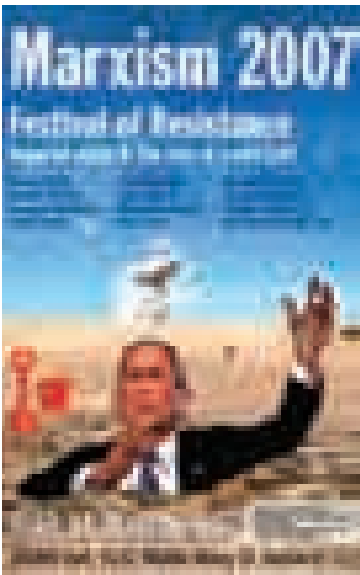


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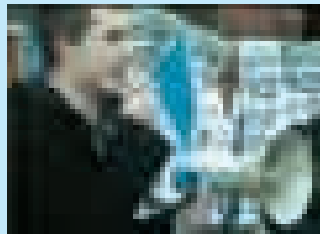
NO 270 : MARCH 3rd-17th 2007

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TURN TO PAGE NINE FOR DETAILS

INSIDE: N.I. Assembly Elections



Pages 4, 6, 7, 12

Shell and the fight for natural resources

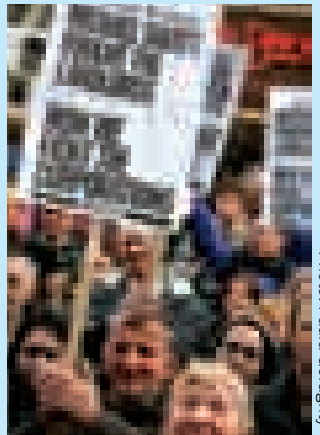


Photo: Paula Geraghty

Page 3

VICTORY TO THE NURSES



40,000 nurses balloted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action.

By Peadar O'Grady

The nurses strike action is a major blow to Mary Harney's plans to privatise the health service.

Running down the public Health service through cutting beds and staff is key to promoting the 'for-profit' hospitals and clinics that the FF-PD government have given massive state subsidies.

Harney has threatened to push ahead with plans to build private 'for-profit' hospitals on public sites and is offering massive pay increases to consultants to continue a 2-tier system in hospitals.

Investing in the public system means building and expanding public hospitals and employing more health care workers with good pay and conditions.

Victory for the nurses will mean a victory for the Health service as a whole. In February trolley queues were back to record levels in our overcrowded A&E units.

Nurses are demanding equality

with other equivalent health service grades in pay and hours worked. This means a 35-hour week and a 10% pay rise as key demands.

The 40,000 nurses in the Irish Nurses Organisation (INO) and the Psychiatric Nurses Association (PNA) balloted overwhelmingly in favour (99% and 97%) of strike action. SIPTU and IMPACT have supported the nurses' demands but have failed to ballot for strike action.

IMPACT has, however, proposed strike action if Harney's privatisation plans are not halted.

In 1980 the Labour Court ruled that Nurses' working week should be reduced as a priority. 27 years later nothing has been done to address this recommendation.

Health professionals work an average basic 35-hour week; nurses work a basic 39-hour week.

Nurses are the lowest paid graduates in the Health service.

As a result of poor conditions, including low pay, long hours and

lack of beds and support staff, more than two thirds of nurses and midwives emigrate within 18 months of graduation.

Nurses will commence strike action with a series of lunchtime protests and plan to escalate to full strike action if their demands are not met.

The strength and solidarity shown by nurses has shaken the government parties, with backbenchers lobbying ministers to concede to the nurses just demands - but it will take action to halt the plans for privatisation.

The nurses deserve every possible support from the public, trade unionists, community activists and socialists.

All nursing unions should call an all out strike, refuse to pass picket lines and spread the strike to other healthworkers and industries to halt the privatisation of our health service.

Turn to page three

SUPPORT THE NURSES' PROTESTS

Lunch-hour protests begin:

Monday, February 26th Cork University Hospital: 12.30 - 1.30 p.m.

Friday, March 2nd Mid West Regional Hospital, Limerick: 1.00 - 2.00 p.m.

Friday, March 2nd University College Hospital, Galway - 12.30 - 1.30 p.m.

Friday, March 9th Mater Hospital, Dublin: 1.00 - 2.00 p.m.

End Irish complicity in Bush's war
US Troops out of Shannon
DEMONSTRATE
Fianna Fail Ard Fheis
Saturday 24th March
City West Dublin
www.irishantiwar.org

THE THINGS THEY SAY

"I went down and gave my good time to the eminent gentlemen. Enjoyed it no end. But I done that, that's over, so I'm not answering any more questions. I've answered enough questions about signing blank cheques."

An arrogant Taoiseach Bertie Aherne indicates to the Dail that he won't be answering questions on the Moriarty tribunal.

"We can't afford this leading up to an election. Something must give or we will suffer in June."

Fianna Fail backbenchers begin to worry about the electoral impact of the proposed nurses' strike.

"The postal network has been seriously threatened: it has gone down from 1,750 post offices in 2001 to fewer than 1,300 today, and the number is still falling."

Irish Postmasters Union general secretary John Kane announcing plans to run candidates for the general election in ten constituencies.



Fr Peter McVerry

"And in order to do that, those in political power, it seems to me, have to be in collusion, as it were, with big business and with vested interests."

Fr Peter McVerry on how the push for rapid economic growth at all costs drives Irish politics today.

"Enda Kenny, in fairness, tried to start the debate but he got poo-pooed by the intellectuals and others...I don't know how Brendan Drumm, the HSE, is feeling about 200,000 more people to provide services for at a time when the

health services are in crisis and will be for a long time to come given what is not happening."

Dick Spring brings Labour's approach to Irish immigration policy to new lows.

"If I were running al-Qaeda in Iraq, I would put a circle around March 2008 and be praying as many times as possible for a victory not only for Obama but also for the Democrats."

Australian Prime Minister John Howard unsurprisingly nails his colours to the Republican mast.

"The public versus private debate is driven by an ideological principle that private is always better. Current Government policy is ideologically driven on the basis that private healthcare is superior. However, we have major concerns about the level of care the private sector offers patients as well as its cost effectiveness."

Extract from the Doctors Alliance for Better Public Healthcare position paper due to be published next month.

"There's hardly a corner shop in Belfast that doesn't feature a poster from anti-water charge campaigners. It is the number one issue on the doorstep in this election. All parties agree on that."

The Irish Times' Carissa Casey on the Assembly elections.

"At noon the number of patients awaiting admission to the hospital from the emergency department, including 10 in its new admissions lounge, was 45. At one point earlier in the morning it was 52, the highest it has ever been,"

Beaumont hospital spokesperson on the A&E crisis in the hospital.

"There are no vacancies because I am still there. Can you see any vacancies? The door is closed."

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe insisting that he will not resign over chronic food shortages and a soaring inflation rate of 1,600 percent.

EDUCATION

More government broken promises over class sizes



All our schools need proper resources but the government refuses to provide

In the 2002 programme for government, Fianna Fail and the PDs stated clearly: "Over the next five years we will progressively introduce maximum class guidelines which will ensure that the average size of classes for children under nine will be below the international best practice guideline of 20:1."

Despite this promise, a massive total of 108,619 children are in classes of more than 30 pupils.

The problem stems from the fact that the government refuses to provide the extra teachers, resources and classrooms that are required.

The figures are a terrible indictment of this government when Ireland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

While the Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin, claims that educational disadvantage is her priority the resources being put into this area are still woefully inadequate. Currently 1 in 3 children in disadvantaged areas has serious literacy problems.

This is three times higher than the national average. More than 1,000 children fail to transfer from primary to second level education annually.

Only 70 educational welfare officers of the 330 promised by the government have actually been recruited.

According to Rory Hearne, "The solution is to bring investment in education in Ireland up to OECD levels.

"We currently spend only half that of countries such as Switzerland. Ireland spends 4.4% of GDP compared to the international benchmark of about 6%.

"More investment and more resources are urgently required in primary school education if we are serious about achieving equality for all children."

The following meetings are scheduled over the next few weeks as part of the INTO Crowded out campaign (for a full list see www.into.ie), teachers and members of the community are all invited to attend and

voice their support for the campaign (all begin at 8 pm).

Mon 5 March

Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork
Regency Hotel, Drumcondra, Dublin 9

Tues 6 March

Radisson Hotel, Stillorgan, Co Dublin

Wed 7 March

Glenview Hotel, Delgany, Co Wicklow

Thurs 8 March

Galway Bay Hotel, Galway

Mon 12 March

Clarion, Liffey Valley, Co Dublin

O'Shea's Hotel, Tramore, Co Waterford

South Court Hotel, Limerick

Thurs 15 March

Brandon Hotel, Tralee, Co Kerry

Mon 26 March

Fairways Hotel, Dundalk, Co Louth

Dromhall Hotel, Killarney, Co Kerry

Thurs 29 March

Welcome Inn Hotel, Castlebar, Co Mayo

Clonmel Park Hotel, Clonmel, Co Tipperary

INSIDE THE SYSTEM

☠ Due to their extensive travel, the carbon footprint of Government Ministers is nearly four times the average Irish per capita level of greenhouse gas emissions. It has been discovered that a significant number of the trips taken by helicopter or on one of the two Government jets were for relatively short journeys within Ireland or to Britain.

☠ The new "five star" maternity unit at Cork University Hospital may not open on schedule as management have refused to agree "safe staffing" levels, according to the Irish Nurses Organisation.

☠ A campaign to eliminate life imprisonment without parole for 13- and 14-year-olds in the US has highlighted the fact that there are about 70 of these children across the US, many in adult prisons where there is a high risk of rape and assault.

☠ A European campaign to collect one million signatures from people seeking tougher disability legislation was launched recently. The campaign is seeking a legally binding disability directive that specifically addresses the issues such as equality, opportunity, access, independent living, care, consent, force and institutionalisation. The online petition can be signed at www.1million4disability.eu

☠ Residents in Dundrum, Co Dublin, have been campaigning for the last number of years to prevent the sale of parts of Airfield urban farm. Now a section known as Dudleys Field - sold off in 2005 for €16 million - is under threat of large scale development.

The land is currently zoned for open space and amenity, but residential development is "open for consideration". Cicol Ltd has applied to develop apartments and a leisure centre. A campaign is under way to oppose the application.

☠ According to the Health Service Executive children are now waiting up to four years for orthodontic treatment in the public system.

☠ The first ever community school at primary level is due to be built at Diswellstown, Co Dublin. It is to be set up on a pilot basis and will be overseen by a local vocational educational committee.

There are currently 3,279 primary schools, of which 3,039 are under Catholic control, with 183 controlled by the Church of Ireland, and 34 multi-denominational.

☠ According to the UN Development Programme, nine out of 10 of Nigeria's 140 million people live on less than \$2 a day.

More than half the population survive on less than 51 cents a day. The Nigerian government made more than \$40 billion from oil exports last year.

☠ Two million people have fled Iraq since the war began in 2003, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

The Bush administration has let in only 463 Iraqi refugees while Britain rejected 1,675 out of 1,835 asylum requests from Iraq in 2005, according to Home Office statistics. The UK also continues to forcibly return failed asylum-seekers to certain parts of Iraq.

☠ A U.S. appeals court recently upheld a law that denies federal courts jurisdiction over foreign prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay. They will now continue to be denied due process.

☠ Over 100,000 protesters demonstrated in Vicenza, Italy, against the planned expansion of a US military base. This encouraged the Left to defy Prime Minister Romano Prodi's legislation to increase the Italian military contribution in Afghanistan and they forced his resignation over the issue.

☠ In Guatemala, Rigoberta Menchú, the indigenous people's rights advocate who

won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, announced she will run in the September presidential election. She will stand for a coalition of the indigenous party Winaq, which she founded earlier this month, and the left-wing Encounter for Guatemala. She believes the indigenous people of Guatemala, who make up 60% of Guatemala's 12.2 million inhabitants, want the opportunity to emulate the example of Bolivia's president, Evo Morales.

☠ Growing intolerance for Muslim freedom of expression?

A 12-year-old Muslim schoolgirl in England recently lost her legal battle to be allowed to wear the niqab full-face veil while she is being taught by male teachers, despite the fact that her sisters were granted this right by the school a number years ago.

Mr Justice Silber claimed that the veil prevented teachers from seeing a pupil's facial expressions, which was important for teacher-pupil interaction.

The primary school teachers' union, the INTO, is holding a series of public meetings to campaign to reduce class sizes.

The first meeting took place earlier this month and was attended by Rory Hearne and Richard Boyd Barrett, two candidates for the People before Profit alliance.

COMMENT



Restore Child Benefit as a Child's Right

By Elizabeth Hutcheson

Recently the Government published details of its proposed referendum on the rights of children. Taoiseach Bertie Ahern said: "the move will value and protect childhood like never before".

There was no mention of restoring Child Benefit as a universal payment.

Under current laws, in order for children to qualify for Child Benefit, they must firstly satisfy habitual residence conditions introduced in 2004 in response to EU enlargement. Prior to this every child living in the State received the allowance regardless of family income, nationality or immigration status.

The condition was subsequently found to be in breach of EU legislation and the Government reinstated the payment to EU workers.

The measure, however, still affects families in a variety of situations such as parents working here for less than two years, migrant workers whose employers have not paid their tax or social insurance and those people awaiting a decision on their residence application, including asylum seekers.

The Free Legal Advice Centre (FLAC) is currently running a campaign calling on the Government to restore Child Benefit as a universal payment.

According to FLAC the present policy takes priority over children's rights and is in direct contravention of international human rights law, which forbids discrimination against children on the basis of a parent's status, including a child's right to avail of social security entitlements.

Further, FLAC say, this policy contradicts the Irish Government's own policy on ending child poverty by putting immigration policy before children's rights.

The organisation also claims it has evidence showing that the provision is impacting hardest on families living in vulnerable situations, especially on some children who lack basic food, clothing and services because their parents are not entitled to the allowance.

FLAC say that some 2,100 applications for Child Benefit have been refused on the basis of not meeting habitual residence criteria and they estimate the cost for reinstating the allowance as a universal payment at approximately €4 million.

Rory Hearne, Dublin South's candidate for *People Before Profit*, agrees.

"The government is making a big fanfare about its plans for a referendum to enshrine the rights of the child into the constitution and yet here we have a blatant example where they're denying the rights of certain children in this State by refusing their guardians Child Benefit."

FLAC's campaign is being backed by a number of organisations, including ICTU, SIPTU, the Children's Rights Alliance and the Irish Refugee Council.

For more information contact FLAC at campaigns@flac.ie or phone 01-874 5690. Elizabeth Hutcheson is a freelance writer and works for the Citizens Information Service.

Socialist Worker EDITORIAL

Shell and the fight for national resources



Shell protest: Part of the national demonstration in Dublin on February 24

Photo: Paula Geraghty

The national march on 24 February gave a huge boost to the Shell to Sea campaign. Some 2,000 demonstrators made it clear that they were opposed to the rip-off of Irish gas by Shell and the danger inherent in the current plans by the multinational to get its hands on the gas.

Most importantly, the large and exuberant turnout sent the Mayo activists back on a high, knowing that they have tremendous solidarity from the capital.

As Vincent McGrath, one of the Rossport Five, put it: "It was absolutely important to come to Dublin. Today is the first national protest since we came out of prison."

"The turn-out is marvellous. There has always been wonderful support from Dublin."

People are seeing the broader picture of the giveaway by corrupt politicians. A sordid deal is what has led to all this. We don't intend to be the victims of corruption. Dublin's inner city communities have been victims of the planning corruption. It's easy to see how the people of Dublin can identify with the campaign."

McGrath is right to draw attention to the wider issue. The Shell to Sea campaign is not just a campaign about local health and safety fears, important as they are. It is also about who owns Ireland's natural resources and collusion between big business and the Fianna Fail-led government

in order to exploit them.

First, there was the EPA decision to give Shell permission to build a refinery. The pretence was that this was a considered "neutral" judgment. The reality is that corporate representatives have hollowed the EPA out from the inside.

The Chair of the EPA is one Mary Kelly who was one of the chief lobbyists for the business organization IBEC.

The five-person board also includes Laura Burke, who was a top manager for Indaver, the company that wants to build an incinerator in Ringaskiddy and Meath.

So with two out of the five-person board directed tied into corporate interests, what could you expect?

Then there was the announcement that Shell was the first company to apply to use the Strategic Infrastructure Act to get planning for the pipeline. This new act was the direct result of lobbying by IBEC and is designed to circumvent local objections to planning. It is another erosion of democracy in this country.

The Irish state has developed two central techniques for dealing with protest: they try to grind movements down by fighting a long battle and they try to use the media to convince activists that they are a minority who can never win.

A key way to do this is to suggest that the majority of the Irish people are only interested in consumerism and will never

support protests like those at Rosspoint.

This image is, however, totally mistaken. The huge rallies of people power are what got the Rossport Five out of jail and this mass movement needs to be re-ignited now if we are to win.

Building a mass movement means taking risks in the hope of winning a majority.

The first step in this was the successful national demonstration.

Campaigning within the trade union movement for their affiliations is important in strengthening the sinews of a national campaign.

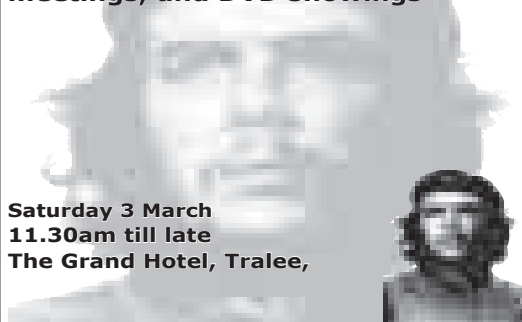
The Shell to Sea campaign in Mayo should also consider fielding a candidate in the next election for the Dail. The decision to contest the Senate is interesting but the electorate here excludes the poorest sections of Irish society.

If a representative of Shell to Sea were to be elected to the Dail, it would help to radically transform the situation and stimulate the building of an even bigger mass movement.

The objection that this might cut across other candidates who have supported the Shell to Sea campaign can be countered on two grounds. First, that the votes will transfer to genuine supporters and secondly, that the wider movement must take priority over the political ambitions of every party.

RESIST 07 A Day of Real Politics in Tralee

An exciting set of public debates, meetings, and DVD showings



Saturday 3 March
11.30am till late
The Grand Hotel, Tralee,

- ★ Martin Ferris TD (Sinn Féin) & Peadar O'Grady (SWP) on 'Why Is Our Health Service in Crisis?'
- ★ Colm Bryce (Raytheon 9) introduces screening of 'Back From Beirut' made by members of the Raytheon 9.
- ★ Kieran Allen talks on 'Revolution in South America from Che Guevara to Chavez'.
- ★ Local activist Mike Geraghty recently returned from a trip to Palestine introduces a showing of the film 'The Iron Wall'

Hosted by Tralee Socialist Workers Party
087 6716009 www.swp.ie

Victory to the Nurses

Continued from page 12

Madeline Spiers, President of the INO included the following remarks in a recent address to INO members, "the standard working week for all healthcare workers as agreed by the HSE is 35 hours - just not for nurses."

"Our call for a 35-hour week is not only fair; it is what other similarly-educated professionals already have. This is our opportunity to achieve what we have been genuinely waiting for and negotiating for the last 27 years."

"The starting salary of a graduate nurse with an honours degree is €29,000. The starting salary of a chiroprapist, play

therapist, occupational therapist, which we believe at the very least we should be compared to, is €36,000.

"That difference is an insult to the hard work and commitment that nurses and midwives have brought to the health system. All graduates working in the health system should have a similar starting salary."

"We have a significant number of nurses who retain their registration with An Bord Altranais but have opted out of the nursing workforce."

"Unfortunately they have chosen not to work in their profession because their needs are not being listened to on any level by either health

administrators or the government.

"Our challenge is to retain nurses and midwives in the health system. The current inadequate pay and conditions are driving experienced and compassionate nurses and midwives out of the system."

"It is the direct responsibility of this government to retain and value us within the health service."

"Nurses and midwives genuinely struggle to deliver care and protect human rights in an increasingly difficult arena. We are now at the stage where political short-term strategies are hindering, not helping, this."

"In the past eight years,

Ireland has lost 12,000 Irish trained nurses and midwives who have chosen to work abroad where pay and conditions are better."

"At the same time we have recruited 10,000 nurses and midwives from abroad to take up jobs in the Irish system."

"When will this government realise that delivering healthcare requires respect, reward and trust?"

"Nursing and midwifery are demanding jobs, mentally and physically. We will not shy away from confrontation however; our door is open. If we have a clear vision of the future of nursing and midwifery these issues have to be addressed."

On the campaign trail

By Sean Mitchell, People Before Profit Candidate, West Belfast

The election campaign is now into its last couple of weeks. We have been finding a great response on the doors for the non-payment campaign to stop the introduction of water charges.

The major issue that everyone wants the major parties to do something about is that of the water charges, yet people are telling me that all you get from them is confusion and contradiction. It should be straightforward.

The Water Tax should be scrapped and water service kept in public hands, yet on the doorsteps the major parties in the electorate I am standing in say they will try and block it when they get into the Assembly but then they tell people to pay the charges.

Why should anyone have to pay if Sinn Fein or the SDLP or any other party is going to get rid of the water charges when they take power? Why would you have to pay for something that won't exist a few days after the Assembly sits? This doesn't make sense.

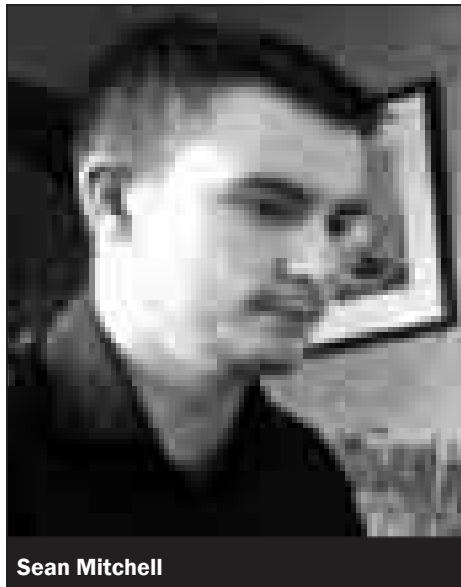
People before Profit says don't pay twice. Don't pay for something you already pay for through your rates. We will be building the fight to stop the charges both during the election and after it. The water charges must be stopped.

By building the non-payment campaign we can beat the government and those in the Assembly who haven't the nerve to rescind it.

Tony Blair has just announced the pull-out of British troops from southern Iraq. This is effectively an admission of defeat.

The US/UK invasion of Iraq, which was opposed by the majority of people here, both North and South, has not only made the situation in Iraq a living nightmare it has made the world a less safe place.

The deaths of 600,000 Iraqi's; the spread of



Sean Mitchell

Islamophobia; the billions spent on prosecuting the war. This is the legacy Blair leaves behind. The constituency I am standing in is one of the poorest in Belfast.

There is a housing crisis, deep long-term poverty and social crisis in terms of the alienation and despair felt by young people here who see little prospect for the future and this is despite the British government telling us that everything is moving forward.

The war in Iraq only compounds the problems here.

A day or so later we were informed that the troops were going to Afghanistan. The troops should be brought back, the tragic foreign policy of intervention reversed and the money spent on the regeneration of local communities.

TIME TO PUT MANNERS ON THE ASSEMBLY?

By Colm Joyce, Rail driver and Amicus shop steward

I would like to thank Eamonn McCann on behalf of the railway workers of the North West. In 2004, the "intercity" rail corridor between Derry and Belfast was under serious threat of closure. Eamonn played a large part in the campaign to keep open and develop the line.

A lobby group was formed, 10,000 Foyle constituents signed the petition which was brought by 250 supporters by special train – proudly driven by myself – to Belfast to deliver to the Dept of Regional Development.

The above was Eamonn's brainchild. He fought our corner and won! His support for unionised working class people not only saved my livelihood but 120 other railway jobs in the North West. I would like to see Eamonn at Stormont to put manners on the Assembly!

One of the main planks of SEA policy is the environment, hence its support for railways in reducing CO2 emissions. Climate change is a major concern for our planet and future existence.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report concludes that global warming from the 1960s was 90% caused by man-made emissions from industry, transport and power generation. Estimates in the IPCC report put global temperature rise over the next century between 2 and 4 degrees.

Only last month, the EU warned that a change of only 2 degrees would have irreversible and catastrophic consequences. But the report has been ignored by policy makers on our own island. The National Development Plan (NDP) is a prime example, promoting a swathe of expensive motorway



Eamonn McCann

across the island.

In the run-up to the elections North and South, the candidates will talk Green but once in power will revert to promoting the private car and the use of HGVs to transport people and freight for fuel and road tax revenue – which is government's real concern!

Whilst thinking globally, we must act locally: policy makers must bite the bullet and make the shift back to rail to save the planet. I'm going to be voting for Eamonn McCann to help stop commerce choking the planet – sure who else would you vote for?

Drop the charges against the Raytheon Nine

On August 9th last anti war activists occupied the Raytheon offices in Derry.

They wanted to 'de-commission' an arms making facility that had been involved in the murder of scores of civilians.

During last summer's attack on Lebanon, 100 extra Raytheon guided Bomb Units were rushed by US military transport planes to Israel, stopping to re-fuel at Prestwick airport.

These 'bunker buster' bombs were used in attacks on civilian areas of South Beirut and in the murder of 51 men, women and children in the village of Qana.

The 100,000 cluster bombs which were dropped in the last three days of the war were also manufactured by Raytheon.

The Raytheon Nine who were part of a larger anti-war protest that occupied the factory wanted to save human lives.

They had been listening to the horrific media reports of what was happening in Lebanon and decided to act.

The protestors wanted to take action to save human life and so they attempted to de-commission a military facility.

The nine activists were arrested and face trial in the coming months before the notorious Diplock courts.

The Derry anti war coalition



The Raytheon Nine

is waging a campaign to get the charges against the Raytheon 9 dropped.

In a statement made recently the Derry Anti War Coalition said: "People can see the double standards of making it a criminal

offence to occupy a factory in Derry, while the people behind the occupation of Iraq go scot-free. The Raytheon company is currently supplying weapons for use in Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine.

"We say that trying to stop war crimes shouldn't be a crime. Already, international figures like Noam Chomsky, Tony Benn and Mark Thomas have called for the charges against the nine to be dropped."

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO OPPOSE BUSH'S WAR

■ Ask everybody standing in the election for the assembly three simple questions:

- Are they opposed to Bush and Blair's war?
- What practical steps will they take to stop that war?
- If they support de-commissioning are they for closing down the Raytheon plant in Derry?

■ Support the Raytheon Nine. Order leaflets and material from the campaign by checking out the website Raytheon9.org.

■ Join the anti-war protests in March 24th. Contact Belfast Anti-War Movement on 07837507935.

Phoney 'consultation' and the big education sell-off

By Luke Forrest

As with water charges, the British Government are carrying out a "consultation process" around education in Northern Ireland; they have produced a website and encourage "stakeholders", individuals and organisations to comment on the Governments proposals.

And again as with water charges, the Government will ignore the views of others and inflict their market driven reforms on us all.

There are three elements to reforms of education: selection

(what replaces the 11 Plus); the Bain report (school closures and merges) and PFI (the privatisation of school buildings).

The 11 Plus is going but instead of bringing in a more comprehensive system, as a way of signing up the DUP to the St Andrews Agreement, the Government have suggested that selection will be left up to the Assembly.

If there is no agreement in the Assembly - the most likely outcome - then individual schools could set their own admissions criteria. This even

more divisive than the 11 Plus and brings in a larger degree of competition in a situation of falling pupil numbers.

The Bain report indicates that nearly one third of schools across the North face closure or merger. This means that 440 schools and hundreds of jobs, including those of teachers, are under immediate threat.

This could have a devastating impact. Schools should be kept open and utilised as resources for the community providing facilities for young people in the evening. This would be a real way of

addressing the problems young people face that leads to anti-social behaviour or high rates of suicide, especially in socially deprived areas such as West Belfast.

Instead, the Government wants to sell of school land to property developers under the mantra of public sector bad, private sector good. Reducing the pupil-teacher ratio is a good thing and improves pupil learning.

This is crucial when the percentage of pupils that have either learning difficulties or a language other than English as

their first language, is continually increasing.

In the consultation report Blair's Government is very coy about the use of private schemes, PFI, to build new schools. They should be.

One of their flagships, Balmoral High School, has been a disaster. Built in 1996 to accommodate 500 pupils, this year only nine pupils enrolled in this post-primary schools. Yes that's nine. Clearly it will be closed.

Yet the consortium that built it will be paid for a total of 25 years to provide facilities for

500 non-existing pupils. This market-driven reform is a wasteful use of public money and much less efficient than keeping buildings within the public sector.

The education system in the North needs reform, what we should aim for is: comprehensive education; schools kept as community resources; smaller pupil-teacher ratios and the removal of the profiteers from the system.

Luke Forrest is a teacher in East Belfast

INTERNATIONAL

Anti globalisation farmer and activist to run in French elections

By Niall Smyth

French sheep farmer and political activist Jose Bove quite literally crashed onto the world stage in 1999.

In protest at the effects of the fast food industry on food production and livelihoods of small farmers, Bove, the founder the Confédération Paysanne, a radical movement focused on defending small farmers' rights, ran a bulldozer into the front of a McDonalds in Millau in Southern France.



José Bové

Bové was sentenced to three months for his role in the incident, but was eventually only imprisoned for 44 days. However this was not the first or last brush with the system for Bove.

In the 1970s he was arrested for the destruction of military documents in protest at the extension of a military camp in his hometown. For his action over the GM Crops, Bove was sentenced to ten months in June 2003.

Protests led to a reduction of the sentence by three months, however, on 15 November 2005, the court of appeals sentenced Bové to four months in jail for having destroyed genetically engineered corn from a field.

His radical reputation led in February, 2006, to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents

stopping him at New York's JFK Airport en route to Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labour Relations for events sponsored by Cornell's Global Labour Institute.

According to Bové, the Customs agents told him he was "ineligible" to enter the U.S. as the result of his past prosecutions for "moral crimes". After being detained for several hours, Bové was placed on a flight to Paris.

Bové played a leading role in the victorious anti-EU constitution campaign in France in 2005. In January, this year, Bové announced his intention to run for President of France.

"I am running to unite the anti-globalization left, the left that stands for the environment, and against the obsessive focus on productivity and economic liberalism," he said, deeming himself the man for those "to the left of the Socialists".

Bové's vision of uniting the left may not, however, come to fruition as he will be competing with Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) candidate, Olivier Besancenot, French Communist Party (PCF) candidate Marie-George Buffet and Arlette Laguiller of the Trotskyist organisation Lutte Ouvrière.

Although it is by no means certain that Bové or even Besancenot will get the nominations of the 500 mayors they need to stand, it appears that the chance of a united left candidate in the early stages of the upcoming elections is unlikely at this point.

See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6320485.stm>
<http://www.semcosh.org/Jose%20Bove.htm>

African workers strike back



Workers take to the streets in Guinea

By Paul O'Brien

The corrupt leaders of West African states, long mired in debt and corruption, have been challenged by a mass strike organised by the trade unions that holds out hope for radical change in the region.

More than 110 people have died since early January in Guinea in West Africa during a general strike against President Conte, a despot who seized power in an army coup twenty-three years ago.

The strike has disrupted the mining and export of bauxite from Guinea, the

world's leading exporter of the ore from which aluminium is extracted.

Daily life has become tougher and tougher in past years for the average Guinean. Rice, the staple food for the West African nation's eight million people, more than doubled in the last two years.

The price of a 50 kg bag of rice increased from US\$10 to US\$ 25, which equates to more than half the average monthly salary of a civil servant.

Martial law in Guinea forbids all public meetings

and empowers the military to censor newspapers and all radio and television broadcasts.

The army can also monitor private communications, such as telephone calls, faxes and emails.

Witnesses said at least three people were killed in opposition-controlled suburbs of the capital Conakry during the last week.

In the southeastern town of Nzerekore, local officials reported six protesters killed and dozens injured in clashes

with police.

Union leaders called the nationwide stoppage because Conte refused to implement an agreement to hold open and fair elections for a new prime minister. Instead, he named a close ally, Eugene Camara, a member of the governing elite to succeed him.

France, the former colonial power, has extensive interests in the region and has been aligning itself against the continuing strike in an effort to protect its position and economic control in the region.

Abortion referendum victory in Portugal

By Paul O'Brien

Portugal's ruling Socialist Party will use their majority in parliament to legalise abortion after a recent referendum on the issue failed because turnout was too low to make it binding.

More than half of the traditionally Catholic nation's 8.7 million electorate abstained. Of those who voted, 59.3 percent voted to lift the abortion ban and 40.8 percent to keep it.

Despite the low turnout, the Prime Minister Jose Socrates said the outcome was in favour of lifting the ban.

"Finally after thirty years of democracy in Portugal we now can pass a law that will not treat women as criminals," said Maria Antónia Santos, a Socialist deputy. "This is the first step toward eliminating the reality of back-street abortions. Now it's our responsibility to pass a good law."

Portugal's new abortion law, however, will only allow abortions in the first ten weeks of pregnancy, making it more restrictive than most countries



Activists celebrate referendum victory

where they are permitted much later into pregnancy.

The previous abortion law was very restrictive. Abortion was only possible when the pregnancy posed a risk to the woman's life, her health, in cases of foetal malformation or when the pregnancy resulted from rape.

But even in those rare cases abortion was not always

provided because hospitals and doctors sometimes refuse to help women in these conditions. Abortion on social, economic or psychological grounds, the most frequent reasons why women need an abortion, were against the law.

As a result at least 20,000 illegal abortions were performed in Portugal each year.

Like Ireland, the restrictive

abortion laws in Portugal resulted in 'abortion tourism', particularly to Spain. But many women, especially the poor and those in rural areas could afford the cost of a foreign abortion.

Despite the restrictive nature of the proposed legislation, the Socialist government is to be congratulated for introducing this necessary reform, which will save women's lives.

As in Ireland, the Catholic Church used its position to mobilise opposition to the referendum. Sermons at Sunday Mass in many parishes throughout this overwhelmingly Catholic country were used to remind parishioners of their duty to vote and to vote no.

When the ban is lifted in Portugal, this will leave behind the small group of Ireland, Poland and Malta with strict anti-abortion laws.

The government in Ireland has consistently failed to stand up to the Catholic Church and implement even the limited reforms recommended by the high court arising out of a number of high profile cases.

Public Meeting:

Women and the Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination

Gateway City Library, Augustine St.

Wednesday 7th March

at 7.30pm

Speaker: **NADIA HARR**

a member of the Women's Department of the Palestinian People's Party

DAWAYN ALLIANCE AGAINST WAR

COMMENT

Asylum seekers fight for decent conditions



By Paul Carroll

According to the official website for the Knockalisheen asylum centre in county Clare the “manager will make every effort to ensure your stay is a pleasant one” and also every asylum seeker “will be provided with house rules which have been prepared to give you a safe and comfortable environment in which to live.”

On the 31 of January, however, asylum seekers from Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, and the Congo, among other countries proposed a two-day hunger strike because of the appalling living conditions in the former army barracks.

“People outside the walls of Knockalisheen don’t know how we live. It’s a prison. Animals should live here, not humans. It should be destroyed. The minds of the managers are not open to us,” explained Serwan Tabhri, from Iran.

On the 9 January, residents sent a letter to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform regarding meals, cleanliness and the living conditions stating that management had refused to offer a means of addressing complaints.

The letter continued: “in meals, we find foreign objects such as hair strands, broken plastic shards, rough particles of shells especially in bean porridge served” and “only one toilet roll is given out once a week, which is not enough because before the week runs out it finishes. Then you are asked to wait till the next date of supply, which we find inconveniencing.”

After discussions between protesters and management the hunger strike was averted.

Outreach worker with Doras Luimni Martin Nugent believes the residents’ concerns were valid.

“What they would argue is there are too many people sharing one room. You might have three or four people sharing one room,” said Mr Nugent.

He believes the law and Michael McDowell’s policy relating to the whole area

of how asylum seekers are treated is the problem.

People are detained for a number of years, on average two to four years however there has been extreme cases of a person being detained for nine years. Mr. Nugent believes the “mental limbo” that these people are left in is unsatisfactory and allows “very, very little connection with Irish society.

“People have nothing to do all day long and, contrary to what the majority of Irish people think, these people want to work. There are many people being detained with various qualifications such as teaching and they want to work.”

He also believes the only way to change people’s perception of asylum seekers is to “try to educate the public about the issue because there is a lot of mis-information out there.”

This is not the first time claims of ill treatment have been levelled at the management of the centre. In April 2006 Limerick Leader’s Ethnic news writer Esther Bolarin claimed that asylum seekers and refugees at the Knockalisheen Asylum Centre were being treated unfairly.

She commented at the time “it’s not different from being prison inmates. They are told what to do, when to go out and when to come back.

“Rooms are invaded and searched randomly without warning or prior notice in the absence of residents. They are going through their personal stuff, this could not be for hygiene purposes.”

“There is a lot of misinformation out there. Asylum seekers and refugees only get €19 a week for their whole family. They don’t get clothes or shoes or child allowances from the Government.”

That asylum seekers, despite their difficult circumstances, have organised and challenged the authorities is very impressive. Their protests have also been effective in generating considerable support.

Paul O’Carroll is a freelance journalist based in Cork.

WATER CHARGES:

Derry meeting
Payment Cam

200 crowd into Derry City Hotel to hear about the non-payment campaign

200 people attended an angry meeting on water charges in Derry’s City Hotel on Thursday 15th February. The packed meeting was told by John Corey, the general secretary of NIPSA, Northern Ireland’s biggest public sector union, that the trade union movement was fully behind the non-payment campaign.

Corey said, “The trade union movement is committed to stand and fight on this issue. We

have printed 750,000 leaflets that will be delivered to every house in Northern Ireland calling for people to refuse to pay this water tax.” Corey continued, “People should voice their opposition to these charges in the upcoming election. Every politician should be asked where they stand, and people should vote for candidates who are calling for non-payment of this double tax.”

Eamonn McCann, candi-

date for the Socialist Environmental Alliance in the Assembly elections and a leader of the Communities Against the Water Tax, also addressed the meeting. He said, “This is an eminently winnable campaign. The attendance at this meeting proves the strength of feeling on this issue.

The government is treating us like idiots, On the one hand they claim to want to consult us and have asked for submissions

on the issue of water charges to be given to them before March 5th.

On the other hand people have already received estimates for their bills through their doors in the last week. This shows the only message they will listen to is a mass campaign of non-payment of water charges.”

McCann continued, “Some parties are trying to undermine the campaign by saying it will be a repeat of the rent and rates

How do we oppose the wa

On a recent politics show, Sinn Fein spokesperson Mitchell McLoughlin was asked a straight question: ‘Would his party urge their supporters not to pay their water charges bills?’

And he gave a straight answer. His party did NOT favour this tactic and instead urged people to vote for them so that they could oppose the measure in the Assembly.

The interviewer appeared to be taken aback and joked ‘So this is the new compliant Sinn Fein?’

Strangely enough, Sinn Fein is at one with the DUP on this particular issue

Both parties are verbally opposed to the charges but do not support a campaign of non-payment.

In the case of the DUP, it has always been a right wing party, so it is hardly surprising they tell people to ‘respect the law’.

In the case of Sinn Fein, they have moved from being a revolutionary nationalist party to playing by the rules of the conventional game.

One of those rules is that

you do not urge people to break the law but instead argue that people should express opposition though voting.

There are two serious problems with this approach.

The first is that Sinn Fein and the DUP have no strategy for when the British government say they have to work within the budget they are given.

The actual financial arrangements for the Northern Assembly will be set in place before it meets – and neither Sinn Fein nor the

DUP have spelled out how they will block the charges then.

The second problem is that non-payment has been shown to work.

Why is their no poll tax in Britain today?

It was because of a mass non-payment campaign.

When people were hauled before the courts, their supporters gathered outside and showed how ‘people power’ could frighten our rulers.

Maggie Thatcher claimed she was an Iron Maiden who

g sets Non- campaign on fire



strike in the 70s, where people were left badly in the lurch. But it was those same parties that left us in the lurch. Some of them even joined the courts in pursuing non-payers. The anti-water tax campaign will be different. We won't leave anyone in the lurch. This campaign has the backing of the trade union movement - the biggest organisation in Northern Ireland. The rent and rates strike never had that.

This campaign will organise across both communities, The rent strike affected one community - and a minority of that community at that. There was only 26,000 at its height.

The anti-water tax campaign will be a mass movement. This campaign has prepared the ground and is also organised democratically through mass meetings like tonight."

A woman in the audience said, "The best guarantee

against the courts and to stop these charges is to build a massive campaign. People shouldn't be frightened by legal threats. Instead we should go from this meeting and make sure our neighbours and friends don't pay and join the campaign."

One man from the audience who used to live in Wales said, "Water charges in England and Wales continue to rise year on year. My brother now pays over £400 a year.

We should not be afraid of resisting the charges even through the courts. The potential legal costs are tiny compared to what we might be paying every year if we don't stop them. They won't be able to bring us all to court."

Over one hundred people signed up to help organise the campaign in their area. There are now local meetings planned in every estate in Derry over the coming weeks.

Water charges?

could break any protest movement.

But the protest movement broke Maggie Thatcher and she was forced to resign as Prime Minister

Why are there no water charges in the Republic of Ireland?

Once again it was because there was a mass non-payment campaign.

Hundreds of people turned up to meetings in local working class estates and voted democratically not to pay the charges.

When the local councils

sent in contactors to turn off the water they were either driven out of the estates or teams of plumbers who belonged to the non-payment campaign re-connected people.

The moderate Irish Labour Party took the same position as Sinn Fein and DUP - that while they were opposed to charges, they could not support a non-payment campaign.

If they had been listened to, their would be water charges in the Republic of Ireland today.

VOTE NON-PAYMENT CANDIDATES

Eamonn McCann, Socialist Environmental Alliance, Foyle

Sean Mitchell, People Before Profit Alliance, West Belfast

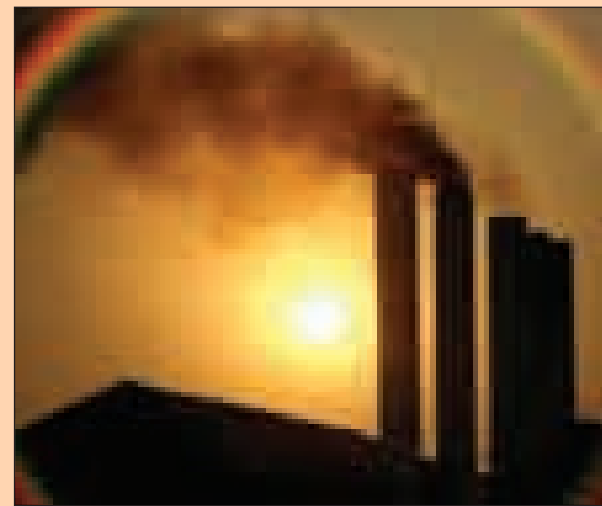
Jim Barbour, Socialist Party, South Belfast

Tommy Black, Socialist Party, East Belfast

Harry Hutchinson, Don't Pay Water Tax Campaigner, Mid Ulster

Victor Christie, Don't Pay Water Tax Campaigner, East Derry.

The science behind Global Warming



By Tom Williams

Global warming, which is caused by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels and the destruction of the tropical rainforests, is the most urgent problem facing humanity today.

But despite the potentially devastating consequences of warming—including massive loss of life in poorer countries resulting from flooding in some regions and drought in others—there is a powerful global movement that denies the scientific evidence and opposes any attempts to take action.

This movement is resourceful and well-funded by the energy industry, taking the form of think tanks or "concerned citizen's groups" that continually strive to undermine the scientific consensus on global warming.

We need to understand the hard science behind global warming and climate change if we are to successfully take this movement on.

Human activities influence our climate through a natural phenomenon called the greenhouse effect, which is the natural warming of our planet due to the trapping of solar energy by the atmosphere.

All the energy on Earth comes from the Sun in the form of solar radiation. This passes through the atmosphere and heats the planet's surface. Most of this energy is then released by the Earth as infrared radiation out into space.

The infrared radiation cannot pass back out through the atmosphere as easily as the solar radiation could get in: a layer of "greenhouse gases" surrounding the planet absorbs much of it, trapping it in the atmosphere and heating the planet.

This greenhouse effect is actually essential for our survival: without keeping a certain amount of the solar heat in, Earth would be up to 30 degrees C colder and uninhabitable by humans.

What enables a greenhouse gas to trap infrared radiation? Each particle in a gas is made up of several atoms joined by chemical bonds, and the properties of these bonds depend on the atoms they connect. Greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, contain just the

sort of chemical bonds that can absorb infrared, but not solar, radiation.

So, a balance between trapping heat in the atmosphere and loss of heat into space is important for keeping our planet at the right temperature. This balance depends on the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere: too high and more heat is retained, leading to global warming.

This is the problem: since the start of the Industrial Revolution, we have been pumping enormous quantities of one particular greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere.

For 10,000 years before the Industrial Revolution, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was between 260-280 parts per million; over the last two centuries we have increased that level to about 380 ppm.

This unprecedented rise in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has unbalanced the greenhouse effect and is increasing the amount of heat trapped, directly driving global warming.

The most well known effect of global warming is the melting of the polar ice caps, leading to a rise in sea levels and increased flooding in low-lying areas.

The Earth's climate system, however, is extremely complex and not yet fully understood, and there may be many other negative consequences. The most frightening of these is the idea of a tipping point: there may be a degree of warming which when reached will simply cause the system to collapse, with potentially catastrophic consequences for all life on Earth.

For instance, the world's oceans currently store much of our carbon dioxide and reduce the impact of global warming. But they may begin releasing it back into the atmosphere once a temperature tipping point is reached, disastrously worsening climate change.

Despite the claims of some politicians, the evidence that human emissions are causing global warming is unequivocal, as detailed in the recent 2007 report of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The scientific reality is that global warming is happening and that we will need to learn to live sustainably if we are going to survive it.

IRAQ:

SECTARIANISM STOKED BY EMPIRE

It is the policies of the occupation that are tearing apart Iraqi society apart, not divisions between Shia and Sunni Muslims, writes Anne Alexander

Bombs in markets, murder squads and attacks on mosques. Bloody sectarian violence is spreading across Iraq, and now a new ethnic war pitting Kurds against Arabs and Turkmen threatens the north of the country.

Over the past two years, abductions, murders and bombings have multiplied. In 2003 there was one suicide bombing which killed over 50 civilians, in 2004, there were four, in 2005 there were five, 2006 saw six. In January of this year four bomb attacks killed 70, 88, 73 and 137 civilians.

Although most of these atrocities are carried out by nameless, masked gunmen, we are told that the roots of the conflict lie in the split between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Supporters of the occupation say there is little that the US and British occupying forces can do to heal this ancient grudge.

They promote a dangerous myth that the problem in Iraq is not the occupation, but the divisions between Iraqis and the people's own murderous tendencies.

They imply that the killings by US and British forces are not only justified, but the sole shield, against chaos.

In fact the occupiers deliberately poisoned political life, leading to the current explosion of sectarian violence.

US officials have long promoted a view of Iraqi society as segmented along religious and ethnic lines.

In the aftermath of the invasion of 2003, US officials adopted a strategy to manage their Iraqi allies. They assumed that the exiled politicians who returned in the baggage train of the US army were genuine representatives of their respective religious and ethnic "communities".

There were two major problems with this approach. The most basic was the assumption that Iraqis were first and foremost "Shias" or "Sunnis", "Kurds", "Arabs" or "Turkmen" who could only be represented by members of their own sect or ethnic group.

The second was that the Iraqi parties which backed the occupation, aside from the major Kurdish parties, had little support among the majority of Iraqis.

The result was a desperate scramble by these parties to capture the resources of the state. At stake was a share of the \$12 billion of Iraqi money controlled by the US. At the urging of US officials ministries were parcelled out along sectarian lines.

Throughout 2003 and 2004, while real power rested with the US officials who ran the Coalition Provisional Authority, toothless Iraqi governments squabbled over whether the interior ministry was Sunni or Shia.

Although the pro-occupation politicians could not run the country they were able to turn government ministries into patronage machines, dispensing employment and favours in order to build influence.

In particular, the state became an incubator for militias, which were largely ethnic or sectarian, reflecting the politics of their parent organisations.

These policies, combined with the disbanding of the Iraqi army and other state institutions, lay behind the explosive growth in militias outside the state, such as the Mahdi Army of Muqtada al-Sadr and the Sunni Islamist groups.

Meanwhile the privatisation of the occupation continues apace – there are currently at least 48,000 "private soldiers" in Iraq in addition to half a dozen secret militias under US control.

It is the logic of an imperial occupation which is the current driving force behind sectarian violence in Iraq. It is a consequence of the attempt by US and British officials to control a country where the majority oppose their presence.

Their policy was a classic colonial strategy – in order to hold down opposition to invasion, select some local elites who will cooperate with you, back them militarily and claim to be innocent when conflict erupts.

The horrific death toll in Iraq is either directly down to the US and British forces or is the result of divisions which the occupation has encouraged.

The occupiers have deliberately fostered the conditions for communal sectarian conflict. The longer they stay, the more they will damage Iraq.

The sooner they leave, the more likely it is that anti-sectarian movements will gain momentum once more.



British troops marched into Baghdad during the First World



Opposition is growing in Najaf



The UN sanctions ripped Iraqi society apart and drove its people into poverty

A history of unity against imperialism

The Iraqi state created in 1921 was dominated by an alliance of the Hashemite dynasty, the royal family from Mecca in Arabia, a group of former Iraqi officers from the Ottoman army and the British, who conquered the country during the First World War.

The Shia clerical leaders of Najaf and Kerbala, some of whom supported a national uprising in 1920, were marginalised by the new political order.

However, although the Iraqi state was initially dominated by Sunni politicians, the new ruling class was built by strengthening tribal leaders, rather than through sectarianism.

British colonial administrators urged tribal leaders to become the new landowners, seizing lands once held in common by whole tribes.

This process benefited a new ruling class drawn from both the Shia and Sunni tribes.

Neither the landowners nor the powerful Shia merchant families showed much interest in financing the Shia clergy or Islamist movements during the monarchy.

The rise of a nationalist movement in the 1940s and 1950s led to a crisis in the clerical institutions of the Iraqi Shia as the numbers of pilgrims dwindled and revenue from traditional taxes on peasants dried up.

This radicalisation meant Shia Muslim workers and peasants turned in large numbers to the Communist Party, which by 1956 was the dominant political force in the holy city of Najaf.

Baghdad and other cities became a melting pot of religious and ethnic groups with intermarriage common.

Sunni Islamist organisations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, were small and lacked influence. None of the major parties opposed to the monarchy were organised on

sectarian lines.

The Communists included Arabs, Kurds, Turkmen, Sunni and Shia Muslims, Christians, Jews and members of other religious minorities in their ranks.

The two Arab nationalist parties – the Independence Party and the Baath Party – were both led by Shias during the 1950s.

In 1958 a revolution overthrew the British-backed monarchy. Ties of class and the experience of a common struggle against imperialism were more important than sectarian identity.

At the heart of the revolution were the millions of peasants and workers drawn into Iraq's urban centres.

The tragedy of Iraq was that this movement was cut short, first by the new ruling class that emerged out of the revolution, and subsequently by the destruction of Iraq's economy and society by imperialism.

Sanctions sowed the seeds of division

The seizure of power by the Baath Party in 1968 is often presented as leading to the creation of an exclusively Sunni Muslim regime under Saddam Hussein.

However, although the Baath Party in the 1970s and 1980s was dominated by Sunnis, this largely reflected the strength of Saddam Hussein's extended family and related clans from his hometown of Tikrit.

While the elite inside the Baathist state were drawn from a small circle, it drew its stability from the relatively large middle-class – both Sunni and Shia – that benefited from employment in the bureaucracy and the public sector. This class disappeared during the 1990s.

Saddam Hussein did pursue sectarian strategies to maintain his rule, particularly after the rise of Shia Islamist opposition groups in the late 1970s and during the 1980-88 war with Iran, a fact which at the time did not trouble his backers in the US and British governments.

Despite eight years of brutal war, Saddam Hussein's demonisation of Iran – and the expulsion of thousands of Iraqis of suspected Iranian origin – it was not until 1991 that a large-scale revolt broke out in the Shia areas of southern Iraq.

The trigger for the 1991 uprising was the defeat of the Iraqi army by a US-led coalition in the Gulf War and its expulsion from Kuwait.

The 1991 uprising drained support for the Baath Party. Although on the surface Saddam Hussein appeared as strong as ever, he presented himself increasingly as an

Arab tribal leader, rather than a secular nationalist.

During the 1990s, two trends contributed to the growing political and social influence of religious organisations – the decay of secular nationalism and the dramatic weakening of the social institutions of the state. Baathist propaganda began to use both Sunni and Shia religious images.

In the aftermath of the war of 1991, the UN imposed sanctions that destroyed much of Iraq's infrastructure, including the health and education systems.

As the welfare system crumbled, Sunni and Shia charitable institutions expanded to meet rising demands from a population sinking into misery.

Meanwhile, brutal state repression meant that the mosque was often the only safe forum for political discussion. The state contributed with the "Islamisation" of politics by sponsoring preachers and building mosques.

The power base that rebel Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr inherited from his father, Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, was built on this network of Shia charities.

The state's promotion of religion was one sign of the Baathists' increasingly desperate search for stability.

Another policy which proved similarly destructive of central power was the revival of old tribal power, which meant giving tribal leaders license to run private armies and to dispense tribal law.

Where the tribal chiefs were strong, particularly in the countryside, this policy ate away at the legal foundations



A United Nations inspector passes a portrait of Saddam Hussein before the 2003 invasion.

of the state.

Since 1958 Iraq's secular civil law code has, in theory at least, treated all citizens equally. In practice, of course, the legal system was skewed in favour of the ruling party.

The revival of tribal custom as an alternative justice system, backed up by armed force, created a counterweight to the regime. In some areas party and tribe intermeshed. Saddam and his family had long relied on tribal and regional loyalty over Baathist ideology.

The problem was that the more that party became another word for tribe, the easier it was to jettison even the outward semblance of Baathism for personal and local loyalties.

The aftermath of the US invasion in 2003 showed this process in action, some tribal leaders rapidly abandoned Saddam Hussein and supported the occupation, while others joined the

resistance.

However, this did not mean that sectarian conflict was an inevitable consequence of the occupation. Many Iraqi tribes are both Sunni and Shia, and the majority of Arab Iraqis rejected the occupiers and their local clients.

There is also a long tradition of Iraqi Sunnis and Shias uniting in a common struggle against imperialism.

In 2004, the growing armed resistance drew together Sunni and Shia opponents of the occupation. While US troops besieged the largely Sunni city of Fallujah they were confronted with an uprising by Sadr's Mahdi Army across the south.

By early 2005, faced with their inability to defeat Iraqi resistance, the US commanders were beginning to openly discuss the "El Salvador option", inspired by the CIA-backed death squads of Latin America in the 1980s.

According to military commentator General Wayne Downing, himself a former head of US special forces, the US military has been using death squads in Iraq since 2003.

The cycle of killing and revenge that was unleashed has created a complex interplay of resistance and sectarianism. But the picture of Iraqi society as a cauldron of ancient religious hatreds is as false as it is destructive.

Anne Alexander is co-author of Iraq: Rise Of The Resistance, International Socialism 105. Go to www.isj.org.uk/index.php4?id=52&issue=105. For a history of Iraq see Old Social Classes And Revolutionary Movements In Iraq by Hanna Batatu, www.bookmarks.uk.com.

Free Derry Museum

By Paula Geraghty

'No one who struggles for justice is a stranger here. No one who dies in the struggle is forgotten in Free Derry.'

The Free Derry Museum is a community based museum telling the story of the people of the Bogside, Creggan and the Brandywell over a four year period ending with the events of Bloody Sunday, where 14 people were killed by the Paratroop regiment of the British army.

John Kelly was standing at the museum entrance, chatting to a woman about the 35th anniversary commemoration of Bloody Sunday. He welcomed us in and told us how his brother Michael was one of those killed on that day.

This was a true community museum, in the heart of Free Derry. Unlike most museums, it doesn't 'own' any of the items on display; rather, they are all on loan from the families and individuals involved.

The museum tells an unashamed story of how a community fought off and resisted one of the world's largest empires, and how the emerging Civil Rights movement drew inspiration from the Black Civil Rights movement in the U.S.

Through the best museum panels that I've ever had the pleasure to read, Derry is immediately placed within the context of 1960s global resistance to injustice. No one could be in any doubt that this was not an isolated, inward looking community, but one that sought unity and expressed solidarity with others, wherever or wherever they were.



The small museum relies heavily on panels, with a small selection of objects which illustrate the depth of deprivation, discrimination and oppression. These included a blood-stained babygrow and a bandage which had been used as first aid on Michael Kelly as he was dying.

Original RUC helmets and batons were also on display. They looked worn. Empty milk bottles stuffed with cloth, without petrol, sat on a glass shelf. William McKinney was an avid amateur filmmaker whose footage from Bloody Sunday is looped on a large screen. He was later shot dead. Also poignantly displayed is his camera.

One of the highlights are the interactive computer screens showing slides, images and extra material not on display. One element is the complex interactive programme, taken from the Bloody Sunday Inquiry.

It's a virtual tour of Free Derry in 1972 with all the so-called 'hotspots' marked out on a map. When one is clicked on, there is an option of looking at the scene as a panorama, like in a computer game, with original buildings (now long gone) superimposed over images from today.

Witnesses at the inquiry used this technology to assist with identifying where they actually were on the day. It cost well over £100,000 sterling to produce this package for the Inquiry. All families of victims received copies, and in turn, shared them with the museum.

The final panel in the museum goes like this: "Bloody Sunday calls to mind, Wounded Knee, Darfur, Grozny, Gaza, Fallujah...."

The Bloody Sunday families' campaign has been an epic search for truth. We may hope that their indomitable persistence has illuminated a way forward for victims of state violence everywhere.

**Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number-
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in Sleep have fallen on you,
Ye are many- they are few.**

Free Derry is a fragment of a better world which we strive to ensure humanity will one day wake to, cleansed of all evil, oppression and violence, where the will of the people alone holds sway, and justice and law are as one.

No one who struggles for justice is a stranger here. No one who dies in the struggle is forgotten in Free Derry."

FILM

The Glory Days of Liberation



by Peadar O'Grady

This impressive and moving film, about North African soldiers who liberated Italy and France during the Second World War, should not be missed by any socialist or anti-war activist. Sadly, its only showing in Ireland so far was at the International Film Festival in Dublin in February. Hopefully it will go on general release, particularly if it wins the Oscar for best foreign film.

The film is based on four North African soldiers who join the African Army to fight on the side of the French against the fascist Axis forces of Italy and Germany in the Second World War. By 1940, the French Army is defeated and almost 1.5 million French soldiers are prisoners of war. The French Vichy puppet government under General Petain collaborates with the Nazis.

The remainder of the French army turns to the colonies to recruit over 200,000 North Africans, the majority

are natives or 'indigenes' and a minority are French colonial settlers or their descendants, known as 'Pied Noirs'.

These new recruits, include the four Muslim protagonists in the film: Said (Jamel Debbouze), Abdelkader (Sami Bouajila), Messaoud (Roschdy Zem) and Yassir (Samy Naceri).

These 200,000 recruits join with almost 400,000 other North African troops to form six out of seven of the First French Army which helps liberate the South of Italy and goes on to liberate France in fierce fighting.

Throughout the film the bravery and loyalty of these troops is contrasted with the discrimination they receive compared to the French troops. In one scene the African troops are being refused tomatoes in the canteen until they protest together and win a begrudging concession from their white officer.

The troops are majority Arab and black Africans (and mainly Muslim) while the of-

icers are almost 100% white French (and mainly Christian) because of discrimination in promotion.

One character, Messaoud, falls in love with a French woman and they write to each other but the letters are intercepted by the Army and are never received by either. The character of sergeant Martinez (brilliantly played by Bernard Blancan) is a pied noir, apparently, but turns out to have kept secret his Arab mother, showing the shallowness of racial distinction but also the possibility of racism being internalised if avenues for resistance are limited.

At the end, the film concentrates on the injustice of the freezing of pensions for foreign fighters by the French government in 1959. This resulted in pensions for these soldiers today being worth only 10% of their French equivalents.

The pressure brought by the film's release forced Jacques Chirac to declare an end to the freeze on January

the 1st this year, the date of the film's debut in France.

The film's strength in highlighting the injustice to these soldiers and their vital contribution to the liberation of France is, however, also its weakness as the common cause with ordinary French soldiers and the Algerian resistance to French colonialism is played down.

For example, after the war, in the summer of 1945, a 20 year old Algerian was shot dead in Algiers after he refused to take down an Algerian flag during celebrations at the defeat of the Nazis. The French Army repression that followed killed at least 10,000 Algerians.

Despite these weaknesses, *Indigenes* is a powerful indictment of colonialist oppression and racism and the honouring of Muslim fighters in the victory against fascism is long overdue and also, in the context of current Islamophobia, very timely.

'Indigenes' (Days of Glory), Director: Rachid Bouchareb.

MARXISM 2007: A FESTIVAL OF RESISTANCE

A weekend political festival organised by the Socialist Workers Party
March 9,10,11 in the ATGWU Union Hall, 55-57 Middle Abbey St, Dublin 1



A weekend of socialist politics, art and culture in the heart of Dublin.

Debates on everything from Global Warming to the Left movements in Latin America to the new US offensive in the Middle East.

A chance to find out about Karl Marx's ideas from economics to alienation and how they relate to today's world, introduced by some of the best speakers on the Left today.

With over 40 meetings,

workshops, film screenings and discussions.

Tickets: €20/€10/€5 from (01) 872 2682 Buy online at www.swp.ie.



John Boorman

John Boorman, director of the film *The Tiger's Tail* opens the festival on Friday night with a discussion on Cinema and social change. Later on Friday evening

Richard Boyd Barrett, chair of the Irish Anti-War Movement, Haifa Zangana from the Iraqi Democrats Against Occupation, and others ask are we seeing a re-run of Vietnam with The US's gamble for power in Iraq?



David McWilliams

On Saturday David McWilliams, author of *The Popes Children* and Kieran Allen, author of *The Celtic Tiger* debate Class and the Celtic Tiger: How is Ireland changing?



Frank Connolly

We also have Frank

Connolly, *Village* magazine journalist, and Maura Harrington, spokesperson for the Shell to Sea Campaign, introducing Corruption and the Irish ruling class.

Duncan Stewart, presenter of RTE's *Eco-Eye*, Eamon Ryan Green Party TD and Owen McCormack from the SWP ask Can Capitalism stop Global Warming?



Bernadette McAlliskey

Bernadette McAlliskey looks at the politics of Northern Ireland since the Peace Process. John Rees, National Secretary of the RESPECT Coalition in Britain and Cllr Catherine Connolly from Galway will discuss the rise of the new left in Ireland and internationally.

DUBLIN SOUTH EAST

Plan for 120 advertising hoardings is challenged

Rory Hearne, People Before Profit Alliance candidate for Dublin South East, has lodged objections with Dublin City Council for their plans to erect 120 permanent advertising billboards around the city that will be operated by JC Decaux, one of the world's largest outdoor advertising companies.

Rory explained to Socialist Worker his reasons for challenging



Rory Hearne, People Before Profit Alliance candidate for Dublin South East

the plans of the council: "Dublin City Council's (DCC) plans to hand over public space to a private company to profit from advertising for an indefinite time frame in return for 500 bicycles is not value for money.

"These huge lighted display ads, 2.4m high, and almost 2 metres wide, will add to our already impossibly cluttered streets.

"I am lodging objections on the basis that there has been no public consultation relating to these advertising displays which will have a huge impact on our streetscapes and give public space over to corporate profit making.

"Selling our valuable street space to a multinational advertising corporation for a few hundred bicycles is not a good deal for Dubliners."

Rory is calling on the public to lodge objections to DCC, and on the city councillors to vote down these proposals.

The public have 6 weeks from the date of lodgement of the appli-



cation to make objections.

It is ironic that DCC is planning to sell off space for corporate advertising given that last year they tried to ban the erection of public notices denying free speech to non-profit organisations and individuals.

Rory Hearne commented: "This is a Public Private Partnership arrangement between

DCC and JC Decaux. I am currently undertaking a PhD in PPP research and the evidence to date from PPPs carried out by DCC in relation to social housing, waste outsourcing and the Ringsend waste water treatment plant is that PPPs are more costly to the tax payer, and the private partner is only interested in profit to the detriment of the public

service provided.

"If the council want to promote bicycle use they should build more cycle lanes and ensure cars obey them.

"They could start with putting a bicycle lane on O'Connell St. These plans for advertising display units are another example of profit coming before the interests of the ordinary citizens of this city."

POOLBEG INCINERATOR

Tánaiste Michael McDowell has announced that plans for the controversial Poolbeg Incinerator in Dublin's Ringsend have collapsed. Dublin City Council have disputed this claim and said that the incinerator is still on schedule.

Rory Hearne People Before Profit Alliance Candidate for Dublin South East and active campaigner against Poolbeg incinerator welcomed McDowell's announce-

ment but warned:

"It was the active campaigning by the people of Ringsend/Irishtown and Sandymount who scuppered the government's plans to put an incinerator on the poolbeg peninsula.

The community lodged over 3000 objections in October last year and are planning for more action in the coming months.

"The company may have pulled out but Government Policy hasn't changed on this issue. It

seems like Dublin City Council are seeking new prospective investors, but any attempt to resurrect this project will be strongly resisted by the community.

"Despite Michael McDowell's claims that he opposed the incinerator it was his government that voted for the incinerator in the Dáil in June 2006. McDowell didn't bother to turn up for the vote.

"The private company that was to operate the

incinerator, Elsam, has been taken over by a new company that sees the extent of opposition to the planned incinerator and has decided it's not worth the trouble.

"The Government and Dublin City Council must now accept that there will be no incinerator in Dublin. However, we were campaigning not just against the incinerator but against the principle of incineration. This government must

promote a proper Zero waste strategy instead of dangerous and costly incineration.

"The result of this campaign shows that community action works. Michael McDowell must not take the scrapping of the incinerator as a green light for his 'Manhattan' proposal for Dublin Bay. We will continue to ensure only community and environmentally friendly development takes place in this area."

ROSSPORT FIVE

Jailed men speak out

The Rossport 5 launched their book, "Our Story" at Charlie Byrnes Book Shop, Galway this month.

A "who's-who" of left activists crammed into the bookstore, which gave the air of a militant meeting rather than a book-signing. All of the five Rossport men were present.

The Rossport 5: Micheal O Seighin, Willie Corduff, Phillip McGrath, Vincent McGrath and Brendan Philbin, were incarcerated by the Irish state for opposing 3 multinational companies: Shell, Statoil and Marathon.

They were jailed in June 2005 and spent 94 days in Cloverhill Prison.

Their book covers their story and uncovers a dark side of Irish capitalism. The men were cold-shouldered by some

in their community as locals divided over the issue; Shell and the Irish State exerted extreme pressure, and a large force of Gardai were deployed to harass and intimidate in a most disturbing manner.

For the first time in the history of the state, the government granted power to a private company to issue compulsory purchase orders.

The government has given away our gas to a private consortium, the people of Ireland will not make one penny from our own resource. Shell has a new method of inshore gas processing; Erris is being used as an experiment zone.

The company thought that with compliant politicians such as Ray Burke, Bertie Aherne and

Frank Fahey, they could get away with inflicting a health and safety risk on a rural community.

But the men displayed astounding courage and stood by their beliefs. They affected brilliant displays of solidarity. Citizens marched in protest, and blockaded Shell and Statoil stations. The Shell to Sea campaign has inspired thousands of people across the country and beyond who are angry at the way the Irish government has put private profits before people.

The book is a must-have for anyone interested in opposing the multi-nationals and their political allies in Fianna Fail and the PDs. Our Story - The Rossport 5, Small World Media. ISBN 978-0-9554634-0-2. €15

Public Meeting: WHAT IS YOUR FUTURE? HAVE YOUR SAY - LET THE COMMUNITY'S VOICE BE HEARD

From the housing crisis, health crisis, the Irish Glass Bottle site plans, the PDs' plans to create a new heart in Dublin Port will destroy the heart of these communities. What is the future for you, your children and your country?

Isn't it time for a real alternative?

Speakers:

Fr Peter McVerry, Homelessness Campaigner,
Rita Fagan, Save St Michael's Estate Inchicore

Rory Hearne, People Before Profit Alliance Candidate Dublin South East

Ringsend Community Centre 7.30pm
Thursday March 22nd
Contact 086 1523542

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Holiday entitlements in Northern Ireland

By John Kavanagh

All workers in Northern Ireland have a statutory right in law to at least four weeks paid annual leave every year (that's 20 days paid holiday if you work five days a week).

If you're a part-time worker, you're still entitled to four weeks holiday: four of your normal working weeks. For example, if you work two days a week you have the right to a minimum of eight days' holiday (that is, four two-day weeks).

A part-time worker should be treated no less favourably than an equivalent full-timer. This means that an employer who gives extra days off to full-timers may have to give extra time off to part-time workers as well. You can check how much leave you are allowed by referring to your contract of employment or company handbook.

If you're an agency worker, your agency must allow you to take your paid holidays.

There is a minimum right to paid holiday, the main things you should know about holiday rights are:

- you get a minimum of four weeks
- you start building up holiday entitlement as soon as you start work
- your employer can control when you take your holiday
- you get paid your normal pay for your holiday
- when you finish a job, you get paid for any holiday you've not taken

Unlike the Republic of Ireland, workers in Northern Ireland do not have a statutory right to paid leave on bank and public holidays. If paid leave is given on a bank or public holiday, this can count towards your four weeks minimum holiday entitlement. There are eight permanent bank and public holidays in the UK.

If you work on a bank or public holiday, there is no automatic right to an enhanced pay rate. What you

get paid depends on your contract of employment.

If full-time workers get paid leave on a public holiday, part-timers who don't normally work on that day have the right to paid time off on another day, proportionate to the hours they work.

You have no right to additional holiday, even if it's unpaid, unless your contract provides for it. Your employer can set their own rules on any holidays they give over and above the legal minimum. Your employer is not allowed to give you less than the legal minimum.

The government has made a commitment to make paid time off for bank holidays additional to the current four-week holiday entitlement. The change has not come into effect yet but it is proposed to increase the current statutory minimum holiday entitlement from four weeks to 5.6 weeks (maximum 28 days). This is equivalent to an increase from 20 days to 28 days for someone working a five-day week.

If you're not getting your full holiday entitlement, speak to your employer. If you have an employee representative for example, a shop steward you can ask for their help.

Some employers give more than the minimum four weeks leave as part of the terms and conditions of employment, for example, extra leave for length of service, for working shift or for designated Company holidays such as Christmas Eve, however this is more common in workplaces with trade union recognition and strong shopfloor organisation.

The best way of upholding, implementing and even enhancing your rights is by joining a trade union and availing of the advice, expertise, representation and protection that membership of a union affords.

Got an Industrial Relations question for John Kavanagh? Send it to editor@swp.ie

Have you got a story for Socialist Worker?

Send it to editor@swp.ie
Tel (01) 872 2682 or
PO Box 1648 Dublin 8

BALLYMUN

Residents protest over housing delays



Protesting at the Ballymun Civic Offices Photo: Rita Cahill

By Kevin Wingfield

Residents of some of the most run down flats in Ballymun took protest action in February over huge delays in rehousing them.

In 2000 Dublin City Council and its subsidiary Ballymun Regeneration Ltd promised the residents housing in the new Owensilla Terrace development.

The original builder (O'Conner Bros) went on site in 2003. When they went bankrupt, Levin's Associates were engaged as contract managers to

finish off these 30 houses in September 2004.

The residents were then informed by BRL that their homes would be finished in September 2005. But their homes are still not ready.

Residents and their supporters picketed the North West Area Committee meeting of DCC on Friday 16 February.

They demanded to be told why Levins have taken over two and half years to complete the €12.7m contract to finish the 30 houses. Despite Levin's delays, they have not in-

currred penalties, indeed they have been awarded other contracts in Ballymun by BRL.

Residents pointed out that BRL continuously ignored the their queries about the lack of work being done on site until before Christmas. They are also angry that sub-standard baths are being fitted to some of the homes.

The flats they have been waiting in for years are largely de-tenanted and subject to vandalism, and other anti-social activity. They are living in stress-

ful, unhygienic, inhumane conditions.

Lána McCarthy told Socialist Worker, "I wish (BRL bosses) Eamon Farrelly and Ciaran Murray would come and live with me for one night and see how they like it."

"My children are terrified they are going to be burnt alive in their beds or die from smoke inhalation. It is unacceptable that BRL have my family's lives in their hands and couldn't care less about us. It's disgusting."

The protestors point

out, "we are flooded repeatedly, have had to be evacuated by the fire brigade on more than one occasion due to fires raging out of control."

"We have no heating or hot water to speak of and as such our electricity bills are sky high whilst we try to heat ourselves. There has also been two gas leaks in Silogue Avenue recently due to workers hitting pipes."

"Anti social behaviour is rife due to the de-tenanted flats and the Gardaí and Dublin City Council

seem incapable or unwilling to help.

"The flats are also in such a state of decay that we are currently over-run with vermin."

John McCarthy, one of the protesting residents told Socialist Worker, "We trusted the BRL and all they did was feed us lies and leave us to rot in our flats, well we are fighting back for all the people of Ballymun who BRL have treated with disdain, this cannot be allowed to continue."

A year ago, residents

from another part of Ballymun occupied the civic offices for a number of weeks over the same issue. As a result of their protests, some concessions were gained.

This time the protestors won a commitment from BRL and Council officials to speed up the work and investigate a rent rebate for the affected families.

Protestors returned to the civic offices two days later to confront Bertie Ahern and other politicians involved in an opening ceremony at the offices.

STUDENT TEACHERS

About 2,000 student primary school teachers took part in a protest march to call on the Minister for Education to provide funding to meet the expenses associated with the compulsory "teaching practice" element of their course.

Many students have to fork out up to €1,400 over the course of their training to meet the requirements of their supervisors.

Almost 1,800 SIPTU members at Aer Lingus have voted 96% in favour of industrial action up to and including strike action.

The end of last year saw Michael O Leary and Ryanair bid to take over the airline. This was soon followed by an announcement by Aer Lingus itself to introduce new contracts for staff that change conditions of pay, grading, annual leave, overtime and shift premiums. Management made their proposals to reduce terms and conditions of employment for both new and existing staff in their document 'PC1-07' issued on December 4, 2006.

The dispute is clearly a direct result of the privatisation of the airline.

Unsurprisingly, quite soon after the completion of the privatisation process, Aer Lingus management with the publication of this document have broken their own commitments to deal with any proposed changes in work practices or conditions through a process of consultation and agreement with the staff and their unions.

Action in the form of limited work stoppages, a ban on overtime or the withdrawal of co-operation from certain tasks, could be taken before the end of February at Dublin, Cork and Shannon

airports. According to Michael Halpenny, SIPTU's national industrial secretary, a "full strike should not be ruled out." Protests, strikes and mass direct action have been effective in stopping governments across Europe in introducing cuts and privatisation of public services.

Since privatisation was forced upon Aer Lingus workers, it is clear that serious and widespread action is needed to stop these changes.

It is expected that IM-PACT are also to ballot for industrial action on the issue in the coming weeks.

EDUCATE TOGETHER

Educate Together is a group of activists involved in education, whose aim is to put pressure on the state for the planning and delivery of new educational infrastructure

which provide equality of access to all families regardless of social, cultural or religious background.

They have recently launched a campaign: New Schools for 21st

Century Ireland.

This involves a petition, a policy statement as well as a letter and post-card campaign.

For more details see <http://www.educatetogether.ie/>

RAYTHEON 9

Galway held a Raytheon 9 awareness and fundraising night in February. One of the nine, Jimmy Keelly, addressed a meeting at NUI Galway arranged by the Socialist Workers Student Society and the documentary "Back from Beirut" was shown. This was followed by a benefit gig at the Crane Bar, hosted by Galway Alliance Against War. An overflowing audience donated over a thousand euros as some of the best trad/folk musicians in the West contributed their acts for the cause.

PARTNERSHIP

Even the extremely conservative leaders of the trade unions are recognising that inflation is undermining the value of partnership agreements.

The General Secretary of the Irish

Congress of Trade Unions, David Begg, recently described the Partnership process as going through a rocky patch, due to concerns over the rate of inflation.

SIPTU President

Jack O'Connor pointed out that workers could not be expected to carry the burden of inflation.

They are right and the point gives another good reason for all trade unionists to get behind the Nurses' pay claim.

WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

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

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

REVOLUTION

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

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

greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

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

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

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION

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

working class.

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

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

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

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

We want to see an Irish workers republic where all

workers gain.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

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

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

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

Join the Socialists

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

Name.....

Address.....

Email.....

Phone.....



Socialist Worker

Don't Pay the Water Charges

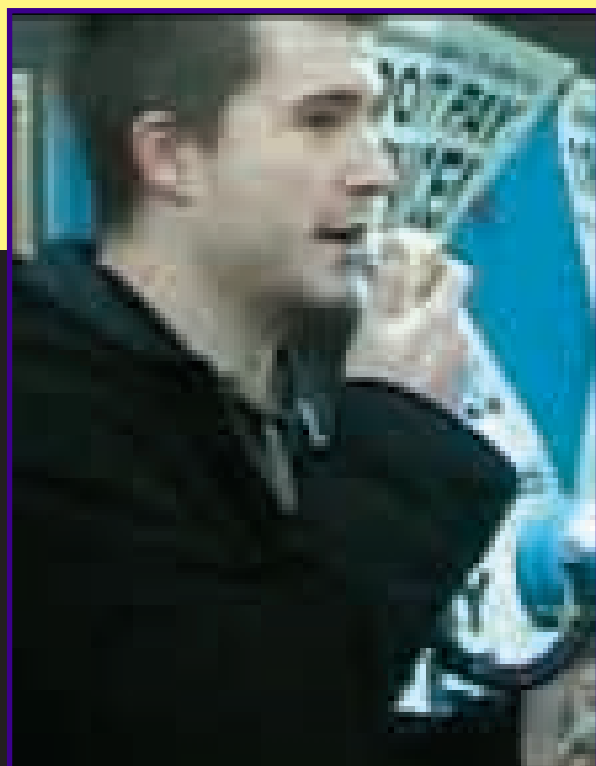
Vote

McCANN Eamonn

Photo: Lorcan Doherty


(Socialist Environmental Alliance) FOYLE

and...



MITCHELL Sean

(People Before Profit Alliance) WEST BELFAST

The election campaign in Northern Ireland has exposed just how little the four major parties political have to offer.

Their messages show them as being trapped in a moribund ghetto, where the most important goal is to promote their own particular brand of sectarian sabre rattling.

Yet what do people say they want from Assembly politicians?

First and foremost they want an end to water charges.

Yet not one of the major parties will come out and say they will get rid of the water taxes once they enter Stormont.

And none of them will support a non-payment campaign.

People also say they want better healthcare, education and a future for their children in terms of a university education and jobs

to go to. None of the major parties will rule out privatisation of these sectors. Privatisation will mean fewer jobs, less services and an increase in the desperate poverty that exists here.

Eamonn McCann of the SEA and Sean Mitchell, the youngest ever candidate to stand in an Assembly election, represent a new Northern Ireland, a Northern Ireland that is emerging which re-

jects sectarianism for the politics of unity.

The unity of Catholic, Protestant and people from an ethnic minority background is needed to fight the water charges, to stop privatisation, to stop the war in Iraq and to ensure that it is people, not profits, that are the priority in Northern Ireland.

A vote for these candidates is a vote for the future.