

Socialist Worker

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STOP THE WAR

**National Demonstration
Dublin Saturday
September 23rd
1.00pm Garden of Remembrance
Parnell Square**

- IMMEDIATE
CEASEFIRE IN
LEBANON
- 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

STOP ISRAEL'S WAR ON LEBANON AND PALESTINE SOLIDARITY WITH THE RESISTANCE NO WESTERN INTERVENTION



INSIDE

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news & analysis
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on Shell to Sea**



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Climate Change**

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By Richard Boyd Barrett

With the murderous Israeli assaults on Gaza and Lebanon over the last number of weeks, the veil has finally slipped from US foreign policy in the Middle East and that of its closest ally in the region.

Israel has slaughtered over 1,000 mostly innocent civilians and forced well over half a million to flee their homes in terror.

Israel's assault on Gaza and Lebanon has nothing whatsoever to do with the capture of three of their soldiers

Israel's decision to collectively punish the entire Palestinian population for electing Hamas was encouraged by the US, UK and EU who refused to recognise the Palestinian government and removed all aid from them knowing this would inflict desperate suffering of the already impoverished and suffering Palestinians.

In the attempt to blame Hezbollah for the current conflict in, what is forgotten is that Hezbollah only came into existence in response to the murderous invasion and occupation of Lebanon from 1982 until 2000. It is also not mentioned that Israel holds Lebanese prisoners that Hezbollah have asked to be released and had warned they would capture Israeli soldiers for the purpose of prisoner exchange if Israel refused.

Israel has exchanged prisoners with both Hezbollah and the Palestinians in the past. So the claim that the hostage taking or Hezbollah's incursion into Israel justified this devastating attack on civilians and civilian infrastructure just does not stand up.

In reality, just like Weapons of Mass destruction in Iraq, the hostages issue is a pretext for a war that Israel and its backers in the Bush and Blair administrations had planned for some time before.

Direct US support for the atrocities being committed by Israel is confirmed by the US rushing an emergency shipment of bombs to Israel to help bolster up the assault.

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QUOTES OF THE FORTNIGHT

"In this present conflict it is Hizbollah and its allies who are the aggressors and the terrorist actions of Hizbollah and those countries which sponsor its activities are to be unreservedly condemned"

Irish Catholic Bishops Commission for Justice and Social Affairs statement on Israel and Lebanon July 06

"There is a huge gap between the declared aims of the war and Israel's actual military operations. What is the connection between the declared aims of this war and the destruction of Beirut? How are the declared aims of the war served by the demolition of a baby-food plant? ...We are convinced that this war mainly serves the interests of American policy in the Middle East...We refuse to allow our name to be used in bringing disaster to another civilian population"

Statement from the Residents of the Galilee and the Valleys, Arabs and Jews, against the war

"Are we children of a lesser God? Is an Israeli tear drop worth more than a drop of Lebanese blood?"

FOUAD SINIORA, Lebanese Prime Minister, as death and destruction rise within his country's borders

"The Arab leaders are traitors who work for the Americans and the Israelis.... [Hizbollah leader] Hassan Nasrallah represents Arab and Islamic dignity."

An Egyptian mechanic expressing the disillusionment of many in the Arab world with the stance of their governments on Israeli attacks

"A multinational force sent to the Lebanon will be seen much as the US and Britain in Iraq. They will be fought as a new

detachment of crusaders"

PATRICK COCKBURN, Middle East correspondent for the Independent

"We are delighted that the conscience of the community—12 people selected off the streets of Dublin—have spoken unanimously"

CIARAN O'REILLY, of Pitstop Ploughshares

"Lopez Obrador, hold on, the people are rising up,"

The 100,000 protestors who joined Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on the streets of Mexico to challenge the outcome of the recent Mexican elections

"Hope over fear. Liberty over oppression ... Let there be no doubt—today Iraq is a democracy."

NOURI AL-MALIKI, Iraqi Prime Minister, addressing U.S. Congress, outlines his country's political and social progress since 2003

"Is he living in Iraq?"

DEBBIE WASSERMAN-SCHULTZ, Democratic Representative, Florida, on al-Maliki's depiction of Iraq and his failure to focus on the country's escalating violence and resistance

"We decided to buy property in Crawford to use until George's resignation or impeachment, which we all hope is soon for the sake of the world."

CINDY SHEEHAN anti-war activist on purchasing property in Crawford, Texas beside the Bush ranch

"US president George W. Bush claims that he has a connection with God every day, but, in fact, he has a connection with the devil because no other country has put humanity in danger like the United States"

HUGO CHAVEZ

Taxpayers to pay for gov't inaction on climate change

By Rory Hearne

The EPA estimates that Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions from 2008-2012 will rise to the double acceptable levels as stipulated by the Kyoto Protocol.

The seven million tons of excess pollution a year will have to be paid for by the government purchasing emissions permits at a cost of about €105 million a year, or €2 million a week.

The Government has decided to buy its way out of the crisis by purchasing these credits for emission internationally. Irish Friends of the Earth director Oisín Coghlan has called the Government's climate pollution plan 'the ultimate stealth tax.'

Even the Irish Times said the government's climate strategy 'is off the rails.'

Explaining how government inaction will cost the consumer and the taxpayer, Coghlan said: 'this is the ultimate stealth tax.'

The government has replaced the polluter-pays principle with the public-pays principle.

On the one hand industry will get their pollution permits for free but raise consumer prices to reflect their value.

On the other hand the government will use taxpayers' money to buy permits for the rest of our Kyoto overshoot. It's a double whammy for the average household.

'Friends of the Earth is calling on the government to replace the current stealth tax with clear carbon pricing across the whole economy.'

'There's still time to make industry pay its fair share for pollution permits.'

The problem lies in the fact that businesses are not forced to include environmental costs into their operation costs.

They don't pay for the CO2 they are producing that is destroying the Ozone Layer and causing global warming.

Furthermore, the government and local authorities' pursuit of neoliberal policies has meant environmental concerns have been ditched in favour of profits for the private

And the glaciers melt away...



Top: Alaska's Glacier Bay National Park in 1941 shows the glacier 2,000 feet thick, Above: By 2004 shows changes to Riggs Glacier in Muir Inlet and the growth of vegetation where there was none in 1941.

sector in planning, transport and energy production.

For example, road transport created nearly 12 million tonnes of CO2 emissions in 2004 and emissions from road transport rose by 144 per cent between 1990 and 2004.

As the Irish times noted: 'It has also been aggravated by urban sprawl and long-distance commuting - a trend encouraged by the Government's laissez-faire planning policies.'

The big builders and developers are driving the agenda not the needs of the environ-

ment and the future of the planet.

And now we, the taxpayers will be bailing big business out as the government forces us to pay for carbon credits.

We could meet our Kyoto targets if proper public transport infrastructure was in place, energy efficiency was put in place in all sectors, and the ESB developed alternative energies: wind, wave and solar.

However the ESB is restricted from developing such energies by EU rules and government privatisation

plans, leaving the development of renewables up to the private sector.

They are often not prepared to make the investment because of the lack of sufficient profit.

An international day of action against Climate change takes place in November.

We should be on the streets of Dublin then too demanding publicly funded alternative energy and a world organised according to the needs of the planet and environment not the profits of the private sector.

INSIDE THE SYSTEM

☠ Dublin has fewer neurosurgeons today than 28 years ago despite a huge increase in population

☠ A study of the asylum process over the last six years has revealed that 60% of asylum seekers who appeal the initial rejection of their application are subsequently granted refugee status. This is a clear sign that the process is unfair and geared to fail people rather than hear their case in a fair and understanding way.

In the last five years, Ireland received just 2% of the two million or so asylum applications in Europe.

☠ Tony Blair was in Pebble Beach, California at the end of last month to speak at a conference organised by his good friend Rupert Murdoch.

According to the local press the conference's content wasn't shared with the outside world but it is known they talked about the future of the world generally—everything from geopolitics to technology to the Middle East

☠ A survey of wages, allowances and expenses for city and county councillors (remember councillors are not fulltime politicians) has revealed that in 2005 average earnings per councillor stood at €29,550—almost the average industrial wage. Many made much more than this—the highest was €83,000

☠ According to the Polish embassy up to 600 Polish people are homeless in Dublin

☠ The full environmental cost of the Israeli assault on Lebanon won't be clear for some months but already the bombing of power stations has led to at least 10,000 tons of heavy fuel oil leaking into the sea. Another 15,000 tons are expected to seep into the Mediterranean over the coming days.

☠ While 43,000 people are currently on local authority waiting lists, just 5% of houses completed in the first three months of this year were for local authority tenants.

☠ A recent police inquiry into the assault of Fu Xiancai—an activist for the rights of people displaced by the Three Gorges Dam project (up to one million, most of whom received no compensation)—concluded he must have broken his own

neck! Fu was attacked when he left a police station following an interrogation after local police chiefs became incensed by an interview he gave to German TV. Human Rights groups have expressed concern

☠ Recently released minutes from Armour Pharmaceuticals meetings reveal that the company knew they were supplying infected blood products to Irish haemophiliacs in the 1980s. 91 out of the 100 Irish haemophiliacs who contracted HIV have died. 220 others were infected with Hepatitis C. Unbelievably the Irish government has so far indicated that it will not take any action against Armour.

☠ €400 a head this year in the Fianna Fail hospitality tent at the Galway races.

EDITORIAL

Statement on the Lebanon war

The SWP and various international socialist groups have issued a statement on how the left should respond to the crisis in Lebanon.—Monday 31 July 2006

1 Israel's war in Lebanon is the latest stage in the imperialist offensive mounted by the United States and its allies since 11 September 2001. The conquest of Iraq was intended to unleash a process of "regime change" that would remove the obstacles to US domination of the Middle East. Instead, thanks to the resistance in Iraq, the Pentagon finds itself bogged down in a guerrilla war that it cannot win.

The Bush administration has therefore set itself the goal of removing the Islamic Republican regime in Iran, whose influence in Iraq has grown since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. This would reverse the blow to US interests in the Middle East struck by the Iranian Revolution of 1978-9. Israel's offensive against Hizbollah therefore offers Washington an opportunity to eliminate a powerful anti-imperialist force that has close links with Iran. The complicity of George W Bush and his closest accomplice, Tony Blair, in this war of aggression is shown by the role that the US and Britain have played in blocking the call by the overwhelming majority in the United Nations for an immediate ceasefire.

2 International diplomacy has centred on this call and on the introduction into Lebanon of a multinational "peacekeeping" force to separate the two sides. The latter proposal is very dangerous. Bush and Olmert initially hoped that a multinational force would consolidate Israel's defeat of Hizbollah. But the stubborn and effective resistance mounted by Hizbollah has made outright military victory for Israel a distant prospect indeed.

In these circumstances, the US and Israel are pressing for a multinational force, perhaps organized by Nato or the European Union, to continue the war against Hizbollah that they are failing to win. Such a force would not be "peacekeepers" but another Western army of occupation alongside those in Iraq and Afghanistan. It must be one of the most urgent tasks of the international radical left to oppose this multinational force. This is especially important in Europe, where several governments, especially the centre-left coalition in Italy, are already negotiating over the basis of such a force.

3 We oppose Israel's war against Lebanon, out of solidarity with the Lebanese people but also because we are against Bush's planned attack on Iran. Some on the left combine a similar position with condemnation of Hizbollah for having attacked and captured Israeli soldiers. We strongly disagree with this stance.

As revolutionary socialists we have many ideological differences with Hizbollah, which is an Islamist party. But Hizbollah developed into a national liberation movement with deep roots in the poorest and most oppressed sections of Lebanese society thanks to the successful guerrilla campaign it mounted against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon during the 1980s and 1990s.

Moreover, Hizbollah initiated its latest action partly to help relieve the Palestinians of Gaza, who have been suffering a particularly brutal Israeli siege. Therefore we are happy to join the Arab masses in expressing our solidarity with the fighters of Hizbollah and our hope is that they succeed in defeating the Israeli assault on Lebanon.

4 As socialists and internationalists we see our main responsibility as rallying mass opposition in our own countries to this war. Around the world here have already been a substantial number of protest actions against Israel's battering of Lebanon. More and bigger mobilizations will be needed in coming weeks if the bombardment continues. We pledge ourselves to building the widest possible movement against this war.

The basis of this movement must be the unity of all those who oppose the Israeli offensive, irrespective of the many political disagreements that may exist among them about the Middle East and about other issues. This movement must be closely linked to the continuing international campaign against the "war on terrorism" and in particular against the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, a campaign whose capacity for mass mobilization has demonstrated the importance of working on the basis of the broadest possible unity.

5 Israel's bombardment of Lebanon starkly illustrates the brutality of imperialism and the suffering it daily inflicts on the world. But, like the occupation of Iraq, it also shows that the US and its allies and clients are not omnipotent - they can be defeated. The Lebanese war can advance Washington's offensive in the region, but it can equally mark a victory for the forces resisting imperialist domination of the Middle East. The internationalist and radical left must throw their weight into the balance to help secure a defeat for imperialism that can weaken the global tyranny of capital.

International Socialist Organization (Australia)
Socialist Workers Party (Britain)
Workers Democracy (Cyprus)
Internationale Socialister (Denmark)
Linksruck (Germany)
Sosialistiko Ergatiko Komma (Greece)
Socialist Workers Party (Ireland)
Internationale Socialisten

(Netherlands)
Socialist Worker (New Zealand)
International Socialists (Pakistan)
Pracownicza Demokracja (Poland)
All Together (South Korea)
Workers Democracy (Thailand)
Antikapitalist (Turkey)
Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (Turkey)
Socialismo Internacional (Uruguay)

Against the US-Israeli War on Lebanon



Up to 3,000 people demonstrated in Dublin on 29 July against the assault on Lebanon

Photo: Paula Geraghty

By Richard Boyd Barrett

Condolezza Rices' chilling statement at the outset of the attack on Lebanon that the violence being unleashed represented "the birth pangs of a new Middle East", is the most dramatic confirmation that Israel's action is linked to a wider US orchestrated plan for regime change in the region.

Rice, Bush and Blair have all refused to call for a cease-fire with accompanying references for the need to deal with the threat of "extremism" from Iran and Syria before a "sustainable" peace can be established.

This is a naked admission that a US plan for "regime change" across the region lies behind the Israeli attack on Lebanon and all Blairs' rhetoric about challenging the "arc of extremism in the Middle East."

Israel, with full US backing and knowledge, has attacked Gaza and Lebanon deliberately to try and provoke a wider conflict with Iran and Syria.

The US neo-cons plan for the Middle East is to set the region on fire, regardless of the human cost, in the hope that when the fires go out they will have smashed their opponents and re-asserted their dominance.

Their next step is to back a

western force being sent into Lebanon to implement UN resolution 1559 to disarm Hizbollah. But any Western intervention force will only be seen as a tool for the US/Israeli governments.

With Israel refusing to implement countless UN resolutions that call for withdrawal from the Palestinian territories, such a one sided UN action would rightly be rejected and resisted by Hizbollah and the Palestinians. The US and Israel then hope to present Hizbollah and Iran to the world as being the forces that refuse to accept international law.

Simultaneously, the UN has now pushed through a UN resolution calling on Iran to cease uranium enrichment by August 31st or face unspecified sanction. Just like in Iraq, the US can then claim the right to attack Iran if they refuse to abide by the resolution. The signs suggest the US, and their allies plan a military assault on Iran some time in the Autumn

However, in the face of this brutal colonial logic, there is hope. In both Iraq and now Lebanon, Israel and the US hoped overwhelming military superiority would devastate their opponents but this has not happened. They face massive and growing resistance. In both

cases they attempted to encourage sectarian divisions to weaken the resistance but have, in fact, fostered an unprecedented level of unity between Sunni, Shia, Christian, Druze, Nationalist and Leftist forces.

Despite all the talk of civil war in Iraq the real conflict is not between Sunni and Shia. Rather it is between the 83% of all Iraqis that want the occupation forces out, on the one hand, and the occupiers and their small band of supporters, on the other.

In Lebanon the divide between Christian and Muslim that allowed Israel to invade and occupy the country in 1982 has given way to an unprecedented national unity in the face of Israeli aggression. The latest poll shows over 80 per cent support for Hizbollah, though less than half of Lebanese population are Shia. Hizbollah are clearly seen as a legitimate national liberation movement by most Lebanese.

Here in the west, the savagery of the Israeli assault and the obvious complicity of Bush and Blair has re-ignited the mass anti-war movement seen in the run-up to the Iraq war. Blair's government is being torn apart and US public opinion is fast turning against Bush's war in Iraq.

As tens and hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets in Baghdad, Beirut, London and thousands here in Dublin in protest at Israeli actions, the urgent need to is to continue and escalate the demonstrations. Given the US plan to manipulate the UN into sanctioning a war, a key part of our task is to resist calls for a western force or Irish troops to be sent into Lebanon to disarm Hizbollah.

Rather, we must argue that the people of Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon have the right to resist colonial aggression and occupation. Our job in the anti-war movement in the west is to build solidarity with the resistance and build on the growing sense of unity between the peoples of the Middle East and the West against the maniacs in Bush Blair and Israeli administrations.

Finally, here in Ireland, we must point once again to the on-going complicity of the Irish government in facilitating tens of thousands of US troops at Shannon and strike a blow against the war machine by forcing an end to that complicity.

Richard Boyd Barrett is Chair of the Irish Anti War Movement. He writes in a personal capacity

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COMMENT

Eamonn McCann

Which side are SF on over Lebanon?

The US/Israeli assaults on Lebanon and Gaza have posed the question: "Which side are you on?"

On the side of the US and its Israeli surrogate, or the side of the resistance?

Socialist Worker makes no bones about it. We are on the same side as Hezbollah and Hamas.

This doesn't mean we share the ideas of Hezbollah or Hamas—any more than support for the ANC and its armed wing MK in apartheid South Africa implied uncritical acceptance of ANC perspectives. The same thinking characterised our approach to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, Zanu in Zimbabwe, Frelimo in Mozambique, etc.

Looking further back, the revolutionary Left supported the forces of Haile Selassie against the invasion of Ethiopia by Mussolini in the 1930s. Stalinists and social democrats refused to come down decisively: Haile Selassie was a feudal dictator and religious fanatic, they said. On this basis, they stayed out of the argument.

Revolutionary socialists argued that support for those fighting fascist invasion was a duty, however fundamental the criticism of the leadership's politics. What's more, it was only by standing with the resistance that socialists could argue for an alternative leadership.

It was on the same basis that socialist groups in many parts of the world supported the Provisional IRA's armed struggle in the North.

Now, the Provos, with the armed struggle over and their sights on Sinn Fein winning office within the system, face the critical question: which side are you on?

The SF position was expressed in a statement by Gerry Adams distributed internationally by the SF press office. In the statement, on balance, Adams opposes the US/Israeli position. But "balance" is the operative word.

The carefully-worded statement begins: "The last twelve months have seen a major deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. The hostile reaction of the Israelis, the European Union and the United States to the election of Hamas, the withdrawal of financial support to the Palestinian government, and the violence, including the deaths of scores of Palestinians in Israeli attacks in Gaza and elsewhere and the subsequent kidnapping of an Israeli soldier, has seen the region lurch from crisis to crisis."

Adams appears to accept the US/Israeli line that it was the capture of two Israeli soldiers which triggered the attack on Lebanon: "Since the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hizbullah the situation has escalated dreadfully..."

The Irish Government, he says, should be pushing for a solution "based on the rights of the people of Palestine and the people of Israel to live in mutual respect and peaceful co-existence. The cutting off of aid or the refusal to recognise democratically elected governments, or the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers, should not be any part of this."

The statement concludes: "The Irish experience tells us that political problems require political solutions. And so with the Middle East. A settlement there is long overdue. It cannot happen without the active involvement of the international community."

Nowhere in the statement does Adams say that Sinn Fein is on the same side as Hizbollah and Hamas—or on the opposite side to the US and Israel.

The statement could have been issued by Pat Rabbitte or Mark Durkan. It wouldn't have been printed as an editorial in Village or the (British) Independent, on account of its weakness and equivocation. (The statement can be read in its entirety at: <http://www.sinnfein.ie/news/detail/15148>.)

Members of Sinn Fein may call themselves "anti-imperialists." Many may genuinely feel solidarity with the fighters in Gaza and Lebanon. But none will publicly distance themselves from the ambivalent Adams line.

They can't answer the question straight: which side are they on?

Belfast protests Israeli carnage



The Belfast Anti War Movement together with the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Committee mobilised urgently against Israel's occupation of Gaza and Lebanon.

Within a week of the Israeli states offensive, lively stalls with petitions and leaflets calling for a ceasefire led into a 100 strong picket of the BBC against biased reporting, followed by an impromptu march to the City Hall.

This was followed by a 250 strong march calling for a ceasefire on the last Saturday in July and a picket of EU offices after the muted response to the mass slaughter in Qana.

More protests are planned by BAWM, IPSC, Trócaire and others.

Photo: Ciarán Ó Brolcháin

PSNI racism

Despite a huge advertising campaign against race hate crime and the setting up of minority liaison officers in each district in the north, anti racism activists say that the PSNI handling of racist attacks is still "as appalling as ever".

In the latest attack, two young Albanian men were hospitalised after one was knocked unconscious and the other needed 18 stitches after being glassed in the face. The PSNI arrived on the scene almost immediately and the attackers were identified by people who had witnessed the attack.

The Anti Racism Network followed up the attack and learned that the attackers were let go

on the spot despite the fact that both of the victims had been taken off in ambulances. Neither the victims nor witnesses were asked to give statements to the PSNI.

Only after ARN activists kicked up a fuss did police arrange to have statements taken from the victims.

After being contacted by a local Sunday newspaper for a response the PSNI said they were appealing for witnesses to "the brutal attack" to come forward. These would be the same witnesses who had been at the scene of the attack a week earlier when PSNI officers had told them to "go home".

ANTI WAR ACTION IN DERRY

Anti war activists took to the streets of Derry on Sat 20th July to call for a boycott of Israeli goods.

All the main supermarkets were leafleted, to the annoyance of management in all.

Sainsburys threatened to call the police but decided against doing so when the activists in turn called the press.

In Marks and Spencer, Israeli potatoes were collected and brought to the check-outs where customers were leafleted and asked to refuse to help fund the slaughter in Lebanon and Gaza.

There was tremendous support from shoppers for

the action.

On Wednesday 2nd August over 60 people packed into the Context Art Gallery for a socialist forum on Resisting Israeli and US terror in the Middle East.

On Sat 27th, despite torrential rain, about 50 people gathered at the War Memorial in the city centre to protest against the carnage in Lebanon and Gaza, while over 70 people attended the Derry Anti War Coalition meeting with Joshua Casteel and Hani Lazim.

Derry's anti war group will be campaigning to expose the role being played by Raytheon in the

arms trade.

Raytheon, the third largest arms manufacturer in the world, has a plant in Derry's Springtown industrial estate.

Despite all the local parties backing Raytheon's presence in the town, there is real anger at the possibility that software developed in Derry is helping to murder people in Lebanon and Gaza.

Anti war activists in Derry will be mobilising for the British Labour Party conference in Manchester on Sept. 23rd to tell Tony Blair that it time to go - for him as well as British troops in Iraq.

Tax haven cowboys in loop for NIO sell off

By Eamonn McCann

"Nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes," declared Benjamin Franklin.

He was wrong. If you are a property company based in a Caribbean tax haven, you can operate on the principle that taxes are for saps who know no better.

If this is your attitude and modus operandi, the Northern Ireland Office won't hold it against you. Peter Hain won't take time off from denouncing anybody who diddles the dole as a "scrounger" to condemn you for failing in your civic duty. Far more likely, the NIO will invite you to bid to take over tax-payers' property across Northern Ireland and use it to enrich yourself further.

The company concerned is Mapeley which, it has emerged, is one of four concerns invited by Hain's officials to submit bids for the Workplace 2010 programme. Under the programme, it's proposed that 80 public service buildings will be handed over to private interests and then leased back to the public at rates which guarantee the new owners a profit acceptable to them.

Technical, administrative and support staff operating in the buildings will be

included in the deal, with obvious implications for their job security, wages and conditions of employment.

The Mapeley story is, by any standards, astonishing. The company was set up in 1999 specifically to take advantage of New Labour's plans to extend and speed up privatisation. Among those involved were the billionaire currency speculator George Soros and giant US investment fund Fortress. Mapeley opened offices in London and Milton Keynes but was registered for tax purposes in Bermuda. (The operation has since been relocated to Guernsey, another tax haven.)

The company's colourful style first came under public scrutiny in the spring of 2002 when the late Paul Foot published a series of articles in Private Eye detailing an extraordinary deal whereby, in early 2001, the Inland Revenue and Customs had sold off more than 600 buildings to Mapeley with an agreement to pay the company £2 billion over 20 years to rent the same buildings back.

For months, no-one in politics or the mainstream media showed interest. Some may have found it difficult to believe that what Foot was alleging was true: could the tax authorities really have handed over

public properties the length and breadth of Britain to an outfit specialising in avoiding tax...? Eventually, Norfolk Tory MP Henry Bellingham took the issue up, with a series of parliamentary questions to Paymaster General Dawn Primarolo. These led in turn to investigations by the National Audit Office and the Treasury Select Committee. Even today, any reading of these bodies' reports---they are easily accessible on the web---is likely to be punctuated by sharp intakes of breath. Or, in Peter Hain's case, perhaps, gasps of admiration for the nerve,chutzpah and disdain for accountability which were the hall-marks of the operation.

The then-separate Inland Revenue and Customs had each believed they were dealing with different companies---but neither of these was the company they were in fact dealing with. The Revenue thought it was transferring its buildings to a UK incorporated company, Mapeley STEPS Contractor Ltd. Customs believed it was dealing with a UK firm called, simply, Mapeley Ltd. In fact, they were both dealing with Mapeley STEPS Ltd of Bermuda.

It appears that for 18 months, until September

2002, both Revenue and Customs continued to believe that they were operating from buildings owned within the UK.

Sir Nicholas Montagu, KGB, chairman of the Inland Revenue, told the Treasury committee that these had been "pure mistakes...for which we have apologised and set the record straight." (Sir Montague has recently been voted European Business Speaker of 2006: I suspect it was that exquisite deployment of "pure" which earned him the accolade.)

At the beginning of this year, Mapeley issued a prospectus in which it listed its assets. It had acquired the Revenue and Customs properties in 2001 for £220 million. It now listed them as worth £546.5 million---an increase of 157 percent. Over the same period, other Mapeley properties rose in market value by a mere 20 percent.

Returning to the fray, Bellingham suggested to Primarolo that this had been "a rotten deal for tax-payers," and that, "If she and the chancellor were investment bankers and made such a duff deal...they surely would have been sacked."

Primarolo's reply, as recorded in Hansard, is difficult to follow, but did

include a claim that the National Audit Office had said that the contract "represented value for money for the tax-payer."

The NAO did use this phrase---but not in relation to the value of the buildings. The reference was to the "annual average charge of £170 million" to be paid to Mapeley in rent.

But this, too, turns out to be wide of the mark. In 2004, £280.4 million of public money was paid over to Mapeley. In the nine months to September 2005, the figure was £213.7 million.

It bought the buildings for a song. Now, having rented them back to the people who sold them for a song, it is charging and receiving rent at a much higher rate than was originally mentioned.

Is this a sweet deal for the tax-avoiders? Is water wet? Have the tax-payers been treated like fools? Is fire hot?

Does last month's announcement that Mapeley has been invited to bid for 80 public service buildings in the North mean that New Labour reckons Northerners a petty, paltry people who can be walked all over at will?

Of course, maybe we are. Or maybe enough of us won't stand for it any more.

INTERNATIONAL

Outrage at US-Israeli war drive



Thousands of protesters took over Talat Harb Square in central Cairo, Egypt, last week to demonstrate against Israel's assault on Lebanon and the failure of the Arab regimes to oppose it. Picture: Nasser Nouri

'Hizbollah is for all Lebanese. They are the resistance force for the occupation'

Lebanese exile Dr Abdul Sayed, spoke to Socialist Worker

"My family, everywhere in the Lebanon, are refugees from their villages," Dr Abdou Sayed told Socialist Worker.

"They are lucky because they didn't have anyone injured. And then again they went without their clothes, left everything behind. It is horrendous.

"I had a call from a friend in Southern Lebanon. They want now to buy water.

"They stopped now calling for medicine. They stopped calling for babies' milk. They stopped calling for wood. Water - that is when the human need has reached to its lowest level.

"If you see Lebanese TV you see the atrocities and the massacres. You see the body pieces collected. What you see in the media here is nothing compared to what we see on our Lebanese satellites.

"Then you have tragedy for the refugees, 750,000 in the parks. There is no place to go, just the park, without even tents."

Popular Resistance

Dr Sayed stressed that Hizbollah is not an Islamist army but one fighting against Israeli imperialism within its own borders.

"Hizbollah is for all Lebanese. They are the resistance force for the occupation.

"I am not defending Hizbollah but that's the true picture."

One of the prisoners that Hizbollah are campaigning hard to release is Nassim Nasir, a Lebanese man of Jewish heritage. Nasir was visiting his relative in Israel and was captured in his village.

"They never accepted him in prisoners exchanges because his mother is Jewish and automatically, as a son of a Jew, he is an Israeli citizen.

"To them he is a traitor and there is no exchange. They [the prisoners] have a symbolic value. Even though he is Jewish, Hizbollah will fight for him against the occupation.

"Different faiths, different races, different cultures can co-exist and live in harmony and that is what you will find in every Lebanese village.

"Thousands of refugees, almost all Shia Muslims from southern Lebanon are sheltering in churches and the church allows them to do Muslim prayer.

"I attended the christening of a Lebanese boy. His godfather is a Muslim.

"That's Lebanon. That's the Lebanon that we want you to defend, to raise your voice for.

"It is the one that shows the acceptance of all faiths and cultures.

"Lebanon is our country. We love it. Please help us to keep the integrity of our country."

100,000 march in London demonstration

Some 100,000 protesters took to the streets of London on Saturday to demand an end to Israel's assault on Lebanon and Gaza - and to express their fury at Tony Blair's refusal to call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.

The emergency demonstration, called by the Stop the War Coalition at a week's notice, attracted a broad range of people. Many had decided to come along at the last moment, after the march was featured on the front page of the Independent newspaper.

Protesters booed as they filed past the US embassy in Grosvenor Square. They left 1,500 pairs of children's shoes outside Downing Street to symbolise the children Israel has killed in Lebanon and Gaza.

The demonstration's anger was not just directed at Israel, but also at the US and British governments for their complicity in the carnage now engulfing the Middle East.

The march showed a significant widening of the movement, even in the time since the previous London protest two weeks ago. This was true both in the size and diversity of the march and in the speakers in the rally in Parliament

Square. Six members of parliament spoke, including Respect MP George Galloway. The leaders of three major trade unions also addressed the rally.

Many speakers argued that Israel's onslaught had to be understood as part of the wider "war on terror" and George Bush's plans for a "new Middle East".

"First it was Afghanistan and Iraq, now it's Lebanon - this is another imperial war," said Soumaya Ghannoushi from the British Muslim Initiative. "This is not just an Israeli war, and Bush and Blair are not just giving Israel a green light. They are partners in war crimes."

Blair's complicity was also highlighted by Mark Serwotka, general secretary of the PCS union. "Why did our foreign secretary tell the media that she did not know that US planes taking bombs to Israel were refuelling at Prestwick airport?" he asked. "When faced with protests, they had to stop these flights - this shows that if we protest we can make a difference."

Left wing Labour MP John McDonnell, who is standing for the leadership of the party, lambasted the prime minister for

"travelling to the US to perform for Rupert Murdoch" while ignoring demands for him to condemn Israel's hostilities.

While the march encompassed all those opposed to Israel's aggression, those speakers who declared their solidarity with the resistance in Lebanon and Palestine received huge cheers.

"They sought to divide the Middle East - but in fact they have united Muslim and Christian, Sunni and Shia, Islamist and secular," said Daoud Abdullah from the Muslim Council of Britain.

"This war has given birth to millions of resistance fighters across the region."

John Rees from the Stop the War Coalition stressed the urgency of the situation now facing the Middle East. "If we don't stop this war, there will be a general war across the region that will make what is happening now pale into insignificance," he said.

"Only the peace movement can destroy the power behind these wars. That's why we must demonstrate in Manchester on 23 September outside the Labour Party conference - and demand an end to this government steeped in blood."



Part of the London demonstration

Photo: Ray Smith



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

CAN THERE BE IN THE MIDDLE

By Órnaith Ní Dhuibhir

Despite the carnage and butchery in Lebanon the international community has again chosen to ignore Israeli war crimes and to instead blame Hizbollah and Hamas.

In the hope that Syria and Iran will be dragged into the 'war on terror', the US government continues to resist calls for an immediate ceasefire.

Arab leaders have shamefully caricatured the Lebanese resistance as 'irresponsible adventurism' and the EU leaders can do no more than propose international intervention. This will not bring peace to the region.

Humanitarian intervention

World leaders who are starving Palestinians for exercising their democratic rights will only intervene in Lebanon to serve imperialists interests.

Indeed, the protests at the UN's Beirut office following the Qana massacre demonstrated that any force arriving in Lebanon will not be seen as neutral by the Lebanese or the rest of the Arab world.

The Lebanese remember only too well that the international force sent in 1982 to oversee the PLO's withdrawal disappeared while local Christian militias, under the watchful eye of Israel, massacred Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Chatila.

An international force sanctioned by the US and Israel will have as its mandate not the protection of the Lebanese but the forcible removal of Hezbollah from the Lebanese/Israeli border and the suppression of Arab liberation movements in the region.

Roots of the conflict

The current conflict cannot be resolved unless its underlying causes are addressed.

The July 12th raid on an Israeli army border post was a relatively unremarkable event. In the six years since Israel withdrew, there have been frequent border incidents between Hizbollah and the Israeli army as Israel continues to occupy the 25km Shabaa Farms area of Southern Lebanon.

The speed and violence of the response to the incursion indicates that Israel has been waiting for international conditions to develop so that it could implement Ben Gurion's vision of a Greater Israel, stretching from the Jordan river to the river Litani.

In so doing, Israel intends to crush Hizbollah and ensure that future Lebanese governments are friendly to Israeli interests.

Acting alone Israel could not achieve these aims. However, its war coincides with the Bush administra-



Murderous attacks: Israeli artillery units fire shells towards Lebanon constantly.

tion's aim to crush resistance movements and non-compliant regimes in the Middle East, such as Iran and Syria. Israel's onslaught has the potential to develop into a much greater regional war.

Therefore, it is vital that the anti-war movement urgently reenergises and opposes Irish involvement in any international occupation force.

This does not mean that we ignore the many ideological differences between revolutionary socialists and the Shia Hizbollah or Sunni Hamas.

However, we support both organisations in their courageous stand against imperialism and argue against those on the left who would equate the violence of the oppressor

with the resistance of the oppressed.

Opposing Zionism

Even if Israel withdraws from Lebanon, the region will never find peace unless it confronts Zionism (the belief that there should be a Jewish state in historic Palestine).

Since its violent birth, Israel has acted as a local colonial agent, opposing national liberation movements and ensuring that Western powers are guaranteed access to the region's vast oil resources.

It denies equal treatment to Palestinian citizens of Israel, holds some 9,000 Palestinians hostage, continues to expropriate Palestinian land, crops and livelihoods and refuses to abide by international law.

The inspiring Palestinian resistance cannot defeat the combined forces of Israel and the US alone. Traditionally, socialists look to the working class to overthrow corrupt and undemocratic regimes.

But unlike black South Africans, Palestinian workers lack that capacity as Israel has removed them from the Israeli economy and destroyed the economy of the PA.

Some on the left argue that Palestinian and Israel workers must unite in their struggle for two democratic states of Israel and Palestine. There have been anti war protests in Israel in response to the invasion of Lebanon.

But the 80% support rate amongst Israelis for the atrocities committed in Gaza and Lebanon highlights where Israeli workers' sympathies lie on this issue.

Justice can only be delivered if the racist state of Israel is dismantled and replaced with a democratic, secular state.

In that struggle, the natural ally of the Palestinians is the wider Arab working class which shares an interest in overthrowing corrupt Arab regimes and taking control of the region's resources.

Solidarity

But this does not mean that it is sufficient for socialists to await the awakening of the Arab masses. We must campaign for the urgent suspension of the Association Agreement and for a boycott of Israeli goods.

We must demand the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador. We must demand that CRH ceases its investment in the Apartheid Wall and illegal settlements. We must ensure that our unions, colleges and cultural associations sever links with Israel.

We must actively campaign against Islamophobia. And we must bring about an end to the political cover that the government lends to the ever-expanding war on the Muslim and Arab world.

We support Hamas and Hizbollah in their courageous stand against imperialism and argue against those on the left who equate the violence of the oppressor with the resistance of the oppressed

STOP ISRAELI STATE TERRORISM

No international occupation of Lebanon

National demonstration in Dundalk, constituency of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern TD

Organised by the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign www.ipsc.ie and Irish Anti War Movement www.irishantiwar.org

Assemble 2pm Saturday 12 August at the Maid of Erin Statue (beside the Courthouse), The Square, Dundalk

Buses running from Dublin contact 087 419 3667 to book places. Bus costs €10.

THE PEACE EAST?



STOP THE WAR

National Demonstration Dublin Saturday September 23rd

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A Lebanese man holds the body of a child killed by air strikes in Baalbek.

Hostages held by Israel

by Christine Murray

Over the past ten years thousands of Palestinian prisoners have been taken from their houses and are currently being detained by both military and civilian forces.

Israeli forces call these "security prisoners" and say that most of the people currently in their custody are guilty of terrorist activities while Palestinians believe that the majority of the captives are innocent. Roughly a quarter of prisoners are being held without charge. 645 are being held under "administrative detention", and have no idea of what suspicions are being held against them.

The conditions in the prisons are atrocious and medical care for the seriously ill is sparse or non-existent. Many necessary operations have only been carried out after mass protests by other prisoners. There have even been cases of prisoners being deprived

of their medication as a form of punishment. Female prisoners who were pregnant when arrested are made to give birth while handcuffed to the bed, with no thought for the pain and humiliation this must cause.

B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organisation have released figures stating that 9,153 Palestinian prisoners are currently being held by both civilian and military authorities.

Not all prisoners being held in these institutions are adults. An estimated 265 minors are currently being kept in sub standard conditions.

Their age does not mean they are treated leniently, in fact the situation is quite the opposite.

Child prisoners are subjected to interrogation, and most disturbingly, they are also subjected to interrogation under torture. While this treatment is obviously wrong on many levels, it is also in direct violation of Article

37 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that "No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment".

As Israel are a member of UNICEF, they are guilty of breaking a legally binding agreement. The children are allowed little contact with their family, with some being completely forbidden to have family visits.

These conditions are obviously detrimental to both the physical and mental well being of the children involved. Saif Adden Ayaad, a seventeen year old from Bethlehem, was beaten so badly during interrogation that he broke a bone in his head.

He did not receive medical treatment for this.

And Israel were allegedly so upset about two of their prisoners (the two soldiers taken captive by Hizbollah) that they have wrecked carnage, destruction and mass murder on the people of Lebanon!

Israel - the roots of a racist state



Palestinians fleeing the massacre at Deir Yassin in 1948

By Conor Kostick

The bombing of Lebanon by the Israeli air force has appalled and angered people right across the world.

The death of hundreds of civilians, particularly children has shown the Israeli state to be without conscience or shame. Israel, despite its founding claims, is a vicious, predatory, war machine and, as one Israeli commentator recently put it, 'the long arm of the US.'

The origin of Israel lies in the philosophy of 'Zionism', the label given to the idea that the world's Jewish population ought to gather together in a state of their own, rather than be dispersed throughout the world.

The founders of Zionism would never have thought that their movement would become a force that slaughtered civilians, but at the core of their outlook was an idea whose logic has led to the scenes we are witnessing now.

In order to establish a Jewish state in an already populated land, the early Zionists had to do two things that has given rise to the inherent violence of the modern state of Israel.

They had to force out the local inhabitants of the land they wanted and they had to obtain backing from a wealthy imperialist power to do so.

Chaim Weizmann, the most prominent Zionist leader of his day, rushed to sell his movement to Britain when, after the Great War, the British became the dominant force in Palestine.

He wrote that Jewish settlement would 'form a very effective guard for the Suez Canal.'

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the Jewish presence in Palestine grew, accompanied by growing violence towards the local Arab population.

Even the Jewish labour organisations were wedded to forging an exclusively Jewish state.

The main trade union federation, the Histadrut, was exclusively Jewish and organised to prevent the sale of Arab goods and crops.

The Second World War gave Zionism irresistible momentum. The horror of the holocaust led most Jewish families to despair that there was any other way of protecting themselves.

At the same time, US interest in the Middle East for its oil supplies gave the Zionists a new and even more powerful backer.

The state of Israel was proclaimed on 14 May 1948 with the patronage of the US, and with hundreds of thousands of Arabs driven by violence from its borders.

Just over a month earlier a terrible massacre of all the inhabitants of the village of Deir Yassin had shown to all the lengths that the Zionists would go to in order to establish their state.

Ever since, Israel has served its master, and in return obtained phenomenal resources. Billions of dollars a year, often half the total US military aid worldwide, have gone to Israel. And the country has been good value for the investment, as far as respective US administrations are concerned.

In 1980 Ronald Reagan explained that Israel has a 'combat experienced military, a force in the Middle East that is actually of benefit to the US. If there was no Israel with that force, we'd have to supply that with our own.'

In words that uncannily reflect the current situation, an Israeli newspaper back in 1951 explained what the role of the country was to be.

'If for any reasons the Western powers should sometimes prefer to close their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or several neighbouring states whose discourtesy to the West went beyond the bounds of the permissible.'

Every time an Arab nation has elected a government potentially hostile to the US, Israel has unleashed its military might to collectively punish the population. That is exactly what is happening now, in response to the growth and success of Hamas and Hezbollah.

World Trade Organisation Doha Round collapses

By Rory Hearne

Last year the Make Poverty History Campaign brought hundreds of thousands on to the streets against the G8 demanding debt cancellation, increased aid and fair trade. One of the principal organisations that, over the last decade, has promoted unfair trade is the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The WTO pushed 'neoliberalism', that is, unrestricted trade.

As far as WTO leaders were concerned, government subsidies to agriculture and public services should be abolished and the economy of every state opened up to private companies and competition.

There are two fundamental problems with this perspective for the world's poor. One is that some services, such as health care, ought to be subsidised by the taxpayer to ensure that good health does not become the privilege of the rich.

One of the more striking examples of the WTO's policy in this area is the insistence that countries devastated by AIDS should, nevertheless, pay the full costs of drug treatments to the (largely US) patent holders.

The WTO has threatened sanctions against those countries, especially Argentina, who are currently supplying cheap AIDS drugs to those countries most in need of them.

The second deeply biased aspect of the agenda of the WTO is that it does not recognise that the world economy is massively uneven. Largely as a result of imperialism, plunder, the slave trade and wars, the majority of the world's population live in underdeveloped countries.

To insist that the peasantry of a developing nation compete directly with the agricultural products of an intensively industrialised western nation is to ask that they be ruined so that some of the greatest multinationals on the planet can increase their sales.

The agenda of the WTO is one that would continue and deepen economic unevenness, rather than assist the developing world to catch up.

Such is the policy of its masters, the US and EU, who have used the WTO, along with regional trade agreements like NAFTA, as a way of breaking into the markets of developing countries while they retain their own protections and subsidies.

The result has been devastation for farmers and workers in developing countries as cheap subsidised western products destroyed their subsistence agriculture.

Those forced off the land have then been left with no alternative but to work in foreign owned textile sweatshops, set up with no workers' protections, as WTO rules all such legislation as illegal: an unfair 'barrier' to private profit.

In late July the WTO's so-called development Doha Round collapsed. While the US the EU and some large NGOs (accepting the argument that the crumbs from the WTO are better than nothing) were disappointed Walden Bello of Focus on Global South, got it right when he said: The collapse of the Doha Round is good for the poor.

The idea that the Doha Round was a "development round" could not have been farther from the truth.

Whilst trade can be a medium for development, from the very start, the aim of the developed countries was to push for greater market openings



EU Imposes its Free Trade Agenda on Africa

While the WTO collapses, neoliberal institutions like the EU continue their savage inroads into the economies of developing countries through free trade agreements like the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Since 2002 the European Union (EU) and 77 developing countries of the Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific Group (ACP) have been negotiating EPAs.

Under the guise of a 'development partnership' the EU is demanding ACP countries agree to policies that they have successfully resisted in the WTO. Through the EPAs the EU is aggressively seeking an increased market access for their own goods and services in markets of some of the world's most underdeveloped nations.

EPAs clearly show how the EU is seeking not to limit or restrain neoliberal globalisation, but to extend and deepen it.

As a result of heavy dependence on aid, ACP governments have little choice but to give in to the EU's demand that they open up their markets to European goods and services.

The result will be deeper unemployment, loss of livelihoods, food insecurity as already vulnerable local food production is undermined, and social inequality. ACP governments will face significant losses in public revenue from the elimination of import duties and will continue to suffer the problem of capital flight associated with liberalisation.

Another free trade agreement that the EU is involved in is the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement which grants Israel (along with several other non-European Mediterranean states) preferential trading terms with the EU. This should clearly be suspended with the on-going massacres Israel is unleashing against Lebanon and the Palestinians.

from the developing countries while making minimal concessions on their part. Invoking development was simply a cynical ploy to make the process less unpalatable.

The problem is not with subsidies. In an alternative system based on need public subsidies would be integral to supporting small-scale industrial and agricultural co-operatives like what is happening in Venezuela. But the EU's agricultural subsidies benefit mainly large-scale farmers.

A different subsidy scheme benefiting small farmers would be much more equitable and cheaper.

The only farmers in developing countries to benefit from abolishing all subsidies and open markets would be the large plantations.

The collapse of the WTO is an

important victory for the anti-capitalist movement that began with the Zapatistas in southern Mexico who declared open war against free trade, the WTO and the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994.

Since then farmers, trade unionists, environmentalists and socialists have strongly resisted the WTO and the free trade agenda.

Protestors in Seattle successfully shut down the WTO's meeting in 1999. In 2003, Korean activist Lee Kyeong-Hae screamed 'WTO kills farmers' before taking his life at the WTO protests in Cancun, Mexico.

In October of last year 50,000 Farmers Protested Against WTO in India and in December the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions and workers' and peasants organisations in Korea attacked the WTO

meetings.

Other institutions, like the EU, are hammering through the WTO agenda of free trade: in Europe with the recent Services Directive, in developing countries through their Economic Partnership Agreements.

Jeffery Sachs in his book *The End of Poverty* argues that if developing countries get a foot on the economic ladder they will be able to compete with the rich countries, see economic growth, and this will end poverty.

But there will never be a level playing field under the present system of global trade.

The trade system emerged unjustly through colonialism and today's system continues that inequality.

That's why we need an alternative trade system based not on free trade capitalism but on solidarity and need.

But its not just trade that causes poverty, it's the priority of a global system based on war and empire that spends trillions of dollars dropping bombs on innocent civilians while millions starve.

The need to link the anti-war and anti-WTO movements in a global struggle against empire has never been clearer.

As Joseph Purugganan of the Philippine-based 'Stop the New WTO Coalition' put it: It is time to think of a world beyond Doha, a world beyond the WTO, and start building and strengthening people's alternatives.

We want an alternative system of global trade that protects livelihoods, promotes food sovereignty, secure jobs, and facilitates access to basic human needs such as water, education, healthcare and affordable medicines.

This alternative system is anchored on cooperation and not competition, where people's welfare matter more than profits.

For info see: <http://www.focusweb.org/content/view/995/60/>

The only farmers in developing countries to benefit from abolishing all subsidies and open markets would be the large plantations.

COMMENT

Conor Kostick.

Juries' verdicts are win for activists



Courage rewarded: Pitstop Ploughshares Not Guilty

The legal process has its biases, not least in the power of the judges, who are drawn overwhelmingly from the most privileged social class. Nevertheless, in Ireland and the UK it has one great strength: the jury system. The right to be tried before twelve randomly selected people means that wealth and power does not always prevail in the courtroom.

Two legal victories this last month have given very dramatic examples of the value of the jury system.

On the morning of 25 July, five anti-war activists of Pit Stop Ploughshares walked free from a courtroom in which they had faced the prospect of sentences of up to ten years, for having caused \$2.5m of damage to a US warplane at Shannon Airport.

With great personal bravery Karan Ballon, Deirdre Clancy, Nuin Dunlop, Damian Moran and Ciaran O'Reilly had entered Shannon Airport in the early hours of 3 February 2003. They caused sufficient damage to a US Navy warplane to ground it for months, before building a shrine that included photos of injured Iraqi children at which they prayed until their arrest.

For a long time the personal consequences for the Pit Stop Ploughshares looked severe. They spent from four to eleven weeks in Limerick prison and harsh bail conditions were imposed on them as the process of prosecution made its erratic way towards a conclusion.

The consistent message of the protesters was that they were pacifists, and that by damaging the plane, they were helping to save lives. They made the case that by damaging the warplane they had, 'lawful excuse', because they were saving lives and property in Iraq. As one of them put it, 'I didn't go to Shannon to commit a crime; I went to Shannon to stop a crime.'

The political test was whether the jury would accept this line of defence. An unsympathetic jury could easily have rejected the argument; the prosecution certainly gave them plenty of grounds to do so. But fortunately juries are drawn from the population as a whole and not the small elite who want to preserve good relations with the Bush administration at all costs.

The victory of the Pit Stop Ploughshares was a victory for the majority of the Irish people: for those who opposed the war in Iraq and who continue to oppose the use of Shannon Airport by the US military. As the defendants put it in their press release:

The jury is the conscience of the community chosen randomly from Irish society. The conscience of the community has spoken. The government has no popular mandate in providing the civilian Shannon airport to service the US war machine in its illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq.

A second stunning victory against the odds was that of Scottish Socialist MSP Tommy Sheridan against the News of the World on 4 August. A Glasgow jury awarded Sheridan maximum damages for libel; in a decision all the more remarkable for the fact that Sheridan sacked his own lawyers after they wrongly accused a witness of having a criminal record, and subsequently conducted the case himself. He recognised the scale of the achievement and the importance of the jury system in his post trial statement.

We have over the last five weeks taken on one of the biggest organisations on the planet, with the biggest amount of resources to pay for the most expensive legal team, to throw nothing but muck against me, my wife and my family.

Well, brothers and sisters, what today's verdict proves is that working-class people, when they listen to the arguments, can differentiate the truth from the muck.

The working-class people on the jury who have found in our favour have done a service to the people of Scotland and have delivered a message to the standard of journalism that the News of the World represents.

They are liars and we have proved that they are liars.

The anger at these verdicts coming variously from US officials, newspaper owners and right wing commentators is palpable, but their fury is impotent. The jury has spoken.



Tommy Sheridan

REVIEWS

GOGOL BORDELLO:

A social and political culture clash



Gogol Bordello: "The Clash having a fight with The Pogues in Eastern Europe"

By Trevor Byrne

One of the most ethnically eclectic bunch of musicians you're ever likely to see (featuring a Ukrainian Romany Gypsy, an Israeli, and a Scottish-Chinese dancer to name but three – a veritable United Nations of musical malcontents), Gogol Bordello's cultural diversity translates into a heady, hedonistic mix of turbocharged folk, punk, hip-hop, dub and wild cabaret.

Fronted by charismatic rabble

rouser Eugene Hütz, Gogol Bordello have been taking New York's Lower East Side by storm for some time now, and are the vanguard of the city's burgeoning folk-punk scene. Gypsy Punks is the band's third full-length release, and may just launch them kicking and screaming into the mainstream. Produced by Steve Albini, Gypsy Punks rectifies the main failing of the band's previous albums, managing to capture some of the raw, glorious madness

of the band's feted live shows.

Standout tracks include current single Not a Crime, the boozy, last orders vindictive of Start Wearing Purple, 60 Revolutions (replete with insane 80s thrash metal guitar riff) and the sublime Immigrant Punk, which is surely destined to become the band's signature tune. Lyrically the album is a kind of fractured, oddball poetry and kooky outsider wisdom, all delivered in either Hütz's native Ukrainian or his magnificently

accented and broken English.

DJ Phil Jupitus recently described the band as "The Clash having a fight with The Pogues in Eastern Europe". In truth they're much more than that – a hedonistic but socially and politically lucid culture clash, Gogol Bordello are an immigrant call-to-arms. The revolution has never been so much fun – join the gypsy punk party.

GogolBordello, Gypsy Punks Underdog World Strike, Side One Dummy Records

Newly discovered Shelley poem shows his political fire

By Paul O'Brien

An early poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley has unexpectedly come to light after an absence of nearly 200 years.

Shelley wrote Poetical Essay to raise funds for Peter Finnerty, the radical Irish journalist who was imprisoned for libelling the British government in his reports of the disastrous naval expedition to the Low Countries in 1809.

Despite Finnerty's background - he was a revolutionary who had been imprisoned in 1798 in Ireland for his support for the United Irishmen - he was invited to join the expedition as an "embedded journalist".

Today, that would be like sending John Pilger or Robert Fisk to the Middle East with the British army and then being surprised when they wrote articles critical of the war.

If journalists step out of line today they are denied access to official sources - for Finnerty, it meant 18 months in Lincoln Jail.

A fund was set up by British radicals to support him in prison. Shelley, then an 18 year old undergraduate at Oxford University, wrote the Poetical Essay to support Finnerty.

A short essay, in which Shelley denounces war and the devastation

it causes, prefaces the poem. The 172 lines that follow are written in rhyming couplets in the style of the popular ballads common to the period. Shelley was writing for a popular audience, not the "fireside reformers" of the Whig establishment.

The poem is important for two reasons. Firstly, because it hints at the great lyrical poetry to come. Secondly, because it confirms Shelley as a great radical writer and bitter critic of war and intolerance, right from the beginning of his career.

His hatred of the "cold advisers of yet colder Kings" echoes the scandal of the intelligence briefing about weapons of mass destruction that led to the Iraq war and has a freshness that resonates down to this day. Shelley denounces the advisers who have:

The power to breathe
O'er all the world the infectious
blast of death.
Millions to fight compell'd, to
fight or die
In mangled heaps on War's red
alter lie
When legal murders swell the lists
of pride;
When glory's views the titled idiot
guide.

Paul O'Brien's Shelley and Revolutionary Ireland (€17.50) is available from Bookmarks, PO Box 1648 Dublin 8 or go to www.bookmarks.uk.com

This is not not sexual liberation

Playboy bunnies on bags, T-shirts and stationery, pre-teen girls in sexy underwear, ordinary women being nipped and tucked on TV in order to look ten years younger...is this what sexual liberation for women was really meant to look like?

Ariel Levy in her absorbing book "Female chauvinist pigs: women and the rise of raunch culture" exposes the worst aspects of this culture and argues that far from constituting empowerment it reflects how much further women still have to go to achieve freedom and power in society.

For Levy female chauvinist pigs are women who make sex objects out of themselves and out of other women. Her examples are manifold...from the college students who expose their breasts for the Girls Gone Wild Show to the female consumers of porn to the high school students who compete to dress the "skankiest" (the smuttiest, loosest, most wanton). While the term FCP seems quite inappropriate, she uses it really to emphasise what is being created - a mirror image of the 'old' sexism and stereotyping, but this time embraced and promoted by women.

Levy is particularly good in exposing how un-liberating all this actually is. In her interviews particularly with female high school students it is clear that all the sexual display and exhibitionism hides a complete failure to embrace and explore one's own individual sexuality and sexual needs. Enjoyment, intimacy and pleasure from sexual

contact don't feature for any of the young women. As Levy notes abstinence-promoting sex education in US schools leaves young women ill equipped to deal with their sexuality in the context of a culture that bombards them with a particularly plastic and simplistic version of what it is to be female.

Levy describes very effectively how this raunch culture is tied so effectively to consumption. The right clothes and the correct body shape all come with a big price tag, while the obligatory consumption of porn and pole dancing are a huge boon to the sex industry. It is in fact the mainstreaming of this sex industry which best sums up the raunch culture. Porn stars become icons, young women aspire to being pole dancers and young professionals do cardio striptease sessions at their local gym.

In all of this Levy is a welcome voice of dissent who clearly articulates the view that this is not progress and this is not sexual liberation. A slight criticism may be that Levy does not seek to look at the broader range of female opinion that is out there. For every Playboy clad young woman, there may be another who refuses outright to wear the stuff. It is however a timely reminder that the issue of women's liberation is still a live one and that the fight must continue. Levy does not advance a way to do this but her book may just inspire you to take on the challenge.

Female Chauvinist Pigs, Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture, Ariel Levy published by Pocket Books Current Affairs £7.99 (sterling). Author's Website: www.ariellelevy.net

Protest/Reports/Struggle

email to brid@swp.ie Phone 01 8722682

BIN TAX CAMPAIGN

Ballyfermot organises against non-collection

By Selina Whiteley

On 1st August over 350 people turned out to a meeting entitled 'Resist the Bin Tax' in Ballyfermot, Dublin West.

The meeting was organized in response to the non-collection of rubbish bins in upper Ballyfermot by the City Council.

Since the end of July the council have put tags on the bins of non-payers, threatening to withdraw the service if people did not redress arrears of 900 to 950 euro. In an area like Ballyfermot, many find these double taxes difficult to afford.

The implementation of threats not to collect bins with unpaid tax "is the biggest challenge that we have ever faced. It's an even bigger challenge than people going to prison," Brid Smith, who was imprisoned over the bin tax, said.

"Refuse services were brought in all over Britain and Ireland in the late 1800's in response to outbreaks of cholera," she said. Today, many fear that parts of Dublin, capital of the world's second richest country, may become as unsanitary as Delhi.

"We have to think of what they're doing to an essential service. They're ripping it apart. They're refusing it to ordinary people, they're creating a health hazard in our communities and they're trying to force us to pay massive taxes.



"We've paid our taxes, and we deserve an essential service. The real sinners are the ones that are making all the profit and pay very, very little of their taxes towards waste management," said Brid. She listed big business and the construction industry among the biggest sinners in waste creation.

There was overwhelming support for a community-orientated system to throw waste into the back of rubbish trucks like the

communities in East Wall, Ringsend and Crumlin. She stressed that this was in line with the law. She also advocated re-use and recycle policies.

"We have been winning very significant court cases over the legality of the bin charges. We've won several cases on appeal. In the years when the people were being brought to court, 2001 and 2002, government actions were actually illegal."

One person mentioned

that Bertie Ahern implemented the policy and was driving round in a car worth 121,000 euro of taxpayers' money.

"I've paid tax all my life. And I will pay what's fair. Why should it be 900 euro to me, and 900 euro to Bono when he's got millions," said Jimmy, an activist within the campaign in Ballyfermot.

A resolution to organize a protest to the Civic Centre returning unwanted "junk mail" was also enthusiastically adopted. The protest is called for Monday 4th September.

Many local activists welcomed the establishment of the People Before Profit Alliance in the area. Brid Smith is the candidate in the next election for People Before Profit. 120 people joined the local People Before Profit Alliance at the meeting.

TAXI DRIVERS

Taxi drivers in Dublin, Waterford and a number of other cities have begun a series of one day strikes over restructuring of fares by the regulator which will impact on earnings.

In Dublin one of the grievances is the aboli-

tion of the surcharge for Dublin Airport.

As one taxi driver told Socialist Worker, "You have to take action."

"These changes mean we will be working on different wages from previously. You can't stand for that."

BUSES

BUS DRIVERS VOTE A BLOW TO UNION LEADERSHIP

Elections for the NBRU executive saw two long standing executives, seen as loyal to the union leadership, lose their positions.

Elections in the important Dublin city garages of Harristown and Clontarf gave drivers their first chance to vote on recent changes in the union's rules.

The NBRU leadership changed the union's rules at its last conference to make it impossible for rank and file drivers to contest top union positions and also made it easier to expel members.

One result of this is that

out of seven garages only two actually had elections as in other garages no drivers met the new qualifications. Drivers, who saw it as a blatant attempt to safeguard several executives loyal to the leadership, have greeted the move with outrage and cynicism.

In two garages where there was opposition, the standing candidates lost badly.

In Harristown, Eugene McDonagh, a driver with a track record of rank and file activism, won by a almost two to one margin.

In Conygham road

garage, up to 40 drivers are said to have resigned from the union in protest at these change.

It is likely many more will follow unless the union begins to listen to its member. Dublin Bus drivers are likely to face a number of battles in the year ahead, with controversial deals on a 48 hour week and deregulation of the city's buses coming up.

These votes show that rank and file drivers are prepared to fight to safeguard their futures, and will be keeping a close eye on the direction their union takes

WATERFORD BUS DRIVERS FIGHT CREEPING PRIVATISATION

Bus Eireann drivers in Waterford, members of SIPTU and NBRU, recent voted for strike action over the drafting in of private operators to do the work of Bus Eireann drivers.

As one driver told a local reporter, "The private operators were only supposed to be used if there was an overflow of passengers on routes. now they are being drafted in to the standard services while up to four drivers at a time sit in the canteen with no buses to drive."

Buses on the city routes are frequently broken down and are out of service for days on end, meaning the scheduled service does not run.

In addition, the company has withdrawn wheel-



chair accessible buses from some city routes inconveniencing disabled passengers.

Drivers feel the service is being deliberately run down and made inefficient in order to prepare the way for

privatisation, which would threaten the drivers' jobs.

Planned strike action was suspended at the last minute when management conceded talks with the unions over the drivers' grievances.

PARTNERSHIP DEAL

As voting on the new social partnership agreement comes to a close, the inadequacy of a 10% pay rise for Irish workers becomes more and more obvious. Spiralling energy costs will raise the combined gas and electricity bills for the average family home by over €450.

The energy regulator recently gave the go-ahead for a 34% price rise in gas which will take effect from this October. This comes on top of a 25% rise last October and 11% the previous year. Likewise electricity prices are set to rocket. Last month the ESB warned customers that they would face increases of 20% in their bills from January.

Further bad news has come from the EU as it now looks possible that VAT will be applied to the cost of a whole range of public services including bin tax. In Fingal where bin taxes have increased by 50% in the last three years, the application of VAT would mean that the cost of getting your bin emptied would rise again from €7.50 to €9.07.

These increases are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to growing demands on wage packets. Due to escalating house prices the yearly cost of paying back a mortgage is now 35% of an

average salary, compared with 20% ten years ago. New householders can face housing estate management fees of a couple of thousand euros per year, (fees to provide services that were previously, and are still delivered, by local authorities) that can rise at the whim of the management company. A survey published just last month showed that Dublin is the 18th most expensive of 144 cities in the world, Ireland is one of the most expensive countries to live in.

In the face of all this it's clear that in real terms a 10% pay rise will be reduced to nothing for the majority of workers.

CLARIFICATION

In our last issue of Socialist Worker we ran a major article on the new Partnership proposals. We reproduced material from a factsheet produced by Eddie Conlon and distributed by a number of trade union activists.

We added our own comment to the effect that the deal be rejected and the trade union negotiators told to bring back something better. Des Derwin, one of the activists distributing the factsheet, has pointed out that this is not in the original fact sheet and is something he disagrees with. We are happy to make this clarification.

Pamphlets available from Bookmarx Ireland

A World to Win, Nos 1 & 2



Many publications and books are available published by authors within the tradition of the SWP and its sister organisations. But for those who want a briefer survey of some of the key questions, a series of small pamphlets reproducing articles which cover the main outlines of the politics of the Socialist Workers Party is now being published. These pamphlets will be useful, we hope, to socialists and anti-capitalists, whether recent participants in the struggle or more long standing, who want to know more about the politics of the SWP.

The first two are now available price 50cent plus postage

These and hundreds more books and pamphlets are available from Bookmarx Ireland. For more details contact PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

State & Revolution Lenin

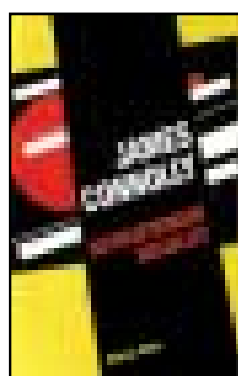


Lenin's State and Revolution is one of the most subversive books ever written. It tackles the prevailing idea that the state stands above society and represents the common good.

It roots its argument for revolution in the fact that even a parliamentary democracy is a form of concentrated class rule. When the elections are over, there is quite simply "one law for the rich and another for the rest". We live in a society where there is a "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie", according to Lenin.

Lenin has been demonised as a tyrant who paved the way for Stalin. But even the most cursory reading of State and Revolution shows he wanted a much more profound form of democracy. This abridged edition aims to make the arguments of State and Revolution even more accessible to modern activists. Price €3 plus postage

James Connolly: Revolutionary Socialist Kieran Allen

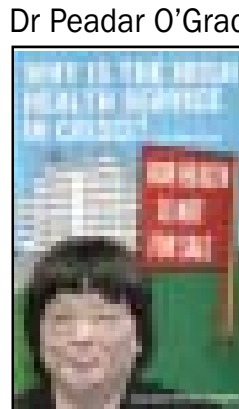


Author's note

Most of the material for this pamphlet is based on the book I wrote in 1990, The Politics of James Connolly, which is now out of print.

Today far more opportunities have opened up for socialists—and with that more questions. Principally how do comparatively small numbers of revolutionaries connect with vast numbers who believe that capitalism has become "extreme" and out of control. In revisiting some of the material I was surprised at just how contemporary Connolly's writing is for those who are striving for 21st century socialism. Above all else Connolly was, as the pamphlet I hope demonstrates, a revolutionary socialist. That singular fact is source of a deep embarrassment for the political elite €3 plus postage

Why is the Irish Health Service in Crisis? Dr Peadar O'Grady



"How can it be that, despite such unbelievable wealth, we have a health service that is now worse than it was in the 1980s when the country was in the depths of recession and threatened with bankruptcy?"

"Out of nearly 13,000 hospital beds only 8,000 are public beds. 2,500 beds are in private hospitals and almost 2,500 are private beds in public hospitals." "Drug companies are now the most profitable of all companies in the world. Even banks and oil companies are less profitable." €3 plus postage

IRISH ANTI WAR MOVEMENT

www.irishantiwar.org

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT

Anti War Movement steps up a gear

Multicultural picnic a success in uniting migrants and Irish

GALWAY

By Dette McLoughlin

Vigils, protests and demonstrations have erupted on the streets of Galway against the Israeli State's offensives in Gaza and Southern Lebanon.

SWP Galway organised a vigil in the city centre, each participant holding a letter to spell out "ISRAEL OUT OF GAZA/LEBANON".

In conjunction with Galway/Palestine Solidarity group members, collections were taken for Unicef and Hope orphanage in Gaza. Passers-by were very generous and supportive, over €400 were raised as many people expressed a feeling of helplessness.

When mobile phone company Meteor organised the visit to Ireland of Florida governor Jeb Bush, SWP again took the initiative to hold a demonstration outside the city centre Meteor shop to highlight the facts why this neo-con should not be welcomed to our country, and also to build for the forthcoming public meeting with Joshua Casteel, former Abu-Ghraib interrogator, and Raymond Deane of the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC).

Unfortunately none of the comprehensively circulated local fee newspapers had announced the event.

Ogre Sinn Fein, with Galway Alliance Against War (GAAW) support, organised a protest the next day and this was followed by the GAAW public meeting.

The meeting itself, even though held during the Galway Arts Festivals had an excellent turnout, with 100 people crammed into the Galway Children's Library.

Casteel of Iraqi Veterans Against the War called for the people of Ireland to demonstrate in numbers against the use of Shannon airport by U.S. military.

Having travelled through the airport himself whilst on active duty he said it would be

a huge boost to the U.S. anti-war movement if Ireland withdrew collaboration. Casteel was presented with a black shamrock badge and promptly asked for more to distribute to the Irish Diaspora in the movement back home.

Deane (IPSC) linked the events in Iraq and U.S. imperialism with the current situation in Gaza and South Lebanon.

He dispelled many myths: that the current violations of international law by Israeli forces are over a captured Israeli soldier, and that anti-Semitism has anything to do with the conflict.

A call came from the floor to hold an emergency demonstration the following Saturday, to coincide with the demonstration in Dublin to demand "Hands off Lebanon, Freedom for Palestine, Stop the War".

With only 48 hours public notice an emergency demonstration was held. 250 people braved gale-force winds to hear Mayor of Galway, Niall O'Brolchain, Green Party, and Councillor Colette Connolly, Labour party, speak out against Israel's bombardment of Lebanon and the lack of action by Irish and European politicians.

Abed Aldakar, SWP, originally from Syria courageously spoke out against the demonisation of the peoples in the Middle East, giving a human and political portrayal of life in the region and the omnipresent threat from the United States and Israel.

Gaeroid Quinn, international law student recently returned from the Golan Heights reported his experiences of life on the ground for the Palestinian people and explained the horrors of the current assaults.

Those assembled signed letters to Eamon O'Cuiv local T.D. protesting against the complicity of the Irish government in the murderous campaign of the Israeli state, and calling for the following

demands on the government.



Protesting Israeli assaults on Lebanon in Limerick

■ End Irish government co-operation with Israeli military.

■ The use of Shannon Airport / Irish airspace for Israeli military jets to be withdrawn.

■ Ireland, as a member of the European Union to call for an end to the preferential trade agreement between the EU and Israel and initiate a campaign to achieve this.

The demonstrators then marched through the streets to O'Cuiv's constituency office, chanting and singing, getting great response from onlookers who either joined in or applauded.

There was a united, militant mood and it was agreed that the pressure must not wane.

Another demonstration was held at the Fianna Fail race week dinner dance in Galway, when Bertie Aherne and several ministers attended the constituency event at a local hotel.

The protest was used to highlight the Irish government's complicity in war crimes, collaborating with the US/Israeli war machine by allowing them to use Shannon.

Once again the response from passers-by stopping to

join and congratulate the demonstrators was brilliant.

We must continue to build anti USUK/Israeli wars activity on the streets and use the

opportunity to broaden out the movement to those who are angered and motivated against the war-mongering of Bush, Blair and the Olmert.

ABU GHRAIB TOUR

Hundreds of people crammed into public meetings across the country to hear Joshua Casteel former Abu Ghraib interrogator speak in a national tour organised by the Irish Anti War Movement.

Over a hundred people attended in each of the meetings in Dublin, Cork and Galway. Successful meetings were also held in Sligo, Derry, Belfast, Athlone, Dundalk and Waterford.

Joshua spoke of how Iranian civilians were rounded up indiscriminately for interrogation. His deep religious convictions and

disgust at what was going on finally caused him to seek conscientious objector status.

He urged everyone to redouble their efforts to build opposition to the war and occupation.

In Dublin, Sligo, Derry and Belfast Joshua was joined on the platform by Hani Lazim from Iraqi Democrats Against the Occupation.

These meetings were a springboard for rejuvenating the anti war groups in the towns and cities visited as people signed up to join the Irish Anti War Movement and its affiliated groups.

CORK

120 people packed the Metropole Hotel for a Public Meeting with ex Abu Ghraib interrogator Joshua Casteel organised by Cork Alliance Against War.

The meeting heard the harrowing accounts of Joshua's first hand experience of working in the Torture prison, and how he became a

conscientious objector and later Iraqi veteran against War once the realisation set in that this was not about fighting terrorism. 60 people signed up to Cork Alliance Against War.

The onslaught of Israel/US savagery in Lebanon has seen over 50 people maintain a weekly Saturday vigil in Daunt Square.

On Saturday Aug 7th there will be a solidarity demonstration with the national demonstration in Dundalk called by the Irish Palestine Solidarity campaign to protest against the war being waged in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq.

The demonstration will assemble at 2 PM in Daunt Sq.

JEB BUSH PROTEST

Around a hundred people joined a lunchtime protest at Florida governor and president's brother Jeb Bush in Dublin in late July.

Jeb Bush was speaking at a business lunch sponsored by Meteor.

The protest was called by the Irish Anti War Movement,

the Peace and Neutrality Alliance and the NGO Peace Alliance.

Jeb Bush is a signatory to the neo-cons Project For a New American century which set out US plans for the domination of the Middle East.

The lively protest was joined by Joshua Casteel, a

former US military interrogator in Iraq and who now is with Iraq Veterans Against War.

Joshua arrived that morning to spend two weeks touring Ireland to speak at successful and well attended meetings organised by the Irish Anti War Movement.

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.



New Left Journal is available at €3 plus postage from Bookmarx, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

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

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

REVOLUTION

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

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

greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

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

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

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION

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

working class.

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

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

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

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

We want to see an Irish workers republic where all

workers gain.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

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

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

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

Join the Socialists

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

Name.....

Address.....

Email.....

Phone.....



Socialist Worker

The fight is still on to send SHELL TO SEA

By Maura Harrington of the Davitt League and Shell to Sea Campaign, Co. Mayo

Shell's latest proposal to re-route the gas pipeline in Rossport is a joke.

This proposal is not a result of the mediation and report of Peter Cassells.

Shell have made this latest proposal because Justice Lafoy instructed both Shell and the State to produce legal documentation in the Courts relating to leases, plans of development, etc.

Judge Lafoy was ruling on a counter-case taken by two Rossport residents injunctioned by the company.

The case has been under-reported but is very significant. Shell is running for cover by suggesting re-routing the pipeline

Last year, two days after the Rossport 5 were imprisoned at the request of Shell, the Dáil shut up shop for the summer.

With the honourable exception of Joe Higgins, Michael D. and a handful of Independents, most notably Jerry Cowley, our so-called elected representatives took off on their long holidays hoping the spirit of five decent men would be broken before the summer was over.

Two days after the shits in suits came back, following a summer which saw the growth of the Shell to Sea campaign and a growing awareness of the ultimate rip-off of our natural resources, Shell and their government partners folded under popular pressure and scrambled desperately for a way to defuse what had become an international story.

They devised a two-pronged strategy: an Independent Safety review (ISR), and 'mediation'. As usual, where Shell dictates and ministerial minions hop to it, the whole thing was second-rate.

The IRS terms of reference were overly restrictive. Advantica the company which conducted the IRS, acted properly within their narrow terms of reference.

But it is noteworthy that they offered only recommendations that did not, of themselves, carry a professional indemnity liability.

The Cassells Report is a different kettle of (stinking) fish. As most trade unionists know – to their cost – Cassells is a government man.

In the case of our natural resources the government is dictated to by the oil companies. Dá bhri



Members of the Shell To Sea Campaign from Mayo take the long walk from Bellinaboy to Dublin. They will arrive in Dublin around midday on Saturday 12th August where they will be joined and welcomed by hundreds of supporters.

"We are walking from Mayo to Dublin to get the truth to the people of Ireland – the media don't tell the full truth. Everywhere we go we are getting fantastic support with many local people walking with us for miles, taking us into their homes and offering us tremendous support" – Terence, one of the walk organisers.

In the case of our natural resources the government is dictated to by the oil companies.

sin (therefore), Cassells was never in any danger of 'going native' as spun by Shell prior to publication of his report.

My opinion of this report is that, by it, Cassells has shown himself to be a fool and a knave.

Firstly, he's a fool in that he has failed to grasp the fundamental elements of a mediation process vis a vis negotiation, arbitration or just plain horse trading.

Cassell's facilitation of the Shell/Dempsey spin that the Rossport 5 refused face-to-face 'dialogue' shows, at best, an ignorance of what mediation is about.

Prior to and following the Good Friday Agreement nobody was buying for Adams and Paisley to be thrown into a room together for

'dialogue'.

Secondly, there is no indication in the report that it was conducted in a proper scientific manner. In order to state a finding, it is necessary to have quantitative data to back it up.

In that context, I believe Cassells has proven himself a knave. This is based on his own words (Section 5, p. 10) reproduced in full below.

From my discussions with local people it is clear a majority of people in Rossport, the wider Erris area and Co. Mayo are in favour of the project. They expressed a wide range of views and concerns to me about the project but at the end of the day the safety of their families, their neighbours and the local environment was their absolute priority.

Local people fall generally into three categories:

those who were in favour of the project from day one and have not changed their minds

those who are in favour of the project but still have genuine concerns.

those who are opposed to any development in the area.

During my consultations concerns were expressed about intimidation of people in the local area. I asked that these complaints be brought to the Garda Síochána as the only group who could investigate them.

Cassells' 'discussions' with local people did not include all the people of Rossport; did not include all business people in Kilcommon parish (which he misspells twice); or Shell to Sea as a representative group (which he incorrectly acknowledges under local consultation).

His categorisation of local people is reprehensible. He denigrates the Rossport 5 and Shell to Sea by portraying us as being opposed to any development in the area. Cassells is displaying a failed Twentieth Century mindset and deserves to be strung up from the nearest lamppost – metaphorically of course!

Members of Shell to Sea and Rossport 5 who have gone door-to-door in Erris with information leaflets within the past month have the empirical evidence to give the lie to Cassells's claim that there is a clear majority in favour of this proposed excrescence.

In short, Cassells' report is unscientific in its execution, badly written (14 proof errors at least), factually incorrect in many areas and disingenuous in its attempt to re-brand the Shell production pipeline as a regular Bord Gáis one.

If Cassells, or Shell, think that by re-routing the pipeline they would resolve this dispute or that by dropping the injunction they will heal wounds, they need their heads examined.

At the first meeting between Cassells and the Rossport 5, Willie Corduff refused to shake hands saying he would be the first to do so if he found Cassells to be an honest man. There's been no handshake!

The fight goes on ...