



## The revolution in VENEZUELA

Speakers  
**Roland Denis**  
(leader of Bolivarian Revolution & previously a member of Chavez' government)  
**Rory Hearne**  
(Delegate to World Social Forum)

**Tue 11 July Cork**  
8pm Victoria Hotel  
Patrick St Cork

**Wed 12 July Dublin**  
8pm ATOWU Union Hall,  
55 Middle Abbey St, D1

**Thurs 13 July Galway**  
8pm Foster Court Hotel  
Foster St Galway

Organised by the Socialist Workers Party

# END ISRAEL'S ASSAULT ON PALESTINE

## A message from Gaza: 'There is little water or power here ... It is a miserable situation'

"There are F-16 planes and helicopters hovering over me as I speak. There are large numbers of tanks throughout Rafah and Gaza. Fear comes with the night. The sonic booms of Israeli warplanes are terrifying the population in Gaza."

This is what Mohammed Omer, a Palestinian journalist who runs the website Rafah Today, told Socialist Worker from Rafah in the Gaza Strip on Monday of this week.

Israel's siege of Gaza, which follows Palestinians taking an Israeli soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, hostage, has made the life of all Palestinians worse. Israel has used this event to punish the Palestinians collectively and undermine the democratically elected Hamas government.

Israel seized a number of Palestinian MPs and minister last week. There were threats of an even more brutal Israeli incursion into the Gaza Strip as Socialist Worker went to press.

It is an absolute outrage that governments across the world are simply standing by while Israel launches a criminal military assault on the Palestinian territories and deliberately targets the basic infrastructure of the entire civilian population of Gaza. This is a war crime by any definition.

Israel and western governments have exposed the utter hypocrisy of all their talk about wanting to bring democracy to the Middle East in their treatment of the



Gaza woman mourns death of child

Israel takes this campaign to its logical conclusion with a wholesale military punishment of the population in Gaza and an actual coup against Palestinian government.

The fact that an Israeli soldier is held hostage is no excuse for this barbarity. There are 9000 Palestinian hostages in Israeli jails, arrested arbitrarily and held indefinitely without trial. This includes 300 children and 1000 women. Where is the International outcry about this? Western silence on this is nothing more than hypocrisy and crude anti-Arab racism.

Irish Foreign Minister, Dermot Ahern's response in calling for "restraint on both sides" is the most pathetic example of sitting on the fence imaginable. The government must get off the fence and name the Israeli attack on Gaza for the war crime that it is. They should call immediately for the European Union to suspend the Euro-Mediterranean Association agreement, which confers EU trade privileges on Israel.

Just as was the case with Apartheid South Africa we appeal to the Irish public to act against this injustice where our government fails. We need people on the streets expressing their revulsion at what Israel is doing and joining the boycott of all Israeli goods."

**Turn to page 5 for more Israel's assault on Gaza**

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## STOP THE WAR

**National Demonstration Dublin Saturday September 23rd**

**1.00pm Garden of Remembrance Parnell Square**

● US TROOPS OUT OF SHANNON ● STOP THE TORTURE FLIGHTS

● END THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ ● NO ATTACKS ON IRAN

Called by Irish Anti War Movement, PANA, NGO Peace Alliance

Turn to page 11 for important anti war meetings and protests over the summer

## QUOTES OF THE FORTNIGHT

**"Until the day I die, I will remember the rasping sound of a knife being pulled from a leather scabbard and the impression that leaves on one's mind"**

Attempting to raise the pre election law and order temperature Enda Kenny recalls a brutal mugging but newspapers later reveal that the incident occurred while the FG leader was in Kenya twelve years ago

**"I had to hold him at bay...with a poker"**

Not to be outdone Michael McDowell shares his heroics with the world

**"We're very thankful to the Americans. They paved the way for us in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Lebanon too- our influence has increased due to the Syrians leaving. They've pushed up the oil price. Thank you!"**

Aliakbar Rezaei, senior Iranian diplomat, outlines how US intervention has strengthened Iranian influence

**"I saw soldiers in uniform on the road, in a public place...it is a breach of our Constitution that these troops are allowed to pass through Shannon in the first place but to see them in fatigues on the streets of Ennis is a disgrace"**

Conor Cregan who placed six US soldiers under citizens arrest

**"Consumers appear to be underestimating the extent to which interest rates are likely to rise in this cycle. There is no doubt that a sizable amount of individuals and households are likely to start feeling the pinch sooner rather than later"**

Alan McQuaid Boxham stockbrokers respond to new figures on borrowing trend in the Irish economy

**"The findings of the survey are fundamentally wrong and were written by people who have no understanding of the health service in Ireland"**

A spokeswoman for Mary Harney responds to a survey of the quality of European health services published at the end of June that placed Ireland second from the bottom

**"The health service in Ireland is seriously bad and it is something we should be seriously ashamed of"**

Retired cardiac surgeon Maurice Nelligan who knows a thing or two about the health service

**"What we did was fully authorised under the law. And the disclosure of this program is disgraceful."**

President George W. Bush criticises reporters for exposing a secret CIA-US Treasury program used to track millions of financial records in search of terrorist suspects

**"When you're in Washington to get money for AIDS orphans, the answer is often, 'We're at war right now.' Our priorities are quite strange."**

Angelina Jolie, goodwill ambassador for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

**"It's the most simple argument on God's earth—you only get what you're worth, and that's the way it is across the board."**

RTE's Gerry Ryan on his €488,000 basic salary. His friend Pat Kenny who makes €900,000 is off for the next two months so presumably was unavailable for comment.

# Alliance says 'Dublin Bay is not for sale'

The newly established greater Dublin Bay Alliance was publicly launched June 18th at 1pm at the Martello Tower in Sandymount and brought together residents and environmental groups from around Dublin Bay.

Groups campaigning against unwanted developments and privatisation on the seaford from Greystones, Bray, Sandycove, Dun Laoghaire, Booterstown, Merrion, Sandymount, Ringsend, Clontarf and Portrane, as well as organisations like Save Our Seaford and Coastwatch have joined the new alliance.

Sandymount Strand and Poolbeg Peninsula are currently under threat from plans by Fabrizio (formerly Zoe Developments) for a major private high-rise on the embankment near Sean Moore Park and plans for a mass burn incinerator on the peninsula.

The slogan of the new Greater Dublin Bay Alliance is, "Dublin Bay is NOT for Sale."

The alliance has a manifesto for Dublin Bay, which seeks to establish general principles that should govern its protection and any plans for development. The alliance also has specific concerns for a number of key sites around Greater Dublin Bay, which it believes are under threat.

This alliance was inspired by the recent victory of Save Our Seaford in the battle over Dun Laoghaire Baths who were then contacted by a number of other groups concerned with the future of the Bay.

It has also been prompted by the plans of the four Dublin County Council's to establish a Dublin Regional Authority to draw up a "master plan" for the development of the Bay.



Save Our Seaford demonstrators take to the streets in Dun Laoghaire

The alliance fear this new plan is being drawn up by a cabal of Council officials, developers and councillors, with a tokenistic approach to public participation in the process.

Richard Boyd Barrett of Save Our Seaford said:

"We have set up this alliance because we fear there are plans afoot to turn large chunks of public amenity space in the Bay into exclusive areas. Such developments will also damage the coastal and wildlife environment and destroy much of the Bay's unique heritage and character."

We also believe "public consultation" on planning issues as practised by the local authorities is currently a sham. We want to see real public participation from the very start in any plans to develop the Bay or any of its key seaford."

Evelyn Cawley, Vice Chair of

the Greystones Protection and Development Association said:

"We are delighted about the setting up of this new alliance. The Alliance is vitally important as a lobby group to ensure proper planning and development of the coast in the greater Dublin Bay area."

Through the alliance we want to see local residents and concerned groups properly represented on any official body set up to look at the future management of the Bay."

Catherine Cavendish of the Sandymount & Merrion Residents Association commenting on plans for the Fabrizio development said:

"We deplore the granting of Permission by Dublin City Council for a giant development by Zoe/Fabrizia Developments, for a Water's Edge development of sixteen blocks, between six to eight stories high, of shops and

apartments, along the seashore.

With the application now before An Bord Pleanála, there are a number of appeals before the Board which are supported by hundreds of signatures from local residents

The Mayor of Paris was so concerned for the health of his citizens that in 2003, he created an artificial beach along the right bank of the Seine. Dublin the City Council is taking a contrary step by allowing the destruction of the very popular Beach in Sandymount.

This is the kind of development that will destroy Dublin Bay and why the alliance is so important."

For more information/confirmation contact Richard Boyd Barrett (SOS) 087-6329511 / Evelyn Cawley (Greystones Protection & Development Association) 087-6483191

## Hotel bosses band together to hold down wages

By Eddie Condon

Did you ever stay in Ashford Castle? It costs €175 per person sharing. If you wanted to stay in the Master Suite that would cost you €1095 per night.

The people who work there could not afford to stay there either. They have been looking for union recognition for some time.

They have not got it but under new procedures the Labour Court deemed that the workers in Ashford Castle were entitled to pay increases of 17%. It recommended €350 per week for a receptionist, €411 for a night porter and €450 for chefs. They are paid considerably less than this.

Not surprisingly Ashford Castle does not want to pay. They want these workers to

continue to pamper to the needs of the rich on miserly wages. Ashford Castle is a member of the Irish Hotels Federation rejected the Labour Court proposals. They took their fight to the High Court. But understanding that all hotels could be affected by the outcome of the court, the IHF placed a mandatory levy on its member to raise the €75,000 for the High Court

case. Every hotel and guest house in the IHF must pay. The IHF understand class solidarity. An injury to one is an injury to all.

Didn't our unions used to work that way?

Ashford Castle lost its High Court case but we can't be sure that the just demands of its workers are going to be met in the short term.

## Ballymun artist refused housing over gossip

By Kevin Wingfield

Ballymun artist Hugh O'Neill has been told he will not be allowed Council housing in Ballymun for himself and his family.

Hugh has lived in Ballymun since he was a small boy. His partner has lived here all her life. Recently Hugh had an exhibition of his paintings and photographs exhibited in Ballymun's Axis centre.

In 1997 they were living with their three children in Ballymun. Hugh was accused by anti-drugs

vigilantes of dealing. This is something he vehemently denies. Nonetheless the Council evicted the family from their flat (which is now burnt out). Hugh was never charged with dealing by the gardai, so the whole thing was done on the basis of gossip and hearsay.

Having been evicted, the family faced being split up. To avoid this Hugh bought a caravan and took his family to Galway, but the caravan was taken away by the gardai and destroyed.

He suffered a serious assault

which involved his throat being cut—but despite the assailant being known to gardai, they refused to seriously investigate or apprehend the suspect.

Eventually Hugh and his family returned to Ballymun living in emergency housing renting from a private landlord. Ironically they are living in housing built under the Regeneration but owned by landlords and speculators. He has now been told by the Council that he and his family will never be housed in Council housing in the Ballymun area.

The Regeneration was supposed to be a new start for the people of Ballymun, but Ballymun SWP has been approached with cases of women with children, for example, forced to live in overcrowded conditions with parents and refused housing.

Public land is effectively privatised as hotels and private housing developments for speculators and landlords spring up.

If you have a housing issue in the area, contact Ballymun Socialist Workers Party on 086-3074060 email swpballymun@eircom.net

## INSIDE THE SYSTEM

Total personal debt now stands at almost €130 billion, that's about €32,000 for every man woman and child in the country

Privacy International has lodged official complaints with data protection commissioners in 25 EU states including Ireland over the covert monitoring of EU citizens money by the CIA in the name of the war on terror.

PI claims it is clearly illegal under existing legislation and an erosion of civil rights.

Gama, the construction company exposed last year for exploiting immigrant workers, is to get an extra €12 to €15 million on top of the original fixed price contract for its work on the Ennis bypass.

The public were led to believe that design-build-operate contracts would be way more

economic than direct state involvement in projects. Unfortunately for the Irish tax payer that is not the case.

According to latest figures from the Revenue Commissioners, 43 people in 2002 who earned over €1 million paid less than 5% tax on their income.

Meanwhile the Labour Party has just published a document showing that the government introduced 50

stealth taxes since the last election.

A health report from the OECD reconfirmed that Ireland has one of the lowest levels of health spending by government in any developed country. While the OECD average was 8.9% of GDP, in Ireland it is 7.1%

Three property developers who last year offered to pay €40 million to extend the Luas out past their properties in Citywest were hailed as private sector heroes.

However it was revealed in the Sunday Business Post that the granting of €13 million by one of those involved, Harcourt Developments, was conditional on 70 acres of land at Fortunestown Lane being rezoned. The only councillor to vote against it was Mick Murphy of the Socialist Party. All three developers have now benefited from large scale rezonings.

Houses in Dublin are now selling for as much as ten times the price they were ten

years ago

Minister for Health Mary Harney in another heartless move introduced legislation last month in an attempt to limit the state's exposure to Hepatitis C compensation claims. From now on three blood tests will be necessary to substantiate the claim. Prior to this a consultant's report sufficed. All those taking claims will have contracted the disease through contaminated blood products provided through the state health service.

## EDITORIAL

### Government reply to reports of underfunding—more cutbacks!

A report in June by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has confirmed what everyone in Ireland knows. Ireland has one of the worst records in the developed world for the share of national wealth spent on health.

Ireland scored a dismal 26th out of 30 countries for health spending as a share of GDP. Ireland spends 7.1% of GDP on health compared to an EU average of 8.9%.

Ireland has less than 2.9 beds per 1000 people while the EU average is 4.1 beds per 1000 people. This is why our wards are overcrowded and sick patients sit on chairs or lie on trolleys in A&E units waiting for a bed. This has also meant high MRSA infection rates which have predictably failed to reduce following Harney's campaign of handwashing.

With such poor funding it was not surprising that the 2006 Euro Health Consumer Index, also published in June, rated Ireland as being second worst out of 25 EU countries for the quality of care.

Mary Harney and the government have responded to these reports of underfunding and low standards of care by saying that in fact hospitals and nursing homes are spending too much and that spending should be cutback even more!

In June the HSE announced that the downgrading of hospitals in the discredited Hanly report will now be implemented. HSE chief Professor Brendan Drumm said: "The people of Ireland will have to realise that you cannot have a hospital in every town".

In the first week of July the HSE announced cutbacks in surgery in Portlaoise and Tullamore Hospitals. Nursing homes reported that cutbacks in funding for incontinence pads for elderly residents would mean only one pad a day per patient. Pads cost a meagre 70 cent each.

This government has no shame. They are intent on forcing through cutbacks on the public service while subsidising the private hospitals with tax-breaks, hospital land and contracts for public patients through the NTPF. This privatisation policy has been repeatedly shown to offer a more expensive and poorer quality service to public patients while offering non-emergency elite services to the rich.

Tax-breaks for private hospitals must end. The 3000 beds promised by Fianna Fail in the 2002 election should be funded immediately and more beds put in to address the growing population.

We must also back the nurses claim for better pay and conditions to retain nurses and improve standards of care. IMPACT union has behaved disgracefully in allowing official Kevin Callanan to write a letter criticising the nurses pay claim which the employers side then quoted in the Labour Court to resist the claim. A nurses victory should lead to other health workers feeling the confidence to break with rotten partnership deals that have only led to the run down of the public service and the acceleration of privatisation.

### Campaign for unity grows

The ATGWU recently hosted a meeting for anti-coalition left wing groups and individuals.

It was a successful day. Delegates from People Before Profit, the Campaign for New Left, the Socialist Party, the Workers Party and many individual activists and former Labour Party members attended.

There was a large degree of consensus on the vacuum for a real workers alternative to coalition with right wing parties.

Many present want to see a broad slate of candidates who will contest the next general election on an agreed and limited platform, reflecting the social movements in Ireland. And there is no doubt that this is what is required with an opportunity for left unity presenting itself now.

The ATGWU will reconvene the conference in September. The Socialist Workers Party welcomes this initiative and work with all groups and individual to achieve unity of the left that will reflect the anger and potential of the Irish people to bring about the change that is desperately needed in the future.

There is a lot at stake. Old disputes and differences should be set aside to achieve this goal. We have a duty as political activists to build a strong grass roots opposition to Ireland's version of Thatcherism.

## DEVELOPERS PROFIT WHILE HOMELESS SUFFER

# Housing is a right

By Rory Hearne

Ahern's recent outburst against Joe Higgins in the Dail revealed the pressure that the government is on over the housing crisis.

People are seething that property speculators and private interests are allowed to make massive profits while we are left struggling to pay unaffordable mortgages and ever-rising rents.

In the last five years Irish property investors have invested almost €20 billion on property overseas. That money would have built 133,000 social housing units, enough units to immediately eradicate the housing waiting list, which currently stands at 43,684 families, and would ensure adequate numbers of social housing would be available for many years into the future.

These billions in profit have been made from the astronomical increase in house prices and the terrible pay and conditions of workers in the construction industry. Joe Higgins, speaking in the Dail explained: "In March 1996, the average price of a home in Dublin was €82,000. This year, 10 years later, it is €384,000, an increase of €300,000. That's a €30,000 increase per year, the equivalent of the current average industrial wage each year for 10 years."

The neo-liberal policies pursued by successive governments, including FF, the PDs, Fine Gael and the Labour Party that have promoted private property, the building industry and developers through tax breaks and land rezonings while simultaneously abolishing rent controls and slashing the number of social housing units being provided by local authorities.

During the early 1950s, social housing accounted for over 50% of all housing units built. While in the 1960s and 1970s, it still accounted for around 20-25% of total building. However, the privatisation of social housing through the surrender grant in 1985 under the FG/Labour government and further cut-backs in social housing under the Haughey and other Fianna Fail governments left social housing completions accounting for less than 10% of all new building in the early 1990s and under 7% in 2004.

Numerous schemes based on the public-private partnership (PPP) model have been launched since then to provide social and affordable housing such as the Part 5 of the Planning Act 2000 where 40,000 affordable homes were promised, but only 2,000



Average house prices have risen €30,000 a year over the past decade

have been provided. The latest PPP sham is the giving away of local authority estates to private developers who build a small number of social housing units in return for getting development rights to the majority of the (formerly) public land upon which they construct hundreds of very profitable private apartments. In the past decade social housing units have increased by a mere 2,300, while there are at least 140,000 people on the social housing waiting list.

The failure to provide social

housing or rent controls has left tens of thousands of low-income people dependent on the private rented sector. Over 60,000 are now dependent on rent allowance. Private landlords have received €1.63 billion of taxpayers' money in this form of corporate welfare.

But there are alternatives to these policies that pamper the builders, developers and the landlords.

There would be considerable popular support for demands such as:

- An end to the sell off of social housing and PPPs
- rent and profit controls
- the granting of the power of compulsory purchase of land for social housing by local authorities
- the immediate construction of 50,000 social housing units
- proper pay and conditions for construction workers
- "all rights to private property must be subordinate to the public right and welfare" (from the Democratic Programme of the First Dail).

### OUT NOW NEW LEFT JOURNAL

In the Summer 2006 issue:-

**Fortress Ireland: after the Afghan hunger strike/Bolivia, Venezuela and the Revolt in Latin America/Behind the veil of lies: Iran/Islamophobia: the new racism/Health and the neoliberal agenda/Politics, the movement and the Left: France & Germany/Immigrant rights in US /The legacy of Michael Davitt/Nuclear Power and more**

We hope, in the pages of New Left Journal, to capture some of the anger and resistance against corporate capitalism—across the globe and in Ireland.

We want to help expose what neoliberal Ireland is doing to our services, our education, our workplaces, our health and quality of life, to our cities and natural resources, and how their interests are enthusiastically represented by the mainstream political parties.

NLJ seeks to develop a radical alternative view to neoliberal economics and

privatisation—something that the traditional left is sorely lacking—and challenge the right-wing consensus in Ireland.

Such an alternative will only take shape if all voices for socialist change are heard so we will be including representatives of different campaigns and political traditions.

In this way, we hope that New Left Journal may become a genuine forum of the anti-war movement, of anti-racism and the battles against the neoliberal agenda in Ireland.



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## COMMENT

Eamonn McCann

## How New Labour fuels sectarianism

Peter Hain's botched attempt to rig the Parades Commission sums up the way New Labour sees the North, and the extent to which British policy fuels sectarianism.

The commission was established almost a decade ago, following widespread mayhem sparked by the Orange Order's insistence on marching down the Garvaghy Road in Portadown, and the RUC action in forcing the march through. Yet last year, Hain appointed two Portadown Orangemen to the six-member body.

Under law, the commission has to be "balanced" and representative of Northern society as a whole. When the time came to appoint a commission to take over in 2006, Hain had letters sent to "community leaders" asking them to encourage applications.

But, astonishingly, the only organisations in the whole of the North to receive the "community" letters were the Orange Order, the Apprentice Boys and the Royal Black Institution. As one member of the Garvaghy Road Residents' Coalition remarked, "If this wasn't serious it would be totally hilarious. Hardly anybody around here believed it when the news first came out."

Having rigged the applications in this near-farcical way to produce a fraudulent short-list, Hain was presented by his civil servants with 17 names of suitable candidates—from which he had to choose six. In keeping with crude "equality" provisions, the religious background of each of the candidates was spelt out.

Eleven were Protestants (64 percent), three were Catholics (18 percent) and three were neither (18 percent.) So Hain appointed four Protestants and two Catholics.

A casual observer might think that the candidates who were neither Catholic nor Protestant would be the best qualified to give an objective opinion on whether Orange marches should be allowed to go through contentious areas. But none of the three "Others" was chosen. They didn't fit into the sectarian pattern of politics which Governments have imposed on the North for generations—none more so than New Labour.

What's more, only three of the 11 short-listed Protestants had any association with the Orange Order—the two Portadown members and a person with a strong family connections to the Order. All three were among the four chosen by Hain.

In contrast, only one of the eight non-Orange Protestants made the cut.

Thus, Hain produced a commission which recognised no aspect of the identity of Northern people other than religious background. And then ensured that the Protestant representation was much more Orange than the Protestant community as a whole.

The message to those who were neither Orange nor Green was that they didn't count.

This reflects the thinking behind the Belfast Agreement. Everybody elected to the Assembly has to identify him- or herself as Unionist, Nationalist or Other. Then the principles of "parallel consensus" and "weighted majority" come into play—meaning, in effect, that all important decisions have to have the support of a majority of Unionists and a majority of Nationalists.

Again, Others are simply forgotten about. They don't figure in the rules for reaching agreement.

If you want to have an effect, if you want to wield influence, you must attach yourself to one or other sectarian camp. And when the British feel the need to buy off one or other camp, they don't hesitate to tilt the sectarian balance in a particular direction.

They have been doing it for centuries, and not just in Ireland. They are promoters of sectarianism. It is in the fight against them that sectarianism can be defeated.

## WATER CHARGES:

# Non-payment can help win this time



Turn on the taps of resistance

At every meeting to organise non-payment of water charges, there's a wet blanket waiting to cite Austin Currie.

At some point, the pessimist will pop up: "What about the rent and rates strike, then?"

But a reading of Currie's autobiography shows that the '70s rent and rates strike provides no parallel for a water charges campaign today.

One reason the rent and rates strike keeps coming up is that those who say they are against water charges but won't support non-payment appear to have no strategy of their own to offer as an alternative. So they resort to a scare. The downbeat message is that if you join a campaign of non-payment of water charges, then, like the rent and rates strikers a generation ago, you're likely to be left in the lurch.

They present the Austin experience as a cautionary tale.

The SDLP man was a member of the power-sharing Executive which took office at the beginning of 1974, as Minister for Housing and Local Government and therefore responsible for bringing the rent and rates stoppage to a close. This put him in a painful predicament.

The SDLP had positioned itself at the forefront of the strike in protest against the introduction of internment in August 1971. It argued that withholding rent and rates was a peaceful means of protest with real potential to

force the Government of Brian Faulkner to free the hundreds of citizens it had imprisoned without charge or trial. The party distributed leaflets across the North with an assurance that, "No arrears will be payable" when the action ended.

Thousands of households took the party at its word and put placards in the windows announcing, "Rent spent."

Two and a half years later, with hundreds still behind the Long Kesh wire, the SDLP was in government with the same Brian Faulkner and Austin had been allocated the poisoned chalice. He didn't flinch, but bluntly announced that, "Payment in full will be required. There cannot be an amnesty. Arrears must be paid."

He refers frankly in his book, "All Hell Will Break Loose," (certain parties today might usefully leaf through it) to "the inconsistency of being in government and, at the same time, maintaining support for civil disobedience."

The Payment of Debt Act was deployed to deduct arrears of rent and rates at source. Additionally, a "collection charge" of 25 pence a week (around £2.50 today) was imposed on people on benefits.

The fact that the major party associated with the action turned on those who had followed its lead came as a body blow to the protest. Numbers dwindled. By the time the Loyalist stoppage had put paid to the Executive

in May 1974, fewer than a third of those involved in August 1971 were still holding out. By the summer of '74, the action was effectively over. But many of the most committed and vulnerable were left deep in arrears at the mercy of State debt collectors and had a harrowing time for years afterwards. Bitterness persists to this day.

Don't be lured into a re-run of this experience, opponents of a water charges campaign warn.

But the experience wouldn't, couldn't, be repeated, not just because that was then and this is now, but because the dimensions and dynamics of the operations are entirely different.

In practice, the rent and rates strike was a single-community affair, conducted almost exclusively by tenants of public sector housing. Water charges, in contrast, will affect every household in the land. Of its nature, by necessity, the non-payment campaign can and must be organised in the Fountain as well as the Brandywell. It cannot be won in the Shankill unless it is also won on the Falls. It wouldn't be a re-run of anything, but a movement forward on a different front.

Internment was a sharply divisive issue. Water charges are a factor for unity across the same divide.

Austin Currie estimates that at the height of the '70s campaign, just over 26,000 out of the North's 450,000 households were involved. By the time the Executive took office in January 1974, the number had fallen to 12,000. After the SDLP U-turn, it fell further, plunging to 7,638 by mid-May. The numbers which can be mobilised against water charges will dwarf this.

The rent and rates strike wasn't organised, but was called into being literally overnight in the 24 hours after the internment squads smashed into homes. Today, we are far further forward: with 10 months to go before bills start dropping onto doormats, there's already the skeleton of a non-payment campaign in place.

The Payment of Debt Act has been rescinded. Campaigners would have to be taken to court one by one. If each was defended, the courts would be quickly overwhelmed.

The company which it's intended will have grabbed ownership of our water service by next April will be forbidden by law to cut off the supply to any household.

The people are in pole position on this one.

Every survey shows massive opposition to water charges. In April, the ICTU's Northern conference voted support for non-payment. The conference of the public service union Nipsa then called for "a vigorous and vocal campaign of non-payment." In June, the Transport Union's Irish conference unanimously urged its Northern leadership to "find ways to implement the (non-payment) campaign as a matter of urgency."

It can be done. Let's do it.

## Time to bury the 11 plus exam

By Mark Hewitt

New Labour is playing a dangerous game in bringing about Education Reform in the North.

The training of teachers for the New Curriculum begins at the end of August. The emphasis signifies both the interests of the business class here but also research that shows collaboration amongst pupils and between teachers is much more educational sound than competition.

In other words a lot of good ideas are being sold in the interests of the market. However central to the idea of collaboration is that academic selection – namely the 11+ and the foul Grammar – Secondary

division, stands in the way of this being achieved. If this division is retained, much of the research and support for much needed change goes out the window.

Incredibly Maria Eagle – the Direct Rule Minister in charge of education is using the ban on selection as a bargaining chip to force reluctant Unionists to reconvene the Assembly.

In proposing legislation for the reforms in the new Education Order this bribery is spelt out by the New Labour Minister despite being clear about the damage the 11+ creates:

"The current system produces good results for some young people, but too many children, particularly those from disadvantaged

backgrounds, do not reach their full potential. I am convinced that banning academic selection would be in the best educational interests of young people in NI, and this is reflected in the draft Order.

"However, I have included a provision in this Order that, if local politicians have agreed to restore the Assembly and Executive by the November 24 deadline, then they will have the final decision to implement this part of the Education Order. If they do not reach agreement on an Assembly by then, the ban on academic selection will become law immediately that deadline has expired."

Even the supporters of Grammar schools know the game is up. Sammy Wilson, the DUP Education spokesperson

has stated that supporters of the 11+ will have to rethink their strategy.

This is in response to figures recently released that show most Grammar schools in response to falling role numbers take in all ability levels.

In fact only one Grammar school in the North has taken all A grades which used to be the case for the majority of similar schools in the past – therefore the necessity of maintaining the numbers at the school comes before the weeding out of 'weaker pupils'.

Instead of breeding cynicism towards reforms New Labour should be burying this form of educational apartheid that for generations has labelled the majority of school pupils as failures.

## INTERNATIONAL

# Protests greet Bush's tour of 'old' Europe



Demonstrating in Vienna

By Eoin Martin

Three cheers for the people of Vienna who protested during the recent visits of the hated U.S. President, George W. Bush on June 21st.

The President was touring what he once described as "Old Europe" in an attempt at reconciliation after much of Europe's revulsion over the U.S. led invasion of Iraq. The visit led to widespread riots throughout the Austrian capi-

tal as hundreds of protesters streamed down Vienna's main shopping street. In other parts of the city the Stars and Stripes were burned.

Bush repeatedly condemned 'Old Europe' for not aiding him in his 'War on Terror'. But in the post invasion world when Iraq has turned into a bloody quagmire, the Bush administration has performed an u-turn and is now attempting to bring about a rapprochement.

The protests are significant in that they

show the power and indeed the importance of the people speaking out and making themselves heard.

The protesters showed Bush that the people had not forgotten the invasion and that whatever their governments might say, they were not willing to forgive the '#1 Terrorist'.

The Viennese and Budapest people are still willing to speak out despite the fact that many Western governments ignored them in the run up to the invasion of Iraq.

## Foreign powers are fuelling war in Congo

By Innocent Nkung

The Democratic Republic of Congo is set to hold elections this month. Refugee Innocent Nkung wrote to Tony Blair explaining these are not democratic

As long as the war in the Congo and the plundering of its natural resources continue, we cannot talk of democratic elections.

More than four million people

have been killed in the war that has been raging in the Congo since 1996.

The war is based on Western interests. There are more than 50 foreign companies exploiting minerals in the Congo. Congolese people have not been consulted about any of this.

While people are being killed or forced to leave their homes, these foreign companies are exploiting minerals—protected by security

forces and unaffected by the war.

The war in the Congo receives incalculable support from foreign powers. British companies continue to supply weapons to Congolese rebels and to the Rwandan and Ugandan armies to terrorise the Congo.

The five candidates for the election are all bloodthirsty rebels. They have obtained power by force. They are all responsible for killing Congolese people. They are all involved in the sale of the Congo and its natural resources.

Several European armies will supervise the elections. It is inappropriate that they should intervene in the Congo. It is time for the Congolese people to determine their own destiny.

In the Congo and across Africa, every single human right is abused. People are so poor that they can't buy food and children don't go to school because of the lack of money and jobs. There is insecurity and poor communication networks.

Only the government and their families, who are thieves of Congolese resources, have rights. Those who oppose the regime are detained, ill-treated, tortured, assaulted and often killed.

Real democracy would give Africans the right to make their own choice for their representatives, to control their own lands, to have freedom of expression.

We are struggling for real African representatives who work for their people's interests.



Innocent Nkung

I suggest that the British government stop selling arms to Congo, stop supporting dictators and rebels and stop exploiting Congolese mineral resources.

The war for profit must cease. Only then can there be real peace from which the population can benefit, and democracy will have a chance to develop.

Mr Blair, I am urging you to use your powers for the withdrawal of all the foreign armies and cease to support rebels, dictators and terrorists in the Congo.

We need our freedom, sovereignty, and independence in order to decide for our own future without any interference.

## COMMENT

Raymond Deane

## What Israel's attack on Gaza teaches us

*Destroying the only power source for a trapped and defenceless civilian population is an unprecedented step toward barbarity. It reeks, ironically, of the Warsaw Ghetto. As we flutter our hands about tectonic political changes, we must take pause: in the eyes of history, what is happening in Gaza may come to eclipse them all.*

Virginia Tilley (Counterpunch, 30 June 2006)

Much can be learned from the operation that saw Palestinian militants kill two Israeli soldiers and capture a third on 25th June last, at the cost of two of their own members.

It was a purely military operation that risked no civilian casualties, yet Israel called it 'terrorism'.

Similarly, Gilad Shalit's capture was described by Israel as 'kidnapping', again eliding the military nature of the operation.

Western media have adopted this terminology, thus reiterating their irremediable bias.

No mainstream media outlet mentioned 'the hundreds of Palestinian children held in Israel's dungeons, [or the] thousands held without charge and trial, abducted from their homes in the middle of the night by Israeli occupation forces' (Ali Abunimah).

Israel's subsequent invasion of Gaza proves that its 'withdrawal' from the Strip ten months earlier was a sham, and provides the template for future equally spurious and provisional 'withdrawals' from the West Bank.

The ongoing destruction of civilian infrastructure is a war-crime, but one awaits in vain its condemnation by EU governments, let alone by the fully complicit Bush regime.

Meanwhile, starvation, thirst and disease await over a million Gazans trapped in their miserable homes in the searing summer heat.

The arrest of some 64 Hamas parliamentarians, surely a novelty even by the standard of Israeli outrages, was originally spun as a reprisal.

The revelation that these arrests had been planned several weeks earlier proves that Shalit's capture was a mere pretext for a show of strength designed to destroy the elected Palestinian administration.

While the US mouths its usual platitudes about 'Israel's right to self-defence', other G8 politicians have been goaded into expressing 'concern' and calling for 'restraint' from the rampaging Israelis.

Such weasel words reveal the double standards at work in the western political mindset.

Indeed if the US/EU can starve the Palestinians to punish them for electing the wrong government, why should Israel refrain from kidnapping most of its members?

Horrific though these events may be, it is pointless to pretend that there is anything exceptional in nature—as opposed to scale—about them: this siege is merely an aggravation of Israel's normal posture towards Gaza and the West Bank, one supported by the US, the EU, and the US/EU-backed Arab dictatorships.

'It is as if the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza never occurred', moaned an Irish Times editorial (1st July).

In reality, it never did. Given this criminal situation, the true international community—the people of the world, minus their political 'representatives'—must do everything in their power to bring about the total isolation of the Israeli state until it withdraws from Arab lands and dismantles its illegal walls and colonies.

This means a massive campaign of boycott and divestment, as called for by over 170 Palestinian civil society organisations. Anything less is complicity in genocide.

Raymond Deane is on the National Executive of the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign

## Jailed activists released in Egypt

The Egyptian state has released members of the Kifaya (Enough) movement who were arrested during recent protests in support of rebel judges. The judges had exposed ballot rigging in last November's parliamentary elections.

About 20 activists, including veteran campaigner Kamal Khalil, were released on Wednesday of last week.

However, Youth for Change activists Muhammad al-Sharqawy and Karim al-Shaer were jailed for a further 15 days under emergency laws. Both men were also beaten during the weekly protests outside the high court in Cairo, Egypt's capital.

Over 600 people were jailed after state security police tried to break up pro-democracy protests. Hundreds of members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood were seized during the repression.

One prisoner, blogger Alaa Abdel Fateh, wrote on his release about how solidarity grew between left wing prisoners and young Brotherhood members.

He said, "[The Muslim Brothers] were from this new breed of Islamists who read blogs, watch Al Jazeera, sing popular songs, talk about love and chant 'down with president Mubarak'.

"We got the news that I would be released. All of a sudden they transformed from just Brothers into comrades! They hugged me, they shook my hands, they laughed and they were genuinely happy.

"They felt and expressed solidarity and they gave me the one happy memory that would help me live through this hell."

## FIRST PERSON

# A bad deal for teachers and kids

By Niall Smyth  
(Organising Secretary, Dublin City North Branch, INTO Personal Capacity)

Ireland's education system rates highest in Europe in terms of literacy and numeracy levels.

Yet this is all happening in an education system with one of the worst class size ratios in Europe. Irish government spending on education as a percentage of GDP fell between 1995 and 2005 and is below the EU and OECD averages (OECD Indicators 2005).

Teachers should be commended for achieving so much in spite of the crumbling school building and the clear lack of resources.

But like the health services, the government lay the blame for any shortcomings in education and in the public service in general at the doorstep of workers.

The publication of inspector's reports or Whole School Evaluations is just one in a number of steps to achieve this aim.

Others measures include performance related pay, which is part of the 'small print' in the new pay agreement.

On the 22nd June, the Minister for Education Mary Hanafin pushed ahead with the publication of school reports on the internet.

The Minister said school inspection reports provided a balanced and fair assessment of the work of schools and that there was "unprecedented interest in the release of school inspection reports.

"As a result of looking at the details of the reports generally parents and teachers can question if areas highlighted need to be addressed in their own school."

But these reports will never provide a balanced and fair assessment of the work of schools. Inspectors' reports don't highlight the shortcomings in resources provided to schools.

There is constant talk of childhood obesity, yet since 2002 there has been no Physical Education grant to schools.

Despite being an IT rich country, Irish schools fall far behind in access to computer equipment.

Many schools are forced to collect tokens from Super Valu or Tesco to equip their schools.

Thousands of children receive their education in inadequate accommodation.

In one case in Laytown Co. Meath, the local national school was promised proper accommodation since the last election, and today the children still wait.

The unprecedented interest in the Inspectors' reports has come only from the media, eager to draw up league tables and perpetuate the myth that its all about 'bad teachers'. The fact is reports are already made available in many schools for local parents to see. One Dublin school with 400 children provided parents with a summary of the report and the full report was available to view at the school. However, only one parent asked to see the full report. Hardly unprecedented interest!

The publication of WSE is part of an attempt by the Minister to introduce school 'league tables' by stealth and of the overall commodification of education. The new pay deal "Towards 2016" is packed full of neo-liberal catchphrases. Section 31.27 of the pay deal document deals with VECs and refers to "improved customer service delivery". This sounds more like a phrase reserved for parcel delivery or a call centre rather than a centre of education.

The decision by the INTO leadership not to fight WSE publication has been further compounded by their decision to recommend acceptance of the new pay deal despite a congress motion passed unanimously by members which stated:

*"Congress: (a) demands a substantial rise in salary to compensate for increases in the cost of living and to ensure that teachers receive their fair share of the increased wealth in an expanding economy;... (c) further demands that no productivity concessions be attached to the payment of the increase"*

This new national pay agreement ties teachers in to accepting major change in work practices and co-operation with "government decisions" in order to receive a miserly rise.

This is a bad deal for teachers and like the Inspectors Reports does not serve the interests of teachers or the education system.

There is lots of anger among teachers at present over changes being forced open them by this government and at a union leadership unwilling to take up the fight.

A network of activists distributed leaflets to teachers and schools on the new deal particularly to INTO members.

It is vital that this deal is rejected, not just for teachers but to ensure an education system that meets the needs of all our children and get rid of this system driven by a pro business, neo-liberal agenda.

# Vote No Partners

The Ireland of 2006, after nearly 20 years of social partnership, has booming profits, high productivity, restrained wages, high prices and low levels of workers rights.

We also have low levels of public spending and the highest levels of inequality in Europe. This new partnership agreement will change none of this.

The agreement is to be implemented over 10 years. The trade union leadership has effectively entered into coalition with the most right wing government in the history of the state.

If we decide to elect a new government next year it can say that it is abiding by this agreement and refuse demands for better public services and action against poverty. The independence of the movement has been seriously compromised.

## Pay, Inflation and Growth.

The pay increase on offer barely covers the rate of inflation.

There is a six month pay freeze in the public sector. The deal offers 10% over 27 months given an annualised increase of just over 4%.

Inflation is currently running at 3.9%. Irish price levels are already 22 per cent above the EU average and the recent rise in inflation is substantially above the EU average of 2.2 per cent. Inflation figures do not include the cost of housing.

Figures just published (June 21) show that house prices have risen by 270% in the last decade: 9 times the rate of inflation. The latest inflation figures do not include the recent hike in interest rates.

This deal was to be the payback for workers contribution to the boom. The wage share of national income has fallen from over 70% in the 1980s to about 55% today.

This huge transfer of wealth to employers will continue. There are no limits on profits, rent or dividends from shares in this agreement.

Ireland is one of the most unequal societies in Europe. Social partnership was supposed to protect the low paid. In fact over the period of social partnership the risk of poverty for workers has increased. That's why MANDATE, the shop workers union, has withdrawn for the talks. And they won't be rushing back.

This deal offers the low paid (those on less than €10.25 an hour) an extra ½ % over 27 months. That's less than €2 per week. Massive profits are being made on the backs of the low paid.

Recent figures published by MANDATE show that in the last 10 years wholesale and retail sector profits increased by 338 % while wages went up by 126%.

Cost increasing claims are banned and workers are locked into binding arbitration if a dispute arises as to what is "normal ongoing change".

While there is an inability to pay clause for employers there is no right for workers to claim ability to pay more. The right to local bargaining in profitable companies was a key objective going into the talks. It was not achieved.

## Assault on Public Sector Workers

This deal is a watershed in that public sector workers have to give substantial productivity in exchange for pay increases that barely cover inflation.

The restrictions on public sector workers are increased by this agreement.

Pay increases can be refused if workers do not cooperate with change and modernisation.

While the last agreement included productivity concessions this was in the context of the implementation of benchmarking.

Some groups of workers have had pay increases withheld because of the failure to cooperate with "modernisation".

Almost 30 pages of requirements for different sectors are set out which make it easier to sack public servants and more difficult for them to get promoted. Contracts are to



Fighting outsourcing: Irish Ferries workers and their supporters on the street

be renegotiated and performance management schemes are to be implemented.

Working hours are to change with workers forced to work unsocial hours. All workers are to vote on specific changes which only affect some workers.

This is profoundly undemocratic and removes the right of individual unions to defend their members interests.

And that's not all. Outsourcing and the use of agency workers is given the go ahead where "work can be carried out or services delivered more effectively or efficiently". The work of unionised workers can now be handed over to sectors where they are unorganised. And we thought this agreement as to stop the race to the bottom.

## The Race To The Bottom

This agreement was to stop a repeat of the Irish Ferries dispute where workers were made redundant and replaced by low paid agency workers.

An elaborate procedure has been agreed which is

# to the ship Deal



ts last winter

supposed to stop this but it wont.

The procedure only applies to **Compulsory Redundancies**: The Irish Ferries redundancies were not compulsory.

It does not apply *“to the employment of agency workers, for temporary or recurring business needs, or the use of outsourcing/contracting-out, or other forms of business restructuring”*.

To use the procedure the union must show that it has cooperated with restructuring and there can be no industrial action. If its found that the redundancies are bogus and the employer goes ahead the only sanction is that they will not get the rebate from the state which is normally given to help cover the cost of redundancies. The workers can take unfair dismissals but most of these cases do not result in reinstatement.

Rather than rely on the self—organisation of workers which was evident in the Irish Ferries dispute a bureaucratic procedure has been put in place which will derail workers action and make it impossible to mobilise against “an Irish Ferries on land.”

Much will made of the commitment to more labour inspectors. While they should be welcomed it needs to be noted:

That there are currently more dog wardens than labour inspectors. There have been ongoing demands for years for more.

As seen above the level of labour regulation in Ireland is low. This helps explain why real wages are falling.

There are few new proposals which will improve health, education or child-care. Indeed it is made clear that while capital spending on infrastructure (roads, broadband etc) is fixed at 5% of GNP spending in other areas is to reflect growth in the economy.

The problem with public services is that we spend a lower percentage of our national income than in other countries. The ratio of social spending to national income will not increase as a result of this agreement. There are no new hospital beds in this agreement.

While it makes commitments to reduce class sizes in primary schools the government has already accepted that

## Union activists speak out

**Bernard Lynch (ASTI) Secondary School Teacher**

**“How is it that prices are allowed to rise untrammelled, like gas, electricity, service charges, food costs, transport, housing— and the only thing held back is workers’ pay. This should be called “The national wage restraint deal” not the National Wage Deal.”**

**Jo Tully (INO Vice Chairperson) Nurse in St. James Hospital**

**“There is nothing in this deal for nurses, just a blank cheque to change work practices and to increase our work volume. It does not deal with the core issue of the number of beds in hospitals both in A&E and long term care.”**

**Paddy Healy (President TUI)**

**“This deal is disastrous for education. By 2016 the cuts in teacher/pupil ratio that the government implemented in the 1980’s will still not be restored. The increase in population is outstripping the numbers of additional teachers being provided.”**

**Mick Martin (SIPTU)**

**“The clock is being turned back. We had expectations that by 2006 we could see extensions in pension coverage but the opposite has happened. We need to educate people and make them more aware of what is happening. And follow up with demonstrations and protests. Otherwise the situation will be a miserable old-age for the young people of today.”**

it will not meet the commitment in the Programme For Government to have class sizes of 20 for under 9 year olds. On the day the pay agreement was published it was announced that the number of children in classes over 30 had gone up in the last two years.

While much is being made of the housing provision it should be remembered that the housing provision in the last agreement has not been delivered.

### There Is An Alternative

This agreement endorses key aspects of government policy which is aimed at making Ireland business friendly. The demand for change and flexibility is all over this agreement.

**In the midst of a boom there are no major concession to workers in the shape of more holidays or shorter working hours. It has not been possible for the Irish Nurses Organisation to advance their demand for a 35 hour week in the context of national agreements.**

It endorses Public Private Partnership and will lead to further privatisation. There is no commitment to public ownership. This agreement will not stop the erosion of pension schemes. It should be remembered that during the “Partnership” talks the state announced the privatisation of Aer Lingus and the Bank of Ireland, having announced profits of €1.3 b, said it was dismantling its defined benefit pension scheme.

This agreement imposed further restrictions on workers and unions. While employers are free to continue making super profits workers incomes are restrained for little or no pay back on the social wage.

The leadership of ICTU has failed abysmally in their objectives in going into these talks. This deal must be rejected.

Some say there is no alternative but yet, more than ever, individual unions are coming to the realisation that they cannot advance and defend their members interests in the context of these agreements.

An alternative is possible. The first step in making it possible is to vote no to this deal.

The deal should be sent back and the negotiators told to bring back an improved version that better reflects the contribution that workers have made to the Celtic Tiger.

This briefing was compiled by Eddie Conlon (Former Hon Secretary of the TUI). Contact him at 087 6775468 or contact Des at 087 6229686 or Kieran at 087 2839964. This document is available to workers in a leaflet that can be distributed in your workplace.

# Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolution

By Chris Harman

**T**here is a tendency in the media of both right and left to see everything in Venezuela in terms of one man, Hugo Chavez. In fact more deep seated forces are at work.

Chavez's original election in 1998 is best seen as a delayed repercussion of the great Caracazo uprising of the poor nine years earlier. The forces of the state crushed the rising mercilessly, but it so undermined the legitimacy of the old political establishment that they did not have a candidate capable of winning in 1998.

Chavez, a middle ranking military officer who had tried to overthrow that establishment in an abortive coup in 1992, came in as a symbol of change—but with a very moderate programme of political democratisation backed by a network of similarly disenchanted officers and fragments of the old reformist political parties. He now says that at that time he was attracted to 'third way' ideas.

Real radicalisation did not take place until the reforms (particularly attempts to subject the source of much of the country's wealth, the state oil company PDVSA, to the elected government) prompted the two attempts to overthrow Chavez by the country's capitalist interests and the enormously privileged and arrogant upper middle class—the coup of April 2002 and then the bosses' lockout at the end of that year.

What thwarted the coup was a spontaneous pouring into the city centre of the poor from the shanty towns on the hills that surround Caracas. What thwarted the lockout was the more or less spontaneous determination of workers to keep industry operating, particularly the oil industry, in defiance of their bosses and privileged layers of management and technicians. The country split down the middle along class lines, with weekly rival demonstrations of hundreds of thousands from the poor areas of western Caracas and the rich areas of eastern Caracas, and an atmosphere close to that of civil war.

The Venezuelan ruling class had miscalculated. Even the US, which had initially conspired with it, did not want oil imports threatened as it prepared for war against Iraq. The lockout collapsed, just as the coup had collapsed.

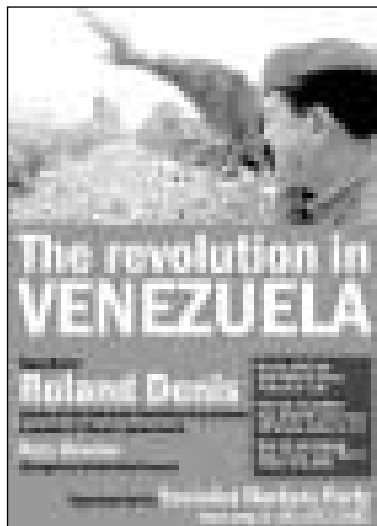
In the aftermath came demands for more reform from the shanty towns and the factories—and Chavez responded with radical talk such as he had not used before. He was pulled to the left by the movement that had grown up to defend him against the right. And he used the huge revenues coming from the rising world price of oil to set up new welfare programmes, known as misiones, operating outside the old state structures.

A third attempt by the Venezuelan elite and the US government to get rid of him, a referendum in the middle of 2004, backfired as people mobilised. It was in response to this mobilisation that Chavez's speeches became explicitly anti-imperialist and then, at the beginning of this year, began to make references to 'socialism of the 21st century'.

But in all this there is an ambiguity. The predominant language of the 'Bolivarian Revolution' is that of things being handed down to the masses from enlightened reformers at the top. Yet these operate within a framework over which they are far from having control. This is recognised by some of those close to Chavez, like the Chilean journalist Marta Harnecker. Speaking in London recently both she and her fellow speaker, the US academic resident



What thwarted the coup was a spontaneous pouring into the city centre of the poor from the shanty towns on the hills that surround Caracas.



With

## Roland Denis

(Leading Venezuelan activist and former member of Chavez Government)

&

## Rory Hearne

(Attended recent World Social Forum in Venezuela)

**Cork:** 11 July 8pm Victoria Hotel, Patrick St, Cork

**Dublin:** 12 July 8pm ATGWU Hall, 55 Middle Abbey St, D1

**Galway:** 13 July 8pm Foster Court Hotel, Foster St, Galway

All Welcome

in Caracas Michael Lebowitz, spoke of the problems of implementing reforms through a civilian state machine still heavily staffed by appointees of the corrupt pre-Chavez political establishment. Such elements are demoralised, but they cannot in any sense be relied on to push ahead with progressive changes.

Harnecker claims that the armed forces are different. But although right wing generals were weeded out of the armed forces after the coup three years ago, there will be many middle ranking officers whose privileged social position and ties with the upper middle classes mean that they hate what is happening. They are a danger for the future and certainly cannot be relied upon to try to make radical reform work even in the short term.

The overall result is that at best the state machine operates half-heartedly to implement reform, and at worst it sabotages it. In some places ministers are able to get it to give way to workers or peasants taking action. In other places, as with a demonstration of bus drivers in the city of Caracaibo in early November, there is repression, even if it is still relatively mild repression.

Meanwhile, the bourgeois opposition may be defeated for the time being but the bourgeoisie itself is very much intact, its wealth untouched by reforms financed out of new oil revenues. Even the two media combines that spearheaded the plots to overthrow Chavez (one owned by a fishing partner of George Bush Sr) continue to operate freely.

When the workers, urban poor and peasants want things from such a bourgeoisie they have to fight for them. So every day there are strikes, occupations of factories that have shut down, demonstrations for higher pay, hunger strikes over union recognition, and small-scale land occupations. A popular

movement that is going forward can win important gains from a state machine that is in disarray and from a bourgeoisie that has lost battles through making disastrous miscalculations. But a revolution cannot go to completion by relying on such a state machine.

Regrettably, many of those who talk loudest about the 'Bolivarian Revolution' urge such a course. Harnecker, for instance, praises Chavez for operating 'within the existing balance of forces' and says that Fidel Castro holds the same view.

That, for her, means leaving most of Venezuelan capitalism intact for the indefinite future, endorsing Chavez's regular meetings with the employers' Fedecamaras organisation, accepting the role of US multinationals in developing oil reserves, and welcoming the plans for business deals between Venezuelan industry and multinationals operating out of other Latin American countries (such plans even involve working with Argentina to build a nuclear power station).

It also means backing him when he relies on those elsewhere in Latin America, like Morales and even Lula, who have made it clear they do not want to break with capitalism.

This is a recipe for stalling the revolutionary process. It is to give the go-ahead to collaboration with capitalism by a state machine designed originally in the interests of capitalism and permeated with its supporters.

At best this would leave a half-baked 'mixed economy' in which the rich remain immensely rich while the workers and the poor live off reforms from the misiones until the world price of oil falls and with it the revenues that pay for the reforms. At worst it would provide the Venezuelan bourgeoisie and US imperialism with the freedom and time to regroup their forces for yet

another attempt to re-establish their total grip on the country.

The 'Bolivarian Revolution' can only go forward by becoming a real revolution—that is by those at the base of society organising themselves in opposition to capital and the state. This does not mean instant insurrection.

But it does mean drawing together the popular forces that have arisen in recent years so as to take action in support of each other regardless of what those at the top might say. And it means taking steps to draw into active involvement in the movement the rank and file of the armed forces.

In these ways a counter-power can be built to the old state and the hold of capital, with the potential to overthrow both.

And no revolutionary process has ever culminated in a lasting revolution without taking this final step. History is marked by the piles of corpses of those who thought it unnecessary. Fortunately there are activists on the ground in Venezuela, like some of those leading the new UNT union, who recognise this.

US imperialism has been taken by surprise by the upsurge of struggle in its own backyard over the last six years. Arrogant proclamations about 'the end of history' prevented it ever expecting such a thing, and its adventure in Iraq leaves it ill equipped to intervene militarily anywhere for the time being. But it is not just going to sit back and watch its influence slide away.

It will be working out ways to organise all the reactionary forces in the continent, as it eventually did successfully when faced with the last waves of popular insurgency in the continent in the 1970s and early 1980s. The rhetoric of Mar del Plata won't stop it doing so. That is why the degree to which talk of revolution turns into real revolution in Venezuela and Bolivia is so important.



## COMMENT

Conor Kennelly.

# Scandals hit Italian football



Juventus: Allegations of match fixing

Italian football has been rocked by a major scandal involving the top clubs, football officials and referees. Four of the top football clubs, Juventus, AC Milan, Fiorentina and Lazio have appeared before a sports tribunal charged with fixing matches.

The charges go right to the heart of Italian football and, indeed, Italian society.

As Paddy Agnew wrote: 'Italian football, like football in any other part of the world, merely reflects the society around it. Hence, football in Italy is currently undergoing a crisis, ranging from financial meltdown to match-fixing and drugs scandals, that reflects the much wider economic, political, cultural and social crisis affecting the country. In that sense, Italian football offers a unique looking glass through which to observe modern Italy.'

The 'beautiful game' has long assumed the role of a secular religion in Italian society. Agnew quotes the great Paolo Rossi, 'In Italy, 90 per cent of people are crazy about football. The other 10 per cent say they are not interested, and then you see that they too like to sneak a look at the sports papers, just to check the results.'

English merchants based in Genoa introduced the game to Italy in the nineteenth century. It wasn't until the fascist dictatorship of Mussolini, however, that the sport acquired a mass following. Mussolini actively encouraged the development of Serie A, the Italian premier division.

For those who claim that sports and politics don't mix, they should bear in mind the following quote from Mussolini: 'Sporting achievements enhance the nation's prestige and they also prepare men for combat in the open field and in that way they testify both to the physical well-being and moral vigour of the people.'

The extreme right is still very much present on the terraces in the form of the Ultras.

Black players are regularly greeted with racist taunts. Neo-Nazi symbols are emblazoned on flags and banners. The odious Paolo Di Canio, an open admirer of Mussolini is something of a folk hero among Lazio fans and greets them with a fascist salute.

There has also been opposition to the far right on the terraces. Venice fans have led anti-war and anti-racist campaigns. Left wing Livorno fans have begun to take back the terraces from the right.

My brother recalls seeing numerous 'Pace' (peace) banners at an Inter Milan vs. Newcastle United match a few years ago at the San Siro though the Inter fans also chanted racist abuse at black United players.

Equally pernicious is the influence of big business in football. Juventus is owned by the Agnelli who also control the Fiat car company. AC Milan was taken over by Silvio Berlusconi in the 1980s.

As readers of Socialist Worker will already know, Berlusconi is the richest man in Italy, owns most of the Italian media and was recently booted out of office as Prime Minister by the Italian electorate for his open support for the Iraq War. The latest corruption scandal is unsurprising given such close links with big business.

The scandal mirrors that of the Tangentopoli scandals of the 1990s that implicated whole sections of the Italian ruling class on corruption charges and links with the Mafia.

Occasionally, and this I think is one of the reasons for the enduring appeal of football, the little guy wins. In 1987, Maradona, (from a poor working-class background in Buenos Aires) single-handedly guided Napoli to their first ever Serie A title. Football has traditionally been dominated by the richer Northern teams and Napoli's win proved that all their wealth could not buy success.

## FILM REVIEW

# The Wind that Shakes the Barley



Ken Loach wants his audience to think about what happens when one country occupies another

By Dave Goughren

Ken Loach's new Palm d'or winning film *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* has received intense criticism in the UK.

It has been described as being anti-British.

There is no doubt that this film makes the British soldiers look bad, but so would any army of occupation.

The parallels between the violence meted out against civilians in Ireland in 1920 and Iraq today are very clear.

The critics who have slated this film don't like the message that Britain has, and does, use violence to maintain its rule of other countries.

But in fact all empires are built on such murderous repression, which in turn breeds resistance.

The film tells the story of a young cork man Damien O'Donovan who joins a flying column after his friend is murdered by the Black and Tans. Damien fights alongside his brother Teddy.

At first Teddy seems to be the more radical of the two.

But later their roles are reversed.

Damien becomes influenced more and more by a socialist called Dan and ultimately the brothers find themselves on opposite sides in the Civil War.

This isn't a nice twinkly shiny Hollywood film.

A lot of Loach's scenes are improvised to make them look and sound more natural, much like the debate scene in *Land and Freedom*.

This gives these scenes a raw energy, which most of us who have engaged in intense debate will be familiar with.

Those who have described the film as being too preachy are missing the point.

It isn't enough for Loach to show what happened in the War of Independence and the Civil War but he also wants to convey why it happened.

He wants his audience to think about what happens when one country occupies another be it Ireland or Iraq.

The growing popularity of revisionist historians such as Niall

Ferguson, who believes in a fairy tale version of Empire, make this film necessary and timely.

This film clearly shows the effects of empire on those who are occupied. Empires are never progressive, whether the occupation is conducted under the British flag or under the American flag.

To a degree the film shows the limits of nationalism.

It explores one of the main reasons for the Civil War, namely that the rich Irish nationalists who backed the resistance weren't willing to continue the war and risk their property, so they accepted the Treaty.

Socialist ideas permeate the film. Damien is influenced by the ideas of James Connolly.

But socialist ideas never really catch hold of the anti-Treaty forces.

This is mainly because there wasn't an independent socialist organisation to argue for socialist ideas.

The question of religion comes up in the film too.

Most of the resistance fighters are Catholics and attend mass reg-

ularly.

It is very obvious that the movement had a strong Catholic ethos.

Most on the left would have had no problem supporting such republicans conducting the War of Independence, which is recognised as a classic struggle against empire. Many of the left though, have been pulled by anti-Islamic sentiment to such an extent that they fail to show support to Muslims living in Britain and Ireland, or those conducting the resistance in Iraq.

The British establishment is trying to rewrite its colonial past in order to justify its present actions in Iraq and its future adventures. The level of repression we see in this film isn't a tenth of what is happening in Iraq. We can see with Damien's character that people don't usually resist naturally, they are usually forced to by difficult circumstances.

For these reasons I think it is important for everyone to see this film.

## Tony Gill: poetry at its rawest

By Joe Moore

Tony Gill was born and grew up along Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin and suffered a horrific death after being set alight by another homeless man on 17th September 2004.

As well as being a poet Tony Gill was also a homeless man when he died at 52 years of age.

A collection of his poems has just been edited and published by his friend and comrade Thomas Crilly.

Tony's work is poetry at its rawest. This is life as experienced by one of the many casualties of the Celtic Tiger. The Ireland "polite society" rave about has no place for people like Tony Gill.

These are the people, along

with Travellers and asylum seekers, who are ignored, harassed, marginalised and shat upon by official Ireland.

All these experiences are graphically illustrated in the poems in this collection.

"Today"

"Today I spoke to no one,  
And nobody spoke to me,  
Am I dead?"

"Dry Our Tears"

"Dry our tears,  
Do you see them,  
In the quietness of the night  
Do you see our tears,  
Three blokes lying together  
Sharing the only we have,  
—our loneliness."

As well as being a poet, Tony was also a political activist. A member of the Workers Party,

Tony was involved in the campaign against the Arms Race, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, anti-sectarianism, and in the various campaigns to save jobs and services for the working class of his native Dublin.

Not only has Thomas Crilly compiled Tony's poems but he also contributes short biographical paragraphs on Tony. As a result the reader gets a full portrait of this tortured victim neo-liberal Ireland.

The utter despair of those forced to live on our streets is best summed up in "I've Seen Her Last Night"

"I've seen her last night,  
Combing her long black hair,  
With a green comb,



The misery of homelessness

She held her finger out,  
Calling me home to rest,  
Death will be my final rest,  
I fear no death, for I've never lived."

"Tony Gill-Street Poet" is edited and published by Thomas Crilly. It should be read by all who oppose this barbaric system we live under. And having read it, then organise to overthrow it.

## PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT ALLIANCE

## DUN LAOGHAIRE

# What are the Council covering up?

The People Before Profit Alliance (PBP) in Dun Laoghaire, has accused Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Co Council of a "cover-up" after the Council's refusal of a Freedom of Information (FOI) request for site plans of the Collen Construction site in Ballybrack, where new Council houses are currently being built.

The FOI request was submitted at the end of May this year, following allegations about possible breaches in health, safety and building standards at the Collen site by building workers involved in the controversial Ballybrack 3 dispute, which led to the jailing of three building workers.

PBP believe the Council's decision to refuse the request to see the plans is evidence they may be deliberately turning a blind eye to law breaking by building firms working on Council contracts.

PBP say the refusal of the FOI follows another recent failure by the Council to investigate a report made by PBP and the trade union BATU on behalf of five building workers who claim they were being falsely and illegally classified as sub-contractors by a building firm working on a Council contract in Blackrock.

Richard Boyd Barrett of People Before Profit said:

"Building workers reported to People Before Profit that they believed Collen Construction were breaking the law on the Ballybrack site because they were using unmarked site entrances and were employing sub-standard building practices in the construction of the foundation walls of the new council houses. This was reported to the Council but they ignored the reports. That is why we were forced to resort to a Freedom of Information request.

The site plans will help establish if Collen were using entrances to the site in a residential area without

permission, which is both an offence and dangerous. They might also help establish the specifications for the construction of the foundation walls which bricklayers said were built in a sub-standard way.

The Council, who are obliged to reply to all FOI requests within 28 days, replied only on the 28th day with a letter sent by courier, which stated that the request was being refused. The delay in replying to the request until the very last minute and the fact that it was sent by courier is in itself extremely odd and suggests something is amiss.

The Council justified its refusal to hand-over the site plans under section 20 (1) (a) and (b) of the FOI Act 1997. This section allows

heads of sections in public bodies to refuse FOI if they relate to the "deliberative processes" of the public body or if giving the information is deemed to be "contrary to the public interest."

It is ridiculous the council could refuse to disclose information to concerned citizens about a public housing development when the information is being sought to establish if there have been breaches of health, safety and building standards. Under no circumstances can giving out this information be construed as "contrary to the public interest." How could it be "contrary to the public interest" to find out if a building firm, being paid taxpayers money, is breaking the law. In fact, it is

directly in the public interest to find out if the law is being broken, particularly when this law is supposed to protect lives and ensure houses are built properly. This decision suggests either plans which should exist do not exist at all or that what has gone on at the site is at variance with the plans. It also suggests the Council may be deliberately ignoring law breaking by Construction Companies working on Council contracts.

The Council say the decision to block the request can be appealed but the appeal will cost €75 and will be decided by the head of department of the person who refused the initial FOI request. This is a sick joke.

The person that will hear the appeal has almost

certainly already been consulted. In fact, she almost certainly made the original decision. There is no way the decision on this FOI request could take that long and be delayed until the last moment unless there were serious discussions going on with the most senior people in the housing department. In fact, it is likely the County manager was also in on the decision to block this information. It also disgraceful that the public should be charged €75 to appeal such a decision, it means many people simply will not be able to afford such an appeal.

The refusal of the FOI on the Collen site, follows another incident in the last two weeks where five building workers reported to PBP and their union, BATU, that Mc Hugh Construction, who are building a group housing scheme for the Council in Blackrock, were falsely classing them as sub-contractors when then they were employed directly by Mc Hugh Construction itself.

Following calls to the Council by BATU official, Denis Farrell and myself to report the matter, the five workers were let go by the contractor. Meanwhile the council has taken no action against the builder despite the fact that he appears clearly to have been breaking the law.

There is a widespread belief across Dun Laoghaire that the Council has an unhealthy relationship with builders and developers and that the profits of these companies come before the public interest. This sort of decision by the Council adds further fuel to those suspicions. There is something rotten here and it needs to be exposed."

ness to waste council resources and taxpayer's money on things that are not needed while we are told there is no money available for things that are genuinely needed. Its ridiculous!

This madness may also well be another result of the council's policy of privatising maintenance and repair work instead of employing tradesmen directly. The Council signs a contract with a private company and then can't vary it, as circumstances require. If the painters were direct employed by the council they could send painters and other tradesmen where they are actually needed.

According to Caroline McGeraghty, "The Council checked the work on my house and said it was grand. At no point have they said any different. Even the contract painters when they arrived to do the work agreed that there was nothing wrong with it and that it did not need to be painted. But they said they had to do it anyway because that was what they had been told to do."

Forcing the Council to back down from this ridiculous policy is a victory for people power and for the residents of River Close, Killiney.

For more info/confirmation contact Richard Boyd Barrett 087-6329511 or Caroline Mc Geraghty 087-6234192

For more information contact Richard Boyd Barrett 087-6329511

## THIS IS COUNCIL MADNESS

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council has insisted on painting the exteriors and railings of council houses in a Killiney estate even where tenants have recently done the work themselves and have said they do not want it re-done.

People Before Profit in Dun Laoghaire publicised the case of one householder, Caroline McGeraghty, and directly contacted the Council on Caroline's behalf. The Council backed down in the face of public exposure and the threat of the protest after the intervention of People Before Profit in Dun Laoghaire.

Caroline Mc Geraghty actually got an agreement with the Council not to paint her house after a Council surveyor checked the work she had done on her house and passed it. The Council then reneged on the agreement saying they will paint the house whether Caroline likes it or not.

When Caroline protested about this, a Council official told her, "If you don't like it you can get out." Caroline was trapped in her house, afraid to leave, in case the painters come and paint her house while she was out.

Richard Boyd Barrett of People Before Profit said:

"This is bureaucracy gone mad. It is typical of the contempt the council show towards council tenants. They seem to think council tenants have no rights what's so ever. It also shows a disgraceful willing-

## PB4P PICNIC TO COUNTER RACISM

By Rory Hearne

People Before Profit are organising a multi-cultural picnic to get local Irish and migrants together and promote mutual understanding and solidarity. It will take place on July 22nd at 2pm in St Kevin's Park just down the road from St Patrick's Cathedral.

Racist myths blame migrants for people losing jobs, housing, access to health claiming they are just here to 'sponge off our system'. The facts suggest otherwise: It is ruthless employers who are firing workers and replacing them with cheaper labour. The Irish Ferries protests showed that when immigrant and Irish workers unite we can be a strong force and can beat the threats to all our jobs and conditions. It should be equal pay and conditions for all.

Asylum seekers only get €19 a week. They are fleeing war and torture. They are not allowed to work here, are separated from their families, and have to wait for up to five years in limbo for their claims to be processed.

There is enough wealth in this country to provide housing, jobs and a decent quality of life for everyone here, local Irish and the 'new' Irish

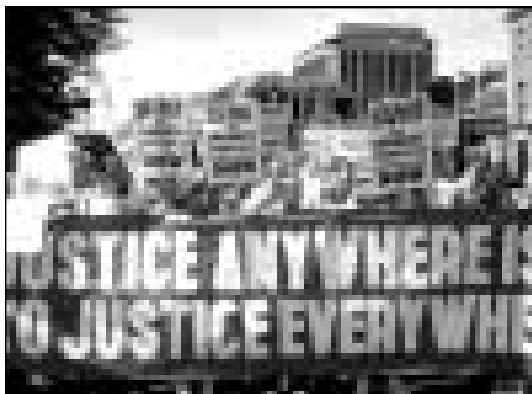


(migrants and asylum seekers). But those running the country at the moment don't want a country for the people. They just want it to be a paradise for big business to make profits.

Come to the free multicultural picnic in St Kevin's Park on July 22nd at 2pm. There will be food from all cultures, lots of games for children and music. Bring a picnic, children's toys, your friends, family and children along. All welcome

St. Kevin's Park is on Camden Row (Off Wexford Street, beside the Village) Contact 086 1523542 for details

## LAWRENCE WHELOCK CAMPAIGN



On June 3rd several hundred people marched to commemorate the death of Laurence Wheelock who died in suspicious circumstances in Garda custody. Laurence was only 20 years old. The Garda in Store Street station claimed he committed suicide by hanging himself with the laces from his shoes. But when Laurence's belongings were returned to his family they included his shoes with the laces still in them. The Wheelock family are calling for a full independent public inquiry into Laurence's death. So far they have not received any reply from the Dept of Justice. Instead the garda who was on duty the night of Laurence's death has been re-instated after a suspension. There is continued harassment of the Wheelock family by the Store St gardai including intimidation and physical attacks on members of the Wheelock family. To contact the campaign phone 0876221218.

## INCINERATOR CAMPAIGN

## Battle in Dublin Bay continues

By Rory Hearne

Residents of Ringsend, Sandymount and Irishtown have held a number of large protests and meetings in recent months against the massive incinerator planned for Dublin Bay.

The incinerator will be used to dispose of a quarter of the municipal waste produced in the Dublin region - up to 600,000 tonnes annually. The incinerator is being developed as a public private partnership between Dublin City Council and Eslam, a Danish company. Eslam will operate the plant for 20 years and make massive profits from the incinerator (paid for by the tax-payer through bin taxes and other stealth taxes). The Public Private Partnership model has been proven with the Sewerage Treatment Plant to be more expensive for the tax-payer and detrimental to the health of people in the area. Serious traffic, health and safety and cost issues relating to the plant remain to be explained by Dublin City

Council and the Government. Dublin City Council have already given €10 million to private consultants for the incinerator.

Most of the local politicians have expressed their opposition to the incinerator, including local PD T.D. Michael McDowell. However, despite this, the incinerator is set to receive planning permission in August. A motion was put to the Dail recently by the Green and Labour parties instructing the Minister for the Environment, Dick Roche, to drop the plans to build the incinerator but Fianna Fail and the PDs voted for the incinerator.

Rather than getting incineration and over development the Poolbeg peninsula should be developed according to what is decided by the people of the area. More appropriate would be a nature park, light-impact community recreation facilities (walks, pitch and putt) and limited housing rather than the proposed massive high rise Fabrizia development.

Protest/Reports/Struggle  
email to [brid@swp.ie](mailto:brid@swp.ie) Phone 01 8722682

## WICKLOW PB4P

## Activists are organising on many fronts

Report compiled by John O'Sullivan, PRO

Following on from a public meeting held in Bray in April the Bray People Before Profit group has a central "core" of 10 - 12 members, meeting at monthly intervals and also informally as specific issues or problems arise.

Activities include leafletting, picketing Council meetings, and organising public meetings and protests.

I think it's fair to say, on behalf of the group, that we focus on campaigns and local issues.

A summary of these campaigns follows.

### PROVISION OF A LOCAL FULL TIME FIRE SERVICE :

This is our highest profile campaign and also probably the one we feel most passionately about.

Over the past number of years, there has been tragic and, we would say, needless loss of life due to fire, particularly in the Oldcourt estate in Bray.

A recent "PrimeTime" programme highlighted the issue nationally and specifically in Bray, with two of our members appearing on the Programme.

Margaret Cahill, who "heads up" the local

campaign has been personally affected by the issue, losing a sister and a nephew in a fire some years ago.

We join Margaret, who is also a member of People Before Profit and her family and friends in a regular picket of Bray Town Council meetings. A public meeting is also organised for July.

### STATUS OF LOUGHLINSTOWN HOSPITAL :

There are two issues here. Firstly, a campaign to upgrade St. Columcille's Hospital, Loughlinstown to Regional Hospital status.

Secondly, the seeking of the provision of full Paediatric A & E facilities at Loughlinstown.

In co-operation with Dun Laoghaire People Before Profit we held a public meeting in Shankill on June 7th. to highlight these issues.

Guest speakers included Madeline Spiers, INO President and Dr. Peadar O'Grady, author of "Why The Irish Health Service Is In Crisis".

We are currently organising petitions in support of a Childrens' A & E for Loughlinstown in Arklow and Wicklow.

We are also involved in opposition to the nature of

"Bray Town Centre" Development and are supporting the Brittas Bay Development Group water scheme.

Carmel McKenna who is a former member of the Labour Party, and was a candidate for that party in local elections has been selected as the People Before Profit candidate for the Wicklow area.

She is highly regarded as a community activist in Bray and North Wicklow.

After a brief association with the Green Party, she is now very much the public face of People Before Profit in Wicklow.

**IRISH ANTI WAR MOVEMENT**

# Stop the War: National Protest Sept 23

The Irish Anti War Movement has announced plans for a major demonstration to Stop the War on Saturday September 23.

September 23 has been designated Day of International Action and major demonstrations will take place across Europe and beyond.

The demonstration in Dublin is jointly called with the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA) and the NGO Peace Alliance. These three bodies were the organisers of the 150,000 strong demonstration on February 15 2003.

The IAWM is highlighting four key slogans:

- US troops out of Shannon;
- Stop the torture flights
- End the Occupation of Iraq and
- No attacks on Iran

The US/UK occupation is not creating democracy but chaos. Recently resistance checkpoints were mounted right outside the Green Zone in Baghdad. Throughout the rest of Iraq the US and its puppet government have lost control to insurgents.

■ The US Embassy in Baghdad sent a cable reporting that embassy guards were unreliable and embassy staff were asking what plans exist for their evacuation.

The Irish Anti War movement points out that the anti war mass protests and demonstrations around the world have had a huge effect.

■ In the US the majority of US citizens now believe the Iraq war was a mistake. Bush's approval rating has slumped to rock bottom.

■ In Britain, the Iraq war has holed Blair's government below the waterline.

■ In Spain and Italy anti war sentiment fuelled and encouraged by the anti war movement has provoked defeat for pro-war governments.

In fact the "Coalition of the Willing" is rapidly

falling apart. Italy is withdrawing all its troops by years end and Japan has recently announced it is to withdraw its 600 troops.

Spain, Ukraine, Netherlands, Nicaragua, the Philippines and Honduras have already pulled out. Only Britain and South Korea now have more than 1,000 troops in Iraq alongside the US.

**Make Shannon an election issue**

With an election certain to be held in the South in the next year, the IAWM has committed to making the use of Shannon by US troops an election issue.

Anti war campaigners are getting geared up for a summer of activity to put Irish government collaboration with the US/UK war firmly on the political agenda.

**EX Abu Ghraib interrogator speaks out**

Joshua Casteel was an interrogator with US forces in Abu Ghraib. He has since become a conscientious objector and works with anti war activists in the USA.

He is touring Ireland for a number of public meetings in late July. He will speak in Dublin, Galway, Cork, Sligo and Belfast in late July.

Check the IAWM website for details of meetings near you.

**National Demonstration in support of Palestinian human rights**

The Irish Anti War Movement and the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign is organising a protest against the Israeli assault on Gaza in Dublin on Saturday 8th July at 2pm at the Central Bank Dame St

**Protest at Jeb Bush visit**

Florida governor Jeb Bush, brother of the US President and one of the cheerleaders of the war—he is a signatory to the Project for a New American Century—guest of honour at a business

**GALWAY ALLIANCE AGAINST WAR**

## Keystone Cops and Political Police



Its official – resistance movements throughout the world take note – red helium-filled biodegradable balloons can down a multi-million dollar warplane, no bother. For verification of this worrying fact all inquiries should be directed to Inspector Tony O'Donnell at the Garda station in Mill Street Galway.

No risks can be taken with this red menace. So the 99 Red Balloons, to be released as part of a protest at the Salthill War Show taking place, had to be destroyed. Up to 30 fearless members of an Garda Síochána arrived to neutralise the red balloons, with one brave officer single-handedly bursting some 97 of them. Surely the President herself must officially recognise this selfless act of bravery. As for the two that got away, they were later watched by a crowd of some 500 peaceniks as they sought the skies for vulnerable warplanes

It is also official – resistance fighters also take heed – helium-filled pink balloons, especially the type being handed out by the Breast Cancer Charity on Salthill promenade that very same day, are harmless. For an explanation, we would humbly refer you again to the learned oracle in Mill St., Galway.

When a member of the Galway Alliance Against War, the organisers of the deadly red balloon event, met the aforementioned inspector on the Friday before their planned sabotage the Gardaí still had an "open

mind" concerning the flying kites. But by the Sunday their minds were very, very closed when they carried out a highly synchronised raid on a Green Party kite flying event miles away from the War Show. Anyone who dared to fly a kite would be arrested unless, of course, you were in Salthill where there were plenty of kites being flown.

On the sea as in the air, people with a dissenting view of the war show were also a danger. Why? Again we would refer all inquiries to the oracle in Mill St. So, amphibious Gardaí surrounded 3 protestors in a boat who all were in possession of contrary views to the war show sponsors and organisers.

In the end, everything went off peacefully and the 4 British war criminals, just back from the killing fields of Iraq, could fly safely through the skies over Galway Bay, as too could the F15 killer jets.

And the spoilsport Green Mayor, Niall Ó Brochain and his deputy Labour councillor Billy Cameron, who preferred to boycott the war show for the deadly peace event, were left with smiles on their faces, while the oracle in Mill St had something that distinctly looked like egg on his. And there may be more eggs to come as the shop owner who tried to supply the red balloons seeks payment from the Gardaí.

As a GAAW spokesperson put it: "The Galway Gardaí are proving to be a peculiar cross between the Keystone Cops and the Political Police."

lunch organised by Meteor on Friday 21 July at 12 noon at the Conrad Hotel, Earlsford Terrace Dublin.

The Stop Bush campaign (Irish Anti War Movement, PANA and the NGO Peace Alliance) have called a protest for that time

outside the hotel

**Rock for Peace gig**

The IAWM is organising an anti war gig for late August. Details will be posted on its website.

**Get involved**

Socialist Worker urges all its supporters and readers to

try to help out in some of these activities.

To get leaflets, posters or to work with others in your area contact IAWM on 087-6187680 or 087-6329511 or visit the website:

[www.irishantiwar.org](http://www.irishantiwar.org); [info@irishantiwar.org](mailto:info@irishantiwar.org)

**DUBLIN PORT DEMONSTRATION**

## 250 protest at British war ship

250 anti war activists attended a protest against the arrival of the British Navy war ship HMS Ocean in Dublin on Thursday June 29th.

The IAWM said that, taken alongside the choice to allow the use of Shannon by the US military, the decision to facilitate the warship is further evidence the Irish government is consciously providing support and legitimacy to US/UK led military aggression in Iraq.

HMS Ocean is the largest war ship in the British Royal Navy and played a leading role in the US/UK led invasion of Iraq. After the HMS Ark Royal, HMS Ocean was the second Royal Navy war ship to be deployed to Iraq in 2003 to participate in the invasion.

In a statement the Irish Anti War Movement said, "Any vessel that participated in the slaughter in Iraq or that is linked to the military machine responsible can only be described as a "terrorist ship." It should not be allowed into an Irish port.

"Yet, why is it when part of the military machine that

has carried out such terrible atrocities in Iraq comes to Ireland, it is welcomed and facilitated by our government. It makes a mockery of the idea that Ireland is neutral. It is a blatant statement of support for US/UK warmongering in Iraq and against Iran."

The HMS Ocean was used as a venue for a "beer tasting," and promotion event while in Dublin. This is not an innocent trading vessel. This is a ship that has been used to export death to Iraq and occupy an entire nation. This was an obscene spectacle of people drinking and toasting on a ship that visited murder and mayhem on innocent men, women and children.

Richard Boyd Barrett, chairperson of the Irish Anti War Movement said "The Irish government should be particularly ashamed of its role in allowing this ship to dock in Ireland and thousands of US troops to flood through Shannon, when countries like Italy and Japan are pulling their troops out of Iraq under public pressure".

**SHELL TO SEA**

## Walk from Rosport to Dublin

A walk across Ireland from Rosport to Dublin organised by Shell to Sea will take place in the first two weeks of August next.

The aim of the walk is to raise remind folk that the Shell to Sea campaign hasn't gone away, it is a publicity stunt, an opportunity to raise awareness and a chance to talk to people across the country in the towns we walk through about the Corrib gas project and the give away of our natural resources.

A contingent of Shell to Sea campaigners will walk from Rosport to Dublin leaving the Shell compound on the 29th July and arriving in the capital on the 12th of August. We plan to bring the 'Shell Out H.Q. trailer' that has been part of our picket outside Shell's Bellanaboy refinery site with us stopping off in towns along the route, to raise awareness, share information and speak with people.

We hope to have a reception in each stop over town (the bigger towns where we will stay overnight), with a short presentation about the campaign and a chance to meet people and answer questions.

On the 12th of August we will arrive in Dublin. We will end the walk at a suitably symbolic site yet to be decided. Since the Dáil will be closed probably at the Shell offices, possibly making a few stops off in

Dublin calling in on Statoil etc.

People are encouraged to join in the walk for a few miles, a few days, a stage or for the whole journey. So far five people plan to walk the whole way to Dublin with many more walking part of it [to sign yourself up for part of the walk contact John Monaghan: 086 312 3439].

29th July (Sat) Rosport-Bellanaboy 7 30th July (Sun) Bellanaboy- Bangor-Bellacorrick 15 31st July (Mon) Bellacorrick- Ballina 20 4 1st Aug. (Tue) Ballina-Foxford- Strade 15 5 2nd Aug. (Wed) Strade- Charlestown 18 6 3rd Aug (Thurs) Charlestown-Carracastle- Ballaghdreen-Frenchpark 18 7 4th Aug. (Fri) DAY OFF 0 8 5th Aug (Sat) Frenchpark- Bellangare-

Tulsk- Strokestown 16 9 6th Aug (Sun) Strokestown-Scramoge- Termonbarry-Longford 14 10 7th Aug (Mon) Longford-Edgeworthstown- Rathowen-Ballinalack- Bunbrosna-Balnafid- Mullingar 27 11 8th Aug (Tue) DAY OFF 0 12 9th Aug (Wed) Mullingar- the down-Coralstown- Kinnegad 11 13 10th Aug (Thurs) Kinnegad-Clonard- Moyally- Enfield-Kilcock 20 14 11th Aug (Fri) Kilcock- Maynooth- Leixlip-Lucan- City Gates 15 15 12th Aug (Sat) City Gates- City Centre 2-3

**STOP THE WAR**  
Demonstrate Saturday 23 September - 1pm  
International Day of Action

US troops out of Shannon  
Stop the torture flights  
End the occupation of Iraq  
No to attacks on Iran

Garden of Remembrance, Parnell Square, Dublin  
Called by Irish Anti War Movement; NGO Peace Alliance; PANA

**IRISH ANTI WAR MOVEMENT**  
**Jeb Bush Go Home**  
Protest at Dublin visit of war monger

Protest outside the Conrad Hotel, Earlsfort Terrace  
Friday 21 July  
12:00 noon

Called by the Stop Bush Campaign: Irish Anti War Movement, the NGO Peace Alliance and the Peace and Neutrality Alliance.  
[info@irishantiwar.org](mailto:info@irishantiwar.org) <http://www.irishantiwar.org>

**IRISH ANTI WAR MOVEMENT**  
Public Meeting  
**US abuse in Iraq**

Picture that shocked the world: Torture and murder at Abu Ghraib

Ex-Abu Ghraib interrogator speaks out  
Joshua Casteel speaks at  
Galway: 23rd July  
Cork: Wed 26th July 8pm Metropole Hotel, Macurtain St.  
Dublin: Thurs 27th July  
Belfast; Derry; Limerick; Sligo; Waterford—see poster for details

To get leaflets, posters or to work with others in your area contact IAWM

on 087-6187680 or 087-6329511 or visit the website: [www.irishantiwar.org](http://www.irishantiwar.org); email: [info@irishantiwar.org](mailto:info@irishantiwar.org)

**WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR**

**Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet.**  
A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

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

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

greater political and economic democracy.

**AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR**  
War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth.

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

**END RACISM AND OPPRESSION**  
We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the

working class.

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

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

**FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH**  
We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Blair government.

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

We want to see an Irish workers republic where all

workers gain.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

**FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**  
To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party.

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

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

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

**Join the Socialists**

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

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# Socialist Worker

# STOP THE RACIST ATTACKS

## LISBURN ACTIVISTS SAY HANDS OFF MY NEIGHBOUR

“There is nothing inevitable about Protestant working class areas being no go areas for immigrants”.

That was the message behind a recent vigil in Lisburn, organised by grass roots community activists from the Old Warren Estate in the city.

The vigil was organised following a spate of attacks against East Europeans in Lisburn.

Socialist Worker spoke to one of the organisers, Fiona McCausland, a community worker who lives in and works in the Old Warren Estate.

**SW: Why did you decide to organise the vigil**

**FM:** It was first of all a protest against the attacks that took place.

We felt it was really important to show people and ourselves that this is not a racist community.

Saying that it is a racist community creates the idea that nothing can be done and that isn't true.

Not one person I spoke to agreed with the attacks that took place.

That doesn't mean that they all welcome migrant workers. However again that can be challenged.

However that is a more complicated process than challenging the attacks.

**SW: Do you think many**



Anti Racist vigil organised in Lisburn in response to racist attacks on immigrants in the area.

**people hold racist views about immigrants?**

**FM:** A lot of people do to some degree have ideas that migrants are taking jobs or taking houses or lowering wages.

Government propaganda creates this.

When I was younger single

mothers were responsible for everything—now its immigrants.

So the politicians say these things, blaming immigrants for everything and then when people in deprived working class communities lash out the politicians wring their hands and tut tut and

say “what is wrong with those people?”

**SW: The vigil was called “Migrant Rights are Human Rights”. Was there a reason for that?**

**FM:** As awful as the attacks are, they are not the worst aspect of

racism against migrant workers.

It is the daily exploitation, the low wages, the rubbish jobs, the 12 people living in a tiny house, the lack of access to services.

The local community has to support a fight against these things or else migrants and locals will be pitted against each other.

Who benefits if a local person on low wages is sacked so that a migrant can be paid even less? Neither. That's what the real fight is about.

These things can only be solved collectively. They can only be solved if we question where racism is coming from.

Patricia Lewsley said after the attacks that she didn't want to try to understand racism. I don't agree.

I want to understand racism. I need to understand racism. I want to challenge racism.

**SW: Do you think the vigil succeeded in doing this**

**FM:** Absolutely. Everyone was on a real high. Loads of people turned up. Not just from Old Warren but from the “Catholic estates”.

They were all ages of people. The fact that there were so many young people was also very positive. People felt really proud to be challenging racism.

That's the key—to build a pride in being against racism and actually welcoming migrant workers into our area. This is a start.