

Socialist Worker

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Fianna Fail privatisation madness

RAIL CRASH COMPANY TO RUN OUR SCHOOLS

FIANNA FAIL are handing over the running of schools to a company responsible for the maintenance of rail tracks in Britain at the site where five people died earlier this month in a train crash at Potters Bar.

The track was maintained by a company called Jarvis. Fianna Fail are handing the running of schools over to Jarvis as part of their

privatisation plans.

But tragic rail crash in Britain shows the reality of privatisation.

The Potters Bar crash took place, just five miles from Hatfield where another crash killed four people 18 months ago.

Warned

A rail worker warned his managers of loose bolts and unstable track at Potters Bar just three weeks ago.

Jarvis, are the contractor responsible for

the state of the Potters Bar rail track. They get an astonishing £4.4 billion of British government contracts.

Now Fianna Fail are giving up the running of five schools to the company.

Jarvis should feel right at home with Fianna Fail—the company boss has a home in the Cayman Islands.

In the schools handed over to Jarvis plc in Britain, rather than saving the taxpayers' money as PPP proponents claim, has actually

ripped off the taxpayer.

In one example, an initial estimate of stg£12 for building a school in Dorset rose to stg£15.2 million and ultimately ended up costing stg£22 million.

Another sign of Fianna Fail's determination to push ahead with privatisation was his appointment of his best friend to a cushy state job.

Joe Burke was appointed the chairman of the Dublin Port Company the day after the general election was

called. Others on the board include FF councillor Royston Brady, John Stafford. The port company is set to be privatised.

When the Port companies were privatised in Britain it led to massive profits for business but massive job losses for dock workers including the Liverpool Dockers.

Privatisation in Britain has been a licence to print money for Fat Cats and destroyed jobs and cost lives in Britain. We need to organise to stop Fianna Fail's privatisation madness.



The train crash in Potters Bar in Britain

Gardaí intimidation for FF incinerators

SECRETARY of Galway for a Safe Environment (GSE), Aine Suttle, responding to a knock on her door, was startled to hear a voice claiming to be that of a Garda from the Oranmore police station.

Identified

"At first I thought it was a joke because when I asked who was there (through the closed door), the garda identified himself as Sergeant John Gormley of Oranmore police station", said Aine.

But Sergeant Gormley emphasised that it was not a joke and it was simple

coincidence that his name was the same as the Dublin Green TD.

Sergeant Gormley requested that Suttle open her door so he could speak to her.

An unconvinced Suttle refused and asked what it was about.

Gormley stated that it was about the signs "A vote for Fianna Fail is a vote for Incineration—Stop the Cancer Before It Starts".

Suttle replied that she was aware of the signs and was awaiting a letter from the "Standards in Public Office Commission", which, she had been informed earlier, had arrived at the Galway One World Centre, the postal address for Galway for a Safe Environment.

Sergeant Gormley asked again if she would

open the door and once more Suttle refused stating that if there was any information he needed to hand over, it could and should be put through the letter-box.

Other members of GSE, then contacted the Oranmore station to verify the authenticity of and reason for Garda Gormley's visit.

Garda Gormley explained that he was responding to a complaint from the Galway Fianna Fail director of elections Aodh Dalton.

Reporting

"It's extremely ironic for Fianna Fáil to be reporting anyone to the Standards in Public Office Commission, given the recent corruption scandals in that party", said Aine Suttle.

"It's even worse when you consider that in Galway West, Fianna Fáil will be spending up to €114,000 between their three candidates on this campaign.

"And they are reporting a voluntary community group for spending around €700 on a poster campaign. €700 wouldn't even pay for the nails on the FF billboards—there are so many of them".

Harney attacks Community Employment schemes

CE workers revolt against Harney's cuts

COMMUNITY Employment workers took to the streets to protest against Mary Harney's decision to slash 4,000 places on CE schemes.

In May, before the election, hundreds of CE workers from all over Dublin took to the streets of the capital.

Joined

Faced with the prospect of closure, in many schemes all the workers joined the protest to defend both their jobs and the rights of the community to the services they provide.

The march ended with a rally outside Mary Harney's Department of Enterprise and Employment.

Many of those on the demonstration spoke about the importance of these schemes in some of the most disadvantaged areas in the country.

Leigh believes that with-



MANY community care jobs rely on scheme workers

out participating in her CE scheme "I would not have had a hope. It was the first chance I got off anyone.

"If I lose this my whole life is gone and my daughter's whole life is gone. I know lots of issues are important but this one is really, really important.

"Without CE some of the people I know who are now able to work with computers

would be out on the street."

As one of the trainers on Leigh's project said, "The government, instead of supporting community projects, is now actually bullying them out of existence."

As a result of the determination of people like Leigh to take to the streets and fight the cuts, Harney conceded that none of the special drugs projects would

lose CE places. However the programme to reduce places by 19 percent remains in place.

Crèches, old folks projects and many others are expected to close in the coming months.

One group who will be particularly hit are travellers participating in Local Training Initiatives.

Renewed

These are short term training programmes that are renewed to enable travellers to access training often for up to four years.

Now an embargo has been placed on taking on new participants.

Existing trainees will complete their current programme and two projects have already closed.

The success in rolling back the cuts in drugs projects is an indication that Harney can be beaten on this. Taking to the streets, attending press conferences and picketing politicians offices are tactics that work.

Now we need a nationwide campaign to defend these jobs and services.

★ While Irish soldiers were training in Wicklow in preparation for the EU Rapid Reaction Force, General Gustav Hägglund, head of Military Committee of the European Union, called for a new common security system for Europe and America. This would involve the EU and the European parts of Nato joining together.

After all the promises crumbling schools still waiting...

Offered nothing but privatisation

THE appalling condition of many primary school buildings has been regularly highlighted by the Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO).

A list of 112 substandard schools was published by the primary teachers union during this school year and included schools that suffered rodent infestation, lack of indoor toilets, chronic lack of space and facilities and general dilapidation.

Published

Minister for Education Michael Woods published a progress report on these schools on May 9 and it is clear that little or no progress has actually been made.

Of the 112 listed schools the vast majority are in the very early stages of the process.

For example of the seven schools listed in county Cavan, four are only in the architectural planning phase.

No start or finish dates are given for any of the building works in any of the schools on the list

The list represents just the tip of the iceberg.

Earlier in the week a further list of over 850 schools awaiting work was made available indicating that a very large proportion of our primary school going population are being educated in substandard or inadequate buildings.

The government is allocating €440 million to the school building programme, but €85 million will be delivered through public private partnerships.

Five secondary schools are already being built by private companies.

Socialist Worker can reveal more schools are in line for the PPP scam.

According to the Department of Education the following primary schools are being considered for PPP: Scoil Christ Ri, Ennis; Ennis National School and Ennis Educate Together National School. New Ross CBS in county Wexford is being considered as part of a major urban area PPP.

The government is hop-

ing that teachers and parents will accept PPP and creeping privatisation out of desperation to get decent facilities. Jarvis plc, the company that was awarded the contract for building the five secondary schools, is heavily involved in PPPs in the education, health and transport sectors in Britain and its record is appalling.

Revealed

It recently hit the headlines when it was revealed, following the horrific Pottery Bar rail crash in England earlier this month, that shoddy maintenance was at fault. Jarvis was the company charged with providing the rail maintenance on this line.

This is not the first time that Jarvis's safety record has been called into question.

Furthermore, in the area of education Jarvis plc, rather than saving the taxpayers' money as PPP proponents claim, has actually ripped off the British taxpayer.

In one example, an initial estimate of stg£12 million



for building a school in Dorset rose to stg£15.2 million and ultimately ended up costing stg£22 million.

The introduction of PPP needs to be resisted and an urgent and comprehensive building programme funded by the state needs to be implemented.

The INTO has done good work in highlighting the state of the primary schools.

It is now time it organised action to get schools up to acceptable standards and to keeping the money grabbing private companies out of education.

Fine Gael's drug money crook pays up but stays out of jail

FORMER Lord Mayor of Dublin and Fine Gael junior minister, Michael Keating, has agreed a tax settlement with the Criminal Assets Bureau of €250,000.

Keating and his for-

mer business partner, Peter Bolger were carrying money for a leading drug-trafficker.

When Keating was arrested in 1997 he was found to be carrying two bank drafts of £48,000 made out to the drug-trafficker.

Keating and Bolger were also involved in a huge VAT fraud in England during the

early 1990s.

The fraud, involved the claiming of VAT on imaginary exports of computer parts.

Keating and Bolger left the jurisdiction and successfully fought attempts to extradite them to Britain to face trial. And there are of course no plans for them to face trial here.

★ Activists in Shannon are reporting an increase in US military plans landing at Shannon airport.

On average there are two flights a day transporting US troops or equipment landing at the airport.

what we think

Fianna Fail crooks get back in but... 25% vote against the bosses' parties

THE CROOKS in Fianna Fail are back in power. Opinion polls paid for by the Independent group predicted up to 50 percent for Fianna Fail.

In reality Fianna Fáil took 41.5% of the first preference votes, an increase of just 2.2 points on the 1997 election. These were votes gained from Fine Gael.

Fine Gael secured only 22.5%, nearly five and a half points fewer than five years and lost over 24 seats.

Charlie McCreevey claimed on television that FF won because everyone was happy buying pints on the back of the money they made out of the boom.

This is nonsense.

Wealth

Between 1994 and 2000, the Irish economy grew at an average rate of 9 percent a year.

But it was the rich that grabbed the wealth—so much so that the share of the economy going to capitalists and property speculators grew from a third in 1987 to over a half in 2000.

Taxes on profits are among the lowest in the world; employers enjoyed the lowest social insurance

costs in Europe; capital gains tax was slashed from 40 percent to 20 percent.

We paid for this by putting up with some of the worst public services in Europe and by accepting wage restraint.

Large numbers of working class people aren't happy with Fianna Fail at all.

The depth of opposition to the political establishment was shown by the fact 25 percent of people voted for non-establishment parties.

Irish society is moving beyond the Tweedledum and Tweedledee politics.

At the time of writing 35 sitting TDs were not re-elected. The Green Party won six seats, Sinn Fein five and independents won 14.

Clearly anything but an endorsement for the parties of big business.

In the same way as a section of big business interests, like Tony O'Reilly's Independent have given up on Fine Gael so have a section of the middle class. That's why the PDs were still able to win the odd seat.

Fine Gael represented one wing of the establishment.

It's origins were among the ranchers and the Blueshirts. During the 1980s they tried to recreate themselves as a liberal version of Fianna Fail.

But as Ireland heads into a recession and becomes more polarised there is less room for two practically identical twins of

capitalism.

Even Noonan's disgraceful attempt to play the race card by demanding mandatory health checks on refugees couldn't save his party.

On corruption, Fine Gael was unable to attack Fianna Fail because they too have cupboards full of skeletons.

Because of this there was an unspoken agreement to play down the issue lest they were all caught out.

So the return of FF does not diminish the opportunities for the left—it increases them. It should be remembered that after FF got its biggest landslide in 1979, the country exploded for a short period into intense struggle after they could not deliver on their promises.

This time they are far weaker; they cannot afford the promises they made to get elected; they need to rely on more right wing populist politics to motivate their activists, and they still have a huge weight of corruption around their necks.

Increase

Last year tax revenue only increased by 3 percent as against a projected increase of 11.6 percent.

The slowdown in the economy is having a major impact on government finances.

Despite the Minister for Privatisation, Mary O'Rourke, having been dumped by the electorate, Fianna Fail are determined to push ahead with privatisation of our services.

Fianna Fail held off publication of the plans for Benchmarking in the public sector until the election was over.

Tens of thousands of public sector workers have been assured that they will get big pay rises through the benchmarking process—a process that measures public sector jobs against private sector conditions.

Workers who were told that benchmarking will "be like going to an ATM machine" will suddenly find themselves facing a right wing government that is determined to slash public spending at their expense.

This sets the stage for huge confrontations. We need to organise in the unions and communities to fight the attacks of this new government. And the Left needs to cooperate and organise to create a socialist pole of opposition to the vicious system.

■ Turn to Page 4 for more election coverage.



Socialist Worker Appeal reaches €16,784

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Election report

LEFT MUST NOW USE THIS OPPORTUNITY

BEFORE THE election one opinion poll predicted that Fianna Fail would get 50 per cent of the vote. In reality, the opinion polls were being manipulated to give the impression that FF was basking in popularity.

The real story is that the election shows the huge level of discontent in Irish society. The main beneficiary of this discontent in working class areas was Sinn Fein and to a lesser extent the Greens.

Radicalism

Labour lost out—as it has done in most of the EU—because it has turned its back on any sign of working class radicalism.

The Labour Party apparatus does not see it like that. Some claim that they lost out because they did not form a voting pact with Fine Gael to offer an alternative government.

But Fine Gael is a dying party—it

stands for nothing different to FF and is being cast aside by the electorate.

Pat Rabbitte also claimed that the electorate had become comfortable and selfish because of a 'feel good' factor with the Celtic Tiger.

But this does not explain why five independent hospital candidates were elected and why Sinn Fein grew by sounding more radical.

One of the Labour Party's main backers is the SIPTU union. At their annual conference this year, it was agreed to organise massive regional demonstrations about the health service in the run up to the election.

But the Labour Party officials who run the union scuppered the proposal—lest they be seen to be too radical.

Seventy years ago the leader of Fianna Fail, Sean Lemass, contemptuously claimed that the biggest source of the weakness of the Labour Party was they were too frightened to appear to be left wing.

As Irish society changes dramatically, they are reaping the full effects of that fear.



Sinn Fein's Martin Crowe at the count

Where now for the left?

THE Socialist Party, the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party fought to win a hard left vote.

With the exception of Socialist Party's Joe Higgins and Clare Daly, their vote was squeezed by the rise of Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein was seen to be large and appealed latent traditions of republicanism.

Nevertheless in areas, where the socialist parties had a record of local campaigning they established a small electoral base for the future.

The Workers Party comes from a very different tradition to the SP and the SWP.

It was formerly a hard Stalinist party which denounced Sinn Fein as "fascists".

For a period in the 1980s, it made breakthrough to thousands of working class supporters through its paper, the *Irish People*.

Today the party is in decline. Its membership is old and it offers little by way of strategy for the

future.

The face of the future is more likely to lie in the growth of the SP and the SWP.

However, what is needed over the next period is a strong socialist block in the South.

The radicalism of Sinn Fein will not be tested for masses of workers for some time.

They will remain outside government for a period and be able to combine left rhetoric and receive US dollars.

Fight

Socialists will have to fight together to carve out a new space in the growing radicalisation.

This will mean joint campaigning at local level—as has begun in the bin tax campaign in Dublin—to show that socialist methods of mass mobilisation are superior to republican rhetoric.

Over the next few months, the FF government will attempt to re-visit the Nice Treaty.

The main opposition to that treaty can either be made on a nationalist basis—or there can be clear socialist arguments about militarism, opposition the "war on terrorism" and the neo-liberal agenda that lies at the heart of the

EU.

That can only happen if the far left pool their resources and mount a credible national campaign.

The far left can grow with two organisations.

In France, for example, both the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire and Lutte Ouvrière have gained massively from the decline of the social democrats and polled over 10 percent of the vote in the recent presidential election.

The far left in Ireland is starting from a lower base but it can still grow in the same way.

But it will grow far quicker, however, if it creates a broader socialist blocks in campaigns and elections.

Will Sinn Fein shake the establishment?

THE RISE of Sinn Fein has sent shock through the political establishment. The Independent Newspaper Group was livid.

Their editorial denounced the election of Martin Ferris asking 'in what other democracy would a convicted gun-runner make such a smooth transition from terrorist to democrat, face so little scrutiny in the process and now be given such a strong endorsement?'

Sinn Fein's vote did

not, however, come primarily from support for vigilantism.

True, candidates like Ferris and Nicky Kehoe, called for more "gardai on the beat" and promoted a strong anti-drug line.

But the primary appeal of Sinn Fein their pushed left wing rhetoric—they were seen to be more radical than Labour.

Equality

They called for an end to bin charges, demanded free health care for all, and argued

for greeter equality.

But at the heart of Sinn Fein there are huge contradictions.

The party appealed to the left—but was well funded by the dollars of US big business.

They opposed privatisation—but in Northern Ireland their Ministers are privatising the hospitals and schools.

They denounced the corrupt establishment but Gerry Adams has made it clear he wants to join Fianna Fail in the coalition.

He has even said that

"If it is good enough for David Trimble, then it should be good enough down here".

At the centre of Sinn Fein's left rhetoric is an argument for a more "pragmatic approach" which plays down the importance of mass mobilisation.

The party wants to prove itself as more effective than the revolutionary left by getting on the inside track with the state bureaucracy and even a section of the employers.

Demand

Their main demand on taxation was to freeze corporation profits tax at a mere 16 per cent—way below the level that most workers pay in their wages.

All of this means that Sinn Fein's challenge will be muted.

Their aim will be to build an even stronger electoral base by a combination of soft left rhetoric and nationalism

But they will play a limited role in promoting a working class struggle against the chains of social partnership and privatisation.

HOW THE SOCIALISTS FARED

Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Socialist Party (SP), Workers Party (WP)

Cork North Central
Barry, Mick (SP) 936 2.1%
Tynan, Ted (WP) 458 1.0%

Cork South Central
O'Sullivan, Michael (SWP) 218 0.4%

Dublin Mid West
McGuinness, Andrew (WP) 393 1.4%

Dublin North
Daly, Clare (SP) 5,501 12.5%

Dublin North Central
Browne, Ritchie (SWP) 638 1.6%
Dublin North West
O'Connell, Seán (WP) 608 2.3%

Dublin South
Maher, Lisa (SP) 1,063 1.9%

Dublin South Central
Smith, Brid (SWP) 617 1.4%
Kavanagh, Linda (WP) 553 1.3%
Kelly, Shay (WP) 270 0.6%

Dublin South East
Ryan, Shay 286 (SWP) 0.9%
Crilly, Tom (WP) 284 0.9%

Dublin South West
Murphy, Mick (SP) 954 2.6%

Dublin West
Higgins, Joe (SP) 6,442 21.5%
elected

Dun Laoghaire
Boyd-Barrett, Richard (SWP) 876 1.6%

Waterford
Halligan, John (WP) 1,270 2.7%
Kelly, Jimmy (SWP) 300 0.6%

Wicklow
Kennedy, Catherine (SWP) 400 0.7%

Comment

What's happened to Labour across Europe?

AS FINE Gael imploded during the election, the Labour Party seemed not to gain from the public mood. This failure had nothing to do with vote management, turnout or new constituencies. It is part of a political crisis for Social Democratic Parties across Europe.

The 1990s saw a sharp reaction against the right-wing neo-liberal parties that had governed Europe and won popular support even within the working class throughout the 1980s.

The conservatives had been allowed to rule for so long through a combination of severe defeats inflicted on workers and the failure of labour parties to provide leadership in the battle against the bosses or the battle of ideas. Many once respected left-wingers embraced the ideas of the market and the bizarre proposition that class struggle was over.

Action

The swing left was sporadic at first and there was no obvious connection between, for example, the huge vote for the Irish Labour Party in 1992 and the wave of strike action in Germany in the same year.

As the decade progressed, however, a pattern started to emerge of mass electoral support swinging to social democratic parties and a slow but steady increase in the confidence of the working class in its ability to challenge the bosses.

This trend reached its high point in 1997 in the landslide victories of Tony Blair in Britain and Gerhard Schroder in Germany which ended nearly two decades of government by the right in both those countries. At around the same time, the left returned to government in Greece, Jospin reversed the rightward direction of French politics and by 1998, social democrats governed in 13 of the 15 EU countries – Ireland and Spain being the exceptions.

Why then, in just four years is social democracy faced with a major crisis of confidence in what were once its heartlands?

Firstly, the social democrats have largely continued the same policies as the conservatives whom the electorate flung out of office.

Jospin's Socialist Party introduced privatisation that Chirac and Juppe wouldn't even have dreamed of – including the flogging of the national airline, Air France and telecommunications company, France Telecom.

That's better than even Mary O'Rourke managed!

The race and asylum policies of Tony Blair's Home Secretaries, Jack Straw and David Blunkett, could have been written by their hated Tory predecessor, Michael Howard. In Germany, the most dramatic betrayals of all took place, with the sacking of reformist finance minister, Oskar Lafontaine, as requested by German business, and worse again, the sight of Green members of parliament backing the bombing of Yugoslavia and abandoning their pledge to shut down nuclear power.

It's not just about betrayal though. In general, reformism can only deliver on its promises in an expanding economy. The economic booms of the last decade have been weak, with major countries like Germany experiencing slow, or even negative growth.

What gains were available were ruthlessly held onto by the bosses. Very little has gone to workers in terms of wage increases, and even in one of the most prosperous European countries, Ireland, the wholesale running down and privatisation of services has continued unchecked.

If all this meant was that Labour continued to be a minority party, it wouldn't be of any consequence to socialists.

Unfortunately, it's much more serious. When the traditional party to which workers look, not only fails to deliver, but actually turns into a conservative party, people start to look elsewhere. For an example of this, we need only look to the electoral success of the BNP in northwest England, National Front in France, Jorg Haider in Austria or the late Pym Fortuyn in the Netherlands.

When the left is seen as being part of the problem, the far right can start to look like the solution.

In Austria, where the Freedom Party are actually in government, the main reason they picked up on the protest vote was that the SPD had been implicated in a corruption scandal, to an even greater extent than the Christian Democrats.

It's time for the anti-capitalist left to create a serious, credible alternative to both social democracy and, urgently, to neo-fascism.

A large Irish contingent at the Seville summit in June would be an important part of building that alternative.

New report reveals...

Half a million people in Northern Ireland living deep poverty

SHOCKING new figures on poverty in Northern Ireland have revealed that one third of all people in the North—over half a million people—are living in deep poverty.

Based on research carried out in Queen's University for the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFM/DFM), the figures were buried by the spin doctors and have yet to make the mainstream press.

Poverty

Socialist Worker can understand why OFM/DFM slipped them out with a press release that implied the report contained nothing but hard-to-understand descriptions of methods of calculating poverty.

The poverty line used in Britain and the Republic tends to be 50 percent or less of average income, while the EU tends to use 60% or less. The measure used



Poverty is part of the lives of thousands

in the North is household with 30 percent or less of average income.

The suspicion is that the usual 50 per-

cent line wasn't used because it would show over half the population of the North living in poverty.

Not all of these are

people living on benefits, rather they are victims of the low wage economy that is being promoted abroad by all the parties in the Exec-

Fight in Post Office to reject insulting offer

Royal Mail's latest pay offer is an insult. Service Delivery staff should reject the deal—which has sadly been recommended by the CWU leadership.

Royal Mail has offered just 2.2 per cent, backdated to last October, and another 2.3 per cent from 15 October 2002. That will take a post worker's basic salary to £261 in around two years' time—way off the £300 which John Keggie, the deputy general secretary of the Communication Workers Union, pledged to achieve by

October 2003.

In January, Keggie described the 2 per cent pay offer by Royal Mail as a 'pittance'. He's right. The police have been given six per cent. Unison workers have just rejected 3 per cent.

So why should posties, who will be working harder with fewer staff, accept this lousy package?

Productivity

The managing director for Service Delivery, Mick Linsell, said: "There is simply no spare cash for extravagant pay awards." That didn't stop Royal Mail from offering 10 per cent pay rises to two of its

directors .. who were shamed into turning them down.

Linsell is determined to tie any increase in basic pay to higher productivity.

He wants postal workers to spend four hours on the street without a break, instead of two and a half hours at present.

The abolition of the second delivery would save them more money, with posties working even harder.

It is already happening in Ballymena, one of the pilot areas where the second delivery has been scrapped.

Keggie decided to recommend the offer because the new

delivery patterns will be discussed separately from the pay negotiations. But that doesn't mean Royal Mail's demands are off the table. The ferocious cuts at Parcelforce will go ahead, too.

The Derry, north Belfast and Portadown depots face closure.

If the deal is accepted, management will take it as a signal to walk all over the CWU. Simple and New Labour are figuring out how to push through the cuts package and plans to open up Royal Mail to private competition.

A NO vote will show them that they face a fight—AND to deliver £300 a week.

utive.

The report shows that almost four out ten of those living in this poverty are working, 26 percent of them full-time, a further 12 percent part-time.

Families with children are most likely to be living in deep poverty, with two-thirds of all those in this category having young children.

Half of all the poorest children are living in families where there is at least one worker.

Relative

The figures also reveal that Catholic workers remain disadvantaged relative to Protestants.

Both Protestant and Catholic workers suffer from low pay and poverty, but Catholics do least well.

It is clear that Catholic workers remain concentrated in the poorest paying jobs.

As a result, 35 percent of Catholics of working age are living in deep poverty compared to 21 percent of Protestants.

Half of all children from Catholic families are living in deep poverty, as are a third of Protestant children.

The effect of Catholic over-representation in low paid jobs is highlighted when it comes to pensioner poverty, where most working class people rely on state pensions.

There is little difference between the proportion of Protestant and Catholic pensioners who are living in deep poverty.

But what these poverty figures, and in particular the growing numbers of working poor, really show is how bankrupt are the economic policies shared by all the parties in the Stormont Executive.

By joining the global race to the bottom, encouraging privatisation of public services and the transfer of public sector workers to the private sector, they have cheered on a growing low wage economy.

European Social Forum

Gathering of movements

by JOE CAROLAN
Globalise Resistance

IF YOU are against globalisation and war, and for freedom and justice, you should be planning to come to the European Social Forum (ESF).

The forum will be held in Florence from 7 to 10 November. The ESF looks set to be one of the biggest and most exciting anti-capitalist events of the year. It is going to be a huge assembly for everyone who is against neo-liberalism and war.

The second planning conference for the European Social Forum, brought together over 400 representatives of organisations from Dublin to Lublin, Oslo to Palermo, in the Austrian capital of Vienna on May 10th and 11th.

The ESF will be the biggest meeting so far of the European wide movement against neo-liberalism, fascism, war and corporate globalisation, involving up to 100,000 people. Huge halls and meeting rooms have already been booked in the Italian city of Florence, the two main halls with capacity for over 8000 each, with another two dozen halls with capacity for one to two thousand.

The conference will be a four day summit of the movement, and its programme will deal with four to five main themes agreed so far.

Most of the key groups who have been building the anti capitalist and internationalist global justice movement in Europe were represented:

The Italian Social Forum and Refondazione Comunista, emboldened by their three million strong general strike against Berlusconi's neoliberal agenda in April, ATTAC and the French far left such as the Revolutionary Communist League, fresh from mobilising 1.3 million people in Mayday marches against Le Pen

The organisers of the half a million strong mobilisation in Barcelona against the EU, joined by the Mobilisation for Seville, who have successfully argued for a one day Spanish general strike on June 20 before the EU summit

The British Stop the War Coalition, who brought over 100,000 people onto the streets of London against Bush and Blair's axis of evil, and Globalise Resistance, fresh from helping to organise a 3000 strong demonstration in Dublin in defence of civil rights, after the Irish Police force brutally baton charged a Reclaim the Streets event on the Mayday bank holiday.

The Vienna conference also saw a serious attempt to spread the anti capitalist movement into the East, with many representatives coming from Eastern Europe. It is hoped to also involve emerging anti capitalist groups forming in the Mediterranean region, as the radicalising effect of the Palestinian intifada also sees new forms of organisation and protest forming in Egypt, Lebanon and the wider Middle East. There were also speakers

If you want to come to protest at the EU summit in Seville or find out more about the European Social Forum than contact Joe at 087 9032281 or globalise_resistance@yahoo.com

who are attempting to organise the African Social Forum and the Asian Social Forum next year, who are planning to attend the ESF in Florence.

Globalise Resistance activists argued that the somewhat poetic language used in the Italian proposal be replaced with what we are concretely against and for. So a proposal to have a session on "Europe, xenophobia and the fear of the other" will now be a debate on "The rise of Eurofascism, racism in Fortress Europe and how to stop it". Other main themes will be War and the new imperialism, global resistance to neo-liberalism, and the new emerging relationships between "the Movement", rank and file trade unions and the political movements.

There was also debate on the role of political parties and their role in the ESF. At the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, there was a formal ban on parties, despite the organisational assistance given by the Brazilian PT (Workers Party). In Italy and Britain, radical left parties have played a central role in building the movement, whereas from France, ATTAC representatives close to the French government argued for a ban on all parties.

Radical

It was agreed that in plenary sessions, political party representatives would not speak as party reps, but could not be excluded as participants from the movement. The Italian experience since Genoa and the radicalisation of the left will mean that all members of radical political groupings will be free to speak.

There was also huge interest from Eastern European groups in holding a fringe meeting with Irish participants on our rejection of the Nice Treaty. Most of them are arguing against the EU as an increasingly militarised and economic superpower, and are interested in hearing the Irish "No to Nice" point of view. Making these links on the "peripheries" of Europe will give the lie to claims by the Irish establishment that those of us who rejected Nice are against the poorer nations of the East.

The thing that struck me most about the conference in Vienna was the new found surge of confidence and energy in the movement—especially after the general strike in Italy and the massive mobilisation in Barcelona. Most groups are preparing for the EU summit protests in Seville on June 20 and 21, which—when coupled with the call for a general strike by the main Spanish unions—promise to be massive.

Scores of people will travel from Ireland to Seville next month. It is hoped that hundreds will come to Florence. Globalise Resistance hopes to facilitate that process, and invites all those who want people before profit and planet before pollution to join us in organising the Irish delegation to the ESF. We hope to bring a wide coalition of rank and file trade unionists, environmentalists, NGOs, students and human rights activists to Italy. A better world is necessary!

'BLUE BLOC' VIOLENCE: GARDAÍ ATTACK PEACEFUL PROTESTORS

ON May Day bank holiday a thousand people took part in a Reclaim the Streets demonstration. The response of the Gardaí was to try and baton people off the street.

Twelve people were hospitalised and 24 arrested. The attack on the RTS protest was part of a concerted attack on the movement.

Recently John O'Donoghue was at a joint meeting of EU Justice Ministers to discuss how to tackle the anti-capitalist movement.

Senior Gardaí have admitted being at Gothenburg last year for the EU summit to learn how to tackle protestors—live rounds were used by the Swedish police against protestors.

Globalise Resistance responded to the attack on the RTS demo by calling a protest at Pearse St. Garda station, which attracted 3,000 people who marched to the civic offices where the original protest had attempted to go.

One Guard, Donal Corcoran has been assigned to a desk job, while an internal and secret investigation takes place. The response of the Garda Representative Association was to call for night sticks and mace in order to tackle "subversives".

Socialist Worker calls for the dropping of all charges resulting from the RTS protest and the sacking of all Gardaí involved.



Who are the Gardaí?

THE FIRST moves to establish a local police force in Ireland occurred in the 1780s in response to nationalist and peasant agitation.

Even the moderate politician, Henry Grattan called them "an abominable institution".

Ever since, the essential task of police officers has been to act as the muscle men for the wealthy.

Gardaí see themselves as being on a mission to enforce the rule of law. But the law they enforce is overwhelmingly biased towards defending the privileges of the rich.

Ninety percent of those who are jailed have committed crimes against property. The vast majority

of offenders are poor. The police see themselves as being almost at war with sections of the working class community they are supposed to serve.

The Gardaí stop and search young working class people on housing estates regularly.

They are encouraged to be suspicious of every action and motive of those around them. But this same suspicion never extends to their political masters.

The result is that within the police is concentrated all the most reactionary and conservative ideas of society.

The effect of the whole structure of the police is to encourage these attitudes and render the police a pliable tool at the disposal of our rulers.

The Gardaí were originally drawn overwhelmingly from the ranks of the IRA. One study showed that two thirds of Gardaí

who were recruited between 1922 and 1952 claimed an IRA membership.

But even though they came from a revolutionary nationalist tradition, the structures of the police force soon moulded them into a conservative force.

One of the first commanders of the police between 1922 and 1932 was Eoin O'Duffy, a former OC of the Northern Brigade of the IRA.

Scum

O'Duffy joined the IRA to fight the empire but he soon revealed his class prejudices when he warned the force about "city scum who are always alive for any chance to plunder and loot, ready to espouse any cause which undermines order and government".

Trying to beat protest off the street

ON A Critical Mass cycle demonstration during last year's European Car Free Day around 150 cyclists created their own car-free zone in Dublin's O'Connell Street.

They held a sit-down protest and a few people played football until they were attacked by Gardaí.

On October 13th last year the Irish Anti-War Movement held a protest at the US Embassy in Dublin. But when it moved off to march, two people were immediately arrested. Kieran Allen was fined an outrageous €1,300.

Three days earlier, on October 10th, Globalise Resistance called a protest at an international conference on privatisation at Dublin's Burlington Hotel.

Gardaí drew their batons and attacked the protest, injuring a number of the protestors.

Fourteen people were arrested and charged under the Public Order Act. One of those injured and who needed medical help was subsequently charged with trying to steal a police radio!



Investigating themselves

THE GARDA Complaints Board was set up in 1986.

Over a thousand complaints are received each year.

About 40 percent of complaints are rejected immediately as inadmissible; between 20 percent and 40 percent of complaints are rejected as frivolous. In 85 percent of cases, it is ruled that no breach or offence took place.

In 1994-5, only one prosecution arose from complaints of criminal wrongdoing. In 1998, there were seven prosecutions,

THE DONEGAL corruption scandal is straight from the pages of a cheap novel, but it shows the reality of how the Gardaí operate.

In October 1996 the body of cattle dealer Richie Barron was found by a ditch in Raphoe, Co Donegal.

Initially the police believed Mr Barron was a hit-and-run victim. A view recently upheld by the state pathologist.

Yet within hours the road was cleared and all potential evidence destroyed. The failure to preserve the crime scene has never been explained.

Within weeks of Barron's death the Gardaí decided—for reasons never revealed—that he had been murdered by a blow to the head and that two local men, Frank McBrearty Jnr and his cousin, Mark McConnell, did it.

McBrearty Snr owns a pub and nightclub in Raphoe, and before long eleven members of his extended family had been arrested for questioning.

Critical

In the years since, one critical fact has escaped attention: from day one of the "murder" inquiry the Donegal guards were assisted by four members of the elite Cobra Unit from Garda Headquarters in Dublin.

Dubbed "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse", these officers have helped secure murder convictions around the country. Their role in the Donegal scandal remains a mystery.

What is known is that shortly into Frank McBrearty Jnr's interrogation, detectives emerged with what they claimed was a signed confession to the "murder" of Mr Barron.

The DPP's office, however, seems to have been unconvinced since McBrearty was never charged. Fabricating evidence is a serious offence, yet no Garda officer has been called to account for concocting a murder confession—in a case where there wasn't even a murder!

on other people's lands to be found by Gardaí.

A tape recording indicated that Lennon also knew about drugs being planted by Gardaí prior to a raid on the Point Inn nightclub, Quigley's Point, Inishowen. The Point Inn was owned by Frank Shortt who later served a three year sentence for allowing drugs to be sold on his premises—a conviction which was overturned in November 2000.

planted

A central figure in the whole affair has threatened that if he's charged with corruption he'll reveal other cases where senior Dublin detectives planted evidence and fabricated confessions to corruptly get convictions down the years.

His evidence would end many senior police careers and could completely shatter the judicial establishment.

BELMONDO Wantete, an electrical engineer from the Congo, still faces harassment from the Gardaí four years after he first came across the Gardaí.

Since May 1998 he has been subjected to the most appalling harassment and racism by the Gardaí.

On May 1st 1998, his home was raided at 3am by a group of Gardaí. He and his family were subjected to extreme racist abuse.

He was arrested and held for twelve hours without access to an interpreter or a solicitor. He was then imprisoned in Mountjoy for a week before being charged with assaulting two Gardaí in his house during the raid and released on bail.

Six weeks later, he was arrested again for failing to carry ID. When the case came to court, the arresting Garda admitted he was

in no doubt about Belmondo's identity, but insisted he had the right to demand to see his residence permit. The judge dismissed the charge.

Belmondo was again arrested on foot of an arrest warrant that was not in his name.

Despite the fact that friends and his lawyer arrived at the station with his identification papers, the Gardaí still refused to release him.

He was detained for five hours before being released without charge.

On numerous occasions Belmondo has been charged with offences, such as not having motor tax or insurance, just as an excuse to repeatedly drag him through the courts.

Just as the Stephen Lawrence inquiry revealed "institutionalised racism" in the British police, the Belmondo Wantete case shows there is the same racism in the Irish Gardaí.



(All pictures on this page from indymedia ireland)

ON APRIL 20, 2000, John Carthy died after being shot by members of the Emergency Response Unit following the siege at his Co Longford home.

The Gardaí who killed John Carthy at a siege in Abbeylara in Longford will escape prosecution.

Carthy, a building labourer, with a history of depression, was shot in the back four times by officers armed with Uzi machine guns and assault rifles.

Carthy's sister, Marie, told the inquest she tried to go to the aid of her brother as he lay dying on the roadway but Gardaí prevented her.

"I tried to go to him but the guards wouldn't let me... I wanted to say goodbye but they wouldn't let me."

This came after the Gardaí had refused to let her speak to her brother during the siege.

"At one point they pushed me and shoved me," she said. Tom Walsh, John's cousin, said when he asked if cigarettes were being brought for Mr. Carthy, the Garda replied, "He's not getting it all his own way".

The Gardaí were told that Carthy would give himself up if provided with a solicitor. They claim that they could not find Carthy's requested solicitor in the phone book.

They made no attempt to contact his Psychiatrist.

A Dail sub-committee set up to investigate the events surrounding the fatal shooting was closed down because of police pressure. This comes after council for the Gardaí argued that a number of their members who were due evidence should not have to.

The same was used by British soldiers to try to avoid giving evidence to the Bloody Sunday inquiry. But in that case the Irish government supported civilian groups who demanded they appear.

The report on the fatal shooting of John Carthy contains no expression of regret or apology to

In 1928, he led a police pilgrimage to the Vatican where he was greeted by the fascist dictator Mussolini.

In 1933, O'Duffy was sacked by the new Fianna Fáil government and went on to form the Blueshirts.

But the nature of the police force did not fundamentally change.

Fianna Fáil recruited 80 of its supporters into the Special Branch but instead of spying on fascists they concentrated most of their activity on radical left wing republicans.

There was never any pretence that the Irish Gardaí were subject to democratic control.

No local police boards were established. The Gardaí were run directly by the secretive Department of Justice.

Gardaí never interfered in the affairs of the rich.

For every miscarriage of justice that occurred in Britain, there has been one in Ireland.

In the mid seventies, for example, a Heavy Gang was formed within the Gardaí to beat confessions out of suspects.

One woman, Joanne Hayes, was forced to confess to the killing of a baby which she could not have committed.

Between 1975 and 1979 no less than twenty people died in police stations and prisons.

The activities of the Gardaí have always been concentrated on the "crimes" of the poor and on political "subversion".

Major workers' struggles such as the post office workers' strike of 1979 were defeated by Garda baton charges on picket lines.

Their whole role brings them into conflict with working people because they have to enforce the rule of the privileged.

the family, apart from one sentence towards the end of the document.

The Garda Report shows no need for "enhanced police training in human rights, psychology, and negotiation tactics is not even addressed in a manner which

indicates any purpose of institutional amendment on the part of An Garda Síochána.

"In the absence of such an approach one is left with the pessimistic conclusion that Abbeylara could happen again," concludes the ICCL.

How the Gardaí hounded Dean Lyons to his death

WHEN DEAN Lyons died in an English prison his death came as a relief to the Gardaí.

For if they had their way he would have died in an Irish prison for a murder he did not commit.

In 1997 someone made their way upstairs to the bedrooms of two long-term psychiatric patients, Sylvia Shields and Mary Callinan, aged 59 and 61, and brutally stabbed both women to death.

Two hundred officers were put on the case. Eventually 50 of them stormed the Salvation Army hostel a hundred yards from the scene of the murder and dragged Dean Lyons from his bed.

A homeless heroin addict, with learning difficulties, who had a tendency to fantasise Lyons wasn't physically strong enough to have committed the murders.

According to his family Dean Lyons went to Britain after a drug rehabilitation course, because he was terrified of the Gardaí.

In Manchester he got back on heroin and was arrested for shoplifting.

The exact reasons for his death were unexplained. He was twenty-seven.

No compensation was ever paid to Dean Lyons. No apology ever made, no state car drove Dean Lyons to a tribunal in Dublin Castle. It wasn't a miscarriage of justice—it was murder.

It could only have come from severe intimidation inflicted by the Gardaí on him. Twenty-one days after Lyons was charged,

INTERVIEW WITH DUTCH SOCIALIST

'We fought against Pim Fortuyn's party'

THE DUTCH general election was dominated by the fallout from the assassination of far right leader Pim Fortuyn. Here we speak to PEPIJN BRANDON from *Socialist Worker's* sister organisation in Holland, the *International Socialists*, about the rise of the far right and the crisis of the mainstream parties in Holland.

WHAT LIES behind the support for the far right?

THE RISE of Pim Fortuyn was a direct result of the severe crisis that has hit all the mainstream parties over the last few years.

From the second half of the 1990s the Netherlands has seen fast economic growth.

However, the ruling "purple coalition" of conservatives and the Labour Party made sure that the fruits of the boom went to the rich.

A voluntary social contract between the union leaders, the government and the bosses has meant wages hardly kept up with inflation, while the number of millionaires exploded.

It also meant there was virtually no organised opposition from the labour movement against an unprecedented attack on welfare, healthcare and education.

The so called "Polder model" or "Dutch model"—the system of organised co-operation between the bosses, the state and the union bureaucracy—in practice meant that the privaters and the neo-liberals had their way under cover of the Labour Party.

The results were appalling.

Spending on healthcare and education in relation to economic output was lower than in the US.

Hospital waiting lists led to several cases of people dying because there wasn't enough room in intensive care. Instances like these created a deep hatred for all

government parties.

But the lack of a visible left alternative organising on the streets meant that the anger hardly translated into rising levels of confidence to fight back.

This created the conditions in which the far right could grow.

WHAT IS the nature of the far right in Holland? How big is it, and is it a form of fascism?

WE campaigned during the last few months under the slogan "Stop the Dutch Haider", after Fortuyn made a breakthrough in local elections in the city of Rotterdam.

The comparison between Fortuyn and the Austrian far right leader Jörg Haider is accurate. Both presented themselves as maverick anti-establishment politicians but campaigned hard on the traditional themes of the fascist right.

The media and most organisations in the Netherlands refused to put Fortuyn in the same category as the rest of the European far right. Outside the Netherlands, however, the rest of the far right saw him as one of theirs.

Filip Dewinter of the Flemish Block in Belgium even proposed to rename his organisation in the main Flemish-speaking city Liveable Antwerp, copying Liveable Netherlands, the organisation in which Fortuyn rose to prominence.

The issues on which Pim Fortuyn campaigned were virtually identical to those Le Pen



The assassination of Pim Fortuyn moved Dutch politics to the right

used. They both stressed the corruption of mainstream politics and the need to build "a movement" against all established parties, the Labour Party in particular. Fortuyn posed as a right wing rebel against those in government.

His second theme was racism. Fortuyn claimed that all social problems in the Netherlands are linked to immigration, in particular of people from a different "cultural background".

He called for a "vital and aggressive Dutch culture" against the "threat of Islam", which he called a "backward culture".

The racism was targeted at the newest immigrants, who largely come from Muslim countries. And it was wrapped in the "respectable" language of cultural differences, to which mainstream politicians have capitulated.

The race hatred it led to became visible immediately after the murder.

Groups of his most extreme supporters rioted in front of parliament chanting, "All blacks to the gas."

Fortuyn's organisation, List Pim Fortuyn (LPF), is not a fully fledged fascist party.

There were some connections with the very small and until recently very isolated Nazis.

But the bulk of his party was a loose grouping of frustrated ex-

members of the mainstream parties, some rich eccentrics, and large numbers of people who thought they could make a quick career by jumping on Fortuyn's bandwagon.

One of the horrible effects of the shooting is that it gave the fascists inside and outside the LPF the confidence to come out on the streets and start recruiting.

But even now, most of those who join in the Lady-Diana-like hysteria created around the murder are against much of what Fortuyn stood for.

There are some immigrants in the orchestrated mourning. But they are largely there in the hope that they will not suffer a backlash if they are seen to be upset.

The tensions within Fortuyn's organisation can make it unstable. Fortuyn's first replacement is an "integrated" black man, but the party also has activists who are openly racist.

If they are not confronted the fascist elements will gain ground.

There were all sorts of maverick right wing organisations in Europe in the 1920s.

They moved towards outright fascism after Hitler seized power in 1933.

Fortuyn's party is a reflection of sections of people falling for the far right's propaganda and moving into the orbit of those who want to build a coherent fascist force.

WHAT WAS the impact of Fortuyn's assassination on the election campaign?

HIS PARTY used the assassination as an excuse to whip up a witch-hunt against the left. It says everyone who opposed Pim Fortuyn's politics, starting with the Labour Party, is guilty of murder.

Over the last couple of days we (and the other left wing groups) received dozens of e-mails and phone calls from Fortuyn supporters saying we should be wiped off the face of the earth.

The official spokesperson of the LPF told the press that the International Socialists had created the atmosphere for the killing.

The day after the murder we got a call from our printer saying he was refusing to produce our paper any more.

This is only part of the climate of intimidation that is being created.

The LPF used every form of moral blackmail imaginable to keep all parties apart from itself from campaigning for the general elections.

Such an experience underlines that unfortunately just getting rid of individuals is not the way to smash fascism.

HOW HAVE the parties of the left responded?

THE PARTIES of the left were weak on fighting Fortuyn's policies before he was killed.

They refused to call him a racist, let alone compare him to Haider, and they went along with the hype around crime and immigration.

Building a movement against Fortuyn largely fell to anti-racist groups and anti-capitalist groups like ourselves.

In the week before the general election the parliamentary left went into hiding.

This means that while the press and the right are virtually making a hero and martyr out of Fortuyn, the left is silent.

The stronger we fight the climate of racism, intimidation and hatred that is being whipped up, the sooner we'll be able to turn the tide and beat back the racists and the fascists.

HOW DO events in Holland fit into the wider crisis across Europe?

HOLLAND WAS never thought of as a country of sharp political polarisation.

Recent events show how quickly these things

can change. If it can happen in "stable Holland" it can happen anywhere. Underlying the rise of Fortuyn (or Le Pen and Haider, for that matter) is not a simple shift to the right, but polarisation in politics going both ways.

The anger and disillusionment felt by the majority of ordinary people can translate into a vote for the far right.

But it can also erupt virtually spontaneously into movements of the left.

The anti-capitalist movement is the clearest example, of course. But we should also think of the way in which the initial successes of Le Pen in the French elections sparked a mass movement on the streets of France against the fascists.

Over the last few weeks we have seen the general strike and three million strong demonstration in Italy. Now there is the important strike by the engineering union, IG Metall, in Germany.

There's no clear run for the far right anywhere in Europe. We should be aware of that, and start mobilising the kind of mass movement against the far right and racism in Holland that can stop the LPF.

Alongside that we can argue for socialist and anti-capitalist politics that can point to a real solution for the problems faced by working people.

Eamonn McCann

The real football hooligans

THINKING about sport and the World Cup, I fell to wondering whether Dermot Desmond has ever read Richard Wright's "The Outsider".

One of the characters in the great Afro-American novel—about a black boxer bidding for a world title—is a rotten-rich businessmen who at the height of his power suddenly decides to manage a few fighters on the side. Why would he want to do that when he had his millions already made?, queried the fighter.

Well, confessed the manager, he'd made his money manufacturing brassieres.

But being a repressed sort of a fellow, he was uncomfortable about admitting this when people at parties asked him what business he was in. But, "I manage fighters" made him feel real cool.

Similarly, Dermot Desmond might be embarrassed to respond to the same query by confiding, "Bribery, corruption and property development". Far more style in being able to say, "I'm a director of Glasgow Celtic..."

Desmond made millions more than a decade ago from the dodgy deal whereby the old Johnston, Mooney and O'Brien site at Ballsbridge was bought for next to nothing and, a wet week later, sold on via a State company for around £10 million.

Then he made millions more from the gigantic scam represented by the Haughey-sponsored Financial Services Centre in Dublin. Throughout this period, he was also one of the chief suppliers of bulging brown envelopes to Haughey.

Desmond is by no means the only villain using sport as a shield to conceal his criminality. One of the most appalling newspaper photographs of recent years was of Denis O'Brien wrapped in a huge tricolour outside the stadium in Teheran where Mick McCarthy's lads had just edged out Iran to make the World Cup finals.

O'Brien is the scabrous parasite who pocketed quarter of a billion euro from buying the privatised Telecom Eireann at a knock-down price and then flogging it off for twenty times as much.

In what other context than sport could such a crook manage to have himself presented on the front page of the Irish Times as a fun-loving patriot at play?

As for commitment to "Ireland"—O'Brien hasn't paid a penny piece in tax on the huge sums he's "earned" from scams facilitated by corrupted politicians.

He's a "tax exile", officially resident in Portugal. Meanwhile, his pal, currency speculator J P McManus, is in "exile" in Monaco. However, McManus isn't known to the media as the Tax-Avoidance Kid, but as the "Sundance Kid", being commonly identified by reference not to his shady manipulation of the money markets but to his supposed love of horse-racing and football.

This use of sport by sleazy business will reach new heights with the World Cup finals. The ruling elite in each of the 32 countries which have qualified will be grabbing every opportunity to associate themselves with "their" team.

Gabriel Batistuta has warned against the Buenos Aires regime using the euphoria which victory would bring to divert attention from the crisis in the Argentine economy. Advocates of anti-people politics—Blair in England, Ahern in Ireland, Chirac in France, Berlusconi in Italy etc., etc.—will similarly want a slice of the feel-good factor which would come from success in the tournament.

The hype machine now being cranked up will generate a feeling that all of us—English, Irish, Nigerian, Paraguayan, Japanese, whatever—are in this thing together, emotionally united as our team battles to make it through.

People who would normally feel ill at ease at the sound of a national anthem will feel it proper to show some reverence.

It is in this context and mood that crooks who have robbed the plain people of Ireland blind will hope to present themselves as part of a great national outpouring of innocent Irishry. These shysters are not true football fans at all, but political hooligans who have attached themselves to the team. It's about time the real football people kicked them out.

book

Exposing new world disorder

THE NEW Rulers of the World is the powerful new book from investigative journalist and documentary filmmaker John Pilger.

Pilger has frequently written and spoken out against war, oppression, poverty and racism.

He has been one of the most prominent figures in the anti-war movement in Britain.

His latest book is a collection of four essays, mainly based on his recent television documentaries which expose the links between globalisation and imperialism.

"The Model Pupil" chronicles the West's support for the brutal coup of General Suharto in Indonesia in 1965. Suharto's henchmen slaughtered around one million people, mainly members of the Communist Party.

The Western leaders looked on with glee, and the multinationals moved in to carve up the country's economy between them.

The IMF and World Bank gave billions of dollars of loans to Suharto's regime, despite Indonesia's invasion of East Timor, where at least 200,000 people died.

Suharto was overthrown by a popular uprising in 1998, but Indonesia still owes \$262 billion to West-



Anti capitalist protestors hung this banner from a office in Berlin as George Bush was due to arrive in the country. It reads "Peace to the world, Pretzels for Bush".

ern banks and financial institutions.

The second essay, "Paying the Price", reveals the horror of the bombing and

sanctions inflicted on the people of Iraq by the US.

Thousands of Iraqi children die every month because of the

effects of depleted uranium weaponry used by the United Nations (UN) in its 1991 onslaught on Iraq.

These weapons have massively increased the cancer rates and other diseases in Iraq. Iraqi doctors cannot treat these diseases because the UN does not allow medical supplies through, as they say they could be used for military purposes.

"The Great Game", the third essay in the book, brilliantly goes through the lies and hypocrisy of our rulers as they carried out wars on civilian populations in Iraq, Serbia and then Afghanistan. Pilger calls this "Western state terrorism".

It was always about the control of power and economic resources, not the "humanitarian intervention" claimed. This is the "new imperialism".

Horrific

The final essay, "The Chosen Ones", shows the horrific systematic racism of Pilger's native Australia towards the aboriginal peoples, the original inhabitants of the country.

The *New Rulers of the World* allows us to hear the voices of Indonesians working in sweatshops, Iraqi doctors watching despairingly as children die in front of them, and aboriginal people fighting against racism.

Pilger is obviously heartened by the anti-capitalist movement that has swept the world in recent years.

After listing a number of recent struggles against capitalism Pilger says, "The list is endless and a source of optimism."

"Contrary to myth, people are seldom compliant. That the real terror is poverty, from which some 24,000 people die every day, is beyond public dispute."

This is a great book from an author who is writing for the millions of people resisting war and capitalism across the world.

The New Rulers of the World by John Pilger £10 stg

book

More of a trickle than a flood

A Little Help From My Friends is a new book about planning corruption in Dublin. Paul Cullen has provided in it a lucid summary of the Flood Tribunal.

And compared to wading through the evidence for yourself it provides a detailed descriptions of the scams of the Golden Circle.

The tales of developers and their bought and paid for politicians is fascinating reading. But by taking the tribunal as his primary source Cullen is trapped in its terms of reference.

The book follows almost chronologically the ramblings of the Flood Tribunal.

This means we go from the "will I get a receipt for £30,000"

to Ray Burke; from JSME to Denis O'Brien and Century Radio, via Bribes in plastic bags for Dublin councillors—all without any context.

The Flood Tribunal has raised far more questions than it answered, and while the occasional revelation has come to light, it will be years before it even hears evidence on scandals already exposed.

Millionaires

The Flood Tribunal has cost almost €6 million so far this year—yet it hasn't sat for a single day in public.

Last year it sat for only 17 weeks. The cost of the Flood tribunal is now nearly €20 million with four of its leading barristers earning fees of over €1

million each.

The Tribunals serve a purpose beyond making lawyers rich, which is to keep corruption scandals safe in a long, confusing and indeterminate legal process.

The Flood Tribunal covers more than planning corruption and yet has only uncovered the tip of the corruption in the Irish planning process over the years.

And unfortunately Cullen's book, while useful as a reference point for the Tribunals, is in the end as incapable of explaining corruption as the Tribunal is incapable of solving it.

A Little Help From My Friends by Paul Cullen. Gill & MacMillan.

—JAMES READ



where we stand

Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system.

The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion.

To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST

The SWP welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships. These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class.

We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry.

We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army.

Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class.

Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states.

We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it. We support the leaders when they fight but oppose them when they betray workers. We stand for independent rank and file action.

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. The SWP aims to build such a party here.

news & reports/politics/industry/the unions (01) 8722682 /fax (01) 872 3838 e-mail swp@clubi.ie / www.swp.ie

PHONE REPORTS ABOUT STRIKES/LOCAL CAMPAIGNS/PROTESTS

Teachers

Interview with Pat Cahill vice-president ASTI 'We have to fight for our share'

Pat Cahill was elected vice president of the ASTI at this year's annual Convention. Pat is known as one of the main opponents of the PPF and benchmarking and has been active in the union for many years. One of the "hardliners" that the media is so fond of attacking, Pat is one of a large group of activists who have organised on a rank and file basis to ensure that the wishes of the members of the ASTI are represented by the union. Convention saw anti benchmarking activists take many key elected positions and the union, despite attempts by governments and media, is firmly united in its continuing campaign to win decent pay rises for teachers. Pat spoke to *Socialist Worker* about ASTI opposition to benchmarking and PPF.



Teachers on the march

The ASTI teachers dispute is now in its third year. Prior to the signing of the present PPF the ASTI decided that it did not want to be part of the new agreement in spite of the fact that the ICTU was telling workers that it was the "only show in town".

The ASTI took this principled stand because it saw that the PPF with its benchmarking and "no strike" clause would not deliver any real increase in income to teachers.

Inflation

At the time the PPF was signed the Irish economy was experiencing an unprecedented boom yet the government and the ICTU were forcing workers into signing an agreement that would not keep pace with inflation.

The ASTI had always been a loyal and faithful partner of the ICTU family but when we tried to point out the flaws in the PPF we were told that it was the only show in town by leaders like Des Geraghty and Joe O'Toole.

In the past workers had been told that if they tightened their belts during the economic downturn and took all the cut-backs under the Haughey administration they would get their rewards when the economy recovered.

Workers in general did take the harsh medicine yet we now know from the tribunals that our leaders were not following the advice they were giving to the rest of us.

However in the period which is now known as the Celtic Tiger all we were offered was the PPF.

The ASTI believed it was not an acceptable reward and we were forced into the decision to leave the ICTU and to carry on the fight on our own.

The whole establish-

ment, government, media and the trade union leadership, turned against the ASTI. Yet all the ASTI asked was for the Minister for Education to simply talk about pay and conditions.

Instead we had our pay illegally docked by Michael Woods.

In the present dispute over supervision and substitution when the ASTI refused to do what was voluntary supervision and substitution, the Minister introduced what he called a contingency plan using what can only be called "scab" labour.

In all of this did we hear any protests from the ICTU leadership?

Protest

This month at the annual general meeting of the Association of Catholic Secondary Schools in Galway many principals spoke about the disciplinary problems associated with the Minister's contingency plan and made it clear that some schools were at breaking point.

In spite of the hammering the ASTI have taken in the media they have stood firm. The reason for this is the principled stand we took in the first place against the PPF and benchmarking and all the members see this.

If introduced into teaching, benchmarking will undermine the caring aspect of teachers' work, prevent students from reaching their true potential in the broadest sense and lead to increased teacher demoralisation.

Benchmarking is likely to make the quantifiable parts of the job (the number of report sheets filled out etc.) take precedence over the non-quantifiable aspects which would be seriously undervalued.

All the social capital that teachers had built up over the years would disappear.

Social partnership did not deliver to the workers of this country.

Bertie Ahern when questioned recently about his term in office said that this would be

referred to as "the golden period".

I would agree with him that the last five years were such provided you were a member of the golden circle.

One can see from the tribunals that some people have done very well but others have not.

The gap between rich and poor is widening, the recent walkout of from a meeting of the PPF in Dublin Castle by anti-poverty and equality groups shows this.

This group which constitute the Community Platform said they were frustrated that they had not been consulted about several recent government decisions which had serious implications for their members.

Frustrations

I think that the radical and principled stand that the ASTI has taken should be a beacon for other trade unionists.

We are not out of step. We know and feel that we as teachers have done more than our share in producing the

Celtic Tiger.

All we are looking for is our fair share.

After all many groups of workers have got pay increases over and above the terms offered in the PPF.

Joe O'Toole himself, one of the chief advocates of the Programme, got a pay increase of 31.3% over the PPF.

Treated

Teachers just want to be treated in the same way.

In the years between 1987 and 1999 the share of the national economy going to wages, pensions and social security has declined by 10 percent.

By contrast the share going to increased income in the form of profits, interest, dividends and rent has risen by 10 percent. This is what social partnership has done.

Where were the leaders of the ICTU during all of this?

For them it is a case of if you can't beat them, you may as well join them.

SWP activist meetings—all welcome

□ **ATHLONE:** Contact 01-872 2682 for details

□ **BRAY:** Meets every Thursday at the Mayfair Hotel at 8.00pm

□ **BELFAST CENTRAL:** Meets Tuesdays at 8pm in White's Tavern

□ **BELFAST SOUTH:** Meets 7pm Tuesdays in Peter Froggatt Centre, Queen's

□ **BELFAST WEST:** ring for details

□ **BELFAST QUEENS UNIVERSITY:** Wednesdays 4pm, Peter Froggatt Centre

□ **CLONAKILTY:** Phone (01)

8722682 for details

□ **CORK:** Meets Mondays at 8pm in Telecom Eireann Club, MacCurtain St

□ **DERRY:** Thursdays at 8pm in Foyle Friend Centre, 32 Great James St.

□ **DROGHEDA:** Meets Wednesdays 8:00pm Contact 01-872 2682 for details

□ **DUNDALK:** Meets Wednesdays 8pm phone 01-8722682 for details

□ **DUN LAOGHAIRE:** Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the Christian Institute

□ **DUBLIN ARTANE /**

FAIRVIEW: Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane / Beaumont Recreational Centre (opp. Artane Castle)

□ **DUBLIN BALLYFERMOT:** Meets Tues 8:30pm in Ruby Finigans Pub

□ **DUBLIN CABRA:** Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in Aughrim St Parish Hall, 13 Prussia St

□ **DUBLIN CENTRAL:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways Pub, Parnell St

□ **DUBLIN DUNDRUM:**

Meets Tuesdays contact for details

□ **DUBLIN FINGLAS/BAL-LYMUN:** Phone Kevin on for details

□ **DUBLIN RATHMINES:** Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm downstairs J O'Connell's (Pub) Sth. Richmond Street Dublin 2.

□ **DUBLIN RIALTO:** Meets every Wednesday at 8:30pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR

□ **DUBLIN SOUTH CITY:** Meets at 8.30pm every Tuesday upstairs Bowes

(pub) Fleet Street Dublin 2

□ **DUBLIN TALLAGHT:** Meets every Tuesday at 8pm in Jobstown Community Centre

□ **DUBLIN DCU:** Meets 2 pm Thursdays in CGO2

□ **DUBLIN TCD:** Meets Wednesdays at 1pm contact for details

□ **DUBLIN UCD:** meets Wednesdays 1pm contact for details

□ **ENNISKILLEN:** Phone 01-872 2682 for details

□ **GALWAY:** Meets every Wednesday in Currans Hotel,

Eyre Square (beside Cuba) 8.30pm

□ **LIMERICK:** Phone 01-872 2682 for details

□ **LEIXLIP/MAYNOOTH:** contact for details

□ **SLIGO:** Phone for details

□ **TRALEE:** Phone for details

□ **WATERFORD:** Meets every Thursday at 8pm in the ATGWU Hall, Keizer St.

IMPACT conference**Pay, PPPs and benchmarking the issues**

IMPACT union delegates were meeting in their annual conference as *Socialist Worker* went to press.

At the conference in Cork, low pay, Benchmarking and social partnership were being hotly debated.

With the general election out of the way, the new government will be grappling with the budget deficit and casting round to make cuts in public spending.

This makes it certain that the Benchmarking Report, expected later in the summer, will fail to come up to expectations and will leave the issue of low pay to fester.

One delegate told *Socialist Worker*, "There is widespread dissatisfaction with continuing low levels of pay among public sector workers."

"Look at what many thought initially was a sizeable pay rise under PPF. It has been completely eroded by inflation and soaring

house prices.

"I think much of the anger and frustration has been contained by hopes of a generous award from benchmarking.

"Benchmarking is therefore top of the agenda. Many in the union, including myself, are warning that benchmarking will not deliver."

Delegates need to insist on the membership deciding the response to the Benchmarking report. Importantly, the Cork branch has tabled a motion demanding a special delegate conference to discuss the outcome of the benchmarking report.

Other important issues to delegates at this conference include the increasing use of PPP's (public private partnerships) in water and sewerage schemes where jobs and pay rates will be under threat.

This IMPACT conference comes as clerical and admin workers in the health service are about to be balloted about a series of serious grievances ranging from overtime rates to incremental credit.

CPSU conference report**Government in for 'hot autumn'**

THE CPSU held its conference in Galway in May. The union—which represents low paid civil servants—is to call a special delegate confer-

ence in September to consider the outcome of the Public Service Benchmarking Body.

Recent pay awards to civil servant mandarins and fat cats has fuelled

anger among union members. CPSU general secretary Blair Horan, was forced to reflect this when he declared that the Government would be "in for a hot autumn" if members were not treated fairly.

Parents Making Children Aware

Parents MAKING Children Aware (PMCA) was established in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown area two years ago to provide a drug and health awareness programme to school children.

The project has received just €11,000 per year in funding, but despite its shoestring budget it has proved highly successful with its programme now running in fourteen schools.

Enthusiasm

The project has succeeded mainly because of the enthusiasm and commitment of those involved in the group. Instead of

getting support from the government however their application for an increase in funding of approximately €170,000 has been turned down.

According to Sarah Mulligan, one of those involved in PMCA, "We are not paid very much but what we are doing is very valuable. We need this funding so we can get premises and some part time workers."

"We badly need to extend this service because kids everywhere are being exposed to drugs and programmes like this help them to learn how to deal with the issues that they have to face.

"We cover a very broad range of topics including bullying and suicide and have got great feedback from both children, teachers and parents".

At a time when much

attention has been focused on juvenile crime, PMCA members see a huge contradiction in how the government is dealing with the issue. As Sarah says, "Surely it is much better to prevent the problems in the first place".

Appalled

Lucy Corlander, chairperson of the group, has been involved in lobbying for more money and is appalled that no increase in funding will be forthcoming this year or next. She believes they have been "too polite".

Group members have devoted a lot of their own time and resources to this project but it can no longer continue on this basis. Unless resources are forthcoming this project will fold.

Dun Laoghaire**Textile recycling plant under threat**

THE sacking of Mick O'Reilly and Eugene McGlone is a disgrace. They were pushed out on trumped up charges contained in a 240 page document.

They were silenced and told not to speak about their case.

They only found out they were finally removed when they heard it on the television.

If an employer behaved like this there would have been outrage!

Both men were sacked because they stood up for genuine trade unionism. They did not believe in partnership with the employers but encouraged workers to resist them.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Southern government put pressure on the London head office to sack them because they backed a group of train drivers who were otherwise denied their negotiating rights.

Rank and file ATGWU members who want to defend the progressive tradition of

the union should rally around these two men.

They will only be reinstated when members take back the union—and put it under rank and file control. The Irish elected members of the Executive—who come from both parts of Ireland—want these two officials back. But their wishes are being thwarted by an unelected bureaucracy. This situation cannot be let fester, as it will lead to frustration and splits. The TWGU in Ireland needs to be urgently re-organised on the basis of democratic control by members.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

In June the TGWU in Ireland will meet in conference. The delegates should back the resolution to re-instate the two sacked officials.

If head office does not accept this resolution, the conference should re-convene and take direct measures to re-structure the union on a democratic basis.

No unelected group of bureaucrats have a right to lord it over members. It is time for democracy—and a return to genuine trade unionism.

Liberties Training and Development Project

The Liberties Training and Development Project in Pimlico is the only textile recycling plant in the State and it is now faced with closure.

The plant recycles more than two thousand tons of textiles every year that would otherwise go into already overflowing landfill sites. But now the

government is refusing to fund its continuation.

The project must vacate its current premises, which was deemed unsuitable by the Health and Safety Office, before June 14. A new building has been identified that would be suitable as an Enterprise Centre.

Projects from Ballyfermot and the Canal Communities are keen to take up residence there as well. However as Philip Moloney who runs the plant with

three CE supervisors and 30 CE workers told *Socialist Worker* they have been given the run around by both the Waste Management Agency and the National Drugs Strategy when it comes to funding.

Philip showed *Socialist Worker* a fax from Dublin City Council indicating that the project was worthy of funding. However further communication from the head of waste management, Matt Twomey, completely overturned this and stated that the recycling operation was not a priority.

The project is one of the few CE schemes to offer those affected by drug use in their families and communities the opportunity to work as opposed to participation in a training programme. This is very important to some of the women who work there. Emily told *Socialist Worker* that she was particularly attracted to the scheme because it was "more a job than a course".

She had hoped that following completion of the scheme and with the growth of the enterprise that she may have obtained a job in the recycling plant. However without funding for new

premises her dream will not be realised.

Emily believes that her work in the plant has been very important in "getting me more stable, secure and confident. I've got a flat which I definitely wouldn't have now but for this job."

"I don't want to be reallocated to another project as I know what I'm doing here and we're doing good for people who are less fortunate than us. The clothes that we recycle go to people in Africa and Pakistan."

"I have a one year old child and the flexible working hours suit my situation but wouldn't be available to you in most jobs. The supervisors here also know everyone's situation and are very supportive so people feel more comfortable."

While the National Drugs Strategy has recognised that the project is doing great work, and it was one of the projects prioritised by the South Inner City Partnership, resources are apparently not available to meet need.

The government has talked a lot about both the

need to recycle and its commitment to helping areas that have been left behind by the Celtic Tiger.

The Liberties Project fits the bill on both counts but it is a measure of the hypocrisy of the politicians that nothing has been done to support it. Now the people of the area are facing the loss of their jobs and landfill sites will have to find space for another two thousand tons of textile waste every year.

RTE

DURING the middle of the election coverage there was a hidden battle going on in RTE over the attempts to contract out jobs in RTE.

Unions at the station agreed to suspend industrial action due to start at midnight of the Election.

The move came after RTE bosses agreed to defer the decision to do away with its outside broadcast

Social Workers

Social workers in Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow have voted for industrial action over staff shortages, resource constraints, and unmanageable case-loads in child protection services.

According to IMPACT more than half of social work posts are vacant in some Dublin community

care areas.

As a result, over 2,000 vulnerable children in the region have not been allocated a social worker.

The worst affected care areas are in the Northern Health Board, followed by the South-West Health Board.

The industrial action, which comes after nine months of negotiation with management, will provide a full service for what are deemed "priority cases" but restricted services for other children.

All three health boards in the Eastern Regional Health Authority area will be affected by the action, which could begin before the end of the month.

IMPACT says social workers will refuse to work on child protection cases where no social worker has been allocated, except in emergency duty situations.

This means social workers will not represent area health boards in court cases where no social worker has been allocated and will not provide care plans or reviews for children in care whose cases have not been allocated to a social worker.

Also they will not facilitate access visits for children in care whose cases have not been allocated to a social worker.

According to one Impact member, "Social workers have had enough of slick announcements of Government initiatives that are never followed through properly or backed up with sufficient resources.

"It is clear that a full service cannot be provided without a full complement of social workers and the most vulnerable children will suffer unless this is faced up to."

Disability rights

As reported in the last issue of *Socialist Worker*, parents of children in the Marino Special School in Bray were taking to the streets to demand that their new school, first promised in 1992, be built.

Their protests and pressure resulted in verbal commitments from Dick Roche (FF) and Mildred Fox (IND) to make representations to Michael Woods and, more importantly, they have been told by

the Department that the school is at an advanced stage of planning.

Harry Sterling whose child attends the school explained that "Parents feel so strongly that they would march to the ends of the earth for this but we have called off our protests for the moment to allow some breathing space. We are hoping that the politicians and the Department have got the message. We will give them one month to act."

Opposition to sewage plant

RESIDENTS in Donneycarney are campaigning against Dublin Corporation's attempts to build a massive raw sewage tank

behind **Par-nell Park.**

The tank, which would be protected only by "odour beds" is to be built just fifty metres from houses and adjacent to two schools.

Clanmoyle resi-

dent Christy Daly showed *Socialist Worker* the proposed site from his back yard and explained,

"With the prevailing wind coming from the west, the stench of sewage would be constant into our house and will effect people

throughout Donneycarney, Killester and Coolock.

"As well as the annoyance, there's a health risk. Children play in that park and who knows what sort of viruses they could pick up. It will also knock thousands off the value of people's homes."

Socialist Worker

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Solidarity price € 2.00

Irish Nurse returns from siege of Bethlehem...

'THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT GIVES ME HOPE'

MARY KELLY, back from the siege of the Church of Nativity after having been deported from Israel, talks to Socialist Worker



A wounded Palestinian met by Israeli troops after leaving the church

MARY KELLY, a nurse from Cork was a volunteer with International Solidarity Movement in the Palestinian territories for the previous six weeks. Mary, arrived back in Ireland having been deported from Israel in May and spoke to Socialist Worker.

She was deported from Israel following her arrest at the end of the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Mary had been inside the Church for the final week of the siege after taking food and medical assistance to the Palestinians inside.

"The army stormed the church and grabbed us. They put us into handcuffs and leg-cuffs, drove us away by truck and held us for days before we

were taken to the airport. Throughout the soldiers were aggressive and belligerent."

Before this Mary smuggled herself into Nablus during the Israeli imposed closures to volunteer with medics from Palestinian Red Crescent.

"The IDF attacked the old city with F16s. They imposed a total curfew—nobody was allowed in the streets for 21 days.

"We dragged some of the dead and injured into a mosque and converted it into a field hospital.

"We were there for five days and although we could provide some medical aid we had no blood, so we lost lives over this.

"In the Rafidia Hospital the conditions were terrible. All the staff—technicians, doctors, nurses, young volunteers—had to sleep in the hospital.

"It was fourteen days before we could bury the dead. We had to put the

bodies in a dairy truck—the smell was terrible."

Despite Israeli claims that they were targeting "terrorists", Mary described how the IDF systematically harassed the civilian population.

"Ambulances were stopped, held up and harassed. This meant that some of the injured died before we could get them to hospital. The IDF lied that ambulances were used to carry bombs—that was completely untrue.

Fired

"We tried to get to Askar refugee camp but had to turn back after Israeli tanks fired on us.

"On the way to Belata refugee camp with six Palestinians medics in an ambulance we were stopped at a checkpoint.

"The IDF beat us up, blood was streaming from the ears of a couple of

the guys.

"They threatened to kill us and seized the men. When they tried to take two women, our non-violent resistance made them back down. Before they let us go they tore up all my film."

When asked to estimate civilian casualties Mary replied, "Nobody knows the scale of the deaths and injuries. It is still impossible to get in—even the UN team were not allowed in.

"The offices of Al Haq, the human rights HQ in Ramala, tried to compile information on the disappeared—old men and young boys. Their offices and all their records were trashed by the IDF.

"As well as targeting young boys, the Israeli army has set out to destroy the whole civilian infrastructure.

"Bulldozers tore up crops in the ground, water tanks on the tops of

houses are shot up, sewerage systems smashed.

"The Health and Education Departments have been destroyed, travel is impossible and even fishing boats off Gaza have been arrested. The Israeli army has been destroying everything."

Mary would like to see Human Rights teams and UN troops in the area, but says of governments, "Nobody is standing up to Israel and the US.

"On the other hand I have been overwhelmed by support from ordinary people. It is this people's movement that gives me hope. I hope the boycott of Israeli goods is taken up in a big way."

Support the boycott of Israeli goods. Details and stickers from the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign www.supportpalestine@ireland.com

Justice for Palestine — Victory to the Intifada