

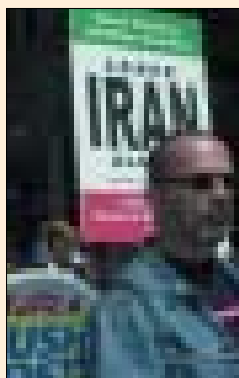
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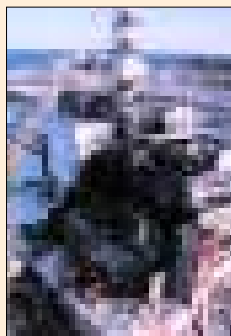
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Government gives go-ahead for Mayo pipeline
But local people say:

DEMPSEY & SHELL CAN GO TO HELL!



"The very people who are in the vanguard of celebrating 1916 are the same people who are destroying us".

This is how Vincent McGrath, one of the Rosspoint Five described Minister Noel Dempsey's declaration that the Corrib gas pipeline project can go ahead in Mayo following the publication of the Advantica Report.

Michael O'Sheighin, one of the Rosspoint Five who spent months in prison last year for opposing Shell's project, has said it is a "good report within its terms of reference.

"But the terms of reference did not include the safety of the local people."

The report recommends that unrefined, dirty and dangerous gases should be piped through Rosspoint at a

reduced pressure of 144 bars, down from Shell's original plans of 345 bars. But this is almost twice the recommended Maximum Permissible 88 bar.

It is worth reminding ourselves that the gas from the Corrib basin is entirely owned by multi-nationals – Shell own 45% of the gas, Statoil own 36.5% and Marathon own 18.5%. None of this valuable natural resource will belong to the people of Ireland.

As Maura Harrington of the Shell to Sea campaign said "The only part of the Corrib plan we own now is the risk". Local people opposing the project know that the what the government intended to do in the first place they will now try to pursue against the

will of the people.

But the will of the people is a force to be reckoned with. This project was supposed to be completed by 2003 and is still in its infancy.

Bord Gais is building new roads in the area for the project. The oil companies and the government are planning ahead.

But they will have to deal with people power.

Throughout the country there is a massive amount of goodwill towards the campaign against this project.

It is a case of the lives of the people of Rosspoint versus Shell's profits. Shell can refine the gas at sea but have admitted they won't do that because it is more expensive.

This is rich coming from a multinational who have made vast profits on the backs of local communities from the Niger Delta to Mayo.

The local community has been betrayed by the whole political establishment. The government are putting profits before people, Enda Kenny of Fine Gael (a Mayo man) has abandoned them and the silence from Pat Rabbitte of the Labour Party (another Mayo man) is deafening.

It is time for a political alternative that represents the courage and determination of people like the Rosspoint Five who are willing and able to stand up to the greed of multinationals like Shell and Statoil.

The struggle has only just begun.

NURSES SAY: PRIVATISING HEALTH CARE WILL DO US ALL DOWN

The annual conference of the Irish Nurses Organisation in Cavan this month is hugely significant. The INO has shown why it is vital to oppose the privatisation of health care.

The union's campaign of highlighting the overcrowding in Accident & Emergency units over the past year has embarrassed Mary Harney.

She should be ashamed.

Thousands of patients have been left lying on trolleys and some have died from the lack of care.

Nurses are absolutely right to demand shorter working hours and parity of pay.

A campaign against private health has to be linked to the pay and conditions of the nurses. There are 60,000 registered nurses in Ireland but only

40,000 working in our hospitals. Many of them are migrant workers. Nurses are the only health professionals who work 39 hours a weeks.

Radiologists, technicians and clerical workers all work below 35 hours. So why are nurses treated differently?

Nurses' pay is falling way below other professionals. A national meeting of

nurses planned for late June will be very important. This meeting will lay out plans for a campaign to reduce the working week and increase nurses wages to parity with other grades.

We need a mass campaign of all communities and health care workers across the country to take on the corporate agenda of for-profit medicine. Harney is

spending her energy on driving through a private health care system. We don't need to follow the American model. It has failed and leaves the poor to die while multi nationals make massive profit from health care.

Every trade union and community in the country should stand behind the nurses. It's time for Harney and the profiteers to go.

QUOTES OF THE FORTNIGHT

"In the next election Fianna Fail will be our deadly enemies. We have ample knowledge of Fianna Fail's ambition to obliterate us as a party which, of course, is not surprising since the party's leader is a self professed socialist"

Dun Laoghaire councillor Mary Mitchell O'Connor speaking at the recent PD conference

"The low turn out on Easter Monday reflected the absence of almost every age group"

Mallow councillor Jack Tierney on the "embarrassingly low" turnout for the town's official all party 1916 commemorations

"If I were grading, I would say we probably deserve a D or a D+ as a country"

Donald Rumsfeld on the US performance in the global "battle of ideas"

"All we have been offered is €1200 per year of legal service. The workers do not deserve to be treated so badly- we thought that we would be left with a bit of dignity."

A local SIPTU representative on the redundancy deal offered to Mallow sugar workers. The factory is due to close on May 12.

"I think people who want to be a citizen of this country ought to learn English. And they ought to learn to sing the national anthem in English"

George Bush on "Nuestro Himno", the new spanish version of the national anthem released as part of the immigrant rights

movement.

"We are going back to the eviction days with people being thrown out of their homes"

John Shortt from Tooman in north county Dublin, one of 15 families who are being forced out of the area to make way for a superdump

"We've been lied to, and they're going to lie to us again to bring us a war in Iran. I'm here because I have a lot of anger, and I had to do something"

Marjori Ramos of Staten Island, one of the estimated 300,000 who participated in the recent March for Justice, Peace and Democracy in New York

"I think that we have options at our disposal that are not even necessarily fully within the UN Security Council."

Condoleezza Rice outlines the US threat against Iran

"They are the same candidates from 20, 30 years ago. They are greyer, a little fatter, but they are the same people, and they've destroyed the country."

Ollanta Humala, Peruvian presidential candidate, speaking of traditional politicians and their parties

"There were many breaches of the procedures after the accident. They just got away with it. Its pointless having a Health and Safety Authority if they won't implement their own rules"

Pat Foley, whose son John died in a workplace accident four years ago, speaking at a protest to mark International Workers Memorial Day. So far this year 13 people have been killed at work

Work: A danger to your health



By Richard Boyd Barrett

Over 100 people protested outside the offices of the Health and Safety Authority on April 28th to mark Workers Memorial day.

Workers Memorial Day is an international event to commemorate the thousands of people that lose their lives every year in work related accidents.

The protest was organised by Lauren Foley, whose brother Justin was killed at work on December 3rd 2002 at the age of 21. Justin was a transport worker who was crushed to death by a truck in a loading bay where he worked.

Justin's family believe he died because of the failure of the government and the H.S.A to enforce proper health and safety standards and hand out serious punishments to employers that breach them.

A H.S.A. inspector actually inspected the loading Bay where Justin Foley was killed only days before his death and took no action even though the bay was in a dangerous state of disrepair.

Following a fatal accident, employers are supposed to immediately contact the H.S.A. and preserve the scene so the cause of death can be properly investigated. However, Justin's employers did not contact the H.S.A for over 24 hours and in the meantime cleaned up the area where he

was killed.

Lauren Foley told Socialist Worker: "We are very aggrieved with the H.S.A. for failing to enforce proper health and safety standards and for not giving harsher punishments for employers that are in breach of them."

The Foley's also met recently with Minister Tony Killeen to ask the government to officially commemorate Workers Memorial Day and to take action on health and safety standards.

The Memorial Day was established in 1998 but the Irish government has still not signed up to participate in the event, that is marked officially in many other European countries.

The Workers Memorial Day protest was also supported by a number of trade unions, particularly those in the construction industry, such as SIPTU and BATU, where there are a high number of workplace deaths every year.

Twenty-three workers died on building sites last year alone and a similar number have been killed every year in recent times. Construction workers and their unions have been campaigning and protesting about the situation but feel the government and employers are ignoring their calls for something to be done.

Billy Mc Clurg, a bricklayer and BATU member was jailed for two weeks recently

for protesting about anti-union policies and the use of sub-contractors at a building site run by developer Colleen construction in Ballybrack. He attended the workers memorial protest.

Billy told Socialist Worker:

"Myself and two other building workers were jailed for protesting about the behaviour of rouge employers in the construction industry. Yet not a single building boss has been sent to jail for causing the death of a worker when they are breaking the law by not enforcing proper health and safety standards. Where is the justice in that?"

"Colleen, the company that put me in jail were responsible for the death of a building worker in 2001. The investigation into his death found that there was no integrated health and safety plan on the site because of the use of multiple sub-contractors. Colleen only had to pay out €65,000 in a fine for the death of that man - which is nothing to multi-millionaire builders like them. They should have gone to jail for breaking the law but instead they have been rewarded by this government with many more public contracts."

Billy and many other building workers believe the only way to ensure Health and Safety standards is to have trade union health and safety reps on every building site with the power to stop all work if breaches are taking place.

INSIDE THE SYSTEM

Its official the rich are getting richer. According to the Sunday Times rich list, the combined wealth of Ireland's 250 wealthiest people has risen by 18% in the last year.

There are now more billionaires living in Ireland per head of population than in the US or Saudi Arabia.

The Competition Authority raided the offices of five waste collection companies in Mayo last month.

This following allegations that they had agreed to operate as a cartel for household rubbish collection.

Mayo County council is currently in dispute with its waste collection workers over plans to privatise the service.

The UN's World Food programme recently announced that it would have to scale back its operation in Darfur in Sudan.

The 3 million Sudanese people dependent on the programme will have their individual food rations halved because just one third of the \$746 million requested from donor nations has been received.

St Patricks Day was an expensive time for Irish taxpayers.

This year we spent €70,000 on sending Eamon O Cuiv and friends to New Zealand, Mary Harney and company to Bahrain and South Africa and Mary Hanafin et al to UAE.

Details of the cost of the

many other ministerial junkets will emerge over the coming weeks.

The US Federal Emergency Management Agency has just informed families in New Orleans, who expected their rent to be paid for a year, that they will shortly have to assume their own housing costs or leave their homes and apartments.

There are real fears now that many victims of Hurricane Katrina will be forced back onto the streets.

According to Eric Schlosser's new book on the fast food industry, and aimed specifically at children, the McDonalds strawberry milkshake contains 59 chemicals and no fruit. Schlosser's book "Chew on This" is due to be published at

the end of May.

With house prices continuing to spiral, it was no wonder that an affordable housing development in Citywest in Dublin saw desperate house hunters queue for days and sleep in cars in an effort to secure one of the 193 units on offer.

Trinity College is currently in talks with Coca Cola over the company's offer to privately fund two full-time posts in international economics and competition policy in the university.

The Students Union- which boycotts Coca Cola products due to the companies treatment of trade unionists in its Colombian bottling plants- is set to vigorously oppose any attempt by

the college authorities to sanction these posts.

According to a recent CNN poll over 75% of Americans favour allowing long time illegal emigrants to stay in the US.

PD junior Finance Minister Tom Parlon has so far presided over the sale of over €300 million worth of state land. Last November a new property record was set when a two acre site on the site of the former veterinary college in Dublin 4 sold for over €171 million. More sell offs are expected before the end of this year.

Roger Toussaint, leader of the US transport union- the TWU- has just served a ten day jail sentence for leading a

pre Xmas transport walkout in New York. The action was deemed to be a violation of a state law which bans strikes by public employees.

Thousands of supporters accompanied him to the gates of the prison to begin his sentence.

Current proposals from Minister for Family and Social Affairs, Seamus Brennan, would see the Government replacing the lone parent's allowance with a new time-limited allowance for the 80,000 or so low-income families with young children.

Parents would be required to seek training or a job after a child reaches five, and the allowance could cease after the youngest child reaches a certain age, such as eight years of age.

It's time for a New Left

Speaking on Sunday morning 23rd April, at the Jim Gralton Commemoration School in Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, Eamonn McCann responded positively to Joe Higgins' call for a new left party.

Joe Higgins' call last weekend for a left-wing slate of candidates to fight the next Dail election is to be welcomed. There will be difficulties in the way of achieving the unity necessary to offer common left programme across the State.

But we should not be daunted. We should see it as a duty, on as wide a basis as possible, to put forward a clear alternative to coalition with Fianna Fail or Fine Gael.

The idea of a new mass-based Left party is some distance in the future. But a united campaign, bringing together credible community and single-issue groups, trade union activists and existing Left organisations is a realistic ambition which it is our duty to pursue.

The party I am a member of, the SWP, responds positively to Joe Higgins' call. We look forward to discussing how we might advance the project together, neither hiding the differences which exist, nor making such a fetish of them that continued fragmentation is ensured.

At anti-war meetings and meetings of the People Before Profit/Davitt Alliance over recent months, I have been struck by the wide range of people who have been able to make common cause, despite previous sharp disagreements and resentments of one sort and another. Others will have had similar



experiences in different contexts. We must build on this. I hope the days are gone when we allowed, say, different analyses of the class nature of

the Soviet Union to stand in the way of joint action on immediate issues.

We should discuss our differences as we march for-

ward together. We might discover we have much learn from one another. We might have even more to learn from the people we would be

appealing to in a general election campaign, who have no time for the endless wrangling which has characterised the Irish Left for too long.

Some of the most committed fighters against neo-liberalism I have met in the past year would not describe themselves as socialists at all. Many have come into political activity through involvement in local issues---to do with planning, incineration, hospital or school closures, etc., etc. They haven't set out to overthrow capitalism, but their activity has brought them into confrontation with the neo-liberal agenda adopted by all the major capitalist parties.

Who better than local campaigners who have earned the trust of their neighbours to carry the flag for a new Left initiative?

Who better to represent the broad working class interest than the union activist who has helped organise her or his fellow workers to defend jobs and conditions?

It is, I think, within the bounds of possibility to put forward candidates standing on a common programme in a dozen constituencies at least, not to seek a junior position in an administration dominated by adherents of neo-liberalism, but to represent and amplify the voice of resistance to neo-liberalism.

People Before Profit Public Forum

WHO OWNS IRELAND?

Friday May 12th @ 7.30pm
Cassidys Hotel, Parnell Square,
Dublin

Speakers:
Cllr Ollie Rahman, Respect (New Left Alliance England) **Carmel McKenna**, Wicklow People Before Profit, **Francis Corr** (Combined Residents Against Incinerator)

Davitt League - Seminar

1906 - THE LAND OF IRELAND FOR THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

2006 - THE RESOURCES OF IRELAND FOR THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

The Davitt League will host an open seminar on The Ownership and Control of Ireland's Natural Resources and has invited all political parties to submit where they stand on this issue.

Venue: Imperial Hotel,
Castlebar, Co. Mayo
Date: Saturday 27th May
Time: 11 am
ALL WELCOME

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Socialist 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.

COMMENT

Eamonn McCann

Jim Gralton remembered



Jim Gralton

I motored down through Barnsmore Gap and along by the side of Ben Bulbin last weekend to Carrick-on-Shannon in Leitrim, to speak at the annual commemoration of Jim Gralton, deported by de Valera in 1933 because of his political beliefs.

The only other person I'm aware of to have been thrown out of the Free State for political reasons was the American singer Phil Ochs in the 1970s.

It struck me during the weekend that there's a lot of local pride in Gralton around Leitrim. People from a wide range of political backgrounds attended some or all of the activities, organised by a committee headed by left-wing Labour veteran Declan Bree. Whether everybody assembled wanted to draw the appropriate conclusions is a different matter.

Jim Gralton was typical of his time and place, born, in 1886 on a small farm at Effermogh. Like many another, he fled from poverty as soon as he felt able, and joined the British Army. He deserted in Lancashire rather than serve in India, and went to work under false names on the Liverpool docks, then in the Welsh coalfields, then as a stoker on ships out of Merseyside.

In 1909, aged 23, he landed in New York and stayed, labouring on construction sites and the railways. Everywhere and always, he poured his energy into organising the union and encouraging workers to stand up for themselves. After the 1916 Rising, he founded the New York James Connolly Club, of which, at various times, Jim Larkin, Nora Connolly and Liam Mellows were members.

Gralton returned to Ireland briefly in 1922, believing that a bright brand new day was at hand. His first move, which was to prove momentous, was to rebuild Effermogh parish hall: it had been burnt down by the British as a reprisal for the shooting of an officer. The hall reopened as the Pearse-Connolly Hall, run not by the parish but by a lay committee. That was the momentous bit.

Gralton went back to New York towards the end of the Civil War, apparently feeling disillusioned, as well he might. But in 1932, he returned to Leitrim to help his elderly parents on their farm. Fianna Fail was on the brink of government and, again, there was a whiff of revolution in the air. It's often forgotten now—because no major political force has an interest in remembering—that FF was more left-wing then than, for example, Sinn Féin is today.

Gralton joined the Revolutionary Workers' Group and reopened the Pearse-Connolly Hall, as a venue for meetings and dances. It was a space and a place for people to organise independently, which both church and State found intolerable. (The feeling was to be expressed three years later when FF, at the Church's instigation, brought in the Licencing of Dance Halls Act, requiring that all halls be controlled by individuals "of good character" who had been formally approved by the courts.)

Meanwhile, FF leaders were turning on any erstwhile supporter who continued to take seriously the rhetoric they'd espoused in opposition. What one commentator described as "a combined anti-communist and puritanical witch hunt" was launched in Leitrim. Gralton's hall was denounced as a den of iniquity from pulpits from Arigna to Effermogh. One section of the IRA fired shots into the hall, while another backed Gralton. An IRA unit of the first persuasion made a botched attempt to blow the building up. On Xmas Eve 1932, it was burned to the ground, nobody knows for certain by whom.

In January 1933, Gralton began holding open-air meetings around the district, shouting defiance and pledging that the hall would be rebuilt. In February 1933, after the de Valera government ordered him deported as an "undesirable alien," he went on the run. The Revolutionary Workers' Groups organised a defence campaign. Peadar O'Donnell came down to speak, but faced such an angry mob of pious constitutionalists that he had to take refuge in a tree.

Gralton was captured in July and, in August 1933, escorted onto a boat bound for New York. On arrival, he went straight back into action, becoming a full-time union organiser. He organised US publication of Connolly's pamphlets and raised funds for the International Brigades in Spain. For the rest of his life, he was a committed member of the US Communist Party, and twice stood for election on the party ticket.

Gralton scorned those who affected radicalism in relation to Ireland, then associated themselves in the US with the representatives of the rich.

He died in New York on 29th December 1945 and is buried in the Bronx. His niece, Margaret, laid a bunch of flowers last Sunday afternoon at the site of the hall. Vincent McGrath of the Rosport Five and myself were among the speakers who talked to a crowd of a hundred or so, gathered in bright sunshine along the narrow Carrick-Effermogh road, of the relevance of her uncle Jim's legacy, to Leitrim and Ireland and the workers of the world.

We all expressed hope that the hall will one day soon be rebuilt and reopen, for the benefit of the community and as a memorial to a man who kept faith.

The other man deported from Ireland for political reasons, the late Phil Ochs, wrote a wonderful song called "Love Me, Love Me, Love Me, I'm a Liberal." I told Margaret that when the Pearse-Connolly Hall is rebuilt, I'm coming back down to Effermogh for the opening, to sing it as a commentary on those who, in this generation as in Jim Gralton's, cool their ardour and ameliorate their views when they land either in office or in the US.

Sure, once I was young and impulsive,
I wore every conceivable pin,
Even went to socialist meetings
Learned all the revolutionary hymns.
Ah, but I've grown older and wiser
And that's why I'm turning you in,
Love me, love me, love me,
I'm a liberal.

Increasing the pace of the Hain agenda

By Gordon Hewitt

Arguments are raging in the press and beyond about the re-assembling of the Northern Ireland Assembly due to take place in the next two weeks. Concerns over the nature of its powers and whether Hain will allow the Assembly to control fiscal policy (Hain has publicly ruled this out) clamour for space alongside various claims and counter claims as to who will and won't walk out first or whether it is even worth it given that many think it will collapse in November.

Whatever the case there is another debate taking place which is equally if not more important as it is the outcome of discussions about the shape of the Northern Irish economy which will ultimately determine the impact of the Assembly on working class people here.

The Irish Association conference held at Queens University at the end of April brought together 80 suited economists, business people, members of the political parties and perhaps a few interested individuals to discuss the way forward for the Northern Irish economy. While most viewed the Assembly reconstitution positively the real debate in the conference was not about the political structures, for these people a secondary consideration, it was about what is necessary for business to do well here.

What is clear from the conference is that the debate has shifted sharply. Last year the general positions argued by business people and by Peter Hain were that Northern Ireland was doing well. Growth was good, better than some of the regions of the UK, unemployment was low actually the lowest it had ever been at around 4% and that wages were rising. There was, of course, a sting in the tail. The imbalances accrued over the years of the troubles had distorted



Peter Hain

the economy and these needed to be rectified. There was too much public and not enough private sector, too many on benefits and not enough entrepreneurs, and beyond that what we were being given from the exchequer was not matched by what was collected in rates and taxes. All that had to change and hence the Hain agenda of rates increases, water charges and privatisation of the service, attacks on incapacity benefits, civil service job cuts and the review of public administration which includes the sell-off of public buildings.

At the conference, in the face of new figures released on the economy in Ireland, Northern Ireland it appears is no longer doing well. It is now argued that Northern Ireland is on the brink of at best, an economy languishing miles behind its competitors, and at worst an irreparable disaster waiting to happen.

The case was put as follows; last year Ireland created 100,000 jobs on the back of 5% growth, in Northern Ireland the corresponding figure was 10,000 (made weaker by the fact that NI has lost

100,000 jobs in the last 20 years) despite a reasonable headline growth figure. New contracts in Ireland dwarfed those won in NI and given that business is stuck with uncompetitive tax rates and few tax incentive policies contracts are being lost to the south and to Eastern Europe, and finally, that unemployment masked an inactivity level massively higher than anywhere in Europe and the UK. In Ireland the need was for an increase in immigration to take up the slack that Irish labour cannot match.

Amidst various complicated technical arguments over the benefits of lowering corporation tax and the need for a move to all island economy with a corresponding debate about an all Ireland economy, the key argument was for more of the Hain agenda and for this to be pursued vigorously i.e. more privatisation, more linkages with the south, more all island networks (gas, electricity, education, transport) and particularly interesting, more attention to productivity. Workers in Northern Ireland, it was argued, have not been used to delivering productivity outcomes and therefore productivity is low by European, all island or UK standards.

What this means in plain language is that workers in Northern Ireland are going to see jobs decimated, price increases for services, a decimation of the public sector, working conditions attacked and all on the back of a new ideological assault.

The case for an alliance of campaigns against the Hain agenda across Northern Ireland is clearly presented by this conference. More than ever we need to organise together to beat back the neo-liberals who want to sell off our resources, our labour, our communities and our services to the highest bidder.

Respect challenges Labour in local elections

By Sasha Simic, RESPECT candidate in Hackney

Campaigning as a RESPECT candidate for the up-coming Council elections I have yet to come across an enthusiastic Labour voter. There are many people who will vote Labour of course, but hardly anyone will attempt to defend their record nationally or locally.

Hackney is one of the poorest boroughs in the country, never mind London. Nevertheless Hackney council still has an appetite for grandiose projects, and plans to squander £70 million on a new town hall. These big projects are part of a strategy to 'regenerate' Hackney by attracting the wealthy. It is possible, for example that Hackney will end up with 5 city academies. This year however over 250 Hackney children haven't secured a secondary school place in Hackney itself.

Faced with this resolutely Blairite council there is a level of justifiable apathy. In canvassing you meet a lot of people who dismiss politicians as 'all the same'. There is also a very high level of unregistered voters. However people are



Respect supporters in East London

also very interested in our arguments and are looking for alternatives. RESPECT is still very much the new kid on the block, but we have met with a very positive response. Our candidates have a proud record of resistance to Hackney council's attacks on working people.

In the last two weeks the issue of the BNP has given the election a greater sense of urgency. Faced with the prospect of a melt-down New Labour has tried to mobilise their vote by playing up the threat of the Nazi BNP. This

cynical manoeuvre has been seized on by the media and has ended up giving the BNP a credibility they never had previously. The real story is that the fascists have been resolutely pushed out of London. Only a few years ago they could still stand candidates in Tower Hamlets and Hackney.

Today the BNP are contesting wards on the fringes of London. They are still a danger and have been made a greater one by Labour's cynical attempts at voter manipulation but the people of London have a long and proud history of kicking the fascists in the gutter whenever they have tried to grow.

The stakes are very high with a number of forces trying to fill the vacuum opened up by New Labour's betrayals. In the south of Hackney a Tory councillor has managed to ingratiate himself into a grass-roots campaign resisting the gentrification of a working-class area. We can expect to see this bizarre situation repeated unless we're there to put a class argument and a class solution to the problems of Hackney.

And that is why RESPECT plays an important role in these local elections.

REGULARISING UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS

By Barbara Muldoon

The UK's leading think tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) has called on the government to regularise the position of all undocumented workers living in Britain and Northern Ireland.

The reason for this is not driven by humanitarian concern but by the huge economic benefits it would bring.

They have calculated that granting undocumented workers the right to stay here would immediately net the treasury over £1 billion in taxes. A further £4.7 billion would be saved in the costs of policing and deporting undocumented workers.

Migrant workers are absolutely neces-

sary in terms of filling gaps in the workforce and they bring huge revenue to the treasury and yet the British government will not grant permission for them to remain here lawfully.

Migrant workers make a disproportionately greater contribution to the UK economy than local workers.

Just over 8% of the British and Northern Ireland workforce are from overseas and yet their contribution to the economy is over 10% of all tax revenue.

They also take out proportionately less in terms of benefits and public services. A recent study of Polish Workers living in the Newry area showed this.

Only 5% receive any benefits at all.

Over 60% are not registered with a doctor and 90% are not registered with a dentist.

Therefore the government is telling downright lies when they put forward arguments for stricter immigration controls. Far from being a burden on the economy or our health system, migrants are putting huge amounts into the economy and not even taking out what they are entitled to.

The refusal of the UK government to regularise the position of undocumented workers and the continual tightening of the UK's immigration laws have no other explanation other than being fuelled by racism.

Migrants are being refused permission to live here not because they are a drain on the economy but because they are foreigners.

INTERNATIONAL

NEPAL:

Protests face repression but force king to retreat

By Christine Murray

April 24th was a historic day for Nepal. After almost three weeks of protests and street fighting King Gyanendra finally succumbed to the will of the people and agreed to reinstate the country's parliament.

King Gyanendra came to the Nepalese throne in June 2001, inheriting a crisis caused by a deep-rooted civil war with Maoist rebels.

From the start of his reign he tried to impose totalitarian control on Nepal. In 2001 he dissolved the parliament and placed in their stead ministers of his own choosing.

In February 2005 he went further. Gyanendra believed that in failing to calm the Maoists and restore peace the government had not fulfilled their mandate and consequently it was abolished, being replaced with his direct rule over the country.

This was a major step backwards for a country that had managed to abolish absolute monarchy in 1990.

He stated that the country would be at peace after a three-year period: the peace of a dictator who had crushed all opposition.

Throughout King Gyanendra's rule civil rights were breached on the extraordinary grounds of his claim that democracy and progress were basically incompatible.

Restrictions against the freedom of the press and censorship led international aid organisations to express concern about the safety of journalists and humanitarian aid workers in the light of Gyanendra's regime.

But the monarchy's real weakness was that it failed in its stated aim of subduing Maoist activity.



Pro-democracy demonstrators battle police

The monarchy is backed by feudal families who have legal claims over most of the arable land.

Most Nepalese are poor peasants, just two percent of Nepal's population is engaged in industrial labour, usually low tech assembling and processing manufacture.

These factories are also typically owned by the feudal elites, King Gyanendra is personally a capitalist of this sort.

The protests that have restored parliamentary democracy to Nepal were amazing, both in the size of the demonstrations and the dedication of its participants.

For three weeks thousands of people took to the streets of Nepal's

cities and towns, with the popular uprising culminating in a general strike.

The victory was not won without a cost however; at least fourteen people lost their lives in the violent protests.

In an attempt to stop the protests the Nepalese government introduced a curfew and police endeavoured to disperse crowds of protestors by beating them back with canes, pelting them with rubber bullets and by the use of canisters of teargas.

Bijay Dasal from Pokhara described how the police "use excessive force, even when the demonstrations are peaceful".

In the face of all this it is impossi-

ble not to commend the bravery of the participants and admire the spirit of protesters like Bharat Sharma, a volunteer ambulance worker, who said "the bastards shot at children. If the king thinks he can control us with bullets he'd better forget it."

"This is the 21st century and a king is a rarity, something that belongs in a zoo."

Also praiseworthy is the sheer levels of organisation of the protesters, nominally co-ordinated by the 'Seven Party Alliance' a coalition of constitutional opposition parties.

One seventeen year old high school student from Lalitpur recalls how active protesters were in

recruiting people for the strikes, visiting the homes of some and sending letters to the homes of others, asking for one representative per household to join their ranks.

There was a great sense of solidarity among the demonstrators as they fought for the revival of democracy.

As matters stand the constitutional opposition have celebrated the return of parliament but have stopped short of overthrowing the monarchy.

In this regard they have fallen short of the hopes of many of the protesters and have broken the loose alliance that existed between themselves and the Maoists.

The Maoist organisation hold a large amount of political sway in many parts of Nepal, and regularly hold anti-monarchy demonstrations and champion democracy.

They have welcomed the reinstatement of parliament and have pledged to respect the decisions made by a constituent assembly if the decisions were proven to be "free and fair".

This shows that democracy and land reform are central to addressing the hardship that gave rise to the Maoist movement in the first place, measures bitterly opposed by Gyanendra himself.

Whether the king can hang on to any influence over the country is still unresolved.

But whatever direction the future political structure of Nepal takes, the lessons of April 2006 will not be forgotten.

The days of protests and people from every walk of life influencing and changing the course of both society and history are not yet over.

EGYPT:

Regime steps up repression

Between 24 and 27 April campaigners taking part in protests at the Judges' Club and the Ministry of Justice in Cairo were attacked by the police and around fifty have been arrested.

State security thugs attempted to smash up a sit-in in the club using batons and knives. According to the New York Times up to 10,000 riot police were deployed in central Cairo on 27th April. Leading members of the Kifaya movement (ENOUGH in Arabic) and the Muslim Brotherhood were beaten and arrested for taking part in protests with over 80 pro-reform judges.

Egyptian judges, who monitor ballot boxes in elections, claim that many of their colleagues were intimidated by the regime after they reported widespread electoral fraud.

Hosni Mubarak has ruled Egypt under emergency laws since 1918. His National Democratic Party won the recent elections.

All attempts to protest at the election fraud have been met with fierce repression. Opposition to the regime



Egyptian police move in to crush protests

has been increasing among many of the professional syndicates.

Reformers have recently won key elections in the Judges Club, the press syndicates, the engineers, uni-

versity professors, doctors and actors associations.

Up to 7,000 of Egypt's 9,000 judges have joined forces to campaign to an end to government inter-

ference in the Judiciary.

The rise of the reformists comes at a time of growing discontent against the regime's neo-liberal policies.

Despite the presence of over 10,000 riot police who sealed off central Cairo to prevent a demonstration by Kifaya and the Muslim Brotherhood, the state security forces failed to dampen the protests.

On Friday 28 April hundreds of demonstrators defied police with a series of protests across the city, while 200 judges gathered outside their headquarters to defy the state security police.

Many of the activists arrested have now been in custody for nearly three weeks. Protests and solidarity are urgently needed as it is during this period that detainees are most likely to face abuse.

Send messages of protest to
Counsellor Maher Abd al'Wahid
Public Prosecutor, Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali, Ramses
Street, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 577 4716
Copy to
The Ambassador
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 12
Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

MEXICO: STRIKERS SHOT AND KILLED DURING STEEL MILL OCCUPATION

Police shot and killed two workers, another was crushed to death in a melee and over 40 others were wounded, most by gunshots, when authorities launched an assault to expel striking workers occupying the SICARTSA steel mill in Lazaro Cardenas, Michoacan, Mexico on April 20.

Reports from the scene suggest that others may also have been killed or may die from their wounds. Workers and townspeople retook the plant, but were then besieged by police. Parts of the plant have been taken over by the Mexican Army and the Mexican Navy.

Mexican unions have demanded the resignation of the country's secretary of labour, the impeachment of the country's president, the punishment of those who are guilty of the violence and the recognition of the elected leader of the mine workers union.

Your support is urgently needed - please send off a protest email to http://www.labourstart.org/cgi-bin/solidarityforever/show_campaign.cgi?c=89

Brother of Guantanamo prisoner says 'I want justice for Omar'

Abu Baker Deghayes, the brother of Guantanamo prisoner **Omar Deghayes**, recently visited Galway at the invitation of Galway Alliance Against War* (GAAW). GAAW asked Abu Baker Deghayes to address their 1916 commemoration in order to raise the issue of Shannon airport being used by CIA jets involved in transporting prisoners to the infamous Camp Delta, Guantanamo Bay. Later he spoke to Socialist Worker's **Dette McLoughlin**

My younger brother Omar is now aged 37. Our father was a trade union leader in Libya. He was arrested and executed there as a political opponent of Colonel Mu' ammar al-Gaddafi.

Our family managed to flee persecution in Libya and was granted political asylum in the UK.

We settled in Brighton. Omar studied law at university, his aim was to become a human rights lawyer.

After his Law degree he decided to travel to the east to taste Muslim culture. His application for British citizenship had been submitted but not yet granted before he left. He travelled around Malaysia, Pakistan and Afghanistan comparing Islamic laws with Western laws, and also looking at the possibility of setting up a business in dried fruit that would bring much needed employment to locals.

In Kabul he married and had a son.

Things changed after the 9/11 attacks and Omar fled to Pakistan with his family.

He planned for them to return to Brighton. However, early one morning in April 2002 the house he was living in was surrounded by Pakistani security services.

They entered by force, handcuffed Omar and his wife, took all their money and identity documents and imprisoned the couple with their baby.

Omar was sold to the U.S. military for \$5,000 as an "enemy combatant".

His wife and child were released. His wife told us that Omar was taken to Bagram airbase and from there to Guantanamo. 4 years later he is still there.

"Omar has never been charged with any crime. He was told that Spanish authorities had video evidence of him training Chechyan terrorists. This is absolute rubbish, and was even discredited by British experts working for the British police and the BBC. Now, he faces constant imprisonment, held hostage by the U.S. with no trial.

He has lost the sight in one eye through torture, had a finger crushed by a guard so that it now needs a metal rod to support it. He suffers systematic beatings.

He has been interrogated by US, British and Libyan Intelligence agents. He is under constant threat of being handed over to the Libyan authorities to be killed."

"Omar was last seen by his lawyer in September 2005, he was denied access on one occasion after that. This is disturbing as we have not had a letter from Omar since August 2005.

He is allowed to write to his family through the Red Cross but obviously the letters are heavily censored.

He used to correspond with us every 2-3 months. We must continue to show the U.S. authorities that Omar has not been forgotten.



Left: Camp Delta in Guantanamo Bay where prisoners are routinely mistreated, Right: Omar Deghayes

I know that my brother is innocent but if he is not to be released he is at least entitled to be charged, have a legitimate trial and be judged accordingly. He deserves justice."

Muslims do not feel safe and secure. The new anti-terror laws are creating the same atmosphere that I grew up under in Gaddafi's Libya.

If you are arrested now you may not know what for, or for how long, there is widespread erosion of human rights.

But on the positive side I think that there is a lot more political awareness now, and I am not just speaking about myself.

I had never been active before this happened to my brother. Many peo-

ple who were never active before now feel an urgent need. People are standing up together for their rights.

This has brought unity between the muslim and non-muslim communities in localities.

What happened with the London bombings was shocking and tragic. This would not be the usual actions of the ordinary law abiding, hard working Muslim. Britain's involvement in Iraq was definitely the cause.

"I think that this so called war is illegal and immoral. The US/UK and their allies have no strategy, they are just using state terrorism.

They have might on their side, so they invade and murder, and it was all based on lies. WMDs? Democracy? Security? Better life for Iraqis?

The uprising against them now is bigger and more powerful as all the countries around Iraq are involved, the whole region is destabilising.

But until there is justice for Palestine there will never be peace in the Middle East. Our future is in our hands. We must fight for Justice. "

The "Save Omar" group has been formed by local groups and citizens in Brighton. The Respect Coalition, university groups as well as the Islamic forum are actively highlighting the campaign.

When Tony Blair was in Brighton he was asked to attend an audience with campaigners but he wouldn't. He did say he would look into Omar's

case though.

Since then the official line is that the British government can't make representations for people who are only "residents". They say Omar must appeal to Libya for help! All European citizens have been released now. Obviously non-European citizens are treated as second class citizens.

It would appear the UN are useless. Even though Kofi Anan has called for Guantanamo to be closed because torture is a regular occurrence there, nothing is done.

"I would do anything for justice for my brother. I am honoured to attend the GAAW commemoration. It gives me an opportunity to raise the issue, not only of my brother but of international human rights.

What happened to my father, what is happening to my brother, it can happen to anyone, anywhere now.

It is hard to believe that the Irish government are actually accomplices to US/UK atrocities. But I have faith in the people of Ireland."

"People in Ireland can do a lot. Contact your local politicians, government ministers, and your MEP. The European Parliament called for all European residents to be released from Guantanamo.

Use your influence with your American friends. Public opinion is against what Bush and Blair are doing. Blair has called Guantanamo an "anomaly!"

Write to my brother- show the U.S. that the world is aware.

Demonstrate together in numbers. When Condoleezza Rice visited Blackburn we all travelled up there with placards and shouted "Shame" at her.

Stop what is happening in Shannon, call for investigations.

For all we know Omar having been kidnapped in Pakistan could have been transported via Shannon to Guantanamo Bay.

For information on the case of Omar Deghayes: <http://www.end-unlawful-imprisonment.org.uk/> <http://www.save-omar.org.uk/>



Statue to anti imperialist Liam Mellows in Galway City

Galway 1916 Anti War protest

Over 100 people of all ages, diverse ethnic backgrounds, various mother-tongues, different religions and those of none, came together in Galway for an anti-war protest at the 1916 commemoration organised by Fianna Fail.

There were city councillors from the Labour Party and Sinn Fein, plus representatives from other political parties such as the Socialist Workers Party, cutting across party divides for a serious and solemn purpose.

The protest highlighted the deep hypocrisy of Fianna Fail in honouring the anti-imperialist rebellion of 1916 whilst collaborating with British/U.S. forces in the illegal invasion and occupation of another nation, and allowing CIA torture jets use Shannon airport for human rights abuses subtly named "extraordinary renditions".

The illegal war on Iraq was based on lies, Aherm lied about Ireland's role in this murderous event

They say the first casualty of war is truth.

Those gathered together at the Galway Alliance Against War commemoration agree with the sentiments of James Connolly and say "WE SERVE NEITHER BUSH NOR BLAIR!"

DON'T ATTACK IRAN



Thousands joined the anti war protest in New York City protest on April 29

By Dave Lordan

Will the US go to war with Iran? What more evidence do we need?

The US government has branded Iran "public enemy number one" and called it "the world's most active sponsor of terrorism".

Condoleezza Rice says the United Nations credibility is at stake if it doesn't act. Jack Straw says, "It is very serious that the Iranian regime has failed fully to cooperate with the United Nations".

Rice added that the US will act with a coalition of "like-minded nations", if the UN doesn't do America's bidding. Sound familiar?

It was recently revealed that British army officers took part in US war games aimed at preparing for a possible invasion of Iran, despite Straw saying such an attack was "inconceivable".

Meanwhile, the Turkish foreign minister has revealed that Turkey has turned down a US offer of a sweetener in the shape of a free nuclear reactor if it will allow the Bush administration to use a Turkish air base for attacking Iran.

All of this points in one direction - towards war.

But what kind of war will it be? The US army is tied up fighting the increasing insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Troops on the ground are exhausted and demoralised.

The number of US troops killed in Iraq in April was seventy, hundreds more were injured.

The majority of troops now say they want to go home immediately. Six senior generals have come out

in recent weeks condemning Donald Rumsfeld for the mess in Iraq.

Bush has neither the military manpower nor the military willpower to invade Iran, not to mind hold it against the inevitable mass armed resistance to an occupation.

The US has other options. It could use its massive conventional arsenal to blanket bomb Iranian Military and Civilian infrastructure.

But conventional bombing would be unlikely to seriously damage either the Iranian regime or its armed forces.

Remember that the Serbian Army emerged unscathed from their hideouts after 90 days of Nato bombing in the Spring of 1999. Tens of thousands of civilians would be sure to die.

When asked about his intentions re nuclear weapons Bush has repeatedly replied that 'all options

are on the table'.

And indeed, to seriously damage Iran's military and uranium enrichment capacity Bush would have to order the deployment of nuclear weapons for the first time since the dreadful and completely unnecessary destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of WWII.

But wouldn't these be bunker busting nukes- hi tech weapons that penetrate rock and

explode deep underground creating no fallout and therefore no civilian deaths, no cancers, no deformities?

Nonsense, for no such weapons exist.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists nuclear rockets would have to penetrate to a depth of at least 30m to contain a blast underground.

But the US has only 50 modified nuclear bombs that can penetrate to a maximum depth of 6 metres.

The resulting explosion would eject thousands of tons of radioactive material into the atmosphere.

The UCS projects that an attack by one of these weapons on the Iranian nuclear facility in Estafan would result in the deaths of three million people from fallout in Iran and neighbouring countries.

35 million others would be poisoned and a large area rendered uninhabitable for generations.

The anti-war movement globally has got to start acting now to prevent such atrocities.

Even the fact that nuclear attack is under consideration should raise the alertness level of activists to code red. Only a mass movement can stop a war in Iran.

350,000 Americans filled the streets of New York on Saturday April 29th, with Don't Attack Iran being one of their main slogans, showing how the issue has begun to galvanise the US anti-war movement.

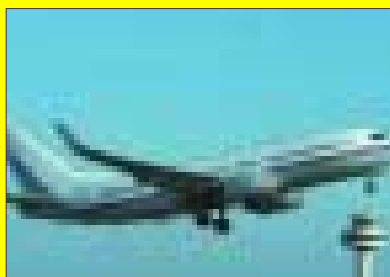
Like Americans, Irish activists need a return to the streets.

Shannon used for torture flights

A new EU report confirms that the CIA have been kidnapping people in Europe and illegally detaining them, effectively supporting the recent contention of Amnesty International that Shannon airport has been used at least 50 times as a transit point for alleged terrorists.

The damning report on 'rendition', a euphemism formulated by US security forces for kidnapping and torture, was based on data obtained from Eurocontrol, Europe's air safety agency, as well as 50 hours of testimony from individuals who were victims of US secret service operations in Europe.

The report's author, Italian socialist MEP Claudio Fava, concluded



Shannon: Used as a transit point for alleged terrorists

that 'violation of human and fundamental rights was not isolated or an excessive measure confined to a short period of time, but rather a widespread practice in which the majority of European countries were involved.'

EU parliamentarians now intend to visit Romania and Poland, where they believe the CIA to have operated secret interrogation camps.

The government has made no response to the report, which comes as a

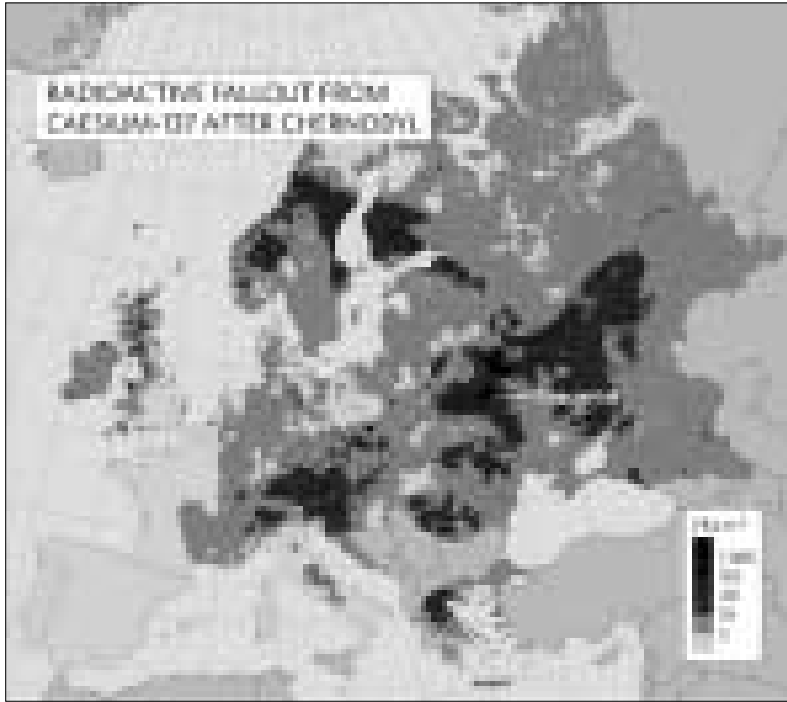
serious embarrassment to them.

Bertie Ahern and Dermot Ahern, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, have both put on record their opposition to the practice of rendition, but they have stuck to the line that 'there is no reason to doubt the specific and unqualified assurances on the issue from the United States authorities, that prisoners have not been transferred through Irish territory, nor would they be, without permission.'

The combination of the Amnesty and the EU reports would make the government position untenable, were the main opposition parties not so divided in their own view on the use of Shannon airport by the US military.

NUCLEAR POWER

Twenty years after the Chernobyl disaster



By **Conor Kostick**

At 1.23am on 26 April 1986 the number four reactor of the Chernobyl nuclear plant became unstable. Immense heat caused steam pressure to build up in seconds, ripping through the coolant tubes and blowing a hole in the roof.

Radioactive material, of an amount four hundred times greater than that of the Hiroshima bomb, was explosively and catastrophically released into the atmosphere.

The subsequent fallout affected nearly all of Europe, with Ireland being among those countries that received a serious dose of Caesium - 137.

Governments, especially the Russian, along with powerful lobbyists for the nuclear industry, have since hampered our knowledge of the disaster and its consequences.

With the price of oil soaring and with the attraction that a nuclear power industry assists in the production of nuclear weapons, it is not surprising that the world's most powerful governments are defenders of nuclear power.

In 2005 George Bush included 'safe, clean, nuclear energy' as part of his energy strategy for the US. He has budgeted over \$500 million for new nuclear plants.

What is a real shock, however, is that some environmentalists are currently championing nuclear power as a means of addressing global warming. Jim Lovelock, the creator of the Gaia hypothesis, now lobbies on behalf of Environmentalists for Nuclear Power, an organisation that downplays the effects of the Chernobyl accident.

So, for example, they propagate material that claims 'apart from about 1800 thyroid cancer cases registered in children and in some adults, there is no evidence of any major public health impact attributable to radiation expo-

The destroyed reactor in Chernobyl. Now governments are once again planning more nuclear reactors

sure after the accident.

There is no increase in overall cancer incidence or mortality or in non-malignant disorders that could be related to radiation exposure.'

And that apart from 30 workers at Chernobyl 'no deaths directly attributable to exposure from the Chernobyl radiation have been found in the population of the contaminated regions.'

Even the official UN report, which included input from the Russian government and the International Atomic Energy Agency, a body responsible for promoting nuclear energy, admits that some 5,000 fatalities will result in the significantly contaminated areas in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine and it predicted that, in total, 9,000 will die from cancer among the 6.8 million most exposed Soviets.

But these figures are massive underestimates. Mistrustful of the forces lining up to shape the UN report, German Green MEP Rebecca Harms commissioned an alternative report, TORCH. It predicted about 30,000 to 60,000 excess cancer deaths and that, depending on the risk model, there would be excess cases of thyroid cancer range between 18,000 and 66,000 in Belarus alone.

Even more starkly Greenpeace, by considering other health issues than cancer, including intestinal damage, heart, respiratory and circulation problems believe that 'the most recently published figures indicate that in Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine alone the accident could have resulted in an estimated 200,000 additional deaths in the period between 1990 and 2004.'

In the worst affected region, Belarus, almost a quarter of country's farmland has been rendered permanently unusable. An estimated 1,000 children die there every year from thyroid cancer. A quarter of the country's budget is spent on alleviating the effects

of the accident. But no part of Europe will be unaffected. The long-term impact of the Chernobyl disaster on civilians remains to be seen.

Understanding the true scale of the suffering arising from a few minutes crisis in one nuclear power station is vital for rejecting the arguments of the nuclear industry.

But not only have the nuclear lobbyists belittled the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, but they have also rushed to say that such accidents will not recur.

They point out that the particular design of reactor was flawed and that, unlike Western power stations, the lack of a containment building was crucial.

What these claims fail to answer is the evidence that there have been some twenty serious accidents in Western nuclear power stations, most significantly a partial meltdown in 1979 of a nuclear power plant on Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania.

After this accident, no more nuclear power stations were built in the USA, although Bush's plans suggest this is about to change.

The idea that nuclear power can be safe is simply not true. No matter how many safety features a power plant contains, none of them could guarantee the plant's safety in the face of a terrorist act or a severe environmental act, such as an earthquake or a hurricane. It is a little known fact, for example, that the Waterford nuclear power station, some 20 miles west of New Orleans, had to be shut down when it lost its connection to power supply as a result of hurricane Katrina. Only a standby diesel generator prevented a terrible nuclear disaster from accompanying the natural disaster.

Moreover, there is no known safe mechanism for dealing with the radioactive waste produced by nuclear power. This waste remains toxic for

thousands of years and therefore no facility, even a hollowed out mountain, such as they have in the US, can be guaranteed to prevent it leaking into the environment.

In practice the current holding places for nuclear waste are dangerously shoddy. The Observer newspaper pointed out that 'almost 90 percent of Britain's hazardous nuclear waste stockpile is so badly stored it could explode or leak with devastating results at any time.'

According to the nuclear lobbyists, especially the 'green' ones, the main argument for nuclear power is that it does not contribute to global warming. But even that view is mistaken.

The generation of electricity from a nuclear power station does not just depend on the nuclear reaction, but also the mining and transport of uranium.

A Friends of the Earth report in November 2004 that took into account these wider activities along with the carbon emission cost of building a nuclear reactor and storing spent fuel showed that nuclear power produces 'about 50 percent more global warming emissions than wind power.'

Just one example can show the flaw in the nuclear industry's argument. The world's biggest uranium mine is Olympic Dam in Australia. It's the region's largest producer of carbon dioxide and consumes a quarter of all electricity used in that part of the world. It is also plagued by problems of waste management and water management.

So far the Irish Government has resisted lobbying by the nuclear industry. But its own national energy agency, Sustainable Energy Ireland has said that 'the country would have to seriously look at nuclear energy as an alternative to fossil fuels from 2020 onwards.' But the lesson of the Chernobyl disaster is simple. The alternative to fossil fuels is not nuclear power.

'In Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine Chernobyl could have resulted in 200,000 additional deaths between 1990 and 2004.'

COMMENT

Gino Kenny

Who will go to bed with whom?

Next year election fever will be upon us. Already manoeuvres are afoot, to see who wins the race to the bottom.

The War Chests are in the waiting and the greasy till merchants of Corporate Ireland are all over them like a cheap suit.

According to the latest polls Fianna Fail are up 5 percent at the expense of Fine Gael and Sinn Fein. I suppose when Fianna Fail were putting their preparations for 1916 anniversary together, this was the 1916 dividend they were craving. In fact, since it went so well, FF/PD government will announce to the world they're going Nuclear for the 91st anniversary of 1916.

The scrum for next years election has truly started, who will go to bed with whom, will it be a "Dream Team Pact", will it be Rainbow, or a Coalition of the Willing. The balance of power is a precarious form.

This election will be one of the most important general elections in the history of the state. If it's more of the same, I'm heading for the Wicklow Mountains, to grow a beard, and plot revolution. If it's Fine Gael/Labour, with the cardboard cut out Enda Kenny as leader, I will grow a beard, and plot counter revolution in the hills.

So where does that leave the so called anti-establishment parties.

The Greens will enter a rainbow coalition if its on. If you had told me that Sinn Fein could enter government with the right wing parties of the south, I would have laughed, and throw my scarf over my shoulder.

But anything is possible in election year. But before we head for the hills, there is another alternative, the alternative to the neo liberal agenda, privatisation, the two tier health /education society, the race to the bottom, the all consuming consensus of free markets ideas, that has turned the land of saints and scholars, to the land of speculators, profiteers and exploiters, that alternative is Left unity, and its not the salmon coloured ticket variety.

It is the people who don't want to see the sell outs of Labour, the Labour party who said that they would "smash the golden circle" and then they went into coalition with the golden circle. I don't have the space to argue all the positives for a left alternative.

That will be done in the coming months I am sure with all the forces of working class people who are fighting back against the injustices of the system.

But the stakes are massive.

The lines have been drawn, and the e-voting machines will be stored for another year, but let's hope we don't have to go to the hills.

REVIEWS

Bruce Springsteen returning to folk?



Bruce Springsteen

Michael Smith reviews Bruce Springsteen's new album: "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions"

Springsteen's new album is a rousing and ramshackle collection of songs from the repertoire of American folk icon Pete Seeger. Seeger, a Marxist singer-songwriter, was widely held up as the true heir to Woody Guthrie.

The two actually shared a stage at a benefit for migrant workers in New York in 1940. The folk archivist Alan Lomax described that night as the renaissance of American folk song.

The album was recorded live in a series of sessions over recent years at Springsteen's farmhouse in New Jersey. The musicianship on the recordings is second to none though

each was seemingly unrehearsed. You can hear the band really enjoying themselves in this laid-back atmosphere and songs such as "Pay Me My Money Down", an old labour song, demand to be played loud and roared along with. Springsteen is backed by a small group featuring his wife, Patti Scialfa, E Street Band violinist Soozie Tyrell and other New Jersey musicians playing largely traditional folk instruments like mandolin and banjo. It sounds like a gang of friends having a blast and because of this it reminded me very much of Steve Earle's "The Mountain" which he recorded with a similar ensemble of bluegrass and folk players.

Springsteen is well-known for siding with the working class in America and has never shied from tackling political issues in his songs. "Born in the USA" is probably the

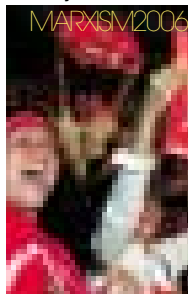
best-known but, more recently, he addressed the shooting by New York cops of the Liberian immigrant Amadou Diallo on "American Skin (41 Shots)".

Given Seeger's legacy and Springsteen's own leanings, it is a little disappointing that there are few political statements made among the songs. The songs are all about working people and, therefore, sit well with Springsteen's previous albums. But, apart from a beautiful version of the classic title track, "We Shall Overcome", and an anti-war song "Mrs. McGrath" ("All foreign wars I do proclaim/ Live on blood and a mother's pain"), there is a sense of an opportunity missed to highlight the need for protest in music and art in the face of Bush, neo-cons, imperialism and globalisation today.

WHAT'S ON

MARXISM 2006

Central London 6th - 10th July 2006



For five days thousands will gather at this political festival to celebrate the global movement against war and injustice and debate a huge range of questions about the world.

Up to 200 forums and debates will take place on a range of topics including war and imperialism, Latin America; women's liberation; anti-capitalism; Africa; anti-racism; working class struggles; America's hidden history;

environment; media; science; revolution today.

There will also be a series of discussions around art and culture, and a range of entertainment including gigs, theatre productions, exhibitions and film showings.

Speakers include Tariq Ali, Anas Al-Tikriti from Iraq, Walden Bello, Tony Benn, Alex Callinicos, Louise Christian, Mark Curtis, Roland Denis, Terry Eagleton, George Galloway, Rose Gentle, Lindsey German, John Gittings, Bernadette McAliskey, Eamonn McCann, Trevor Ngwane, Yvonne Ridley, Michael Rosen, Alfredo Saad-Filho, Mark Steel and many more.

www.marxism2006.org.uk

Underground Music

Urban Beats - Gritty, young and highly talented Dublin Hip Hop Artists, Krisma (Fatima Mansions) and Urban Intelligence (Ballymun) rap about their lives in 'Ireland's biggest building site'. Not to be missed! Saturday May 27th

6pm-7.15pm at the Peacock Theatre

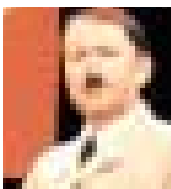
Theatre

Operation Easter

By Donal O'Kelly. Calypso Productions Kilmainham Gaol, Date: Until 20 May 2006 Time: 8.00pm Website: <http://www.calypso.ie/> Price: €20.00 Donal O'Kelly's new play is being staged in Kilmainham Gaol as part of the anniversary remembrances of Easter 1916.

Casting a searing light on the 1916 Rising, its aspirations and effects, Operation Easter combines both life stories and recorded oratory of the participants. On the 24th of April 1916 the proclamation of the Irish Republic was read by Padraic Pearse from the steps of the GPO. This play asks, 90 years on, what does 1916 mean to Irish people and what kind of nation has evolved?

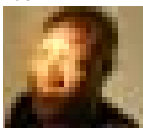
Adolf



Ten42 Productions Present Adolf Written & performed by Pip Utton directed by Guy Masterson Showing until 13 May 2006 Civic Theatre, Tallaght Box office: 01 4627477 Created from the words of "Mein Kampf" & "Table Talk", this play furnishes an acute anatomy of fascism: its ideological justifications, its poisoned utopias; Utton takes his audience on a journey into themselves. He plumbs the very source of racism and exposes just how near the surface of our own lives lurks its insidious influence. Powerful, dramatic and challenging. Admission: €20 & €16 concession. School students €10

Come Good Rain

The Samuel Becket Theatre Written and performed by George Seremba Come Good Rain is a moving and inspirational autobiographical account of writer and actor George Seremba, as he takes the audience on his journey from survival to triumph over the oppressive political regimes of Uganda in the 70's.



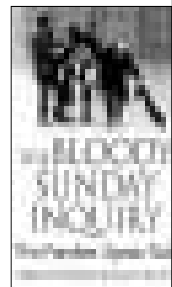
Integrating African song and folklore as well as live percussion, Seremba depicts the vibrancy and wonder of youth, his deep love for Africa, and how as a student and political activist, he suffered torture and near death under the murderous regimes of Milton Obote and Idi Amin. Draiocht Studio, Thurs 25 - Fri 26 May, 8.15pm, Tickets: €16 / €14 conc

BOOK LAUNCH THE BLOODY SUNDAY INQUIRY The Families Speak Out Edited and introduced by EAMONN McCANN
Introduced by: STEPHEN REA
Friday 12 May, 6.30pm, Anthology Books, The Studio Building, Meeting House Square, Temple Bar, Dublin 2

The Bloody Sunday Inquiry has been epic in its scale and implications. This is the story of how it came about and of the hopes and suspicions which surround it, told from a uniquely personal point of view.

Twenty-one wounded survivors and relatives of the dead describe the campaign which led to the establishment of the inquiry under Lord Saville. They reveal their bitterness at the whitewash of the first inquiry under Lord Chief Justice Widgery, and describe the frustrations of their struggle to force the British Government to launch a new search for the truth.

The relatives comment sharply on Saville's performance, and on the attitudes of politicians, the media and an array of celebrity lawyers. They reflect on whether soldiers and politicians should now be prosecuted for murder, and discuss whether the outcome is likely to hinder or enhance the peace process. This is the story of the longest legal proceedings in British or Irish history in the raw words of those most intimately involved. What they say puts a new focus on the significance of state atrocities in shaping perceptions of the past and aspirations for the future in Ireland.



Protest/Reports/Struggle

email to brid@swp.ie Phone 01 8722682

ANTI BIN TAX CAMPAIGN

Private company dumps on Limerick

By Councillor Joan Collins
Anti Bin Tax Campaign and
Campaign for an Independent Left

A small article in the Herald on 11th April reported on what is a very significant issue. Limerick Waste Recycling, a private company, went into liquidation.

Many householders and businesses had paid the company in advance for the year, for their waste to be collected. The company issued a statement that people will have "to make their own arrangements".!!

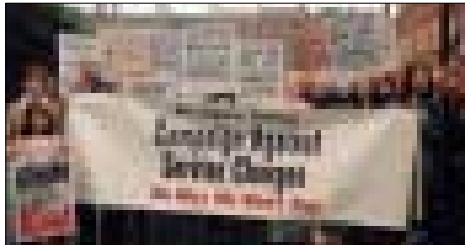
There was absolutely no public response from the EPA, no comment by Government or from Limerick Council. These bodies are usually the first to condemn the people as the cause of bags being left on roadsides. They are

quick to slap fines on people for having rubble lying in their gardens.

They call people resisting bin charges "scroungers". But where is the outcry when a private company folds up and leaves 4,000 householders and businesses without an essential waste collection service?

The anti bin tax campaign has from its inception campaigned against the privatisation of our waste collection. The majority of Council areas nationally have privatised the services out to companies like LWR.

This was done by either the councils charging for the collection and when they got full compliance, handed over the service to private companies. As soon as a refuse service is privatised the



Bin tax campaigning in Dublin to avoid fate of Limerick

costs soar and the waiver system is terminated.

In Tipperary the flat charge is over €300 a year and then €13.50 per lift. The Government line is the less you put out the less you pay. Bullshit. There should be no

privatisation of the collection of waste.

Waste collection was introduced in the 1890's in response to huge cholera outbreaks in cities like London. Because of the health implications the British

parliament introduced legislation and set up a public waste collection. Ireland followed suit. This was the system in place up to 1996 when the Irish Government brought in the 1997 Waste Management Act.

Essential services should not be provided to make profit. This goes for water, lighting, the provision of public housing, health, education, hospitals, communication and child care. Services like these should be provided on the basis of need not greed.

The collapse of Limerick Waste Recycling strengthens that argument. All the more important that in Dublin City the boycott of bin taxes is maintained to deter the council from privatising our services. This will be a key issue for the left in the next election.

PARTNERSHIP TALKS

Employers drag feet on regulation

By Kieran Allen

The unions, the employers and the government have set themselves a three week deadline to get a new partnership deal.

The talks have moved forward at a snail's pace as employers refused to accept new regulations to combat exploitation of migrants.

Instead the labour inspectorate is to be increased to 90 and the state has agreed to withhold subsidies for redundancy payments where they are used to displace workers.

The unions have backed down on new laws that would protect construction workers and have let the employers off the hook on further regulations.

While extra labour inspectors are welcome, their powers are quite limited. They cannot, for example, enter the premises to check records on overtime payments or payments for Sunday working.

At grassroots level, there is a growing awareness on how the detailed clauses in partnership deals directly affect working conditions.

The CPSU conference, for example, has thrown out proposals to link performance management to pay rises. This suggestion arose directly from the partnership agreement.

The other key clause in partnership deals is one which permits the outsourcing of 'non-core' work. Employers have used this liberally to contract out many clerical services and intend to make even further use of these clauses in future.

Transport Minister Martin Cullen gave the game away when he claimed that the next partnership deal would give employers even more scope to outsource. He was talking after the Labour Court ruled that the privatisation of driver testing represented an outsourcing of 'core work'.

Unions members need to watch carefully that their leaders are not signing up to clauses which give local employers a whip hand.

The employers are also pressing for a ten year pay deal and putting on the poor mouth about 'competitiveness'.

They want a long deal because they know that interest rates are rising and oil prices will add to inflation.

Any deal that does not give an 'ability to pay' clause to workers in industries such as banking or construction will be an outrage. But judging from past form, it looks like the union leaders will concede on this as well.

AROUND THE UNION CONFERENCES

CWU

The Communications Workers Union biennial conference was held on the last week of April in Cork. This was the first conference since the resignation of disgraced General Secretary, Con Scanton. This was the man who as chair of the Eircom Employee Share Ownership Trust received payments of over 1.8 million. The current ownership of Eircom was one of the main issues debated.

At the moment an Australian based so-called venture capitalist company, Babcock and Browne is attempting to buy out the former State owned telecommunications company. The objective of this company is clear, they are investing pension fund money and will do everything in their power, if successful, to return as big a profit as possible. This will mean attacks on workers' pay and conditions, no investment in infrastructure to combat the digital divide, and a sell off of assets.

The Employee Share Ownership Trust (ESOT) is currently in talks with Babcock and Browne with a view to putting forward a joint bid for Eircom. When one considers that the CWU is the biggest component of the ESOT, then one can see where the partnership model leads. In a key note speech to the conference, newly ratified General Secretary, Steve Fitzpatrick stated that if Babcock and

Browne did not give written assurances on pay and conditions, then the CWU would oppose the buyout. This would mean the Union being in direct confrontation with the ESOT.

The delegates also gave the incoming NEC a mandate to negotiate improvements in pay and conditions in return both for future changes and for changes already conceded. A deadline of Dec '06 has been put on these talks.

Conference delegates from An Post took time to analyse the campaign to force the company to pay the Sustaining Progress pay rises. Although over 90% of workers voted for strike action on a number of occasions, the Union officials instead diverted this mandate into talks with the Labour Relations Commission and the National Implementation Body. Both of these state sponsored bodies are pro-boss. The resulting deal and the method by which it was balloted on left many workers feeling betrayed by the Union leadership.

Given the current situation both in An Post and Eircom, it is now time for the newly elected Executive Council to withdraw from the partnership arrangements with all employers and instead represent the members' true interests. On a positive note a number of activists loyal to Con Scanton either resigned or lost their executive seats.

INO and IMO

INO and IMO conferences blame Harney for crisis in Health Service: Time for Minister to go says the People before Profit Alliance

The following is a statement issued by the People Before Profit Alliance

This week nurses at the annual conference of the Irish Nurses Organisation (INO) will vote on a motion of no confidence in Minister Mary Harney.

The nurses' motion blames her "lack of clarity on how to address long-standing problems facing the public health service" and "her negative attitude towards the nursing and midwifery professions".

INO Deputy Secretary, Dave Hughes, says INO nurses are rejecting "the cosy consensus" of the social partnership approach to nurses' conditions and the health service. Nurses are looking for a reduction of their hours to a 35 hour week and parity of pay with other therapists. These demands are vital to ensure the retention of nurses and to ensure safe conditions for patients.

At the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) conference two weeks ago Dr Fergus O'Ferrall also pointed to the lack of clarity calling on the Government to publish any research behind the promotion of for-profit hospitals which will cost the public billions in tax-breaks. "The evidence that is available to us supports public not-for-profit healthcare in regard to both cost and outcomes" he said. O'Ferrall blamed Mary Harney's "neoliberal ideals" for putting profits before people.

The People Before Profit Alliance has responded to the current crisis by setting up a Health Action Group to campaign for a publicly funded state of the art Health Service.

Dr Peadar O'Grady of the Health Action Group says: "Of course Mary Harney's promotion of for-profit hospitals has no evidence to support it because it is based solely on making profits not on good health-

care. The crisis in the health service is now a national emergency according to Harney. She should know. She is in charge of it. Harney's refusal to fund public beds and running down the public service is not an error — it is the plan. It is designed to scare people into buying health insurance and force them to 'go private'. In a for-profit health system like in the US, Health Insurance for an average family now costs over \$10,000 per year!"

The US is number one for health spending but 22nd (out of 22 OECD countries) for health. This makes it the most inefficient health service in the developed world. International research repeatedly shows that it is the bureaucracy, fees, executive pay and massive corporate profits that cause this waste and inefficiency. This waste alone can account for over one third of healthcare costs! The US spends three and half times

more, per person per year, on health administration than Canada's mainly public system does. The Neoliberal ideology that Harney and this government follow puts profits, privatisation, markets and tax-cuts for the rich before the quality of health and safety of children, the sick and the elderly.

Pat Fitzgerald of the Health Action Group says: "The near silence from the 'opposition' parties is not good enough. The Health Action Group is calling for support for health service workers who defend their conditions and stand up to this government's profiteering. We call on all campaigns to work together to stop Harney's neoliberal drive to privatise the health service. As a first step to save our health service Mary Harney should be forced to resign."

Signed: Pat Fitzgerald, Peadar O'Grady, Health Action Group, People before Profit Alliance, www.people-before-profit.org

INTO

Delegates at the INTO conference took their executive by surprise when they voted to end cooperation with Whole School Evaluations in protest at the Minister for Education's decision to publish the inspectors' reports.

Speakers pointed out that this was an unfair way to treat workers who, though not named, would be easily identifiable in the written reports.

Anger was expressed that teachers would become the focus of reports while lack of facilities could be ignored. Many teachers expressed the fear that publication would be the precursor of league tables.

Despite the Minister's claims of substantial extra funding for primary education, teacher after teacher took to the podium to decry the lack of movement on class

size (Ireland has one of the largest class sizes in the OECD), the continued neglect of many children with special needs and the problems in the disadvantaged sector caused by continued lack of adequate resourcing.

On the new partnership talks, the executive was directed to deliver substantial increases with no productivity concessions attached.

The Campaign for Commercialism Free Education, set up before Christmas and involving teachers from the three teacher unions, circulated literature at the conference and its motion—condemning the growing commercialism of education and directing the INTO to draw up guidelines for members on the promotion of commercial products in schools—was passed just before the close of conference.

CPSU

By Denis Redfern
CPSU Activist Group

Delegates at the CPSU conference voted overwhelmingly to reject the unions Annual Report.

This document drawn up by the General Secretary of the union, lacked any opposition to the changes that have been taking place in the civil service. Most important among the changes which have been introduced is the linking of yearly wage increments and promotions to the new employee assessment system, called PMDS (performance management & development system).

Each civil service member's performance will now be graded in 1 of 5 boxes. Each box will have pre-set percentages of how many people in a department/organisation

will go into each box. Now up to 1 in 10 can be denied their yearly wage increase and up to 3 in 10 can be denied the right to go forward for promotion. This contradicts the stated 'aim' of assessing workers individually and fairly.

This new rating system is a massive cost saving exercise, reducing wage increment and promotion costs rather than eliminating underperformance as its proponents claim. The empowerment given to local management under the changes could be open to abuse and inference. As it stands people will be competing with each other, pushing up productivity with no increase in wages and will lead to performance related pay in the future.

These changes were agreed by a narrow majority of the unions executive, 9-10, last summer. The 9 against

this agreement have campaigned since to let the members have their say. At conference a motion calling for a national membership ballot on PMDS was passed with almost unanimous support (6 delegates, plus 10 executive members opposed it).

However it is clear from the experience of the last year that the union's official magazine and other publications will be used to support the PMDS changes. As they have been used in a partisan way in all the issues facing the union, rather than represent the spectrum of opinions among activists.

Motions also passed which laid down benchmarks for agreeing to any new deal with the government, including, no inability to pay clause for public sector employers and no clause which allows outsourcing.

Protest/Reports/Struggle

email to brid@swp.ie Phone 01 8722682

ARTANE

Stardust picket victory

By Martin O'Sullivan

After Nearly 10 weeks of a picket on the Silver Swan Pub and the Maxol filling station,—which are situated on the former Site of the Stardust—Eamon Buttery the owner of the pub has agreed a settlement with the picketers.

Eamon Buttery agreed to:
 ■ Change the name of the pub. From the Silver Swan to the Artane house.
 ■ Erect a Memorial to the 48 People who died in the fire.

At time of printing the name of the pub has been changed, and the commissioning of a Memorial is at an advanced stage. And the Butterlys will be responsible for all costs associated with the memorial.

This victory is a powerful example of how people power can achieve what often seems impossible. The families of those who died in the Stardust fire have wished for a memorial to their loved ones to be placed on this site for the last 25 years. The Butterlys have always refused to acknowledge the families request for this simple thing until they were faced with the forced closure of there filling sta-

tion and pub.

But this victory is not the end of the campaign. The campaign for a fresh enquiry continues. This will be a much harder fight, as it involves questioning the role of the state, in their failure to prevent the disaster and to investigate it properly.

Despite having no evidence that the fire was caused by arson, the tribunal which investigated it came to the conclusion that the fire was probably caused by arson. This finding was crucial for the Butterlys (who are known Taca members, the Fianna Fail fundraising organisation), being awarded compensation, as the victims of arson. The working class people who were the real victims of the fire had to fight for nearly 8 years before being awarded any such compensation.

The campaign is an extreme example of both how working class people suffer at the hands of the state and business and how they can organise and fight back. Everything that the families of those who died and the survivors have achieved has been through organised struggle. The state and the Butterlys have not conceded a single thing without a fight.

NIC-ICTU

Hain arrival prompts walk-out protest

By Ritchie Browne
 ATGWU

The Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC-ICTU) biennial delegate conference took place in Newry at the end of April.

Peter Hain the direct rule minister for Northern Ireland was due to address the conference.

Upon his arrival Hain was heckled before a large number of delegates walked out of the conference.

They were protesting against the Labour Governments attacks on public service workers pensions, cut-backs in the education and library boards and under funding for the National Health Service.

The walkout was lead by the entire delegations of the ATGWU and NIPSA as well as individual delegates from most of the other Unions.

There was a motion before the conference calling for NIC-ICTU to support the mass non-payment of water charges campaign.

The Executive of NIC-ICTU opposed the motion asking that it be "remitted", a tactic used by the bureaucracy when they don't want to be seen to be opposed outright to something but don't want to support it either.

Delegate after delegate went to the podium and exposed this tactic for what it is.

They argued that the campaign had to be supported and that NIC-ICTU had to show leadership on

the issue, especially as this is a class issue that effects all workers equally, regardless as to what side of the religious/community divide they might be on.

The call from the executive to remit the motion was defeated and support for mass non-payment of water charges was overwhelmingly carried.

INCHICORE

Residents shocked by St Michaels School closure announcement

The announcement by the Christian Brothers that they intend closing St. Michaels School in Inchicore by the end of June, has shocked the local community.

This school should be a model for all national schools in Ireland. It has one of the lowest pupil/teacher ratios with 10 teachers to 67 children and four of the teachers are dedicated to kids with special needs.

Situated near Dublin's inner city there are children

DUBLIN BAY

New alliance to oppose privatisation and environmental destruction

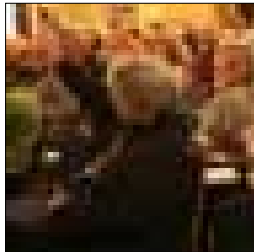
A new alliance of community, environmental and campaign groups based around the greater Dublin Bay region was recently established at a conference organised by the Save our Seafront (SOS) group in Dun Laoghaire.

There were over 100 people and 15 organisations in attendance.

The conference was organized by SOS, following their successful fight last year against plans to privatise the site of Dun Laoghaire baths, which saw thousands of local residents take to the streets in protest.

The conference established the new alliance to counter plans by developers and local authorities to put large-scale private and commercial developments on key sites around the bay because they will restrict public access and damage the coastal environment.

The new alliance wants the seafront around the Dublin Bay region protected and developed as a public and environmental amenity available to all.



The conference also demanded real public participation in the planning and development process and an end to the cosy cartel between developers, local authorities and government.

Richard Boyd Barrett, Chairperson of Save Our Seafront and one of the conference organisers said:

"Over the last few years we have seen a huge growth of resistance by

communities to unsuitable, unwanted, privatised and environmentally damaging development. But most of the time we are on the defensive and fighting these developments on a piece-meal basis. This alliance will allow us to support one another in our individual battles but also to campaign for the protection and development of the bay as a public and environmental amenity that belongs to everyone."

The conference agreed a wide-ranging series of resolutions that would form the basis of their new campaign. They plan a major demonstration this summer to back up their demands. The provisional date set for the protest was Saturday June 17th to coincide with the Bloomsday weekend and the celebration of Dublin Bay by James Joyce and other Irish writers.

For more information contact Richard Boyd Barrett 087-6329511 or Nicola Sarratt 087-4170592

DUN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN

Council treats single mum with contempt after home fire

Tracy O' Brien, a pregnant single mother who suffers from a stress disorder has been sleeping on the same mattress as her 12-year old son for over six months in a tiny single bedroom council house after a fire damaged her home.

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Co Council has refused even to let Tracy back into her home to access clothes and other belongings since it was boarded up following the fire.

The fire broke out in Tracy's home in October last year when the electricity distribution box burst spontaneously into flame doing substantial damage to the house and destroying much of Tracy's own furniture, fittings, bed-clothes and cloths. Tracy was in the house at the time with her 12-year old son, Adam.

Tracy is expecting a baby in July and can get no

indication from the council as to when she will be able to move home.

The Council also say Tracy must pay herself to replace all furniture destroyed in the fire even though the fire resulted from a faulty fuse box in house that was built less than a year. This has left Tracy, a single mum with a low income with a major financial problem as the cost of replacing the furniture runs into thousands of euros.

Tracy distraught says: "We are very put out and our life has changed. It's horrible for Adam because we are sharing the same room and he is 12 years old now. There is no room for a cooker; I can only use a chip pan or microwave to cook hot food. I am completely stressed out because of it."

The council say the delay in repairing Tracy's house and moving her back in resulted from a dispute between themselves and the private contractors who built the houses as to who should pay for the repair work.

Richard Boyd Barrett, local SWP rep who was approached by Tracy for help on her predicament said:

"It is utterly disgraceful that Tracy and her son should be left stranded on a mattress for six months and have to suffer a major financial loss because of a fire that resulted from a faulty fuse box. Landlords and local authorities have a responsibility to ensure electrical wiring is not a fire hazard. Tracy's case explains why so many council houses are boarded up for so long while thousands are left frustrated on the housing list. It results from council policy of contracting out maintenance; repair and

building work to private developers instead of employing building workers directly to do the work.

The council should employ enough trades people directly to do maintenance, repair and building work.

This way there would be proper accountability on the standard of work being done. It would eliminate the sort of needless delays and buck-passing that has left Tracy and her son stranded.

It could start to deliver council homes to some of the thousands rotting on the housing list. It would also be cheaper for the taxpayer and prevent the sort of abuse of workers rights seen in the Ballybrack three, GAMA and other cases."

For more info: contact Richard Boyd Barrett 087-6329511 or Tracy O' Brien 087-6135223

BALLYMUN

Inquest set-back

Four year old Alex Cuthbert from, Ballymun, was killed on 22 August 2001 after being hit by a dumper truck during building works for the regeneration of the Ballymun area.

In May an inquest into the Alex's death recorded a verdict of accidental death.

Alex's mother, Joan Landy told Socialist Worker she was very disappointed with the inquest.

"After Alex was killed, health and safety had a short improvement. But now it's not much better. The coroner's court has the power to make recommendations but it didn't!"

Joan said they had been told no building work would be carried out in that area at that time.

"The dumper truck was reversing on a narrow path when the tragedy occurred, a dangerous manoeuvre. It should have had someone to guide it safely."

Joan said, "Accidents don't just happen—they are caused. I hate to think it but a tragedy like this could happen again."

"It's disgraceful. We are living on a building site and Ballymun Regeneration and the contractors are not doing enough to make sure of health and safety."

One of the main contractors, PJ Carey, has already been prosecuted and fined €40,000 for a health and safety breach.

TRALEE ANTI WAR

By Sean Moraghan

Members of the Tralee Anti War group protested outside a Fianna Fail event held to commemorate the 1916 rising. The main speaker at the event was cabinet minister Eamonn O'Cuiv. Local Fianna Fail supporters and Fianna TD Tom McEllistrim were confronted by a banner - "Stop the Torture Planes at Shannon". They pretended to have forgotten how to read as they tried to ignore the protest but it was a reminder to the people of Tralee of the role played by the Irish Government in assisting Bush's so-called War on Terror.

The Tralee anti war group also held a showing of Dahr Jammal's film "Fallujah" on the previous night. This film shows how American forces unleashed a brutal display of military power on the men, women and children of Fallujah and battered a whole city into destruction. Most poignant in the film was the pain, plight and confusion of the Iraqi civilians.

Copies of the DVD are available by contacting the Tralee Anti War Group at 086

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

workers 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 we 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**

North water charges break-through:

UNIONS BACK NON-PAYMENT!

By **EAMONN McCANN**

The campaign against water charges in the North received a major boost in April when the trades unions voted to back non-payment.

Delegates to the Northern conference of the ICTU, meeting in Newry, carried a motion calling for support for non-payment as the only means to defeat New Labour's proposed "reforms."

Supporters of the motion, proposed by Fermanagh Trades Union Council, ignored pleas from the platform to remit the proposal. Among major unions supporting the Fermanagh motion were Nipsa and the ATGWU.

Campaigners against the charges must now press to ensure that the move becomes more than a paper pledge. The unions can make a dramatic difference— if they turn words into action and throw their weight behind non-payment.

The vote will should also be used to put pressure on the major Northern parties to get off the fence and back non-payment. All four mainstream parties say they are against New Labour's proposals for charges, privatisation and job losses. But none of them has supported non-payment. In some areas, the party many would have expected to be most sympathetic, Sinn Fein, has intervened to actively oppose the establishment of non-payment groups.

At the ICTU conference, speakers including Kevin Lawrenson of Nipsa, Paul Dale of Fermanagh Trades Council and Eamonn McCann of Derry Trades Council pointed out that a mass refusal to pay is the best means of defeating privatisation and the job losses that would go with it. Water charges imposed on hard-pressed indi-



vidual families are intended to provide a revenue flow for the private company which NI Secretary Peter Hain wants to take over the water and sewerage system.

Water "reform," is a central element in the neo-liberal agenda which also includes the selling off of virtually all public buildings in the North and the wholesale use of Private Finance Initiatives in health, education and infrastructural development.

If New Labour is defeated on water, the confidence of workers and communities to resist privatisation in other areas will be significantly boosted.

Socialist Worker supporters and others will be press-

ing for the creation of a single united non-payment campaign across the North, linking community-based groups with union organisations. At present, there are two campaign groups—Communities Against the Water Tax and the We Won't Pay campaign. Both have done very good work. But it would be a waste of energy and a needless source of confusion to maintain separate campaigns seeking exactly the same ends in a relatively small region.

Unity will depend on all concerned being willing to work together for a common purpose.

Water "reform" is an issue which can bring together Protestant and Catholic communities and the unions. This is one of the key differences between the water charges campaign and the anti-interment rent and rates strike of the 1970s.

And, unlike the poll tax across the water or bin charges in the South, there is a direct link between water charges and the privatisation of a major public sector asset. Community mobilisation is the key to protecting the public sector and saving the 700 jobs which the NIO admits will be lost is privatisation goes ahead.

■ **Defeat the Blair/Browne privatisation agenda!**

■ **No job losses in our water industry!**

■ **For a united mass campaign against water charges!**