not stood up and fought.

Trade unionists had to walk out from their jobs on December 9th and ship officers had to stage a sit-in before anything was achieved.

Yet this is precisely the sort of action which breaches social partnership. When it takes such an explosion of 'people power' to get even a threshold of decency, there is something very wrong with social partnership.



How powerless was Ahern?

The Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, opposed the 'race to the bottom' but his condemnation appeared as genuine as his socialism.

The contrast between how his government responded to requests from workers and bankers was astounding

Throughout the whole dispute, Bertie Ahern and Fianna Fail pretended to support the workers in a desperate attempt to shore up their declining votes in working class areas.

But it was totally hypocritical. They claimed they were 'powerless' to

prevent re-flagging but they were never 'powerless' when employers wanted something.

Successive Irish government have brought in emergency laws to protect companies like Allied Irish Bank and Goldman's meat packing business when they were threatened with bankruptcy.

Each year they introduce a Finance Bill that creates more tax loopholes for big business.

When the Irish Bankers Federation requested that the government set aside its own

law on compliance statements from company directors, they got a positive 'can do' response.

But when it comes to workers, they do nothing.

Worse: behind closed doors at EU level, Fianna Fail support measures which undermine our rights.

* The Irish government has helped to vote down an EU directive to prevent the re-flagging of ferries that travel between EU ports.

* They have helped to veto the Temporary Workers directive which would have given workers who are hired

by recruitment agencies full legal rights after six weeks.

* At present, Charlie McCreevy is pushing through a new service directive which contains a 'country of origin' principle. This means that migrant workers will be subject to the laws of their country rather than those where they are working. In most cases, this means lower labour standards.

The lesson of this dispute is that Ahern and Fianna Fail should never again be considered the 'social partners' of the trade union movement.

Will there be another social partnership deal?

With the battle at Irish Ferries over, social partnership can resume as normal. This is the message from IBEC and some union leaders.

The dispute, however, has exposed major fault lines which cannot be so easily repaired.

The Irish Continental Group was not a maverick firm but was tied to key networks within the Irish business elite.

At no point did IBEC condemn their actions.

A new social partnership agreement is unlikely to bring improvement.

Employers sense that the Celtic Tiger is fading in manufacturing industry and want further reductions in wage costs.

(There is, of course, no talk of cuts in profit margins.) As well as limiting wage increases, they will undoubtedly look at intensifying work effort and more outsourcing.

Some had hoped that Irish Ferries would set a headline to cow the unions.

The majority of employers, however, believe that they can achieve their objectives through the partnership process itself.

Such agreements give workers low wage rises in return for employers getting a free hand to introduce 'normal ongoing change' at workplace level.

Ninety percent of Irish workplaces already employ some form of High Performance Work Technique.

Over the past eighteen years, most of us have become used to 'key performance indicators', 'team-working', 'appraisals' and a whole battery of measures that go under the rubric of 'flexibility'.

We also have one of the lowest holiday entitlements in Europe. Stress management has become part and parcel of social partnership.

More could have been won

The struggle of the Irish Ferries workers was driven from below and got the full backing of SIPTU official, Paul Smyth.

The top leaders of SIPTU and the ICTU came in to give backing – but there was one main limitation.

The union leaders desperately want a new social partnership deal. They did not want to escalate the battle in case it would have broken

links with the government and the employers.

They wanted a huge mobilisation on Friday December 9th – but they also wanted to contain it within certain limits.

Instead of calling a full national strike which could have shut the country down, they called a day of protest where workers were sometimes encouraged to ask permission of the employers

to join the march.

The result was a huge diversity in the response in different workplaces. Where union activists were strong they enforced an effective strike. Where they were weak, they asked permission their employers for delegation to attend the protest.

These tactics set limits on what could have been won.

A national strike with threats of further escalation

could have forced Bertie Ahern to stop re-flagging. Now the company have only given a three year commitment to pay the minimum wage. It could also have stopped Irish Ferries getting a three year no strike deal.

Overall, however, trade unionists held their head up after December 9th – and that augurs well for the possibility of a different type of trade unionism.



Danger: More outsourcing on the way

On top of all this we now face the scourge of outsourcing. Employers may not be able to get away with wage rates of €3.50 an hour but outsourcing allows them to undercut overtime rates or premium pay for anti-social hours. Sustaining Progress allowed employers to outsource under certain conditions – a new agreement may widen that flexibility still further.

Neither the Central Statistic Office or the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment collect comprehensive statistics on 'contingent workers' – unlike, for example, the Bureau of Labour Statistics in the US. But one study conducted for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions suggested that Ireland had a higher percentage (5.2 percent) of workers employed on temporary agency contracts than the average (2.2 percent) for the older EU states. This tendency will almost certainly increase if there is another partnership deal.

Social partnership was supposed to protect us from the worst excesses of Thatcherism but we have become a model neo-liberal economy. Ireland comes fifth in the global 'freedom index' of Heritage Foundation – a right wing think tank that offers accolades to countries who de-regulate their economies.

There are no price controls, no rent controls, no limits on profiteering and a passionate opposition to 'burdensome'

regulation. The only significant economic item that is regulated is wages – albeit through an apparently voluntary agreement. This has two major implications.

First, Ireland has become one of the most expensive countries in Europe with wages only keeping abreast of the official inflation rates. Bizarrely, these do not include house prices and many workers have been forced into the rental sector or carry huge levels of debt.

Second, the share of the economy going to wages and social welfare has declined faster in Ireland than elsewhere in the older EU states. Their share of the total economy in the EU fell from 72 percent in 1987 to 68.3 percent in 2000. In Ireland, however, they fell from 71 percent to 58 percent.



Above and previous page: Huge demonstrations in support of Irish Ferries workers in December photos: Indymedia

Social Partnership and Tax Cuts

Supporters of social partnership claim that tax cuts have compensated for the low wage rises. But those sectors of the economy which showed the least restraint have received the greatest tax cuts.

Recently, the US publication Tax Notes has labelled Ireland the 'Bermuda of Europe' because it has such a low tax regime for corporations.

Cutting taxes has had deep consequences for Irish society, particularly for the poor.

We have become a first world economy – with third world public services. The

reason is that taxes account for only 34 percent of GNP compared to an EU average of 41 percent.

Social partnership has also had a corrosive effect on the unions themselves. Union density has fallen and membership participation is at an all time low. Even more worryingly there is a growing tendency for the unions to align their demands to the framework of government policy itself.

Instead of a strong campaign for publicly funded crèche facilities, there are merely calls for further tax cuts

to assist parents. Instead of demanding mandatory pension contributions from employers, there is an endorsement of PRSAs. Both these approaches favour the better off. Whereas in Britain, many unions oppose public private partnerships, here there is either silence or an endorsement.

December 9th showed that there is an appetite for a different sort of trade unionism. Many workers want stronger unions to fight for their interests. Instead of being addicted to the comforting stability of social partnership, the union leaders should

explore new strategies to tackle corporate globalisation.

They can either bargain on a national or a local level but members should retain the right to make claims when they so wish. This, after all, is a 'freedom' which other market players demand for themselves.

Instead of seeing the government as its partner, the unions should also be forging wider alliances against the growing inequalities. The huge level of public support for the Irish Ferries workers suggest that a new approach might find fertile ground.

Join the Socialist Workers Party

Ireland is governed by politicians who answer only to a wealthy elite

Despite the boom, there is little money for public services. Our hospitals are in a chaotic condition; there are hardly any publicly run crèches – but we increasingly pay a host of new stealth taxes.

The reason: Ireland has become a tax haven for the big corporations.

Ireland should not be supporting Bush's war on Iraq

About one quarter of a million US troops travel through Shannon each year on their way to fight in Iraq. Shannon airport has also been used to transport prisoners to secret CIA torture centres.

But the majority of the Irish people oppose this war and want to remain neutral.

Migrants are being mistreated by Irish employers

Irish Ferries and Gama have exposed gross exploitation.

Employers use the fact that migrants need a work permit to keep them under their thumbs. They want to replace permanent workers with agency or 'contingent' workers. Socialists seek to unite workers to challenge employers – and not let them divide us.

Catholic and Protestant workers have more in common than divides them

James Connolly wanted a 32 county Workers Republic – where all workers gained. Not a country where the Catholic Church ran the schools and hospitals (or where sectarian bigots wanted to make Catholics into second class citizens). You will never get that by going into Coalition with Fianna Fail – or Ian Paisley! The Socialist Workers Party is the leading anti-establishment party in this country.

We advocate 'people power' as the main way to bring about change.

Instead of just electing another politician, we can bring change from below.

The best way to do that is to unite people from many different backgrounds into a common struggle.

The SWP is keen to play its part in a coming together of a New Left to fight the establishment parties and their neo-liberal agenda.

Within all these movements, the SWP keeps to the fore the goal of fundamental change – a revolution which brings about an end to war, racism and privilege.

But can I afford the time?

It's the question that many ask when they consider getting involved. And it's no wonder, as we face hugely stressful lives.

Socialists want to create a

mass party where everyone makes whatever contribution they can.

If that just means distributing a few leaflets to your friends or workmates, that is fine. Or if you want to help organise activity, that is also fine.

You choose what level of involvement you want – but do get involved!

Join the Socialists

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

Name.....

Address.....

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Phone.....



Socialist Worker

Denis Donaldson scandal raises...

QUESTIONS FOR SINN FEIN



Top: Denis Donaldson; above: Freddie Scappaticci; centre PSNI raid on Sinn Fein Stormont offices in 2004; far right: Francie Molloy



Suspended for opposing head-counts



Francie Molloy was an organiser of the first Civil Rights march in Dungannon in 1968. In November, Direct Ruler Peter Hain, announced the North's 26 local councils would be replaced with just 7 – as opposed to the 11 or 15 Councils that the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) advocates.

NILGA is the local authorities' representative body of in the North and Francie Molloy was President of NILGA for 2004-5. That manifesto said that there "can be no gerrymandering of council boundaries".

Molloy, like most of the North with the exception of SF, was horrified at the proposal for seven Councils. Every TV screen showed a map of what this will mean: the North divided into a Green block of three western councils and an Orange block of three Eastern, with Belfast 'hung'.

Molloy publicly condemned the decision as instituting "a sectarian headcount". His opposition was rooted in the Civil Rights' movement, he said and he couldn't support a move that would "endorse gerrymandering".

Within hours, he was suspended from Sinn Fein. The following day, Molloy said "There has to be room in all parties for a dissenting voice..."

But the same insistence on toeing the party line does not apply to all policy. For example, SF policy is not to welcome arms companies to Ireland. Yet, SF councillors on Derry City Council refuse to condemn Raytheon's (one of the world's largest arms manufacturer) plant in Derry.

Similarly, SF policy is now against privatisation. Yet, SF Councillors in Derry cheered on the bid of major privatisation company Accenture for hundreds of civil service jobs – and not one of them has so much as had their wrist slapped.

Why? Because, in the drive for power, showing the party is willing to be "pragmatic" and cooperate with privatisations is more important than sticking to principles or party policy.

The confession of Sinn Fein's chief official, Denis Donaldson, that he was a paid British agent for the last 20 years has sent shockwaves across the North. Coming after the IRA's chief of security, Freddie Scappaticci, exposure as British agent Stakeknife, people in both Catholic and Protestant communities are asking what the last 30 years was all about?

It demonstrates the length to which the British state was willing to go to defend its interests. Important questions now are: Since there was clearly collusion with the security forces by significant sections of both republican and loyalist paramilitaries, why were so many people killed? And how many of them were killed to protect informers?

After Scappaticci, there were huge questions over the deaths of many he had had shot as informers. Did they die because they were onto him, their families asked? Now, even more are asking if their loved one died to protect Donaldson or some other high ranking agent.

The British dirty tricks' brigade are, of course, having a field day. Most people in the North are well aware of this and each new name being bandied about as the next spy to be outed is ignored until evidence is produced.

But Donaldson's position in Sinn Fein was so senior and as there are signs there someone even more senior is still passing information, it's understandable many republicans don't know who to trust anymore.

SPIES AND CONTROL FREAKS

Despite SF spin doctors' assertions that Donaldson was not all that central to the party, the facts speak for themselves. He was a key political enforcer, just as Scappaticci was a key military one. In 2003, he was a paid party worker tasked with "re-organising" Cumann (branches) across the six counties.

His "re-organisation" meant weeding out anyone not toeing the leadership line to the letter. Where an entire Cumann was unhappy with the way things were moving, they were closed down.

Much of Donaldson's power – and the damage done by him – had little to do with British dirty tricks and all to do with the growing control freakery within Sinn Fein.

The republican movement relies heavily on conspiracy and clandestine organisation. It plays down the possibility of 'people power; and points to the power of small numbers. It is held together by an iron discipline – in the grip leadership that has power to call on and off wars.

These conditions allow top level spies to do the most damage.

Today, the IRA's military discipline is being transferred over to Sinn Fein. Its members are expected to be every bit as much on message as New Labour's were when it was pushing for power at all costs. Veteran republican and civil rights campaigner Francie Molloy discovered this to his cost in November. (see panel)

Every political party needs discipline and, of course, members are expected to adhere to democratically agreed party policy. But what Sinn Fein members are often asked to toe is not party policy but leadership policy.

The 'New Sinn Fein' leadership, by contrast, is allowed to ignore democratically agreed party policy – just as Blair ignores so much of Labour Party policy. (see panel)

Even leadership loyalists, who supported every twist and turn in the drive for power, were cast aside if they raised any objection – in public or private – to the latest move. Former MLA John Kelly, who had spoken against the use of Private Finance Initiatives by Sinn Fein Ministers, was ousted after he spoke about the conditions in which dissident republican prisoners were being held in Maghaberry.

His experience was similar to that of Martin Cunningham, a

former SF Councillor in Newry and Mourne who was selected to stand in Assembly elections but ordered to stand aside for Caitriona Ruane. Just as New Labour had de-selected left-winger Liz Davies in Leeds NW and replaced her with a Blairite.

Cunningham had committed the crime of speaking out against the police framing two local 'dissident' republicans and against conditions in Maghaberry. He later told The Blanket that he would now describe Sinn Fein as "Dictatorship, just dictatorship. Total control. Total censorship. Loss of contact with the party roots. The leadership is inebriated with its own success".

We cannot prevent the state deploying spies. But these spies can do the maximum of damage, when there is a top down organisation. Open democratic, organisation that relies on people power is the best cure.

DONALDSON ALERT

The shock expressed by Bertie Ahern and the Sinn Fein leadership at Donaldson's confession is dismissed by human rights lawyer Pdraigin Drinan.

Papers of Pdraigin's were among those found during the police raid of Donaldson's house.

She told Socialist Worker: "I alerted the Irish authorities 18

months ago, and republicans over three years ago, that there was a problem with Denis Donaldson.

"At the very least, they must have raised questions about his manipulations of Sinn Fein election candidates, whether it was parachuting Martin Meehan into Antrim or Catriona Ruane into South Down".