

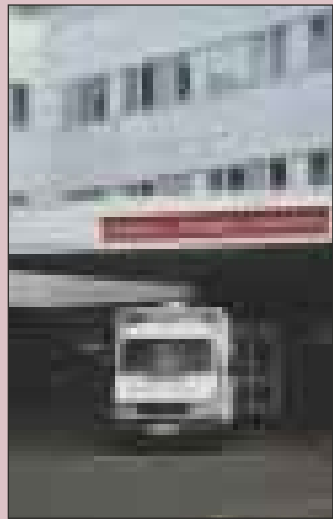
INSIDE

Why the Raytheon 9 were right



Page 12

**Crisis in the Health Service
Pay the Nurses!**



Page 6

PSNI: Who do they serve?



Page 2

Plus:

Mike Gonzalez on Tariq Ali on Chavez
Page 8

Brian Cowen's Budget for employers

Page 4

STOP CIA TORTURE FLIGHTS!

Ireland stands accused by the Council of Europe of having colluded with the CIA in abducting prisoners destined for prisons such as Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

The US has admitted to having an 'extraordinary rendition' programme. This has led to 10,000 people having been denied basic human rights and effectively their having been kidnapped.

Testimony from former prisoners shows that there is a widespread use of various forms of torture practiced upon them by the CIA. Some of them are trying, without success so far, to sue the CIA for abduction and torture.

Ireland's part in this has been to allow the CIA to use Shannon airport as part of their system of transportation for these rendition flights.

This has been known about since April, when Amnesty International gave a very detailed report about US aircraft using the airport.

Their report *Below the radar: Secret flights to torture and 'disappearance'*, was based on data obtained from Eurocontrol, Europe's



Irish army watch as CIA flight lands at Shannon April 2006

air safety agency, as well as 50 hours of testimony from individuals who were victims of US secret service operations in Europe.

Subsequently, anti-war activists at Shannon have seen the same planes highlighted in the Amnesty report using the airport. Now this evidence has been supported by the enquiry of the Council of Europe, who list 147 such flights.

The response of the Government has been to argue that just because certain aircraft have been identified as being involved in the 'rendition' process does not mean that when they land at Shannon they

are carrying kidnapped prisoners.

On 18 February 2003 a CIA-operated plane from Cairo, landed at Shannon immediately upon transferring Abu Omar to Egypt from Germany after his abduction in Italy.

This specific example was made the subject of a parliamentary question to which Dermot Ahern, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, replied that 'the allegations made about it and other planes... do not involve a claim of illegal activity on Irish territory.'

Again, in the light of the Council of Europe report, Dermot Ahern said that 'not one shred of evidence of any sort

has ever been adduced that extraordinary rendition has occurred through Irish airports or territory.'

But apart from the detailed itineraries of these planes assembled by Amnesty and anti-war activists, what other evidence could there be?

The only other way to test whether prisoners are on board the planes would be to unexpectedly send the Gardai on to them to investigate. And the findings would be extremely interesting.

There is, of course, no way that this kind of investigation will happen under the current government. Fianna

Fail and the PD's are fawning in their obsequiousness towards the US authorities.

When pressured by Joe Higgins in the Dail over the issue, Dermot Ahern stuck to the line that since US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice had assured him 'that no prisoners have been transferred through Irish airports, nor would they be, without our permission', there was no further reason to act.

But could Ireland have gotten any other response from the Condoleezza Rice? She was hardly likely to have thrown up her arms in response to a tentative enquiry from Minister Ahern and admitted that the US had breached international law as well as Irish sovereignty.

The government line is that they will not pursue the matter further without the kind of direct evidence that they have no intention of searching for.

To stop the use of Shannon by CIA torture flights will therefore take a sustained campaign, further case studies and, above all, a change of government. 'Rendition' is yet another reason to make Shannon an election issue.

MAKE SHANNON AN ELECTION ISSUE

QUOTES OF THE FORTNIGHT

“You may succeed in silencing me but that silence comes at a price. You have shown yourself to be as barbaric and ruthless as your most hostile critics have claimed.”

Alexander Litvinenko, the former KGB spy who died after being poisoned, accusing Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“A new brutalist philosophy which values only the so-called ‘top schools’ as presented by league tables will have long-term consequences for Irish society and our economy.”

John White from the Association of Secondary Teachers Association of Ireland.

“My son is an honest man.”

George H. W. Bush, defending the current President.

“I firmly believe that the war could have been avoided.”

Kofi Annan, the outgoing United Nations Secretary-General, saying that the war in Iraq was his biggest regret.

“The Taoiseach is astute and brilliant, a noble and the consummate politician.”

Brian Cowen, Minister for Finance who is always good for a laugh.

“It’s not the first time, by the way, where people have showed up and expressed their opinion about my policies.”

President Bush responds to the wave of protests that met him when he arrived in Indonesia.

“The Green Party jihadists of the environmental movement seem hellbent to make Ireland a martyr to their peculiar vision of environmental purity. Their policies on climate change would bankrupt Ireland and set back the economic gains of the past 20 years.”

Minister for the Environment Dick Roche gets a little hot under the collar.

“If it wasn’t for this hospital, and if I hadn’t got here in time, I don’t think I’d be alive today to talk to you.”

Following a serious health emergency country singer ‘Big Tom’ McBride gives his ‘total support’ for the campaign to save Monaghan Hospital, including a street demonstration in Dublin soon.

“The Government is behind gardai in keeping the road open and allowing the project go on. Ireland’s energy needs are such that this project must proceed. We have gone through all forms of due process.”

“We have gone through all forms of conciliation and a tiny minority of people are confronting the law and they are being supported in this by the Sinn Fein party.”

Minister for Shell, Michael McDowell, on the baton charging of campaigners in Mayo.

Warplanes over Galway



US Troops using Shannon airport

Galway City Council will soon be voting on whether to allocate funding for the Salthill Air show next summer.

The Salthill Air show as it exists is extremely militaristic: it displays warplanes and glorifies war.

It provides propaganda for military air forces, such as the

RAF and the USAF, that are currently engaged in wars in breach of international law and are responsible for the deaths of many thousands of innocent civilians around the world.

Public funds, raised from hard-pressed taxpayers, have better uses than to be supporting this kind of militarism in

the skies over Galway.

Last year the city council allocated €15,000 of the city’s annual budget to the air show.

It is clear from the huge turnout at last summer’s protest against the air show (including the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, several Councillors and the local Labour Party

T.D) that the show does not have widespread support among the ordinary people of Galway.

Galway Alliance Against War is asking Councillors to vote against any public funding of the air show, or to make any such funding conditional on the absence of warplanes.

Mayfield says ‘no’ to phone mast

Last year an attempt to site a mobile phone mast in Mayfield, Cork, was defeated on health grounds by residents, including campaigner Ted Tynan of the Workers Party.

In March, however, the mast reappeared, this time erected on top of the Centra Supermarket in Mayfield.

“The southern health board crèche is less than 100 metres from the mast. Babies and their mother visit the nurse there as well as old people visiting the community nurse,” says Ted.

A small number of people continue to picket the new location hoping to encourage people to boycott the shop, while



Campaigner: Ted Tynan

educating them on the dangers of the mast.

Ted says there was a

lack of awareness on the issue.

“We give people the

leaflet and explain how electro magnetic radiation destroys red blood cells,

particularly in young people.

“We’re educating people all the time. We were there for an hour last week and spoke to 30 odd people.

“We explain the dangers and they turn around again and drive out straight away.”

The Centra is estimated to be earning €30,000 a year in rent having the mast on top of the shop. But it is hoped the constant education of the local population on the health effects of the mast will have sufficient impact on the profits of the store that the owner will have to reconsider their decision to facilitate the mast

INSIDE THE SYSTEM

According to voluntary organisations there are over 300 Polish emigrants sleeping rough in Dublin every night. Most of the homeless appear to be drawn to the Phoenix Park, bus shelters and Garda stations.

The Health Services Executive admitted that they don’t have a handle of what is now a growing problem among immigrants to this country.

Not a single piece of legislation has been passed into law since the 16 July when the Dail rose for its summer recess.

A new EU ‘Television without Frontiers’ directive is currently being drafted

in Brussels. It will bring more ad breaks and the introduction to Europe for the first time of product placement.

Race-related complaints soared by 75pc in the first nine months of the year.

A new report by the Equality Authority reveals there has been a record jump in the number of employment complaints from January to September 2006.

Meath gaelic footballer Graham Geraghty is Fine Gael’s latest celebrity candidate. Geraghty comes with a fine track record.

In 1999 while playing in the International Rules series he racially abused

an Australian player. In 2004 he was suspended for 48 weeks for throwing a bottle at a referee after a club game. Geraghty is seeking a nomination in the new constituency of Meath West.

The education system is still failing thousands of students despite Mary Hanafin’s protestations that investment has been adequate in the sector.

The recent report from the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) reveals that almost 20pc of students drop out before their Leaving Certificate.

More Irish people are dying from lung cancer caused by radon gas in their homes

than anywhere else in the world. p to 200 people a year die here from lung cancer caused by radon, which is way above the global average.

A study in Galway revealed that one in five homes in Galway have high levels of the naturally occurring gas. It is one of the worst counties in the country for the gas.

More evidence of growing debt levels in Ireland from the CSO. One in 10 households last year were ‘experiencing debt problems arising from ordinary living expenses’ and the number is up from 8.7pc in 2004.

This involved debt brought about by routine costs such as meeting ordinary household bills,

school or Christmas expenses, according to the survey on Income and Living Conditions.

More people in Ireland are at risk of poverty than nearly anywhere else in Europe, with non-nationals much more vulnerable than Irish people.

Eleven million people in the US cannot at times afford to feed themselves.

US authorities have decided for the first time in their reporting to wipe out the word hunger from official Department of Agriculture reports and to replace it with ‘very low food security’.

It has met with a storm of protest from anti poverty campaigners

Socialist Worker**EDITORIAL**

A budget for the employers

Brian Cowen's Budget for 2007 has been described as a 'green and grey' plan for the Ireland's finances. The description is supposed to be praiseworthy, highlighting the elements in the budget that favour the environment and the elderly.

The budget can only seem positive from a standpoint that fails to take into account both the massive revenues at the disposal of Fianna Fail and the PDs, as well as the desperate state of housing and healthcare in Ireland.

This year the government had more than €2bn extra revenue from stamp duty alone. Instead of offering radical action in the crisis areas, Cowen exercised what the business classes call 'prudence'. For the employers, as expressed through their organisation, IBEC, a prudent government is one that reduces expenditure growth, contains wages and promotes private enterprise in public services. Why? Because Ireland's businesses are looking ahead to the possibility of a bleaker international business climate.

In the last five years construction and retail services rather than exports have fuelled Ireland's growth. Raising the spectre of future hardship, IBEC discussed the budget in the light of a sharp fall in Ireland's competitiveness. From their perspective it would not have been prudent to cut lose



Brian Cowen's Budget: painting green and grey

with the €2bn and spend it on, for example, meeting the demands of Ireland's nurses (see centre spread).

It is worth pausing a moment to think through the logic behind this term: prudence. If, in a time of recession and unemployment, the workforce are told there is no money for their demands, as we were during the 1980s, then surely now, with record government revenues, is the time for living standards to be improved? If not now, when?

Were we to follow IBEC's thinking, there would never, in fact, be a time for a major injection of resources into health, housing, public transport, education and all the other key areas for the quality of life, not just of workers, but the entire population.

When you consider what Cowen could have done with this budget, then it becomes apparent how much he has accepted the IBEC perspective.

There are 32,000 children

in households awaiting long term homes. The total assessed need for social housing according to the Department of the Environment was 43,684 households. Under the last partnership agreement this was to be addressed, but in fact only 1,500 new houses have been built so far. The budget could have commissioned 10,000 new houses for those most in need and made a commitment to continue building until the need for social housing was met.

Alternatively, in transport, the country is in such a state that every day commuters are spending hours of their lives trapped in traffic. Traffic congestion is also impacting on business. Instead of privatising roads, through tolls, Cowen could have commissioned a new fleet of urban and inter-city buses; accompanying them with light rail LUAS-style hubs outside of the major cities. Reserving a lane on the motorway for these buses would then give a major incentive to abandon the car in favour of public transport; something that is needed not only to cut down the logjam of traffic, but also for the sake of reducing Ireland's shocking level of carbon emissions.

The same kind of point can be made in every sphere. The Irish Medical Organisation, for example, has quite rightly argued that Ireland has experienced a major deficit on health spending over the years, compared to European equivalents. Their demand for 15,000 public acute in-patient hospital and a focus spending on the public hospital system rather than the private hospital system is the least that was needed to meet the emergency health requirements of a growing population.

In other words, this was not a prudent budget; it was a betrayal of the basic needs of the population in favour of the perspective of big business.

Time to support Rossport and fight Shell

It has been obvious for a long time that a major strategy of the government and Shell has been to belittle the legitimate concerns of the broad campaign of Shell to Sea, which enjoys huge public support. A recent TG4 poll showed that two thirds of people supported the action taken by the Rossport 5.

For the past few weeks, the people of Rossport have been subjected to the brutal force of the Gardai protecting the gates of Bellinaboy and enforcing the will of Shell. The state has consciously set out to ensure that this campaign is smashed. On the orders of Minister for Justice

McDowell, millions of euro is being poured into this operation.

We have had accusations that the campaign is controlled by 'outside forces', somehow suggesting that the plight of the people of Rossport and the control of Ireland's natural resources could only never be a concern of anyone outside of Mayo.

Secondly, there have been accusations of violence on the part of Shell to Sea protesters from both government and opposition parties. This is despite evidence to show excessive force being used by gardai, such as the report covered in this issue of *Socialist Worker*.

We have been subjected to the Minister Noel Dempsey quoting from a tale of another TD of an overheard a phone conversation on Grafton Street, where the words 'Rossa' and 'riot' were mentioned. This feeble attempt to discredit the protestors ought to have been met with cries of derision rather than have been reported as a serious point by the news media.

Finally, a *Sunday Independent* poll cleverly did not publish a key finding which asked respondents their preferred development model for the Corrib project. This question showed that 44% supported an off-

shore processing of the gas. In addition the *Independent* underplayed the fact that 59% said they would protest if it was on their doorstep and a majority polled felt the campaign spoke for all or a majority of the community.

Despite what has been said, all of us have good reason to continue fight Shell on this issue. Gas prices were increased by 34% from 1 October. Shell have the rights to all the gas from the Corrib basin: not a penny of that natural resource will come back to the people of this country.

These facts confirm what we

already know, which is that there is massive public support for the campaign. It is vital, however, in light of recent decisions to call off protests that the campaign is spread. The call from the People Before Profit Conference for a national day of action early in the new year in Dublin is one way of showing the true nature of the support for the people of Rossport and putting an end to the media lie. It was the thousands on the streets of Dublin that finally brought the Rossport Five from jail and likewise thousands on the streets of Dublin in the New-Year can do the same.

Garda brutality: An injury to us all

By Paul Carroll

'We were standing there and all uniformed Gardai were ordered to withdraw.

'So they withdrew 20 feet and we were given our final warning. They were ordered to draw batons and they advanced on the crowd. The interesting thing about that was when they were given the order to draw batons some guards were quite happy to do so, but others looked terrified advancing on the crowd because they didn't know what was going to happen. Some of them didn't draw any batons at all.

'I went down and they basically marched over you and forced the crowd backwards as much as possible. They knocked off enough of us and cleared us away and they corralled the rest of us. I jumped into the dumper

part of the truck that was full of rocks.'

'Their "public order specialist" advanced on me taking out his steel extendable baton and telling me to get off the truck. I said I wasn't getting off the truck.'

So I lay down and covered myself as much as I could because I knew what was coming. He jumped and leaned on my back with his knee and prodded me with his baton a couple of times.

'I cut my face on the rocks as he forced my face into them. Using the baton on pressure points he forced me off the truck because I was in too much pain.'

These are the words to explain the picture of a bloodied James McBarron, a member of the Workers Solidarity Movement who was attended the National Day of Solidarity on with Shell to Sea at the

Bellanaboy work site, Friday 10 November.

After being taken from the truck James was thrown in the drain, lifted from it and dragged back through police lines.

Earlier that morning a large group of local activists supported by solidarity movements from around the country had arrived at the Bellanaboy junction. The Gardai began sealing off the road immediately.

Normally protestors are allowed on that road, but on that Friday Gardai banned the march under the Public Order Act without informing anyone.

After brutally clearing a path for the convoy of works vehicles, the police launched a second round of attacks on protestors at Lennon's Quarry, where people were beaten and some thrown onto barbed wire.

A further blockade at



James McBarron

Barret's Quarry saw a local fisherman, Pat O'Donnell, knocked to the ground and kicked, receiving fractures. He was one of four protestors who were hospitalised that day at the hands, feet and batons of Shell's finest.

With Tony O'Reilly owning so much of Ireland's media and with a handful of corporations internationally deciding what is news, you can't afford to miss Socialist Worker. The paper provides essential news of the many struggles and protests across Ireland, north and south and an alternative, socialist, view on topics otherwise dominated by conservative voices.

The best way to ensure you get each issue is to subscribe by filling in the box on page 4. You can also read the paper and extensive archives online, at <http://www.swp.ie/html/socialistworker.htm>

Socialist Worker welcomes reports and announcements from those involved in campaigns. We also are keen to get feedback from readers with your thoughts on the articles we carry. Feel free to get in touch, or submit comments and articles of your own. Contact editor@swp.ie

NEW LABOUR ON THE RUN FROM WATER CAMPAIGN!

By Eamonn McCann

The authorities in the North are running scared of the campaign for non-payment of water charges.

A leaked memo from Water Service CEO Katherine Bryan reveals that a special propaganda unit has been set up to try to combat the non-payment campaign.

But the trade union movement is set to deliver a leaflet through the post to every household in the North calling for mass refusal to pay. This follows a motion for non-payment passed at the ICTU conference in Newry in May.

Campaigners from Communities Against Water Charges, the We Won't Pay campaign and individual local groups are meeting widespread support collecting non-payment pledges door-to-door.

There are signs of some within the main political parties thinking again about their opposition to non-payment: although none of the leaderships has moved towards non-payment.

SWP members in the North have been arguing for non-payment both because the changes are unfair and as a means of resistance to privatisation of the water industry.

New Labour had hoped to bring in charges last April. But grassroots opposition forced a postponement. Hain and his hatchet-woman Bryan are now determined to impose the charges from 1 April 2007 and simultaneously to hand water over to a Government-owned Company (GoCo). This would operate as an



'ordinary' commercial firm. Full-scale privatisation would come in 2008 - 9.

The purpose of the charges is to provide a revenue flow for the private company. Charges and privatisation are bound up together. A successful non-payment campaign would scupper privatisation.

There has been deep anger at the debt-enforcers brought in by Bryan dividing the North into 'rock bottom' people and 'affluent achievers'. The private debt-collectors, Crystal

Alliance, proposed in a secret document to take a bare-knuckle approach to the 'rock-bottom' element, but to wear kid gloves when dealing with the 'affluent achievers'.

Bryan went on television to deny any insult. But she didn't deny the statement had been made and the strategy planned.

In fact, legal advice obtained by the main water union, Nipsa, tells that, 'non-payment of water charges does not amount to a criminal offence.' This has eased the anxiety

of many who knew the charges were a scam, but were nervous about not paying.

Nipsa's lawyers confirmed the Water Service will not be able to dock wages or benefits or cut off supplies. All they'll be able to do is take people individually to the Small Claims Court. If there are enough non-payers, this will be impossible.

People in the North have been paying all along for water, through the rates. But rates are being raised, too. We are being asked - forced

- to pay twice. The message of the campaign is, 'don't pay twice, it's alright.'

It's because they face mass resistance that Water Service chiefs made a number of 'concessions.' An 'affordability tariff' offers reduced charges to the worst-off, for two years. After that, everybody will have to pay the full whack.

The people who'll be hit hardest will be those on the edge of poverty. Poverty levels in Northern Ireland are officially in line with across the water. But this is only because over-all housing costs are lower. Water charges would push Northern Ireland disastrously down the poverty league.

Nipsa general secretary John Corey has rightly described official union support for non-payment as 'unprecedented'. Trades councils and union branches now have the opportunity to mobilise communities across the North. There is no doubt there's enough potential support to defeat charges and privatisation if it's organised to give people confidence they are not on their own.

The non-payment campaign cuts across sectarian divisions. It can't succeed on the basis of support in one community. This is one reason the main parties - all based on communal identity - are so unenthusiastic.

But with them or without them, trade unionists, socialists and community activists are determined to build the campaign street-by-street and to put manners on the arrogant New Labour regime.

PSNI: who do they serve?

The debate about Sinn Fein and policing gathers more significance as the DUP uses it to duck the issue of power-sharing. There is no doubt about SF support for policing generally. Councillor Larry O'Toole recently became vice-chair of Dublin's joint policing committee, in spite of the Dublin cops' anti-working class record: seen most vividly in the case of Terence Wheelock.

The question whether the PSNI could ever be accountable to the nationalist community is seen as the crux of the North's policing debate. Will the PSNI ever treat Catholic working class people with respect? Can it be made accountable through the bodies established as part of the Pattern forms: the District Policing Partnerships; the Police Board and the Police Ombudsman? These are the questions being asked as Sinn Fein prepare to join the Police Board and to urge supporters to back the PSNI.

But there is an even more fundamental question. How realistic is the idea of any 'police service' treating working class people with respect? Fiona McCausland is a community worker in Old Warren, an estate generally described as 'loyalist'. She says she joined the Lisburn District Policing Partnership (DPP) because she thought it possible to work in partnership with the police.

The reality has been very different. There is no question of partnership. Indeed



Fiona says, what they want to do is 'to control everything that happens in the community... They have huge powers and they hate us. They hate us because we're trying to do things to improve the community. They'd prefer it if we were all drug dealers and criminals. They think they're superior and we're inferior.'

'I really don't see the DPP as holding them accountable. In fact, the local police don't seem to be accountable for lots of things, like murder, which is the responsibility of the Police Board. The DPP deals only with less serious crime.'

'They didn't talk to me for the first few years I was on the DPP because I was asking questions. Even when the DUP ask them questions, they go mad. They cannot take even the mildest form of criticism.'

Last year, Protestant and Catholic women from Old Warren and Tonagh estates in Lisburn came together to try to get the drug dealers out of the area. They went to a DPP meeting to ask questions about why known drug dealers were being protected by the police. In spite of Fiona being on the DPP and able to keep up the pressure, they still have had no answers.

To make matters worse, it is now officially too late to go to the Police Ombudsman about the issue.

Fiona has little faith in the Ombudsman either. 'This community has heaps of complaints with the Ombudsman about the way people, especially young people, have been treated. But it took a year and a half for the Ombudsman's Office to get the name of a police officer and it's having to deal with notebooks going missing and police officers refusing to make themselves available for interview.'

When Fiona talks to friends in Catholic areas about the way people in her community are treated, they are astonished. The 'reforms' were seen as needed to protect Catholics, and yet things are every bit as bad - or worse - now in Protestant areas. She has minutes of a meeting where a police officer explains why this is the case: 'it's because we can't get away with it in nationalist areas anymore,' he said.

The experience of Old Warren shows that there is a problem with the whole concept of policing in class society. The problem isn't partition, or sectarianism; although there are still question marks over the PSNI's record on sectarianism. The problem is that the police exist mainly to keep working class people 'in their place' and protect the position and property of the rich.

Raytheon 'bunker buster' missiles used by Israel to bomb Lebanese civilians

RAYTHEON & the Global Arms Trade



Speaker:

Eamonn McCann

(Author, journalist and one of the 10 protestors being prosecuted for occupying the Raytheon offices in Derry)

3pm Saturday
9th December
Cassidys Hotel, Parnell Sq, D1



INTERNATIONAL

SOCIALIST ELECTED TO US SENATE:**Bernie Sanders: Bushwhacker?**

By Eoin Martin

One of the positive outcomes of the U.S. Mid-Term elections is that for the first time in U.S. history a self-proclaimed socialist has been elected to the Senate.

Bernie Sanders, the longest serving independent to sit in the House of Representatives (having served as member for Vermont at-large since 1991), was born into a poor British immigrant family in Brooklyn New York in 1941. He was involved in the early 70s in the Liberty Union party; a party set up as an alternative to the Republicans and the Democrats in Vermont.

Sanders later went on to become independent mayor of Burlington, Vermont's largest town; a major blow to the Democrats who had held the mayoral position almost undisputed before Sanders. While serving as mayor, Sanders was involved in the formation of the Progressive Coalition, a third political party for Burlington, which defended Sanders' reforms against the strong business interest of the Democrats and Republicans. These reforms included a Women's Council which fought for women's rights in the state; an arts council which oversaw greater investment in the arts; a land-trust housing scheme (the first in the U.S.) which expanded low and middle income housing; and a broadening

of the tax base so that business interests were targeted.

When he reached Congress, Sanders ensured the extension of the Commodity Supplemental Food Programme and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programme to ensure food and fuel subsidies for lower income households. He was also heavily involved in the founding of the House Progressive Caucus, a body in the House of Representatives that seeks to represent the interests of ordinary Americans and bring about a just America. One of the main issues of this group is to oppose the war in Iraq. It works to highlight for example the actual cost of the war, which currently stands at \$346,000,000,000 and grows rapidly.

Sanders campaigned on a number of important issues. These included a major campaign to lower the cost of prescription-drugs by introducing the 'reimportation' legislation into Congress.

This has met huge opposition from the Republican administration and their friends, the major pharmaceutical firms.

Sanders also fought successfully on the issue of I.B.M. Vermont cutting employee pensions. He is also a strong, and active, opponent of the un-constitutional contents of the U.S.A. Patriot Act and of the growing consolidation of media in the hands of the corporations, which he sees as a serious threat to American liberty. He is also an active voice against the war in Iraq; he voted against the \$87,000,000,000 that Bush requested to continue the war. He has also made repeated calls for a complete overhaul of environmental legislation in favour of conservation.

Though Sanders' election to the Senate does not herald a socialist revolution in the U.S., or even an imminent rise of the left, it is nonetheless significant and a pointer towards the future. Sanders has been elected to the Senate in the same election as the first ever Muslim, Keith Ellison in Minnesota, was elected to the House of Representatives.

Support for Sanders and Ellison shows that the torch of common sense has not been extinguished completely in the U.S. by what is in effect a one party executive and an all-powerful media which is dominated by the corporations.

In his victory speech Ellison declared that 'we showed that a candidate can run a 100% positive campaign and pre-



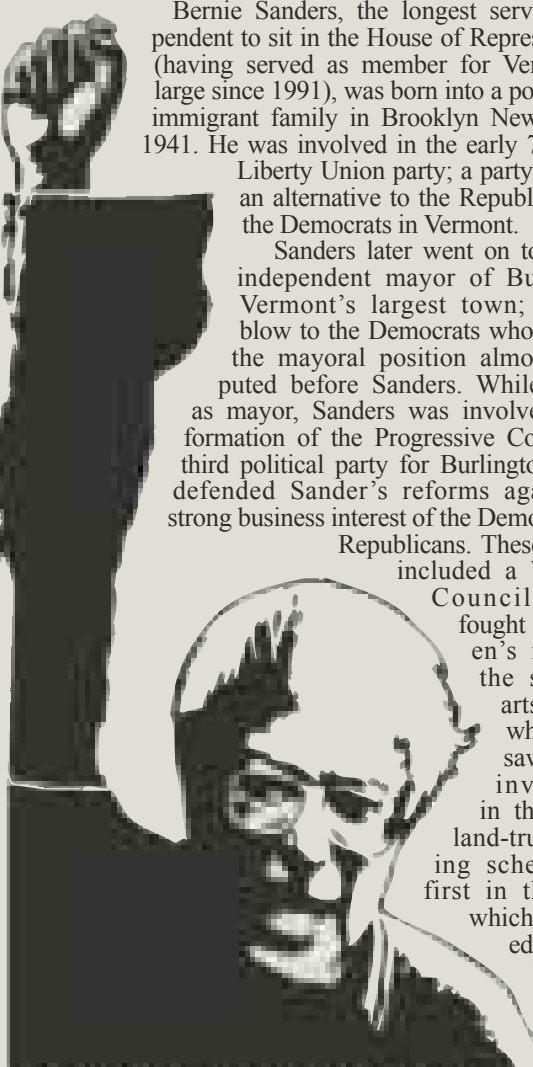
Senator Bernie Sanders

vail, even against tough opposition.'

That Ellison could secure a victory against Bush-administration sponsored racism and Sanders can be elected to the Upper House on such important issues as the environment and the war in Iraq shows that there is substantial hope for the left in the world's most powerful state.

On a more immediate scale the elections show that George W. Bush and the Republican Party cannot remain in power much longer, considering Republican candidates such as Arnold Schwarzenegger refused to be seen with the President because his un-popularity loses votes.

For Bernie Sanders see www.bernie.org; for the House Progressive Caucus see www.bernie.house.gov where you can also see exactly how much the war in Iraq is costing by the second. For Keith Ellison see www.keithellison.org.



BERNIE SANDERS FOR SENATE

A Letter from Colombia: Toxic Fumigation

By Antonio José

As Alvaro Uribe Velez enters his second term as president of Colombia, the situation for the majority of the subsistence farming campesinos and urban working classes remains desperate.

There are currently two million displaced people in Colombia, with hundreds arriving daily in the slums of the main urban centres like Bogotá and Medellín.

Under Plan Colombia (a pact between the U.S and Colombia which involves an annual 1.3 billion dollars in military aid to the Colombian military for the so called 'war on drugs') a campaign of indiscriminate and toxic fumigation has been waged on large parts of Colombian territory.

The effect of the 'war on drugs' is to suppress popular movements in order to pave the way for the exploitation of Colombia's vast natural oil and gas resources by multinational corporations.

One of Uribe's latest fronts in his U.S backed militaristic strategy concerns the National Park of La Macarena.

This area is situated east of the Andes Mountains in the department of Meta, where the llanos plains meet the Amazon. In 1989 the Colombian government declared La Macarena a national park based upon its unique biodiversity and ecological importance.



The 'war on drugs': suppressing popular movements to allowing multinationals to exploit Colombia's oil and gas resources

There are several thousand campesino subsistence families living in La Macarena, who established communities there after escaping the political violence in the 1950s and 1960s.

Left wing peasant self defence groups were formed among them to protect themselves against state military repression, these groups were incorporated into the Fuerzas armadas revolucionarias de Colombia or FARC (in its

Spanish initials) in 1966, who continue to govern La Macarena and who provide public services such as social aid, justice and security in areas neglected by the state.

In the last twenty years coca has been cultivated in La Macarena as a means to supplement the meagre earnings from subsistence crops like avocado, yucca and papaya.

In December 2005, with a national election looming and

little progress in his war against the guerrillas, Uribe called for a national offensive into La Macarena National Park.

In order to be seen to be protecting the delicate eco systems of the national park, Uribe sent in 1000 manual eradicators with 3500 troops in support as opposed to the normal aerial spraying of the coca crops, this new strategy was meant to pave the way for an eco-friendly assault in the 'war on drugs'.

After a week of fighting with the FARC, the Colombian military suffered many losses and many of the paid eradicators fled back to their homes in other parts of the country.

The Colombian military was bogged down not being able to move beyond the eradication zone.

Early in 2006 Uribe ordered massive aerial bombardments of FARC positions that included campesino communi-

ties and large sections of the national park, after which Uribe announced that immediate aerial fumigation would begin.

The agent used in the aerial spraying is a herbicide glyphosate which is banned in the U.S.

It defoliates forest, destroys food crops as well as coca, poisons the soil and severely affects the health of the people who are exposed to the chemicals.

Not only do the campesinos lose their means of providing food to their families and suffer severe ill health but before every fumigation U.S supplied helicopter gunships spray the area with bullets to clear the way.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced due to the spraying, yet the amount of cocaine entering the U.S and European countries has increased.

As growing rejection of neoliberalism grows in Latin America, Colombia stands as a strategic toehold for US interests in South America. Uribe is a key supporter of those whose eyes are on Colombia's vast natural resources.

Only with his downfall can there be an end to the oppression, exploitation and destruction of Colombia's campesinos, working class and indigenous people: the ones who are suffering the most in this conflict.

OUR TRADITION

The Comintern and the National Question

By Conor Kostick

The Communist International, or Comintern, was an organisation founded in the revolutionary era that followed the Great War.

It was an international body of those who sympathised with the Russian Revolution and, until twisted into a tool for Russian foreign policy by the rise of Stalin, the Comintern was involved in the greatest mass movements ever seen.

From 1919 to 1922, heady with the anticipation of being able to achieve socialism in the immediate future, the meetings of the Comintern nevertheless knuckled down to a sober assessment of the various and complex political tasks that they faced.

The resolutions and debates of the first four gatherings of delegates from around the world at the congresses of the Comintern are fascinating reading and the problems they tackled are full of relevance to today.

The formulations of the Comintern on the 'national question' seem particularly pertinent and worthy of re-examination.

Naturally, the revolutionaries of the era wanted to see successful revolts by colonies against empires.

They despised the attitude of reformist socialists who claimed that for the sake of being opposed to nationalism they could not support the attempts of colonies to escape their imperial rulers.

At the same time the Comintern was clear that simply cheering on the national movements was inadequate, not only for the achievement of socialism, but also for the sake of having a successful revolt in the oppressed country.

This is the spirit in which the draft theses on the national question were formulated (by Lenin) at the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920.

Having stated that 'all Communist parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement in these countries', they go on to argue 'the need for a determined struggle against attempts to give a communist colouring to bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the

backward countries.'

The fact that these statements seem slightly at odds is not a problem with the logic of the socialist revolutionaries, but arises from the contradictory nature of national liberation movements.

Such movements have a revolutionary content insofar as they are challenges to injustice and imperialism, but since they aspire to create a nation in which is competitive in the world economy, they inevitably (although they hardly ever boast of this) become participants in the exploitation of their own working class.

Hence the conclusion of the 1920 theses: 'the Communist International must enter into a temporary alliance with bourgeois democracy in the colonial and backward countries, but should not merge with it, and should under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in its most embryonic form.'

When the Comintern held its Fourth Congress late in 1921, they again came up with a similar two-sided formulation: 'a dual task faces the Comintern and workers' parties of the colonial and semi-colonial countries.'

On the one hand fighting in order to win national independence, on the other hand organising workers and peasants in their own interests, to make good the contradictions in the nationalist camp.

This two-sided methodology applies well in the modern situation, although the weight placed on either side at any one moment and in regard to different national movements clearly has to vary.

There is a considerable difference between the situation of a national liberation movement settling down to administer structures that still have a sectarian legacy, and one in the throes of a key conflict with the biggest superpower of the day.

In other words, the socialist approach to Sinn Fein and Hezbollah is essentially the same, but should offer much more emphasis on the need for socialism in the first case and on the need for victory against imperialism in the second.

By Niall Smyth

Early in November, the Labour Court rejected the nurses' claims for a shorter working week, a pay rise and a special allowance for those working in Dublin. Later in the month, on 22 November, at Dublin's Helix Theatre, almost 1,000 members of the Irish Nurses Organisation and the Psychiatric Nurses Association from all over Ireland gathered to outline the key stages of their ongoing campaign. Socialist Worker was there to report on the rally.

'We can't turn back now we must keep fighting. Too many issues are stake. Are they prepared for the utter chaos, When industrial action takes place!' So went the song that rocked the rafters of the Helix at the nurse's rally. The mood at the venue was electric. 'United to Win' adorned t-shirts and flags. Chants of 'we are not going away!' and 'we are going to win!' rang out around the venue.

The palpable anger on display has been growing for years now. It is a direct result of nurses finding themselves in a country with a first-world economy, yet a third-world health service.

The average daily number of people waiting on trolleys in March was 292. The figure in February was 260. According to the INO, on the 24 November there were 220 patients waiting on trolleys.

The nurses have made a number of important claims for better treatment. Since the nursing unions are not part of social partnership agreements they have every right to pursue industrial action to win their claim.

As part of their claim they seek a reduction in the working week from 39 hours to 35. As it stands, nurses work longer hours than many other grades because their meal breaks are not counted for pay purposes. The Labour Court itself recognised that this was wrong as far back as 1980 when it noted that 'the stressful environment warrants' a reduction in hours. Their claim includes a 10.6% pay claim to bring them into line with social care grades. A nurse's starting salary is €3,000 below the social care grades and remains below them for 20 years of service.

Dublin is among the twenty most expensive cities in the world. The Economist Intelligence Unit even put it eleven places ahead of New York. Therefore the nurses are looking for a Dublin Weighting Allowance to compensate for this disparity. The Labour Court recently dismissed their claims, saying it would have to be pursued through benchmarking. Both the INO and the PNA, however, have withdrawn from benchmarking.

A victory for the nurses would have a major effect on improving the health service. Thousands of nurses presently emigrate or leaving the profession because many feel undervalued. Since 2000, 6,000 registered nurses have left. At the rally both unions set out the key stages of the joint campaign, over the coming months.

■ Workplace information meetings, which began on Monday, 27 November.

■ Regional meetings, and balloting, commencing in January, seeking a mandate for phased action: lunch hour protests; a work to rule; or a withdrawal of labour (essential services will be maintained).

■ The result of the national ballot will be announced on Thursday, 1 February 2007.

■ Throughout the campaign there will be organised lobbying of all TDs and Senators at constituency clinics. Meetings will also be held with opposition parties to establish their position and response to these outstanding priority issues.

The response from politicians will be circulated to all nurses and midwives in the relevant constituencies.

According to Liam Doran, INO General Secretary, 'today's rally demonstrated the commitment of our members to advance these claims and that nurses and midwives are united to win. The 40,000 members of the INO and PNA have waited for up to 26 years for movement on these issues and they will not wait any longer.'

This was a view backed by one nurse, speaking to Socialist Worker: 'the ballot will return overwhelming support for



Nurses from across Ireland gathered for a rally in the Hexagon DCU to press their case for decent pay and conditions

BEHIND THE DRUG SHORTAGES AND

action, which will begin with lunch time protests building up through a work to rule to stronger industrial action. The plan is to put pressure on the government in the run up to the election. The feeling on the ground from nurses is fantastic.'

She felt, however, that despite there being 'an energy on the ground for action' people were questioning the delay by the union. 'People asking why wait until January? Why not now? The executive is too meek.'

Additionally, there were other issues that desperately needed to be addressed.

'There is a need to link this campaign to opposition to privatisation of our health service. We also should be calling ICTU out. Health is an issue for the whole trade union movement.'

The rally certainly proved that nurses are ready to show the government that they really do mean business. This is an important struggle not just for nurses but for the future of our health service. It is essential that when they move that the whole trade union movement backs their claim.

Behind all this lies a government hell bent on privatisation and the HSE, a public management agency that is dominated by a dogmatic neo-liberal outlook.

The board of the HSE is staffed by corporate executives, such as Joe Macri, the Managing Director of Microsoft Ireland and also a member of the National Executive of IBEC and Donal de Buitelir, a former General Manager with AIB. These individuals have little sympathy with trade unionism and unsurprisingly with the nurses' claim.

In fact, as they view it, a weakened trade unionism in the health sector would pave the way for the US style system of privatised medicine, one that they desperately want to create in Ireland.

The real root of the crisis in the Irish health service is a lack of beds along with an inefficient and parasitic private health service. What is required is an urgent building and staffing plan for public hospitals, a common waiting list and an end to private fees in healthcare.

WE A CLEAR MESSAGE:

**Now we must keep fighting...
We know we mean business!**



DISPUTE: A HEALTH SERVICE CRIPPLED BY BED AND STAFF SHORTAGE FIGHTS AGAINST UNFAIR, INEFFICIENT PRIVATE MEDICINE

Bed and Staff Shortage

Ireland has about three acute beds per 1000 population compared to an EU average of four. Fianna Fail cut more than 3,000 beds despite running an election campaign in 1989 with the slogan: 'Health cuts hurt the old the sick and the handicapped.'

Between the late 80s and the early 90s about 6,000 beds were cut.

Despite recommendations in 2001 from the Department itself that 4,800 extra acute beds were required, these have never been put in place.

The need for extra staffing has been completely ignored, with huge nursing shortages. Irish nurses continually leave Ireland for better pay, training and promotional opportunities abroad.

Private medicine

Since the arrival of Mary Harney as Minister for Health, there has been a

growth in private medicine: private health insurance, private clinics, private hospitals and nursing homes.

The government are reducing funding to public health services and encouraging private investors to step in instead. 'Private or nothing' is Harney's plan for the health service.

It is part of a deliberate policy of privatisation of health and other public services connect to the goals of the WTO and corporate globalisation.

Cork University Hospital is one of eight public sites approved by the HSE for a private hospital.

Every €22 million that a private investor like Larry Goodman puts in is subsidised by €40 million more from the taxpayer. At the end the investor owns all €62 million worth. It's a scam on a massive scale.

Tax breaks have led to new plans for private hospitals. In 2004, consultant Jimmy Sheehan and millionaire beef-baron Larry Goodman opened the 'for-

profit' Galway Clinic.

This 100-bed private hospital is the first private hospital to be built since the Mater Private and Blackrock Clinic were opened in the mid-1980s.

The Galway Clinic was given €20 million in tax-payers' money while the Government tried to close the 100-bed public hospital in Monaghan saying it was 'not viable.'

Growing numbers of people are being forced into private care, creating a business opportunity for billionaires such as Dermot Desmond owner of the private insurance company Vivas Health.

Fight against privatisation

The health service needs urgent changes in these areas: funding staff, beds and facilities in the public system.

We need to get rid of the two-tier private fee system and put an end to the development of 'for-profit' - private hospitals, nursing homes and clinics.

COMMENT

Milton Friedman and the disaster of Neo-Liberalism

By Paul O'Brien

The death of Milton Friedman in November probably went unnoticed and certainly un lamented by everyone in Ireland except by the coterie of free-marketers grouped around the Progressive Democrats and IBEC.

Friedman was a free-market economist who preached neo-liberal economic policies as a solution to the crisis facing capitalism in the 1970s. Friedman claimed to have developed two new economic theories that ran counter to the prevailing interventionist policies of John Maynard Keynes, whose ideas were, at the time, accepted practice across the western world. Firstly, Friedman argued that the economy had to be freed from state control and secondly, that the only function of government was to control the supply of money. In other words, the rich had to be given free rein to get richer and the state should make no effort to reduce unemployment.

This 'monetarist' theory was neither new - Karl Marx had already torn it apart in the third volume of Capital a century before - nor could it be applied in practice. Governments found they could not control the money supply, and economists bickered over how one could even measure it.

Similarly, Friedman's argument that it was impossible to control unemployment levels, as they followed a 'natural' pattern was not a particularly profound thought.

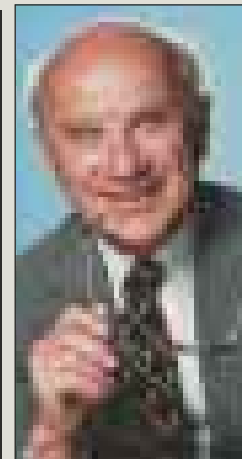
Again Marx had already dealt with the subject, describing the mechanism by which capitalism constantly went through phases of mass unemployment, creating a 'reserve army' of labour and therefore causing wages to decline.

Friedman's ideas played a central role in informing and underpinning the economic policies of Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in America. They were a disaster for working class people across the globe.

He first came to prominence as an economic adviser to the brutal Pinochet regime in Chile in the period after the coup in 1973 that killed thousands of people and decimated working class organisations.

The experiment ended in disaster with wholesale bankruptcies and the impoverishment of the Chilean people.

Despite this, western governments in the 1980s adopted his policies wholesale. Thatcher and Reagan led an onslaught on workers rights and living standards.



Milton Friedman

Control of the money supply became a mantra for the new right, even if jobs and industries were destroyed in the process. Privatisation of manufacturing and services became the order of the day.

Friedman was not just an economic theorist, he managed to mobilise a significant section of right-wing politicians behind his ideas and in time his thinking dominated public policy issues. His views became the standard position of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. South America and Africa bore the brunt of his destructive theories. Loans were made conditional on the implementation of neo-liberal policies: opening up the local economy to the multinationals and privatisation. Local economies were destroyed; food surpluses were sold off to appease the market, poverty and starvation became the lot of millions across the world.

Unbelievably, Friedman was awarded the Nobel Prize for economic science in 1976, a few years before the disaster of his policies became apparent. This was most certainly ideologically motivated and extremely controversial and many argued that it debased the Nobel Institute awards.

The evil that men do usually lives on after they are gone, and yet some commentators can still be found to champion the free market madness of Milton Friedman.

The pin-up boy of the Celtic Tiger rich, David McWilliams, closed his obituary of Friedman with an observation that 'in Ireland today, a dose of Friedmanite clear thinking could do us all a power of good.'

McWilliams appreciated that Friedman provided an ideological justification for a minority to enrich themselves at the expense of the many. Denis O'Brien, Dermot Desmond, the shareholders of Irish Glass and Greencore who amassed vast fortunes at the expense of the taxpayer have lost a champion, the rest of us an opponent.

DEBATING CHAVEZ

*Tariq Ali's latest book, **Pirates of the Caribbean**, focuses on the politics of Bolivia, Venezuela and Cuba. But it leaves crucial questions unanswered* **written Mike Gonzalez**

Not for the first time, Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez spoke for many people around the world when he called George Bush "the devil" in a recent speech to the United Nations. As it turned out, it echoed the feelings of many US voters, as the recent election there has shown. And despite a barrage of propaganda from the right, it seems likely that Chavez will be re-elected to the Venezuelan presidency on 4 December.

Since he came to power in 1998, the two thirds of Venezuela's population who live on or below the poverty line have, for the first time, begun to benefit from the country's oil wealth. The new schools and universities, several thousand new health centres, and a programme for redistributing unused land, have improved the lives of the very poor.

In Bolivia the election of Evo Morales as president in 2005 was in many ways even more significant. Morales was carried to power by a mass movement, born in the city of Cochabamba in 1999 during a struggle that reversed a plan to privatise water supplies. Morales's promise to nationalise Bolivia's oil and gas reserves seemed to echo Chavez's policies in Venezuela.

Middle road

Both processes have opened new avenues for the future of the region - but the route is not easy and some of the contradictions are already visible.

As the months have worn on, it has become obvious that Morales is already looking for a middle road, a way of working with multinational companies that will place obstacles in the way of any deeper social transformation. And in Venezuela, while the grassroots organise to carry forward the revolution, there are many within the government who would happily divert it.

These are the questions that the left needs to explore and debate. Sadly, Tariq Ali's new book, *Pirates of the Caribbean* (Verso, £14.99), falls short of this task.

It is an odd little volume, starting with its title - after all, Bolivia is a landlocked country over 1,000 miles from the Caribbean! The cover design just adds to the confusion. Chavez and Morales are pictured beside Cuban leader Fidel Castro, who is wearing a halo.

Yet in his account of a visit to Havana, Tariq is honest enough to recognise that Castro's regime has been repressive - of dissent, lesbians and gays, and freedom of expression.

More surprising still is that a writer of Tariq's political experience does not ask whether a revolutionary leader should remain in power for 47 years, without any democratic mandate. (True, he did temporarily cede control to his brother, Raul, who has also held his post for 47 years.)

Did we learn nothing from the collapse of the Eastern European regimes? Tariq does ask at one point "why Fidel has not yet retired". His answer? "The battle's not yet won."

In fact there is very little analysis to be found here at all. The book seems to be a kind of memoir with the aim of settling some personal scores. Long footnotes attack people who will leave very little mark on history. A lengthy appendix critiques Teodoro Petkoff, the ex-guerrilla turned vicious anti-Chavista.

But he will be virtually unknown to most of the new generation of people attracted and inspired by events in Venezuela and Bolivia. The question they are asking is how these processes can be developed and deepened, and what role we, as active socialists elsewhere in the world, can play in that process.

The masses

In each chapter, that is precisely the point where Tariq stops. The "Bolivarian Revolution" unfolding in Venezuela and



Graffiti of Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez. Chavez is a symbol of the new radicalism sweeping Latin America

the rising of the Bolivian masses have changed the face of Latin America.

But the reason for that was not simply the election of presidents with popular support or a more defiantly anti-imperialist rhetoric. President Lula in Brazil shared some of that rhetoric, but shrugged it off as soon as he tried on his first Armani suit and joined the club of globalisers.

Daniel Ortega, Nicaragua's new president elect, was once a radical, but is certain to betray the hope of those who elected him (see below).

What changed the face of the planet as the 21st century began was the entry onto the stage of history of the peasants, indigenous communities, the students, urban poor and the organised working class in these countries.

It was they who stopped the right wing coup attempt that sought to overthrow Chavez, they transformed the Bolivian state. In Cuba, too, the choice we face is not the tired formula of Fidel or the Miami mafia - there too it is the mass movement of workers that will change and shape the future.

For those who want to understand the tensions and forces that will shape the Latin American revolution, Richard Gott's thoughtful and informed analyses of both Cuba and Venezuela are powerful weapons, while James Crabtree explores the patterns of protest in Bolivia.

It was Augusto Sandino, who led the anti-imperialist struggle in Nicaragua in the 1930s, who said, "Only the workers and peasants will see the struggle through to its end." In the 70 years since he was murdered by the dictator General Somoza, we have learned that lesson over and over again.

Daniel Ortega: How the leopard changed his spots

In 1979, a 40-year dictatorship in Nicaragua was overthrown by a mass movement. It was headed, in its final months, by the Sandinista Liberation Front, led by Daniel Ortega.

Now, Ortega is set to become president again, following elections held on Sunday of last week. His campaign was conducted under the red and black banner of the Sandinistas, and exploited the memory of their role in overthrowing the dictatorship.

For the ten years that followed that victory, the US financed and armed a counter-revolutionary force, the Contras, which fought with particular savagery against the new government.

The US also used its financial might to destroy the fragile Nicaraguan economy. In 1990, the Sandinistas were voted out of power by a population weary of war, and enraged by the continuing gulf between the rich and poor even after a decade of revolution.

Since then, Nicaragua has lived under right wing governments that have protected the wealthy, deepened poverty for the majority, and opened the frontiers to the global market.

Perhaps that is why many Nicaraguans have invested their hopes in a man who claims to represent a tradition of resistance and a legacy of hope. There are even people outside Nicaragua who claim that Ortega's election is another link in the chain connecting Chavez in Venezuela and Morales in Bolivia.

The reality is very different. Ortega is a cynical political operator whose sole concern was to win power. In pursuit of this goal he has forged alliances with some of the most sinister forces in Nicaraguan society.

When the Sandinistas lost the elections in 1990, their leaders took with them everything that they could carry. They called it the "piñata" - the "golden goose" you might say. Overnight they became wealthy, owners of land, property and the odd bank account.

In 1996, the Nicaraguan presidency passed to Arnaldo Aleman - a banker and wealthy and corrupt businessman. The Sandinistas under Ortega struck a series of deals with Aleman, agreeing a 50-50 deal to share power with him.

Weeks before the election, the Sandinistas rushed through a parliamentary law to ban abortion. This was the result of a deal made with the Catholic church and its leader, Cardinal Obando, the man who had led the attacks on the Sandinistas throughout the 1980s. Ortega's vice-presidential candidate, Morales Carazo, had been a leading negotiator for the Contras.

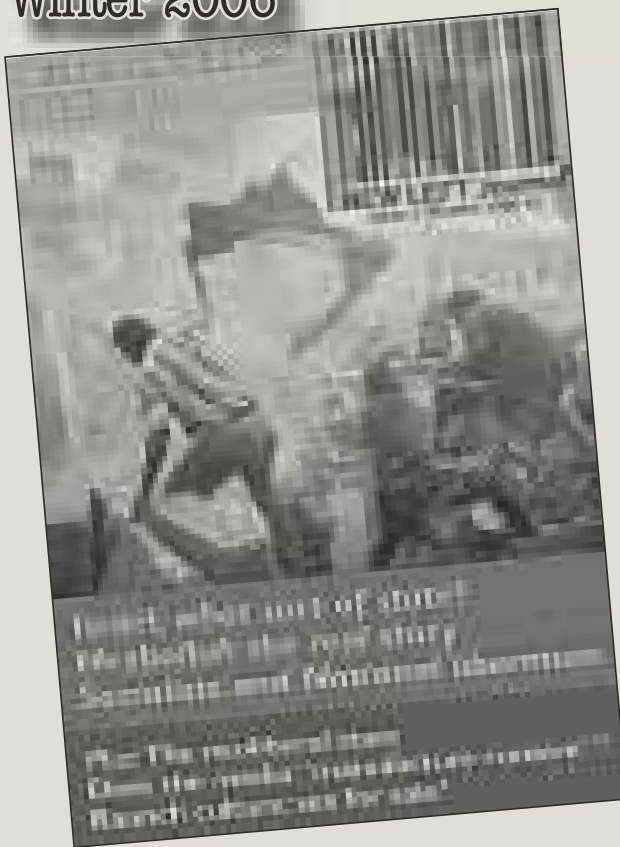
Despite all this some still claim that Ortega will join the fight against neoliberalism. But it was Ortega who drove through the decision for Nicaragua to enter the Central American Free Trade Agreement, the key instrument of globalisation. Ironically, the right voted against it!

The resulting privatisation measures met no resistance from the man who agreed before he was elected to accept the dictates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Ortega's campaign called for "the unity of all Nicaraguans". But there can be no unity with ex-Contras, corrupt businessmen, the IMF and the hierarchy of the Catholic church. It's no accident that Ortega insisted on dropping the line of the Sandinista anthem that said "the Yankees are the enemies of all humanity".

Ortega wants power at any price. He wore the Sandinista colours to win votes, but we will see him in his true colours as soon as he enters office.

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BOOK REVIEW

Richard Dawkins' militant atheism



Richard Dawkins

By Tom Williams

Richard Dawkins is at it again.

The Oxford evolutionist who shot to fame—and infamy—with his 1976 book, *The Selfish Gene*, has turned his trademark mix of lucid, passionate prose and fiery rhetoric against organised religion in his latest work: *The God Delusion*.

Written, Dawkins says, to convert the religious middle-ground to atheism, *The God Delusion* reads like an incendiary call to arms.

The first half of the book is a refutation of the existence of God, while the second half deals with reasons to be an atheist.

The first half succeeds completely; Dawkins has been honing these arguments all his life.

He demolishes the traditional philosophical arguments for God and shows how evolution makes an intelligent designer unnecessary.

He also challenges the idea that religion and science attempt to answer different kinds of questions, since religion makes claims about life and the universe that contradict scientific theories and the observable evidence.

Many of the arguments Dawkins employs are not new, but here he synthesises them into a powerful scientific and philosophical rejection of God.

And he convincingly nails the last resort of the creationist: 'Science can't disprove the existence of God.'

This is true—you can't use science to disprove the existence of anything—but on that basis, you might as well believe that fairies live at the bottom of the garden.

Unfortunately, the second half of *The God Delusion* is less compelling. In

order to explain why we should promote atheism, Dawkins details the negative effects religion has on society, from ancient genocides to the oppression of women and gay people by Muslim and Christian fundamentalists today.

While there is merit in this approach, it is clear that Dawkins lacks the political awareness necessary to fully explore any of these phenomena.

For instance, his account of suicide bombing focuses entirely on the belief in an afterlife without considering the extreme conditions under which people decide to blow themselves up.

As a result, these sections lack the rigour of the first part, which weakens the argument of the book as a whole.

In recent TV and radio debates, creationists have repeatedly seized on this aspect of the book, sometimes preventing Dawkins from getting his main points across.

That's a pity, because *The God Delusion* comes at a time when science and reason need to stand up to the growing power of superstition.

The upcoming opening of a \$25 million 'Creation Museum' in Kentucky, featuring a diorama in which animatronic dinosaurs interact with cavemen, is the latest move by well-funded, right-wing creationists in their battle to discredit science.

We need a book that makes it clear to everyone—including religious moderates—how deluded and impoverished the ideas of the creationists are.

The God Delusion is an exhilarating read, packed with ammunition for your next dinner party—but it is not that book.

FILM REVIEW

Fascism and fairy tales

By Karen Mc Cormack

In *Pan's Labyrinth*, an adult fairy tale, Guillermo del Toro a Mexican filmmaker with an exquisite imagination mixes horror, fantasy and a brutal reality to create one of the greatest movies of the year.

The vivid fantasy world is seen through the eyes of a young girl, 'Ofelia'. This world is set in contrast to the bloody reality of the end of the Spanish Civil War under the brutal fascist regime of General Franco.

The Spanish Civil War began when a group of right-wing military generals attempted to topple the newly elected leftist government, which among other programs sought to implement meaningful land reforms for the country's peasant farmers.

The Nationalists, commanded by General Franco, were supported by the Catholic Church hierarchy, Spain's landowning elite and received material aid and armed support from the governments of Hitler and Mussolini.

Many ordinary Spaniards, along with Socialists, Communists, anarchists and republicans from Spain and beyond, joined the government's Republican Army to help in the fight against fascism and to stop it spreading to other countries.

They received support from the international brigades, the Soviet Union and Mexico.

The story begins when 12-year-old



Reality is more frightening than fantasy for a child in Franco's Spain

Ofelia moves with her heavily pregnant mother to their new home in the countryside and meets her new stepfather, Captain Vidal, who has been posted to this remote area to rid it of rebels.

It quickly becomes apparent to Ofelia what a cruel and evil man Vidal is.

The sadistic Vidal despises Ofelia, who rebels in ancient stories and fairytales.

In order to escape a bitter reality she enters a strange and no less dangerous world of fairies and extraordinary creatures and discovers an ancient labyrinth guarded by a mysterious faun named Pan.

Vidal and Ofelia's adventures are carried out side by side in the countryside, oblivious to each other.

They are both gory

horror stories, taking place on different planes of reality and depicted in a remarkably seamless manner.

None of the scary monsters Ofelia encounters, however, are as frightening as the images of the uniformed fascists in her real life.

Vidal, while pursuing a war against the rebels, mistreats Ofelia and her mother Carmen and uses the storeroom as a torture chamber for captured rebels.

We see him proclaiming to his wealthy guests at dinner that he will wipe out these red rebels who stupidly believe in 'sharing'.

He boasts how his son will be brought into a 'clean' world.

This is probably Del Toro's most personal work to date. He fuses his great understanding

of childhood with his deep understanding of the Spanish civil war.

Del Toro's interest in his childhood in Mexico, where many Spanish exiles sought refuge.

'Mexico was a very brave country at the time of the civil war,' Del Toro recalls, 'we opened ourselves to any and all republican immigrants that would come to us.'

These expatriates heavily shaped Mexican culture and cinema.

Some of them became key mentors of mine growing up. They had tales of leaving Spain behind as children. These tales affected me a lot.'

Del Toro lists seventeen and eighteenth century fairy tales among his earliest influences.

Many of these were filled with blood and violence as well as beauty and enchantment and spoke to the fears and anxieties faced by their audience: both adults and children.

In this film Del Toro presents fascism as a representation of the ultimate horror.

In this sense it is an ideal concept through which to tell a fairy tale aimed at adults, because, as Del Toro explains, fascism is first and foremost a form of perversion of innocence and thus of childhood.

Fantasy is not an escape for Ofelia but a dark refuge.

Chosen as the Mexican entry for an Oscar award, the film is an amazing masterpiece by a director who will now undoubtedly be pushed to the forefront of World Cinema.

CD REVIEW

Strange, Gruesome, Fantastical, Waits

By Eoin Dornan

Tom Waits has always been a lyrical genius. In the market-driven world of music that we find today, there are very few artists who are willing to hold up their own vision of what is music, and thankfully Waits is one of them. His latest album, 'Orphans', is a three-disc masterpiece, constituting three discs, 'Brawlers', 'Bawlers' and 'Bastards', which are supposed to be listened to in that order.

'Brawlers' is full of junkyard jazz. Interestingly, this disc also has Waits' second political song ever, 'Road to Peace', which is about the Middle East. Waits presents the Middle Eastern conflict as something that is not

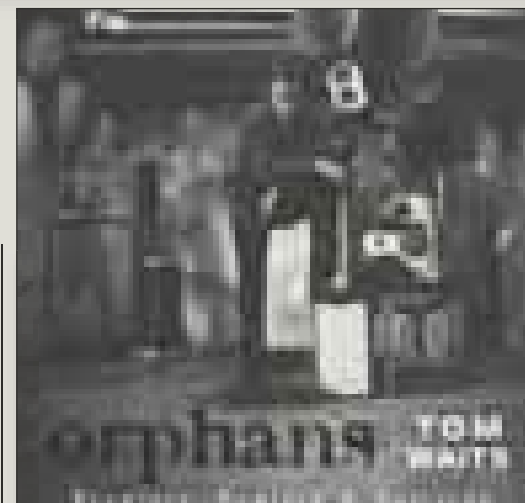
being resolved, merely maintained. He quotes Henry Kissinger and questions his own country's motives in the region, all in the medium of a jazz ballad.

'Bawlers' is an odd disc, mostly because those of us who are Waits fans enjoy his melodic songs, but usually only expect to find one or two of them nestled between animal screams and macabre ditties about recluses. To have an entire disc of them is a treat. There are some quite beautiful songs here, such as 'World Keeps Turning' and 'Down There By The Train'. These songs resemble Waits in his earlier years, but they have the weight of

experience now, and are all the better for it.

'Bastards' has to be my favourite disc of the whole bunch. Waits has always enjoyed the strange, the gruesome, and the fantastical, and is gifted in inspiring this enjoyment in others as well. Some of these gems include 'Children's Story' (which is an elaborate joke too easily ruined for me to say anything further about it); 'Army Ants' in which Waits masterfully disgusts his listeners and perhaps sends a shiver down our spines with his graveyard tones and lecturer-like delivery and 'Two Sisters', a traditional song that Waits has crafted to his own purposes.

All in all, this album



'Orphans', is a three-disc masterpiece

is a sensory delight for the Waits fan, and I believe it is also an excellent introduction for anyone looking to experience Waits for the first time. The division of his music into three separate categories suggests a self-awareness about his work that many might not have suspected of Waits before, and unlike many other

albums of its type there are no tracks on it that aren't fully worthwhile and enjoyable to listen to. 'Orphans' is both a testament to Waits' musical output and to his appreciation for what music can be, rather than what it is usually driven to be by market pressures and the consumable, disposable driveline we hear everyday on the radio.

Protest/Reports/Struggle
 email to editor@swp.ie Phone 01 8722682

People Before Profit Conference

H & M: A tale of two stores



A very successful People Before Profit conference was held 24 - 5 November, with over 140 people attending.

The discussion ranged over issues such as the corporate takeover of our health and education services, to war and neutrality and the need to offer an alternative in the next elec-

tion.

The conference called for the creation of a left slate of candidates for the next election based on a principled opposition to neo-liberalism and a refusal to enter into any deal with the right-wing parties.

The IAWM, PANA and the

NGO Peace Alliance recently launched a campaign to make the use of Shannon airport by US military an election issue.

People Before Profit supports the call for candidates to pledge opposition to the use of Shannon airport if elected.

Following a debate on 'people power', which included

Vincent McGrath, one of the Rosspoint Five, there was a call for a national 'enough is enough' rally early next year to bring together activists involved in the Shell to Sea campaign, the bin tax protests and the fight for increased pay for nurses.

Fashion store H&M recently opened their Dundrum Shopping Centre outlet with an invite only party for 600 people including Kerry Katona and Cecilia Ahern. H&M portray themselves as a company in touch with people's rights. They proudly proclaim that 'CSR, or Corporate Social Responsibility, is an increasingly important strategic matter and accords completely with H&M's fundamental values.' They say that they work towards long-term improvement of working conditions for the people producing our their goods. Unfortunately this spirit does not seem to inform their treatment of retail staff, as Socialist Worker found out from speaking to Mary an employee of the company.

'We were always understaffed. For them to it's to save money on a busy day. Sometimes we were down to work until 10pm. When 10pm arrived, if the supervisor felt things were not done, he would say we will make it up by staying until a quarter past ten and on a number of occasions it has gone on until 10.40pm and we were not paid for this forced overtime if it didn't exceed one hour.'

She described how, on many occasions, she was denied sufficient rest periods between shifts. 'I asked one time to work an early shift because I was due to finish at 10pm and it was likely that we would be in till much later possibly up to 11pm and I had to start the next day at 7am meaning I would have to get up at 5.30am, leaving me only 9 hours. And he said what you do the next day is not my problem.'

Mary claimed that staff rosters are changed at a moments notice. 'Rosters are regularly changed on a last minute basis without notice if they feel it's very busy and no one has choice. The doors are locked at 9pm because it is a clothes store and to stop customers coming in, but this in turn is effectively intimidating staff from leaving on time.'

On other occasions, she says, some staff have had money deducted from their pay to rectify mistakes made by the company and this was done without

prior consultation with them.

Many retail workers right across the industry will recognise the problems faced by Mary and her co-workers. Forced overtime, deduction of pay without prior consultation and insufficient rest between shifts are all basic rights covered by legislation such as the Organisation of Working Time Act (1997) and yet companies are breaking these laws on a daily basis. Article 40.6.1 of the Irish Constitution recognises the right of every citizen to be a member of a union, yet many companies use every means possible to stop workers joining one.

Workers need to be aware of these rights and entitlements. When they are and they have fought back, they have been successful. In New Zealand a campaign organised by the Unite union called "Supersize My Pay" is taking on fast-food chains and outlets like Starbucks over pay and conditions issues.

In Ireland, in 2000, six members of staff at Aldi in Dublin's Parnell Street bravely took on their company over being dismissed for joining a union and won. Just this year, an employee of Dunnes Stores in the Ashleaf centre in Crumlin in Dublin was sacked by the supermarket chain for wearing her union badge in the workplace. Joanne Delaney, a Shop Steward at the store received an indefinite suspension from work for wearing a badge identifying her as a member of her union Mandate. Following a campaign by her union and others, however, Joanne was reinstated.

Despite being heralded as a deal to protect the low paid and most exploited workers the latest pay deal 'Towards 2016', offered little to workers, such as those in H&M. Under the deal, the low paid are to receive an extra 0.5% rise over 27 months which amounts to less than €2 per week extra. The example from the Aldi workers and Joanne Delaney show that if workers get organised and the unions take on these companies they can really take on exploitation and win.

People Before Profit Alliance election candidates



Rory Hearne, Richard Boyd Barrett, Brid Smith and Carmel McKenna, running for People Before Profit Alliance in the forthcoming General Election

The People Before Profit Alliance, formed last year, is formally registered to appear on the ballot paper in next year's general election and it will run at least four candidates: three in Dublin and one in Wicklow.

Richard Boyd Barrett is a prominent anti-war

activist and Convenor of the Save Our Seafront group, which lead the fight that halted the exclusive private development on Dun Laoghaire Baths & the Carlisle Pier is running in Dún Laoghaire.

A former general and local election candidate for the Socialist Workers Party, Richard

Boyd Barrett got 8 per cent of the vote in Dún Laoghaire in the last general election and came close to taking a seat in the recent local elections.

Rory Hearne, former deputy president of USI, is currently active in several campaigns including opposition to the Poolbeg

incinerator and the Corrib gas pipeline campaign, is to run in Dublin South East.

Brid Smith, an anti-bin charges campaigner, is contesting a seat in Dublin South Central.

She was jailed for two weeks in Mountjoy for defending the service

against non-collection. Brid is a member of the Amalgamated Transport & General Workers Union and has been a shop steward all her working life.

Carmel McKenna, was a member of the Labour Party for thirty years and has contested general and local elections in Wicklow.

She is now running for the alliance in that county. Carmel has been very active in the local campaign for a children's A&E in Loughlinstown hospital.

The alliance offers people an alternative to the parties that put profit before people. According to Richard Boyd Barrett 'there is a burgeoning discontent and huge numbers of people are looking for a left alternative, but wouldn't necessarily see themselves as socialists.'

This movement is the coming together of people who have campaigned against Shell profiting from our natural resources, against the war in Iraq and other social movements.'

Protest at the Double Tax Continues

On 27 November around 40 members of the Anti-Bin Tax Campaign held a protest at City Hall for the Estimates meeting. The councillors were due to vote on a budget for the city that includes an increased bin tax. Activists from Ballyfermot, Walkinstown, Drimnagh, Crumlin and elsewhere were present at the demonstration.

Meanwhile, in Drimnagh, each Saturday, activists in the community campaign against the bin tax continue to gather and locals bring rubbish back to the council depots and give out leaflets in spite of police and litter warden presence. Photo: Paula Geraghty



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RTE

Workers refuse to be divided over pensions

RTE Workers in RTE are fighting to reverse a pension scheme that's been described as an 'apartheid' system.

Recently 95% of staff rejected an offer from management to 'improve' the current scheme. They want it axed instead.

At the moment older staff are entitled to a reasonable retirement income (from a Defined Benefit scheme) but workers who joined the company over the past 15 years are in a different pension plan commonly known in RTE as the 'Yellow Pack' pension (Defined Contribution).

They have no guarantee they'll get any provision at all from RTE when they retire, even though they're paying in huge sums of money.

What they get depends entirely on how the stock markets perform.

Workers at the company are campaigning for a secure pension for all, like that enjoyed by other public sector employees

The pensions issue is the biggest industrial issue to have arisen at the company in years.

Workers see it as the difference between poverty or comfort in old age.

RINGSEND

Bertie chased out by incinerator protesters

In October, the Combined Residents against Incineration (CRAI) handed over 3,000 objections to the proposed new incinerator to An Bord Pleanála.

The signatures were collected from people across Dublin against the proposed incinerator for Dublin Bay.

CRAI opposes the siting of an incinerator on the Poolbeg peninsula on grounds of health fears and traffic and environmental concerns. They are calling for alternatives to incineration such as public recycling and for democracy in planning and development.

On 24 November activists in the CRAI demonstrated in Ringsend over the planned incinerator.

Politicians such as Michael McDowell had visited the local community centre earlier in the week but had cleverly evaded local campaigners.

People wished to express dismay, disappointment and anger at what the community have to go through with the threatened proposal of the multimillion Euro incinerator.

Bertie Ahern's came in for particular attention as went on a tour of the area. He was confronted by a crowd of local activists.

For further details Contact: 086 152 3542

STARDUST DISASTER

Campaign called for new Inquiry

Relatives of the victims of the 1981 Stardust disco fire disaster picketed Government Buildings on 22 November as part of their demand for a new inquiry into the fire. Since then the campaign has held a series of daily protests outside the Dáil.

The Stardust Victim's Committee pledged to mount the protest while the Taoiseach considers its new evidence into the 1981 fire, in which 48 people lost their lives.

The campaign claims that evidence proves that arson was not the cause of the fire, as concluded by the original tribunal of inquiry.

They have highlighted the fact, that despite this tragedy that safety in venues remains a huge issue and believe that a disaster similar to Stardust could still happen. Yet the government has ample funds available to ensure regular inspection of all Irish venues.

Conscious of the fact that he does not want this to become an election issue, Ahern, true to form claimed to side with the Committee, saying he would 'help the Stardust families any way he can,' yet at the same he dismissed their presence by saying that there was 'no need for them to protest outside the Dáil.'



Photo: Paula Geraghty

It was not the help of Ahern that brought the victory in Artane earlier this year. As reported in Socialist Worker in May of this year, it took nearly 10 weeks of a

picket at the former site of the Stardust to bring Eamon Butterly the owner of the Silver Swan pub to agree a settlement with the

pickers and change the name of the

pub and erect a Memorial to the 48 People who died in the fire. This was a powerful example of what people power can achieve. Bertie Ahern is aware of this fact and that is why he tries to warn the picketers off their protest.

Speaking at a press conference prior to the protest, Antoinette Keegan, a survivor of the fire, said that from that day the families would picket the Dáil every day until a new inquiry is announced. Reading from a statement on behalf of the families Ms Keegan said, 'having regard not only to the strength of the new evidence but most importantly of all to the entitlement of the families to an effective and transparent investigation, a new public inquiry must be established as soon as possible. The families cannot have any closure until the truth as to the cause and circumstances of the Stardust fire are publicly established. For 25 years they have been seeking the truth and will accept nothing but the truth as to how and why their loved ones perished.'

There is a strong sense of outrage about a cover up organised by the Irish state. There is a belief that the reason the Government has not agreed to a new public inquiry because it would open a 'can of worms' on all the corruption back at the time of the disaster.

The Government and Butterly have not conceded a single thing without a protest. It is time for the state to set up a fresh public inquiry on the issue.

IRISH ANTI WAR MOVEMENT



Large crowds for Galloway and Hezbollah speaker



Photos: R Whelan, Indymedia

On Saturday 4 November over 350 people packed into the Royal Dublin Hotel to hear Ibrahim El Moussaoui (Chief Editor of foreign news at Al-Manar Lebanese Hezbollah TV) and Respect MP George Galloway speak in Dublin against Bush and Blair's Iraq War.

There was barely room to even stand in the large conference room of the hotel.

Ibrahim Moussaoui received a very warm reception at the event as he gave an account of the recent Israeli attack. There were also contributions from Glenda Cimino (IAWM Steering Committee), Roger

Cole (PANA) and Richard Boyd Barrett (IAWM, Chair). There was a lively discussion around Israel's attack on Lebanon, Shannon and the upcoming elections from many members of the crowd.

The meeting was part of a number of meetings across Ireland to which large crowds came out to. There were meetings in Galway on the 5 November and around 100 people came to Cork on 3 November to hear both Moussaoui speak.

The IAWM, PANA and NGO Peace Alliance also launched their joint campaign to make Shannon an election issue.

RAYATHON 9 FUNDRAISING



An evening of poetry and music was organised in Dublin in support of the anti-war activists who were arrested for occupying the Rayathon arms factory in Derry.

Poets Dave Lordan, Colin Shaddock and Elaine Feeney read from their work. Chris Ayliffe, John Flood and Caroline Cassinelli played the music. The highlight of the evening was a recital of Shelley's great poem The Mask of Anarchy by Dave Clinch. This was the first in a series of music and poetry evenings, which will be held in the Irish Film Institute over the coming

months. Meanwhile on 16 November the North City branch of the Irish Anti War Movement held a successful fundraising table quiz in the Red Parrott on Dorset Street, to raise funds for the Raytheon 10 campaign. There were 12 tables and over 50 people at the event. €400 was raised for the campaign.

Get the latest on the Raytheon 10 Campaign at: <http://www.raytheon9.org/> or <http://www.blackshamrock.org/>

The North City Anti War group can be contacted at 087 6972871 or by e-mail: iawmnorthcity@yahoo.ie

AER LINGUS



SIPTU Aer Lingus workers picket Taoiseach's clinic in Drumcondra to demand the government buy back shares in the company.

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
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Socialist Worker



Destruction and revolt in Lebanon

WHY THE RAYTHEON 9 WERE RIGHT

Activists from the Derry Anti-War Coalition traveled to Lebanon in November to attend an anti-war conference in Beirut and visit areas devastated by the Israeli bombardment in July and August.

COLM BRYCE, one of the Raytheon 9, reports on their visit.

Lebanon is still recovering from the 33 day Israeli war. We spent a day in the suburb of most of Dahiya in South Beirut, the stronghold of Hezbollah and the area of the city worst affected by the Israeli bombing.

This is a highly built up, poor area, perhaps a five minute taxi ride from the new office blocks and hotels in the city centre. All the photos and TV footage didn't prepare us for the sheer scale of the devastation. Dozens of tall buildings had been completely levelled, some with craters three, maybe four floors deep into the basements.

There has been two months of clearing and demolition, all carried out by Hezbollah. The government refused help, hoping to turn the local population against Hezbollah and blame them for the Israeli attacks, a cynical strategy which backfired badly.

We walked through scenes that were like pictures you see of Dresden after WWII. 200 people were killed just in this small area, more than 5000 wounded. But what really stood out was the spirit and the resilience of the people themselves.

There was a complete absence of any sense of victimhood or appeals for pity, everyone was immensely proud of the resistance, they all feel part of it, and they feel that they won.

The further south we went, the more the effects of the bombing was inescapable. Down here, eve-



Pictures from the Raytheon Nine delegation to Lebanon



ryone had a story of seeing people killed.

Our taxidriver, Hassan, had spent much of first few weeks ferrying refugees from his village to Beirut.

At a bombed out bridge, just outside of Sidon and he explained that how he had stopped his minibus a hundred yards from the bridge because an F16 fighter was just above it on a bombing raid.

He calculated that he had maybe two minutes between each pass that the F16 made in which to get past the bridge and to safety.

But when he moved the fighter appeared again suddenly, and the car in front of him, carrying a family, was directly hit.

He heard the screams of the people inside, as they burned to death, but there was nothing he could do but press on.

Hassan called at a local house to see if he could get someone to talk to us about what had happened and a young woman came back with him.

Hala Chaloub was a survivor of the bombing. She had lost both her children, two young girls, two of her brothers and 20 members of her extended family in the massacre.

Her eyes were hollow with grief and she spoke quietly of what had happened.

They had been sheltering in the house for 18 days, many of them relatives from surrounding houses. The day of the children had been able to go out to play.

Her oldest daughter, she was four, had said to her that day that she now knew that they were

oppressed and she said it was remarkable that even at that age she could develop that consciousness.

The bomb hit in the early hours of the morning, bringing the house down on top of them and churning up the earth underneath them.

She was buried alongside her two daughters. She thinks the youngest died instantly, because she never heard from her again, but her and her oldest daughter were still alive, their mouths filled with earth and unable to call for help except to groan.

They were eventually found, her daughter was still alive, her body still warm. She was taken to a nearby house, but without oxygen and no possibility of getting an ambulance, she died in the house.

The stories of the fighting are remarkable. In one village we visited there were maybe 50 or so fighters, who held off hundreds upon hundreds of Israeli soldiers, backed by Apache helicopters, F16 fighters, tanks and bulldozers. They lost 18.

The Israelis lost 70 to 100 in this village alone. And the pattern was repeated in all of these villages along the border. The resistance fighters were the local people, who knew every street and lane and fought with great determination and courage.

The ones we spoke to were very modest people, with a great understanding, quietly expressed, of what they were doing; the exact opposite of the portrayal of them as bloodthirsty fanatics.

As one of the fighters we met explained, 'we only want to live in peace, on our own land. I have no problem with the Israeli people. We are all people.'

And I hate the blood. But their government, the US and Britain, they do not want peace. They want to dominate us. To get peace we have to resist.'