

Socialist Worker

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**INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY
SPECIAL**



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On the Beauty
Industry**

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On the struggle
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Two years of brutal occupation of Iraq

MARCH 19: PROTEST TO STOP GLOBAL WAR

Global Protest, Feb. 15th 2003



Iraqi Resistance, 2005



The movements that can end occupation and empire

George Bush and Tony Blair claim that they have brought democracy to Iraq.

The horrific torture of Iraqis by US and British soldiers and the daily bombings of Iraq show this claim is a lie.

Our own government continues to support Bush's illegal occupation. US military pass through Shannon Airport on a daily basis. Bertie Ahern's visit to the Whitehouse on St Patrick's Day will reconfirm Ireland as one of Bush's allies.

Bush wants to bring his global war to Syria and Iran. But the US is losing the war in Iraq.

As a result of the barbarity of the occupation the popular resistance inside Iraq is deepening.

On March 19th millions of people in the USA and around the world will march demanding the troops are withdrawn immediately. Increasing numbers of US army personnel are criticising the war.

This worsening crisis forced Bush to tour Europe in an attempt to garner support for the occupation.

The international anti-war movement combined with the refusal by US soldiers and the Vietnamese resistance ended the Vietnam War.

We can do the same with Bush's Global War. There will be protests in Dublin and Belfast at 2pm On March 19th. Here are five reasons why you should be there.

■ Afghanistan and Iraq were just the beginning of Bush's global war. Bush and the neo-cons are planning war against Syria, Iran and other 'rogue' states.

■ The 'coalition of the killing' Tony Blair, George Bush and Bertie Ahern lied to justify their war for oil. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq

■ Over 100,000 Iraqi civilians have died as a

result of the invasion

■ Over 350,000 US troops have passed through Shannon Airport since 2001. Shannon and Dublin Airports are used to transport CIA's war on terror 'suspects'.

■ McDowell's Criminal Justice Bill and New Labour's "anti-terror" law use the pretext of the 'war on terror' to attack our civil liberties.

Build for March 19th Global day of protest against war

From front page:

AS GEORGE Bush turns up the heat on Iran and Syria, we must again sit through the sickening sight of Bertie Ahern giving the warmonger Bush an 'Irish blessing' on St Patrick's Day.

It is vital we mobilise as many people as possible to get onto the streets on March 19th.

We will be marching as part of a global day of action aimed at bringing, sooner rather than later, an end to the bloody occupation of Iraq and Palestine.

With millions on the streets we can also ensure that our leaders cannot attack Iran or Syria without risking regime change at home.



What you can do

- Organise a meeting to encourage people to come to the protests on March 19th in your workplace, school, local community –advertise it with a few notices.
- Contact the anti-war movement (see below) to get leaflets that advertise the protest.
- Distribute the leaflets at DART stations, bus stations, shopping centres, workplaces, schools –everywhere!
- Put up anti-war posters in shops, on lamp posts etc.
- Details of protests: March 19th Dublin, Parnell Sq, 2pm
March 19th Belfast, Art College, 2pm
- For information contact the Irish Anti-War Movement at 087 6329511 or 01 8727912 or for Belfast 00 44 77 42531617

Activists put war on trial

In the early 2003 the Irish government offered Shannon Airport as a major transit point for the U.S. war machine en route to their invasion of Iraq.

On February 3rd 2003 five pacifist Catholic Workers, Deirdre Clancy, Nuin Dunlop, Karen Fallon, Damien Moran and Ciaran O'Reilly made their way into Shannon Airport and disabled a U.S. Navy War plane.

The war plane disarmed by the Pit Stop Ploughshares at Shannon was en route to war. After the disarmament the plane was sent back to Texas and four U.S. corporations transporting U.S. troops pulled out of Ireland.

The Pit Stop Ploughshares were kept in Limerick Prison from 1–3 months and have been out on bail for the past 2 years, required to sign on at Garda stations daily for the first year and bi-weekly for the second. Some 60 international peace activists are coming to Dublin for the trial starting March 7th.

People are invited to join the daily walk to court at 9am from the Spire in O'Connell St. It is requested, on legal advice, that all banners and placards will be provided by the defendants. The defendants face a maximum penalty of up to ten years imprisonment. More information at www.warontrial.com or Ph. 087 918 4552

Labour Youth back campaign against the EU Constitution

by MARK WALSH

IN THE past few weeks a broad coalition of left organisations has come together to campaign for a No vote in the referendum on the EU constitution. The "Campaign Against the EU Constitution" will be officially launched in the coming weeks.

In a very hopeful sign of things to come Labour Youth have called for a No vote. According to chairperson Donal O'Laithin, "neoliberalism will be enshrined in the EU Constitution." This was despite pressure from Labour Party MEP Proinsias de Rossa arguing that the EU is a "force for good" in the world.

Such presumption on the part of De Rossa of Western benevolence towards the rest of the world is characteristic of European and US imperialism. It shows that de Rossa stands firmly with the oppressors



De Rossa says EU is a "force for good"

while at home claiming to be defending the oppressed.

The Irish Presidency and the EU Constitution

Last June, as the Irish presidency of the European Union came to an end, the political establishment was

unanimous on the agreement reached on the new EU Constitution: it was an unqualified success.

The Irish Times hailed it as "historic and unprecedented" and praised the Government for a job

well done:

"The Taoiseach, Mr Ahern, his Ministers and officials must be congratulated for the intense and focused work which has brought it to a conclusion."¹

That was the first obstacle out of the way. But the second obstacle—the people—could prove a more difficult proposition, particularly in states intending to put the Constitution to a referendum.

Overcoming the obstacle of democracy

In an editorial a fortnight later, The Irish Times explained how this second obstacle might be overcome:

"...the concluding compromises made last month preserved the document's basic integrity. This will make it easier to convince voters it should be ratified. That will require a political campaign to advocate and explain it here and throughout the EU over the next two years."²

In other words we can expect a

major establishment propaganda offensive in favour of the Constitution over the next five to six months in the run-up to the referendum, which is expected to be held in the autumn.

The public debate has already begun with an email debate in Village magazine between Brendan Young of the Campaign and Labour MEP Proinsias de Rossa.

The next general meeting of the Campaign Against the EU Constitution takes place on Saturday 12 March in the Teachers' Club, 36 Parnell Square. All are welcome.

¹ 'Historic and unprecedented', Irish Times editorial, 19 June 2004

² 'A successful EU presidency', Irish Times editorial, 3 July 2004

³ 'Stripping away the worthy guff', Village magazine, Saturday 5 March 2005

Spanish European Constitution referendum: Getting behind the bosses' hype

By LUKE STOBART, activist from the Anti-EU Constitution Campaign in Spain

DESPITE CLAIMS otherwise, the recent Spanish referendum on the European Constitution did not show mass support for the bosses' EU project.

Only one third of all eligible voters voted in favour, with abstention being the highest in any election in Spain since democracy returned in the 1970's. A sizeable minority voted 'no' (17.3% of the votes cast).

This was despite a 'yes' campaign led by the new Socialist (Labour) government and supported by practically the whole of the political and media establishment including disgracefully, the trade union leaderships.

Spain is one of the most pro-European EU states and it was hoped that the



referendum here would have a 'bandwagon effect' on the rest of Europe.

Instead, the Financial Times wrote, 'the low turnout was likely to send worrying

signals to nine other member states that will be submitting the EU charter to referendums over the next 18 months'.

Most of the opposition to the constitution came from the left. The 'no' vote was highest in the regions where more of the electoral left called for it—the Basque Country (33.7%) and Catalunya (28%).

But it was also strengthened by a united statewide campaign of the more radical left.

This mobilised 15,000 people in Barcelona to protest against a planned meeting between Zapatero, Chirac, Schröder and Berlusconi.

In the end, the latter two called in sick!

Now the movement here in Catalunya is meeting to plan more joint action against the Europe of capital and war.

Community workers campaign for funding

THE CAMPAIGN by the Community Workers Co-operative (CWC) to get their funding reinstated has got broad support from a variety of sectors and political parties.

At the end of February, the CWC organised a drop-in meeting for politicians and members that coincided with the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCRAGA) being questioned in the Dáil.

This meeting specifically aimed to support those politicians who were asking questions on behalf of the CWC.

A delegation of the Community Workers Co-operative observed the questioning in the Dáil in the afternoon.

To nobody's surprise Minister of State Noel Ahern TD did not enter any meaningful discussion, while Minister Eamon O Cuiv refused to comment throughout (a transcript of the session can be downloaded at <http://debates.oireachtas.ie>—the debate was held on Feb. 22nd).

The CWC have set up a petition for people to indicate their support in getting the funding reinstated www.petitiononline.com/hv66/petition.html.

Busworkers pay to be slashed Students continue the ban on Coca Cola

By TOM O'CONNOR, Ringsend Bus Depot

On Sunday, 6th March, Dublin Bus intends to implement various pieces of legislation, which will restrict the number of hours an employee can work to an average of 48 hours per week.

An EU directive and workplace health and safety have been cited as the reasons for the new work practices.

As we go to print no agreement has been reached between the trade unions and management.

Information has been very slow in reaching union members and the general feeling is that the whole process has been handled in a very amateur fashion.

Over the last four to five years a huge number of new staff have joined Dublin Bus.

The majority of these, myself included, have large mortgages and young families. Overtime for us is a necessity not an option.

The cost of living in Ireland and in Dublin in particular is scandalous.

Now we have been told that we will no longer be able to earn extra monies to pay for this high cost of living.

The way in which Dublin Bus are introducing these new regulations means that even though in theory there are ten hours overtime available per week, in practice there will be none.

There is huge anger at this. Drivers could quite literally be put on the breadline.

No thought by management or politicians was given to the suffering these changes will bring about.

A deal could be struck between the

unions and the company but we, the ordinary workers, don't hold out much hope for it.

This is because of the way the establishment at present is looking after the company and those at the top – screw everybody else.

Trinity

STUDENTS IN Trinity College Dublin have rejected a proposal to allow the reintroduction of Coca Cola products for sale in Students Union shops.

The banning of coke products in TCD was part of a wider cam-

paign for justice for six trade unionists who were murdered in Columbia for campaigning for Coca Cola employees there.

A similar ban is in effect in UCD and there are campaigns to get solidarity from other student and trade

unions.

The referendum took place on the 26th of February and was defeated 53% to 47%.

UCD

The left in UCD suffered a set back last Wednesday when Fianna Fail member

James Carroll was elected Student Union president.

It is feared that with a right wing president there will be a decrease in support from the union for campaigns for student rights.

The UCDSU is in danger of descending back into rubber stamp for government and college authorities.

A strong rank and file student movement is needed if these important campaigns are to be maintained in the next year.

—THOMAS MCNULTY, UCD Student

Cork City Manager forced to collect untagged rubbish

As a result of Cork City Council's policy of not collecting untagged domestic refuse, hundreds of rubbish bags have been left lying around the city.

Householders Against Service Charges warned of this last December when the council increased the charge and reduced the number of waivers.

Despite the Council's public health obligations, the City Manager stated that "illegally dumped refuse" would not be collected.

The 400 strong demonstration put the manager under severe pressure to reverse this.

A group of city GPs added to this pressure by stating that uncollected rubbish threatened people's health. As a result the City Manager was forced to back down and commence collecting the rubbish.

This pressure needs to continue to ensure all refuse is collected and that this unjust double tax is finally abolished. ■ Householders Against Service Charges can be contacted at 087 2994796

Dundrum shopping centre protest



LAST THURSDAY the biggest shopping centre in Europe opened in Dundrum amidst much hype. SPLASH: The Campaign for a Community Pool held a protest at the opening event. Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council cannot afford to give us the money for our new pool.

The new Town Centre will bring in over €27 million per year for the council. For the pool to be built the council needs to increase its contribution from €1.9m to €4.4 – a mere €2.5 million!

The residents in the area are furious. All

they can see is development while many of the amenities and services are being taken away.

The only ones who benefit are the construction companies and the owners of the expensive shops in the centre. Aengus, one of the members of SPLASH, said "The local reps are not doing their job. We voted for them to represent us and look after our interests and instead they are doing nothing. It is up to us local people to do it for ourselves.

"What we care about is public amenities, not how many new apartments there are."

The SPLASH campaign was set up after the sudden closure of the pool at the DFRC last July.

The support pledged by TDs and Councillors was just hot air.

The protest was to pressure them. We will be holding another public meeting in April and will be looking for the same TD's and Councillors to come along. This time we will not be placated with words.

For more information contact:

Busworkers protest to demand new buses for Dublin

By BRID SMITH

DUBLIN BUSWORKERS held a protest at the new Harristown depot on Monday 28th February.

The occasion was the official opening of the depot by that great 'socialist' Bertie Ahern. News of underfunding of the bus service broke in the media that morning. Dublin Bus had been promised an extra 150 buses in 2001.

Not a single extra bus has been bought. Old buses have been replaced but according to the Department of Transport, no new buses will be purchased until a deal involving the privatisation of the bus service is reached.

Bertie dismissed the issue as "gobbledygook". But in response to a Dail question on Feb 3rd, figures released by the Transport Department show there are actually no new buses and that it's Bertie that is full of gobbledygook.

Busworkers protesting outside the official opening knew the truth.

Aidan from Donnybrook depot said: "The company is starting to operate like a private company.

"They can boast about their increasing profits and implement three fare increases over the last year. But where are the new buses?"

Another driver, Tom from Ringsend garage

said: "The Government has no accountability to people and has wasted millions on the likes of Punchestown and e-voting.

"Now they want to sell off chunks of our

public services to their friends and cronies.

"It is up to workers everywhere to stop them."

The protest received a lot of media attention and at one stage the buswork-

ers were ordered by management to leave the area. But they refused.

David who works in Harristown told Socialist Worker, "This is a very valuable protest. We need to let the govern-

ment know our opposition to privatisation. We are determined to keep our jobs, pay and conditions and to keep transport as a publicly owned and publicly funded service."

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Global warming and the Kyoto Protocol

By MARK WALSH

ON 16 FEBRUARY the Kyoto protocol on climate change became international law. Unfortunately, it will do very little to tackle the reality of global warming.

A proposal known as 'Contraction and Convergence' could avert disaster but corporate obstructionism and media silence mean it hardly even enters the climate 'debate'.

Global warming occurs when "greenhouse gases", largely produced by burning fossil fuels, accumulate in the upper atmosphere and prevent heat escaping from the Earth.

Under the Kyoto protocol, industrialised countries pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 5 per cent overall, based on 1990 levels, in the period 2008—2012.

But according to Frank McDonald, "not even Kyoto's 5 per cent reduction will have to be met in real terms."

"Following tortuous negotiations at UN climate change summits in The Hague (2000) and Bonn (2001), that figure was whittled down to just 2 per cent through the adoption of a series of compromise proposals to give the protocol a chance of being ratified."

The United States, he continues, "despite being the world's most prodigious producer of greenhouse gases—accounting for 24 per cent of the global total—had already pulled out by then."¹



Pollution threatens the future of our planet

Corporate Agenda

A letter sent to Bush in 2001 reveals the corporate agenda behind the decision.

"Dear Mr. President, On behalf of 14,000 member companies of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)—and the 18 million people who make things in America—thank you for your opposition to the Kyoto Protocol on the grounds that it exempts 80 percent of the world and will cause serious harm to the United States." (Michael E. Baroody, NAM Executive Vice President, Letter to the President Concerning the Kyoto Protocol, May 16, 2001, <http://www.nam.org>)²

Such obstructionism by state-corporate power to action on climate change is not unique to the US.

Harney led the charge against carbon taxes

Last year, "Tánaiste Mary Harney, who once made a name for herself as an environmentalist for getting rid of Dublin's smog, led the charge against [carbon] taxes on the basis that they could threaten the competitiveness of the Republic's industrial sector."³

However, the Government has been forced to take some action as a result of the introduction, on 1 January, of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, "The ETS is one of the policies being introduced across the EU 25 to tackle emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in an effort to combat the seri-

ous threat of climate change."⁴

A public relations exercise

But this scheme amounts to little more than a Public Relations exercise given that it comes under the Kyoto protocol which will achieve a reduction of only 2 per cent.

This figure is almost negligible in comparison to what is required. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that CO2 emissions need to be reduced by 60 to 80 per cent from the 1990 figures if catastrophic warming is to be avoided.

Kyoto, then, will do very little to tackle the reality of climate change.

But there is a proposal that could achieve the objective—set out in 1992 by the United Nations Framework

Convention on Climate Change—to "stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will avoid dangerous rates of climate change."

Contraction and Convergence

It is known as Contraction and Convergence, but it has received very little media attention in the British press according to the latest Media Lens Media Alert, which goes into the details of the proposal.⁵

The media silence reigns on this side of the Irish Sea too.

A search of the Irish Times database (which dates back to 1996) for "contraction and convergence" and, separately, "contraction & convergence" returned two results.

One linked to the British Green Party's manifesto, while the other linked to a year 2000 review by Frank McDonald.

The media is silent because it is made up of corporations whose "bottom line" is profit maximisation at any cost, including the destruction of the very world in which those profits are made.

1 'High hopes washed away', Irish Times, 12 February 2005

2 www.medialens.org/alerts/2004/040108_Climate_Betrayal.HTM

3 'On credit: buying our way out', Irish Times, 12 February 2005

4 www.epa.ie/Licensing/EmissionsTrading/WhatistheEUEmissionsTradingScheme/

5 Media Alert: Is the Earth really finished? (www.medialens.org)

Bray victory as the fight against the bin tax continues

ANGRY TENANTS faced down threats of eviction over their active opposition to the waste crisis caused by local authorities and a privatised bin collection service.

Angry tenants of the Oldcourt estate picketed the meeting of Bray town council on March 1st.

They demanded, and got, a full retraction of a threatening letter sent to all residents of the estate by the council's estate development officer Mark O'Neill in February.

At the council meeting the council's chairperson, the Labour Party's Anne Ferris, read out a public apology on behalf of the council, stating that "The Council regrets any offence caused to the people of Oldcourt."

Because of the lively protest outside, all the councillors agreed that the letter should never have been sent in the first place.

Carrying out spot checks

The letter had said that the council intended to carry out spot checks on individual properties and gardens in the Oldcourt estate in relation to their general upkeep. Any tenant whose dwelling was found

By THOMAS KADOR

to be unsatisfactory would have been issued with a warning. If this was ignored they threatened eviction!

The letter blamed the residents for the untidy nature of the estates. But of course the waste crisis in Wicklow has been caused by the overpriced and inadequate waste collection service in the county by private companies such as Greenstar.

Falling behind in payment

In Bray notices are pasted on every litter bin that it is an offence to dispose of household waste in these bins with a fine of €125.

"But this doesn't stop people from disposing of their waste there. They just make sure not to throw out any personal details with it", said Catherine Kennedy, a member of the Socialist Workers Party who spearheads the bin tax campaign and organised the picket on Bray town hall.



Residents of Oldcourt who forced council to back down

Another resident at the picket said that: "Between buying fuel, paying the recently increased rent and the bin charges you always end up falling behind with some payment."

The Oldcourt residents know the current €5.35 per bag charge will go up and soon it will be a matter of either being able to pay the rent or the bin charges.

The waiver system is a shambles

The waiver system, meant to support people on low incomes, is a shambles.

According to Catherine Kennedy, this year some 10,000 people have applied to the scheme for which the council has set aside a mere €65,000.

This means there will be 10 or maybe 13 bags each for the whole year. Yet most households need to put out one bag per week. This privatised service will soon get rid of even this pathetic waiver scheme.

The Oldcourt residents are calling for an end to all service charges, like water and sewage charges and for taking back the service into public hands.

Sinn Féin's John Brady echoed the Oldcourt tenants' opinion when he declared that: "This situation is a direct result of the privatisation of the waste collection service."

The Bray campaign will publicise their call in a series of public meetings across the town in the coming weeks.

Catherine Kennedy continued, "Although they [the council] have withdrawn the letter and the threat of eviction is gone for the moment, we will not let down the people who can't afford to pay for the collection. We will come out in solidarity with them."

COMMENT

PRIVATISATION: The same agenda, just different words

By OWEN McCORMACK, Bus Workers Action Group

THROUGHOUT THE 1980's there was a craze to privatise every state company and public service possible. At the height of the Reagan/Thatcher governments, both left and right moved to sell off state industries to their friends in the private sector and to multi nationals.

The justification was that the private sector was much more efficient, and would deliver a better, cheaper service to the public or customers.

Right wing economists portrayed workers in the state companies as lazy, unproductive, heavily subsidised and living off the fat of the land. If you forced them to compete you would make them productive.

But behind the talk of competition lay the real agenda. Privatisation was a mechanism of attacking unionised jobs in what had been a stronghold of trade unions; the public and state sector.

Massive lay offs and redundancies would be guaranteed before and after privatisation.

Private companies that vied for new business would almost certainly be non-union. As union jobs went they were often replaced with insecure, lower paid non-union ones.

Privatisation discredited

Now something strange has happened. Across the world the privatisation agenda has been thoroughly discredited.

From the third world, (which has seen huge struggles against attempts to privatise vital public services) to the west, more and more people are rejecting the so-called neo-liberal agenda.

Even Bertie Ahern now says he was never a fan of Thatcherite privatisation! You could forget that he was minister or Taoiseach in governments that sold off Telecom, Irish Steel, Irish Life, and Irish Sugar.

Most people now see through the lies around privatisation. In Telecom, thousands of small investors were told they would make a quick buck, only to see their shares fall while fat cats like Tony O'Reilly and Denis O'Brien made the real killing.

In Britain, whether it was the transport or the water industry, people saw huge profits for the new owners while services were starved of investment and deteriorated.

In the railways it led to deaths as safety standards collapsed and high profile tragedies exposed the scandal of privatisation.

Workers fight the sell-off

Now, many workers in industries that are targeted are demanding that their unions fight the sell off. In the eighties and nineties, governments sought to bully or buy off workers with the promise of shares and lump sums if they went along quietly with the sell off.

Scandalously, union leaders did deals and accepted that governments had the right to privatise. To resist it would be political and outside normal industrial disputes.

Even now some union chiefs boast of how they are not ideologically opposed to alternative forms of ownership, as though privatisation was only about a name change.

The logical outcome was the scandal of CWU head Con Scanlon, who alongside ICTU chief David Begg oversaw the sell off of Telecom.

Scanlon was revealed last year to have got pension, salary and wages worth almost €2 million as a result of his position in the union and as head of the employee share option scheme (ESOP).

Begg, who now claims to have opposed privatisation, told Telecom workers the sell off was Marx's dream, giving wealth back to you, the worker!

Privatisation agenda remains

But while privatisation is discredited, the overall agenda remains. The government is "reviewing" its proposal to sell off Aer Lingus.

A review of the ESB may recommend the sell-off of some power stations to aid "competition." In An Post and CIE, privatisation is not on the cards for now.

Instead they want to concentrate on opening up the market. By using public private partnerships (PPP's) instead of outright privatisation they think they can get around opposition from workers or the public.

The result remains the same, undermining unionised jobs with lower paid non-union companies and allowing multinationals to get their hands on lucrative sections of the national economy.

Over the coming issues Socialist Worker will look at key industries and what the government are trying to do, and we will argue that the trade union movement cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the past but should take its slogan from the anti capitalist movement Our jobs are not for sale anymore.

PROVIDING AN ALTERNATIVE

The Socialist Environmental Alliance (SEA) to run candidates in the North's local elections on May 5



SEA opposing the privatisation of health and other public services

By GORETTI HORGAN

The Socialist Environmental Alliance is running candidates in the North's local elections on May 5th.

The decision to stand was not an easy one for the activists who make up the alliance. They are busy organising for the March 19th day of action against the occupation of Iraq and organising against water charges. In short, they have little time to take part in elections.

So why have they decided to stand? There are two main reasons: the political situation and the number of people who have asked them to stand and provide an alternative to the pro-business policies of all the mainstream parties. Below, we print an edited version of the SEA election statement.

Communal politics has reached a dead end. Only the politics of class can show a way forward.

This is why the Socialist Environmental Alliance is standing in the local elections on May 5th. We are neither Unionist nor Nationalist but represent the interests of working class people, no matter what their religion or ethnic background.

The domination of the old parties has meant that every issue, from policing to public investment to the latest factory closure, has been seen in terms of how it affected one 'community' as against the other. The four

mainstream parties "UUP, DUP, SDLP and Sinn Fein" all share a common, pro-business agenda, which offers little to working class people. They have relied on the symbolic issues to prove their credentials. This has been a recipe for sustaining sectarian division.

Where is the furore over the daily robbery of our jobs and public services?

That is what the furious exchanges over the Northern Bank raid are about. The attacks on 'violence' and 'criminality' come mainly from parties who never say 'boo' to the war criminals Bush and Blair, responsible for up to 100,000 civilian deaths in Iraq.

The bluster about the bank robbery is rarely accompanied by similar anger over the daily robbery of our jobs, our public services and our pensions by the rich and powerful.

Sinn Fein is bearing the brunt of the attacks. But Sinn Fein, too, wants to retain a place in the same establishment. Their complaint is that they are being charged too high a price to get in.

All the main parties see themselves as the local managers of capitalism. That is why MLAs from all parties introduced privatisation of our schools, colleges and hospitals through the Private Finance Initiative when the Assembly was functioning. It's why they are happy to see Invest

NI advertise that wages in the North are "up to 32% lower than in the US and 25% lower than the EU average."

That is why every local mainstream party has lined up to attack the wages and conditions of council workers.

The time has come to strike out boldly in a different direction.

The pressing issues for working people—the pensions crisis, the threat of water charges, the sell-off of the public service to private profiteers, the problem of low pay, tuition fees, and the destruction of the environment—cannot be solved on the basis of communal rivalry.

We need to come together across the divide against the wealthy and corrupt few, and their hirelings in the government who are happy to see us divided among ourselves.

We want unity between North and South—unity of the poor on both sides against the rich on both sides.

The real hope of recent years has lain in the practical coming together of working people in a wide variety of campaigns, from supporting striking public sector workers, to opposing the war in Iraq, from defending immigrants to resisting water charges.

The SEA exists to encourage and give expression to this practical unity on the ground.

To help out with the SEA visit
socialistenvironmentalalliance.org



Celebrating International Wo

Women in struggle today

By SÍOFRA NÍ CHONGHAILE

International Women's Day has traditionally been a day of protest, when we celebrate women's struggles and demand equality and social justice.

But if you judged women's struggle by the media depiction of March 8th, you would be forgiven for thinking that the battle for sexual equality had been won. What was formerly a day of action has evolved into a mere celebration of femininity in this 'post-feminist' age.

Instead of demanding subsidised childcare, reproductive rights and better wages, many women's organisations mark the occasion with coffee mornings and make-up sessions. But there is still much to protest about and Irish women remain at the forefront of struggles for environmental and social justice.

Socialist Worker spoke to just some of those women.

RITA FAGAN: Director, St. Michael's Family Resource Centre, Dublin.

Is International Women's Day relevant today?

"Very relevant. Across the world oppression is a bitter experience for millions of women. We still need a day to celebrate our lives and our struggles."

Residents in St. Michael's have succeeded in blocking government plans to privatise the local community. What was the role of local women in that struggle?

"Across Dublin, women are closest to the issues affecting our communities. Women make up the majority of tenants in St. Michael's. We led the campaign for community-based housing and blocked a €200 million development by a government determined to hand community land over to developers.

The process is still on going but we remain committed to continuing the struggle. Women are the heart and personality of the community.

That's why the Family Resource Centre has developed an analysis of the issues facing us based on gender as well as class.

It was women who set up the centre during the 1980s when there were no resources for our kids. Today, local women work and manage the centre and take initiatives to respond to violence against women in the community."

How will you be celebrating International Women's Day?

"We are running a celebration of women's lives and struggles for women in Wynn's that night. Grassroots activists from across Dublin will discuss development issues and what community organisations have done for women down through the years. Nell McCafferty and Kathleen Lynch will be joining us in a night of discussion and celebration of our struggle."

CATHERINE KENNEDY, Community activist in Bray, Co. Wicklow.

Is International Women's Day an important day for you?

"Definitely. I'd say that International Women's Day is more relevant now than before. Despite the economic gains made during the Celtic Tiger, working class women are still struggling to make ends meet.

The Origins of International Women's Day

International Women's Day (IWD), a celebration of women's struggle for equality, was first celebrated in 1908 by women workers in the textile industry in the US. The previous year police in Manhattan attacked a "hunger march" by women demanding better wages and conditions. In 1910 German socialist Clara Zetkin proposed honouring March 8th as a female equivalent of May Day. Seven years later, IWD demonstrations in Russia (23 February in the old Russian calendar) marked the outbreak of the February Revolution.

There was a time when our only role in society was to stay at home and raise a family. Now we have to be 'superwomen' to juggle two jobs, full-time mother as well as working outside the home, often in low-paid jobs. When I think of the amount of un-rewarded work that women do it amazes me. It's important to have a day for women to discuss the issues facing us and what we can do about them."

Do you think that things are changing for women?

"Yes, things are changing slowly and it is great to see women taking control of their lives now. But we haven't all benefited equally from the changes in society and the sense of sisterly solidarity can be very weak at times.

Just look at Mary Harney in government. She was responsible for cutting community employment schemes which directly impacted on many young single mothers living in very challenging circumstances. You don't know what life is like for someone until you walk in their shoes and ordinary women's lives are altogether different from those of women in power.

For me, the greatest hope is young women. I find it really inspiring the way that young single mothers will build networks of support for each other or the way those

schoolgirls walked out of school together the day the war on Iraq started.

These young women have a tremendous fighting spirit. They assert themselves much better than women of my generation. They are the future. If they only realised the power that they have we could send the men in power running for cover."

MIRIAM MURPHY: Campaign against the EU Constitution & DAPSE (Democracy in Public Services in Europe)

We're often told that social change in Ireland only came about because of pressure from Europe. What impact will the new EU Constitution have on women's lives?

"Although the Constitution refers to equality between men and women, underpinning it is a rampant free-market ideology which threatens the most basic of our public services. Women rely more on public services than men, particularly health care.

The Constitution poses a major threat to our health services by banning subsidies, which 'distort competition', and calling for an unrestricted free market in public services. Anyone who believes in protecting women's access to healthcare should vote against the Constitution."



Women's Day: March 8th 2005

'Beautiful Bodies' industries and the women's movement

By AILBHE SMYTH (lecturer in Women's Studies UCD)
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BETWEEN THEM, the 'beautiful bodies' industries—cosmetics, dieting, and cosmetic surgery—gross in the region of US\$60 billion annually, and that's not even counting beauty contests, magazines, advertising spin-offs, gym, exercise and a host of other related products and services.

These industries are raking in bazillion \$\$\$ profits by selling dreams and telling lies. Dreams of a better, more successful, happier life—'because you're worth it'. The brazen, barefaced lie that happiness, or success, or a better life can be bottled, consumed and applied.

And women everywhere are hooked into it. There's hardly a woman around who hasn't got some class of a beauty arsenal, regularly replenished, and very effectively boosting massive TNC profits.

Recent research reveals that 93% of women in the UK use cosmetics in some shape or form, while in the USA, 8.5 million people—88% of them women—had cosmetic procedures in 2001 alone.

The phenomenon isn't the preserve of the rich consumerist minority world either. Accelerated by globalization, the cosmetics market is growing everywhere, even in the world's poorest countries.

By 2001 for example, Avon products were on sale in 143 countries. Throughout Africa, Asia and the Middle East, the skin whitener business is booming, because the commerce in beauty is not only gendered, but also profoundly racialised.

There's one standard, and it is 'Western' and white. But no problem—you too can have (whiter) skin like mine, we have it all bottled just for you! Just beware it doesn't skin you alive.

A popular Tanzanian cream, officially banned but widely available on the black market, contains 'egg yolks, cocoa butter and avocado—plus detergent, bleach and mercury-laced skin-bleaching soap'.

Put me in the machine and spin spin spin. Other bleaching products contain toxic chemicals that can cause skin cancer, nerve damage or kidney failure, or other irreversible harm.

Beauty is mega-big business

I don't use the word 'arsenal' lightly, by the way. The war-generating and profiteering TNC, Halliburton, owns one of the world's biggest cosmetic companies, Dupont. The connections are never innocent. And what about the Dior ad, which reads: 'New! Dior Addict Lipstick to Die For...in 30 Killer Shades. Get Hooked! Now!'

What's really getting hooked up here is the multi-million dollar drugs industry and macho militarisation.

It might seem merely crazy (as well as disgusting) until you consider what it's telling us about the extent to which military values and strategies of aggression and domination underscore global business.

Of course, it's not exactly news that beauty is mega-big business. What is new, though, is the megavicious twist it's been taking in US soaps like Nip/Tuck, and especial-



ly reality TV shows like America's Top Model, Extreme Makeover, and The Swan. US reality TV is obsessed with women's appearance, and intent on re-making us in man's ideal image of 'woman'.

The viciousness is in the lengths to which women have to go to achieve the gold standard of (white) feminine 'perfection', and in their cruel exposure and display for the viewers' fleeting pleasure.

I don't understand what's entertaining about the sight of women being pitted against one another in a brutal contest, undergoing one painful and potentially dangerous surgical procedure after another (as many as 14 procedures for some of the contestants), subjected to humiliating 'therapy' in public (by questionably qualified 'experts'), and getting dumped and branded as 'failures' when they 'lose'.

I don't understand, unless we've become so anaesthetised and indifferent to human indignity and suffering by the relentless waging of mediatised war that we can only get our kicks by voyeuristic viewings of gladiatorial combat. So much for 'progress'.

The emergence of the women's movement

I grew up in the dark and distant 1950s believing what I was told: 'beauty hurts—you have to suffer to be beautiful'.

The point was, no one ever explained to me exactly why I had to be beautiful in the first place. But I quickly picked that up all by myself.

There wasn't a choice. You had to be beautiful (or at least spend a lot of time trying) in order to succeed, and success for a woman meant only one thing: catching a man (and nailing him down as a husband.)

Everything else in your life was incidental to the primary aim: education, work, creativity, even fun, because beauty was—and was meant to be—hard work. Or so the message went. Then came the Women's Movement with a clear-

eyed analysis of the diverse tactics patriarchy uses to keep women in our 'proper place', i.e. subordinate and in chained to our cooks and mirrors.

Feminists saw and named the lies, and resisted them bravely and mightily: women object to our objectification; we are not objects or commodities, and we will fight our exploitation at every turn; we will not stay in 'our place', out of sight, out of mind.

We will struggle to be free of all forms of oppression in all aspects of our lives.

Why are women still being duped?

But the question still begs to be put: if the lie is so barefaced, how and why are women still being duped? Why do I fall for it? Why do you?

How are we conned into buying these empty dreams and fantasies which we know in our heads cannot ever in any sense compensate for the dreadful conditions in which the majority of women in the world continue to have to live their lives: poverty, powerlessness, lack of dignity and security, fear for themselves and the future of their children. 70% of the poorest people in the world are women.

I don't have an instant answer, but I know that the struggle is ongoing, and the forces lined up against us (and against all marginalised and subordinated people) are formidable. 'Patriarchy', as Cynthia Enloe says, 'is not old hat'.

It is actively embedded in the complex, interlocking systems which are forcing a new world order into being, and which all of us on the left are committed to resisting with passion, energy and intelligence.

**Happy International Women's Day
— In Solidarity with Women in
Struggle against All Forms of
Oppression Throughout the World**

The struggle for women's liberation

By SINEAD KENNEDY

Childcare, abortion, unequal wages are some of the many issues that the women's movement is fighting for. Sinead Kennedy debates women's liberation and argues that the division into classes negatively impacts on all workers, men and women.

In the past ten years the lives of Irish women have been transformed, largely for the better. The majority of women work outside of the home and are no longer expected to be solely wives and mothers.

The huge growth of women's participation in the labour force is a global trend. Increasingly today, the typical worker is a young woman, who makes branded goods in Indonesia, staffs a call centre in Dublin or is a uniformed worker in Tesco or Walmart.

Yet just as the Celtic Tiger "boom" has produced enormous wealth, that wealth has been concentrated in the hands of a tiny minority. Irish women have seen their lives transformed but not everyone has benefited equally from these changes.

Women go to work

In Ireland, between 1971 and 1990 women workers increased by about 30 percent with a further increase of approximately 50 percent by the year 2000. By 2002 female participation increased to over 50 percent so that Ireland now equals the EU average.

The majority of new female employment is in the service sector, many in jobs that used to be relatively well paid, high status, male jobs, such as in computers and banking, but which have been deskilled and demoted in the job hierarchy.

Despite increasing numbers, women continue to earn less than men do, often earning less than men who are doing the same job. This is especially the case in jobs that are predominantly female.

The differential is even greater amongst the lowest paid women. In low-skill, low paid jobs women earn just 65 percent of men's wages. For women who are employed in professional and senior positions it rises to 83 percent of men's wages.

Many of these new women workers are part-time workers. More than 75 percent of all part-time workers are women. The majority of these part-time jobs are regular rather than occasional and reflect capitalism's increasing need for a flexible and cheap workforce. This increase in part-time work has been one of the ways that women have attempted to get around the inadequate provision of childcare.

Childcare

Women's participation in the workplace in Ireland is still below the EU average for working mothers. This is because Irish parents spend more of their income on childcare than parents anywhere else in Europe. The lack of state-sponsored childcare means that most childcare is privatised.

In 2003 the average cost of 9—5 crèche space in Dublin was €1350. Just 1 percent of 3 year olds have access to pre-school education in Ireland, compared to 45 percent in Britain and 98 percent in Denmark.

While women are encouraged to work outside the home, they continue to bear primary responsibility for both childcare and domestic work in the home. While contraception is now legal in Ireland, it can be prohibitive-

ly expensive. Abortion is still illegal for Irish women both North and South and a woman's access to British abortion services depends on whether or not they have €1000 to travel.

Class

The Celtic Tiger years has seen the gap between rich and poor increase. All women in Ireland suffer from some level of discrimination but not all women experience these difficulties equally. A checkout operator in Lidl cannot afford to pay for domestic backup, whereas a well paid professional woman can afford a full-time nanny or au pair.

A Barrister recently explained how she did it: "From day one I had two nannies. One who would arrive at 7am and stay until 2.30pm in the afternoon. The second arrives at 2pm and stays until 7 in the evening. It's the only way you could do it."

In the thirty years or so of the women's movement it has become increasingly clear that the limits of women's liberation in our society are also the barriers of class. Does the "right to work" for women mean just the right to work alongside men in the same poor conditions, or is it about opening up the horizons of work for both men and women? Is liberation just about a small number of women achieving legal equality and becoming managers, judges or investment brokers, or is it about raising the position of the poorest and most oppressed working class women.

Feminism

Much of feminist ideology fits with the most limited change, with liberation for a minority on a limited scale. That is why today there are feminists on both sides of the class divide.

There are those who manage businesses or local government, or who advise or are part of government. They may have a strong commitment to women's equal rights, but have no commitment to class equality.

Such a commitment would mean challenging the powerful interests that run society. Instead, these feminists leave most women at the bottom of the pile, blamed for their own inadequacies in failing to equip themselves for a career.

Socialism

However there are others who understand that the only liberation worth fighting for is one which changes the lives of millions, even though that means a challenge to those who run society at present. This is the socialist tradition.

The socialist Sylvia Pankhurst, a fighter for the women's vote before the First World War, understood that she could not fight for women's rights without also improving the conditions of working class men, like the London dockers, many of whom did not have the right to vote either. Questions of class came to the fore.

As the gap between rich and poor widens the failings of feminism become more acute and its inability to change the world becomes more obvious. But women are still fighting for the gains that feminism has promised in the past—of a life beyond work and domestic labour which allows them free sexual and personal expression.

There can be no socialism without women's liberation nor the liberation of women of all classes without socialism.

Socialist Worker

The racist underbelly of the Celtic Tiger

GAMA CONSTRUCTION, a Turkish company subcontracted by the state, admitted that most of its 800 Turkish employees had been receiving less than the legal minimum rate for the construction industry. A similar situation faced Polish workers involved in the construction of the Port Tunnel. They were receiving half the wages of their Irish counterparts.

In their submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination an NGO Alliance (involving the Irish Traveller's Movement, the Irish council for civil liberties, Integrating Ireland and Migrants Rights centre) highlighted the exploitation of migrant workers by employers.

The Polish Consul Malgorzata Kozik said "I am really frustrated by the way Irish employers treat Polish workers. We seem to be the people with no rights. Whatever the workers try to do, they are immediately fired. They have no chance if they complain. These stories happen every day."

The problem is that the employer holds the work permit, there are insufficient labour inspectors, and very few prosecutions have taken place to date in relation to the exploitation of migrant workers.

Why would there be prosecutions when the state is involved in this practice? The reality is that the government and employers use migrants as mere economic units. Cogs in a machine. They then use the race card to divide workers in order to keep wages low and to divert attention and anger away from corruption and the billions in profits made by construction companies like CRH.

Government's attacks on migrants fuels racism

The NGO alliance had this to say about the Irish government in their submission:

"Policies it has introduced have acted to increase racism, and statements it has made have reinforced the perception that many migrants are 'bogus asylum seekers' or are here for 'citizenship shopping'."

This is not news to many who campaigned against the recent referendum that denied citizenship to children born in Ireland to non-Irish citizens. But it contrasts sharply with Irish government appeals to the US government to give citizenship to the 'illegal' Irish in the USA.

No worker benefits from the exploitation of migrant workers. The Unions must fight to win equal pay. Employers must not be allowed to undercut our wages. To avoid the race to the bottom over wages and the super-exploitation of migrant workers we must fight to ensure migrant workers are unionised, receive equal pay and do not live in fear of deportation.

Fear of deportation is the bosses weapon

What is also alarming is the extent to which this state is closing our borders to asylum seekers and intimidating and deporting asylum seekers who are here.

In 2004 a startling 2,633 deportation orders had been made by McDowell by the end of November.

The racist violence, abuse and assaults against asylum seeker detainees in prisons were revealed in the BBC1 programme: "Asylum undercover." The same situation has been reported in Irish prisons.

Asylum seekers are segregated through the dispersal and direct provision system (where asylum seekers receive only €19.10 per week) and are refused the right to work. The tabloid press constantly invents stories of welfare abuse.

This increase in hostility towards asylum seekers and tighter border controls has led to a drop in the number of asylum seekers coming by 40pc in just one year. In 2002 11,630 applicants came here. In 2003 the figure had dropped to 7,900 and last year it was only 4,770.

The fantastic response to the plight of Eastern European workers in the Letterkenny, the successful campaign against the deportation of an asylum seeker in Waterford, the Love Music Hate Racism gig in Belfast and the work by the NGO Alliance shows there is a strong anti-racist sentiment on this Island.

It is through this unity that we can defeat racism and the exploitation of all workers in Ireland.

LETTERS

Write to Letters, Socialist Worker, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, email swped@eircom.net

Government refuses Dublin its buses

I WAS absolutely outraged and appalled, but not at all surprised given this 'Government's' track record that they have refused to give Dublin Bus the 150 extra buses for 2004 and 2005 that they were promised by this 'Government' under the National Development Plan (NDP) and that they, and indeed the Greater Dublin Area in general need urgently, until they have opened up the bus transport market to competition and the privatisation of routes to their rich friends, with the embarrassing and humiliating position where Dublin Bus have had to actually beg for more Quality Bus Corridors (QBCs) Not to be opened until they get their 150 extra buses as promised!

One other side effect from this nasty, petty and vindictive move by this 'Government' is that our elderly and disabled will have to wait even longer to have the whole bus fleet fully wheelchair accessible.

This is an absolute scandal and we the general public must do something about this ASAP! At the very least we should flood Ministers, TDs, Councillors and Senators, especially those of the current

Government Parties with phone calls, faxes, emails and letters protesting in the strongest manner possible about this deliberate run down of our Public Transport System.

Bombard them and make their life hell till they back down

and give Dublin Bus the 150 extra buses that they need straightaway! Indeed instead of flogging off existing Dublin Bus as planned why not properly invest in Dublin Bus and make our Public Transport System the envy of Europe,

which it certainly has the potential to be.

Certainly the workforce and management of Dublin Bus won't be found wanting in this regard. Email:

paulkinsella53@yahoo.com
PAUL KINSELLA, Dublin

Campaign to save our 48A route

A PUBLIC meeting of 170 people has launched a campaign to save the 48A bus service in Dundrum/ Ballinteer.

The meeting was organised by trade unionists, Socialist Workers Party activists and community activists. The bus, which runs from Ballinteer to the city centre, has served the area for many years and is used by young and old alike for trips to town, to pick up a DART, to get to school or UCD and a myriad of other journeys.

Dublin Bus claims that, because of the LUAS, passenger numbers have fallen to such an extent that the present service is no longer economically viable. It is clear that the LUAS which was sold to us as an addition to transport options in a very congested area is now to become the replacement.

Dublin Bus it seems will focus its buses in the long term on serving the new Dundrum Town Centre and the LUAS stations.

In correspondence to the campaign, Dublin Bus quoted a fall off in passenger numbers in excess of 40% leading to a 65% fall in revenue.

The remaining passengers are mostly school children and elderly and the proposal to

cut the 48A service will hit these groups most. However, many living in Dundrum, Milltown and Ranelagh will also be affected. It is the only reliable service into the city serving these areas.

The proposal to cut the 48A service but to improve the service on the 14 routes and to extend this route to Dundrum will tie this bus up into one of Dublin's worst traffic hotspots. The opening of the Dundrum town Centre is set to bring chaos to the inadequate Dundrum road network.

The campaign will resist any deterioration of the service. We know Dublin bus is preparing further attacks on the service. The subsidies to LUAS from the taxpayer reached hundreds of thousands yet a private company, CONNEX runs and profits from it.

Meanwhile the government is pressing for more private buses in Dublin and Dublin bus is one of the worst funded public bus services in Europe. The 48A issue is part of a larger agenda to run down and privatise public transport. Passengers and workers must resist.

DEIRDRE CRONIN, Dundrum
Contact

COMMENT

PALESTINE TALKS:

A road map to a road map to a...?

By RAYMOND DEANE

LAST DECEMBER, when the British announced their planned conference in London to "groom" the Palestinian leadership for negotiations with Israel, the Palestinian Authority (PA) prime minister Ahmed Qureia fumed: "We reject these unacceptable declarations for we are already groomed and we have the necessary means and expertise to negotiate."

Two months later, under freshly elected PA president Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinians meekly accepted their grooming from the likes of Tony Blair, Condoleezza Rice, World Bank and IMF representatives, and the foreign ministers of a number of grisly Arab dictatorships.

Ironically, as this roll call suggests, Mr Abbas may have been the only political leader present without blood on his hands, and the only Arab with anything like a democratic mandate.

Nonetheless, the fact that this conference focussed on "reform" of the Palestinian Authority and took place in the face of an Israeli boycott, implied that violence in Israel/Palestine has its roots in Palestinian misgovernment rather than the illegal and brutal Israeli occupation.

Surely the Palestinians should have stuck by Mr Qureia's initial rejection of the conference. The fact that they didn't reflects the bullying and blackmail that is exerted against the victims of Israeli violence, while its perpetrators escape without reproach.

Five days before the conference, a suicide bomber killed five Israeli civilians in Tel Aviv.

The media worldwide reported this atrocity as the "first breach" of a truce drawn up by Abbas and Ariel Sharon on 8 February, although in the intervening "period of calm" the Israeli army had shot dead some 25 Palestinians, including at least two teenage boys.

The media have been equally obedient to their corporate masters by hyping the London conference while underplaying Israel's refusal to have anything to do with



Palestinians pray under the guns of Israeli army

it. Jim Hoagland of the Washington Post (2 March) referred approvingly to the conference as "a road map for getting back to the 'road map' peace plan."

Since the latter has long since been discredited by all objective commentators as another futile attempt to impose a "solution" that by-passes human rights and international law, Hoagland's clumsy formulation unwittingly puts the whole sorry farce into proper perspective.

The London conference reinforces the sad impression that we are witnessing a repeat of the Oslo syndrome, whereby a "solution" based on the circumvention of international law that plunged the Palestinian people ever deeper into calamity was used by Israel and its fellow travellers as an instrument to deflect criticism and defame critics.

Alan Hunter, Irish Football Supporters Association chief, has opposed the IPSC call to boycott the forthcoming Republic of Ireland vs. Israel soccer matches with the claim that "fans should welcome moves made by Israel and Palestine to resolve their dispute rather than follow a

boycott."

A Dr Abe Rhodes of Cheshire, in a letter to the Irish Times (3 March), claimed that the IPSC in general and myself specifically shouldn't criticise the London conference because "There is now serious dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians and things are moving on."

The fact that the Israelis pre-empted any possible "dialogue" by staying away from the conference had already been overlooked two days after the event!

Now, more than ever before, defenders of Palestinian rights must unite to prevent their governments from acquiescing in a phoney "solution" that to all intents and purposes legalises the Israeli occupation, creates a helpless Palestinian entity and calls it a "state", and turns its "citizens" into slave-labourers in Israeli maquiladoras.

A comprehensive boycott of the Israeli state and all its works is a blunt but potent weapon. We must not be intimidated from wielding it.

Raymond Deane is Chair of the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign

IDEAS FOR THE ANTI-CAPITALIST MOVEMENT:

International Revolution

What would happen if we won the introduction of the Tobin Tax? Or the implementation of land redistribution in Brazil? Is revolution possible today? Conor Kostick applies Leon Trotsky's theories to revolution in a globalised world.

THE STRENGTH of the current alternative-globalisation movement was shown by the 120,000 people registered for the recent World Social Forum in Porto Alegre and the extraordinary range of issues that campaigners are taking up across the planet.

From co-ordinating set piece confrontations with the institutions of world business the movement is now taking more seriously the task of formulating alternatives to the injustices and violence of the system.

There is a great deal of specialist and informed thinking on all sorts of issues from housing to civil rights, from the environment to peace issues.

To introduce the revolutionary ideas of Leon Trotsky to the fertile and eclectic mix of initiatives and perspectives in the movement of 2005 is at best to have them treated with a certain amount of historical respect, at worst to have them dismissed as sectarian irrelevance.

But Trotsky's ideas should be considered a tremendous asset to the movement today. Not to be aware of them means missing out on the actual experience of two mighty revolutions in 1905 and 1917 in Russia.

Lev Davidovitch Bronstein was born into a Ukrainian peasant family in 1879. Arrested at the age of 19 he spent 18 months in jail and was sentenced to four more years deportation. He took the name Trotsky after his escape from Siberia in 1902, calling himself after a former jailer.

He spent his entire life furthering the cause of socialist revolution, eventually being murdered by an agent of Stalin in Mexico, 1940.

His autobiography *My Life* is a fascinating and inspiring read (see links).

Of Trotsky's vast range of writings it is probably those on the subject of "permanent revolution" that have the greatest relevance in 2005; although preserving the reputation of socialism from being discredited by the rise to power of Stalin will probably prove to be his most enduring historical legacy.

Permanent revolution

The theory of "permanent revolution" emphasises three interconnected features of the world that we live in today.

Firstly, and most fundamentally, that the economic conditions make it ripe for socialism. Secondly that the ruling elite are an international class and thirdly that even in the most regionally limited struggle against injustice there is a dynamic that can develop towards international revolution.

The first point hardly needs to be elaborated. If socialists around 1900 considered that the world economy was developed enough to provide the basis for a society where the needs of all could be met by working class control of production, then how much more so is this the case today? Between the years 1900 and 2000, world GDP at constant prices has increased about 19-fold.

The \$42 trillion that the world economy produced in 2000 could feed, clothe, house, provide clean water for and educate every human being on the planet five hundred times over! It is just a matter of how these resources are distributed; which brings us to the second point.

One of the defining features of the new movement is that, from its birth in the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organisation on 30th November 1999, it has been a conscious opponent of international corporations and their political representatives. This is still evident in the protests and counter-summits that challenge every major meeting of the G8, the WTO, government summits etc. There is a clear understanding today that the agenda of the great multi-nationals has to be resisted internationally.

But even as early as the turn of the last century socialists



Trotsky, of course, would be an advocate of the revolutionary view, and the third part of his theory of "permanent revolution" is precisely aimed at showing regional and campaign-specific activists that the overthrow of the corporate class is not just desirable but it is the only logical outcome of their struggles.

Workers' Power

In Trotsky's own day it was an argument about how the fight for democracy against the Tsar of Russia was inevitably connected to a wider European revolution. Trotsky asked the important question: what social force is capable of winning change?

The greatest, and in some ways, most oppressed class in Russia at the time was the peasantry. But while the peasants were capable of very militant action, including the seizure and redistribution of the great estates, they were unable to defeat Tsarist military forces without allies in the cities. Who was capable of bringing about change in the cities?

The liberal middle classes desired it, but lacked the economic power to force it through. Only the working class had both the power and the incentive to bring about change; but here came the critical point. In the process of striking and demonstrating against the Tsar, workers found that they were up against factory owners who were deeply connected to international capitalism.

Like it or not, the local struggle was part of an international struggle, and the more that revolutionary workers took measures that infringed on the control of the employers, the more the international ruling class aligned itself against them.

International revolution

The question of the success or failure of the Russian Revolution of 1917 was decided by whether the transfer of control from the employers to the workers was spread around the world or not. The particular way in which the revolution was defeated is another issue, but Stalin's rise to power was inseparable from the fact that the wave of revolution that shook the world in 1919 did not see success for the workers' movement.

The same logic applies to the movement today. What would happen if we won one of our desired changes? For example, winning the introduction of the Tobin Tax? Or defeating the paramilitaries in Columbia? Or implementing land redistribution in Brazil? Or seeing the Nepalese insurgents secure victory? According to the lobbyist or NGO wing of the movement, a line could be drawn under that issue and we could move onto the next campaign. But in reality the situation would look very different.

First of all, to achieve any really significant victory such as those above, the working class will have had to play a major part, conducting powerful strikes and marching in immense numbers. Inevitably such a rise in working class confidence that accompanied change on one issue would lead to the formulation of newer goals – there is after all so much injustice to address – and a continuation of the struggle. Correspondingly the multinationals and their political representatives would not take the defeat humbly, but would do all they could to overturn it. Just look at the frenzy of the right in response to the relatively modest reforms in Venezuela under President Chavez.

The dynamics of such a situation mean that either the movement would culminate in a decisive expropriation of the international corporations by the world's working class or it would risk a violent reversal of the victory.

Does this mean that everyone in the movement today must sign up for revolution? Far from it – to insist on this would provoke a disastrous split. But it does mean that those who are inspired by revolutionary ideas, including the ideas of Leon Trotsky, must advocate the goal of an international socialist society, a goal that will become more realistic and visible to all activists as the struggle deepens.

Internet link: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/index.htm>

could see the same tendencies that have become gargantuan in our own times. Trotsky put it well when he wrote that: "Marxism takes its point of departure from the world economy, not as a sum of national parts, but as a mighty and independent reality which has been created by the international division of labour and the world market and which in our epoch imperiously dominates the national markets." His conclusion from this was that: "Internationalism is no abstract principle but a theoretical and political reflection of the character of the world economy, of the world development of the productive forces and the world scale of the class struggle."

Reform or revolution

So far, so good. The new movement is united in its understanding of the possibilities for another world and the international nature of its opponents, but there are distinctly different perspectives on the future course of struggles and their eventual outcome.

Basically, there is one wing of the movement, often grouped around long established NGO's, who see themselves as operating as a conscience to the corporations. On the other wing are revolutionaries who wish to abolish corporate control of production altogether. And in the middle there is a large body of activists who have no clear final goal but are keen to challenge every manifestation of injustice.

REVIEWS

ASIAN DUB FOUNDATION'S NEW ALBUM TANK: A soundtrack for today's struggle

By NIAL SMYTH

FROM THEIR inception in 1993 at a London based organisation, "Community Music", Asian Dub Foundation (ADF), with their distinctive sound and politically conscious lyrics, continue to both inspire and invigorate the movement.

This fortnight sees the release of their fourth full album, "Tank".

The album sees the inclusion of some exciting musicians, such as reggae singer, Ghetto Priest and Lord Kimo, who add yet another exciting dimension to an already incredible sound that one is accustomed to with ADF.

Since forming a sound system to play at anti-racist gigs, ADF have always been more than just a music group.

They have been active in many campaigns, from their staunch defence of Saptal Ram, an Asian youth wrongfully convicted of murder for self-defence against a racist attack, to their vocal opposition to the Iraq war.

Asian Dub Foundation represents one of the most important radical and politically conscious music groups today.

"Tank" continues in this tradition and serves as a fantastic piece of social commentary.

It deals with many contemporary issues such as the attack on civil liberties and Islamophobia on the track "Round-up":

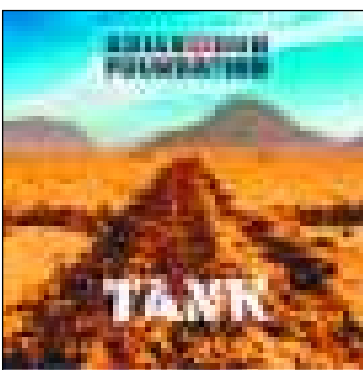
"Dem come for the rasta and you say nothing/ dem come for the Muslims you say nothing/ dem come for the anti-globalists you say nothing/ dem come for you and who will speak for you? This is the countdown to the crackdown/ this is a round up."

Pandit G speaking to Socialist Worker in Britain said of the song: "This track is about a Pakistani youth being picked up by the police. It's our comment on everything being done in the name of the "war on terror"."

The title track opens with an ominously soft military drum roll underlying a sinister message:

"The wheels of the tank keep turning round and round/How many megatons will it take to make them turn around." This sets the pace for the rest of the record.

In a salute to the decision by many US soldiers during the Vietnam war to refuse to fight and to the defiance of Muhammad Ali, the song "Oil" contains the line:



Asian Dub Foundation are an exciting live act and have never been strangers to the live scene here, playing several times over the past decade.

"No Iraqi ever called me Paki."

The track "Powerlines" is based on the group's experiences in Brazil and is about the Krikati Indians there who cut down electricity power lines running through their land, forcing the government into negotiations about their rights.

Musically the album "Tank" carries on from where "Enemy of the Enemy" (2003) left off. This time one can see some new influences creeping into the ADF sound.

The album's first track, and forthcoming single, "Flyover", finds ADF in new terrain with just a touch of electronica covering their usual drum and bass sound.

"Take back the power" is familiar ground for ADF with the song easing seamlessly between two differing rhythm sections, slow yet powerful verses combining with a

foot-stomping chorus.

"Warring Dhol" is a ballad by ADF's usual standards: a soft opening is followed by a steady build up of drum and synth layers, which leads nicely into the track "Tomorrow begins today".

An exciting live act, ADF have never been strangers to the live scene here, playing several times over the past decade.

Let's hope ADF make it here in the near future to brighten up the live music scene dominated by acts such as U2, with Bono and his "Toytown Politics" (as once described by the socialist band, The Redskins).

With Asian Dub Foundation you are brought slap-bang into the centre of today's struggle.

ADF's topical lyrics raise questions about life in 2005 that other artists may be too scared to ask.

According to Pandit G: "Most music today seems to be going back to the 1980s."

"We're waiting till the 2020s when they try to revive music from this decade. What will they play then?"

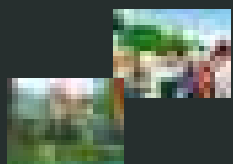
"There's only so much Franz Ferdinand you can listen to. Our aim has always been to cause a debate. We want to be experimental, but also accessible."

A soundtrack to today's movement for global justice, this album is a must for everyone.

Asian Dub Foundation "Tank" (Labels/Virgin) From €16.99

See also:
Official Band Website:
www.asiandubfoundation.com
Campaign against Racism and Fascism:
<http://www.carf.demon.co.uk/>

UNOCCUPIED MINDS



Anti-War poems from May Muzafar Ibrahim Nasrallah Dave Lordan Eleanor Wilner

UNOCCUPIED MINDS

Anti-War poems from May Muzafar, Ibrahim Nasrallah, Dave Lordan and Eleanor Wilner Poetry - Poets from Iraq, Palestine, the US and Ireland reflect on the experience of war, occupation and oppression. "With this collection I hope we can be reminded

that Iraqis and Palestinians feel the same emotions of pain, grief and injustice felt by citizens of the supposedly "civilised" west. By including in this collection poetry from the US and Ireland I hope we show too the human and cultural solidarity of people east and west that

offers the alternative to the barbarism of war and occupation and the hope that another world is possible" Richard Boyd Barrett. Published by the Irish Anti War Movement March 2005. www.irishantiwar.org with thanks to poetsagainsthewar.org



International Socialism

Media coverage of the Iraqi election has thickened the fog of lies and misinformation about the Iraqi resistance. In the new International Socialism, Anne Alexander and Simon Assaf counter the myths and provide the fullest account of the resistance yet to appear.

They argue that it is a movement for national liberation that deserves the support of anti-imperialists everywhere.

The journal also interviews Iranian activist Elaheh Rostami Povey about workers and women in Iran.

It also looks at how the 1905 Russian Revolution affected Marxist theory, and talks to the people behind the Marxists Internet Archive.

Available for 8 euro / £5 stg To order write to SW Books PO Box 1684 Dublin 8, e-mail info@swp.ie or phone (01) 872-2682

FIRST PERSON

Standing up for Wexford Hospital

By MURT FLYNN, activist in Wexford

ON MONDAY February 14th, in the Dun Mhuire Hall, Wexford Town, over 600 people packed a meeting called to show public support and solidarity for Wexford Hospital.

The organisers claimed that another 600 could not get in to the meeting but they spontaneously signed a pledge of support.

Brendan Howlin, the Labour TD, called the meeting because Wexford General is experiencing dangerous levels of overcrowding made more marked by the growing population in the area. The crisis in A+E has resulted in an average of over 20 people waiting on trolleys every day causing day surgical procedures to be cancelled due to the lack of beds and staff.

The FF/PD coalition promised Wexford Hospital an additional 40 beds five years ago. The first 19 of these new beds were due to be open this year, but the government has refused to sanction the start up. That refusal is being blamed on both the Departments of Health and Finance.

Labour TD, Brendan Howlin and others, through local media, insisted that the meeting would be ‘non political’ and that it would be ‘about finding solutions and not blaming anyone’ to dampen and discourage public protest. Nonetheless, many activists turned up to show solidarity with the workers at the hospital and to express their anger at the lack of progress on the Hospital extension and at the arrogance of the FF/ PD coalition Government.

2 Doctors and a Staff nurse spoke at the meeting but all of Wexford’s Oireachtas members were given top table status. This included 2 FF TD’s (John Browne and Tony Dempsey) and an FF Senator (Jim Walsh). If nothing else, you had to admire their cheek.

The most powerful speaker on the night was the Staff Nurse. She spoke of the indignity that patients were experiencing and the pressures on Staff. She blamed the government and she called for support from the meeting for Nurses undertaking lunchtime protests. She got rousing and sustained support and applause from the meeting.

When the politicians spoke, it was to say that they were doing their best and that they would make sure the crisis would end. They gave the impression that it wasn’t their fault and that the crisis is the result of some unknown force.

Every time that someone from the crowd tried to link the crisis to Government policy, the Chairperson of the meeting, a local radio presenter, interjected to say that there was nothing to be gained from ‘blaming’ anyone. The outcome of the meeting was to recommend more lobbying by the politicians, hoping that Mary Harney can be persuaded to see the justice of Wexford’s case.

3 weeks later, the crisis continues at Wexford General. At a recent FF meeting, in New Ross, Senator Walsh said that: ‘he and his fellow Oireachtas members were dealing with the problem’. It seems clear that the Standing Up for Wexford Hospital meeting was an exercise in cynicism.

Labour colluded with Fianna Fail to undermine genuine anger and analysis in order to protect the low taxation regime for the rich which is largely responsible for the underfunding of the health service.

An opportunity for people to express themselves was stage managed to ensure a predetermined outcome that would not threaten the local political elite.

Despite this cynical manipulation there is strong support in Wexford for action by nurses and other health workers to improve services.

Contact frameworkmurtf@eircom.net

Socialist Forums:

Republicanism and Socialism

Thursday March 24th, 7.30pm
Central Hotel, Exchequer St
Speakers: Brid Smith (SWP), Eoin O Broin (Sinn Fein Director of European Affairs)

Women’s liberation and Globalisation:

Ballyfermot, Tuesday 8th March, contact 087 9090166
Rialto, St Andrew’s Community Centre, Wed 9th March, 8.30pm

Socialism and Republicanism

Blanchardstown, Laurel Lodge Community Centre Castleknock, Wed 9th March, 8.30pm
Ballymun, Thurs 10th March, 7.30pm, Axis Centre, Ballymun
Lucan, Thurs 20th March, 8pm, contact Gladstone at 087 6456651

Video: Chavez and the Fourth World War

Artane, Artane Beaumont Family Recreational Centre, Wed 16th March, 8.30pm

The Politics of James Connolly

Balbriggan, The Harvest Inn, Tues 16th March, 8pm

War On Trial at Dublin’s Four Courts

Tuesday March 8th—Friday March 11th * War On Trial At Dublin’s Four Courts *—Supporters Gather at The Spire, O’Connell St. from 9am—Peace Walk to Court, 10am— ‘Remembering The War Dead’ Vigil, Four Courts, 10.30am—5pm.

Wed 9th *ASSESSING THE DAMAGE* Iraq War & Nonviolent Disarmament at Shannon, Walton Theatre, Trinity College 7.30pm. Speakers Include: MAIREAD CORRIGAN MAGUIRE Nobel Peace Laureate & Co-Founder of Peace People, KELLY DOUGHERTY Iraq War Veteran with National Guard

Friday 11th GIVE PEACE A DANCE *—St. Nicholas of Myra Parish Hall (Corner of Carmon Hall & Francis st.) Cuban, Italian, & Irish Music

EVENTS

International Women’s Day



Amnesty Demonstration:

Stop Violence against Women
Assemble 6pm Tuesday 8th, Curved Street, Temple Bar
Alliance for Choice screening of “Vera Drake” follows demonstration

St. Michael’s Family Resource Centre celebrates Women’s Lives & Women’s Struggles

8pm Tuesday 8th, March Wynn’s Hotel, Abbey St.
Slide show of community struggles with food, discussion & music

Women and Globalisation

Thursday March 10th, 8pm
Teachers Club, Parnell Square
Speakers: Ailbhe Smith, Joan Collins, Rita Fagan, Sinnead Kennedy
Followed by photo exhibition and Food/Drink & World Music

Iran and Syria: Bush’s next targets

UCD, Tues, March 8th, 1pm
Trinity, Thur, March 10th, 1pm
Contact 086 1688090 for details



SWP Branches

WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

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

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

REVOLUTION

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

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

greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

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

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

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION

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

working class.

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

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS’ UNITY IN THE NORTH

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

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

We want to see an Irish workers republic where all

workers gain.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

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

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

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

Join the Socialists

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

Name.....

Address.....

Email.....

Phone.....



Socialist Worker

€1.00/£0.70p

NO 238 | MARCH 9—MARCH 22

WWW.SWP.IE

Hundreds on bin tax march send out clear message:

WE WILL FIGHT AND WIN!

Over 700 people took part in a defiant and upbeat march in Dublin last Saturday, February 26th.

The message from the protest was clear: that we can defeat this unjust tax.

Report by RORY HEARNE and DAVE LYNCH,

Photo by INDYMEDIA



“WE HAVE to take a stand now to stop this right-wing government from selling off everything we own,” said Ballyfermot activist and PRO of the Dublin City Campaign against the Bin Tax, Brid Smith. She handed in a letter to SIPTU on behalf of the campaign calling on the union to fully support the campaign.

Brid went on to say: “If we don’t resist the Bin Tax, then we will be faced with more charges until they have privatised everything.

“We appeal to SIPTU to come out and support their workers who are part of this campaign. We need community level organisation, mass non-payment and more large united protests like today’s one to defeat this unjust tax.”

Broad support for the campaign

Letters of support for the protest and the campaign were read out from the Association of Combined Residents Associations (ACRA) and Zero Waste Alliance Ireland. Secretary of the ATGWU, Mick O’Reilly, told the crowd: “The ATGWU fully supports this campaign that you are waging. This is a very important struggle. We are told we are living in a partnership society. We are told that the trade unions have enormous influence and are now working at the very epicentre of government.

“But the truth is very different. When you look at IBEC you can see they do not need influence in cabinet. They can just buy cabinet influence. Changes in government policy

do not just fall from the sky, they have to be fought for.”

Our communities are still very angry

Others speaking at the protest included Cllr. Dessie Ellis (Sinn Fein), Des Derwin from the Dublin Council of Trades Unions and Independent Cllr. Joan Collins. Joan pointed out that: “Minister Cullen, who brought in this tax, knows all about waste. Even now the government have no real strategy for the environment or waste. A lot of people in our communities are still very angry. We should remember that 25 people have been put in jail over this and we have got a lot of support in the local elections.

“We need to keep in our minds that in April everyone will be getting

thought. We need to stand together. We’re not paying one cent of them charges.” – Evelyn from Walkinstown.

“Delighted with the turnout but there should be more here, there are lots of people from other places who aren’t here.” – Bernie from Ringsend

“It’s the workers who pay for everything. There was a lack of publicity for this. If we had known we would have distributed leaflets. Someone leafleted the Cadburys factory where we work that’s how we knew. Its rip-off Ireland with the rich getting richer.

“A working person can’t even afford to get sick in this country. We should be able to sack the government. Ireland is on its knees with stealth taxes. It’s about time people stood up and said enough is enough.” – Angela Farrell, Coolock.

“It’s a good size, better than we’d

Dublin City Council votes that waste should be collected

“IN ORDER to protect public health in the city, Dublin City council will operate a policy of collecting all domestic refuse.”

This motion was passed by Dublin city Councillors on Monday, 28th of February.

In Victorian times in London a huge epidemic of cholera killed thousands of people. A major change in waste collection came soon after the outbreak in the form of the 1875 Public



By JOAN COLLINS (Ind. Dublin City Councillor)

Health Act. This Act charged local Authorities with the responsibility to remove and dispose of waste. Scavenging was replaced by a regular collection of waste from each household. The Public Health (Ireland) Act was passed in 1878 after major lobbying by Irish doctors to provide the Irish poor with the same benefits as the English poor.

In Ireland the 1878 Act was enshrined in law up to 2003. The current

Government in the Protection of the Environment Act gave absolute power to local Authority managers on issues of waste management and also provided that a Local authority does not have to collect waste when a charge has not been paid. EPA reports increase in dumping of waste

Environment Protection Agency reports have consistently reported that

increasing amounts of waste (mainly from private companies but also domestic waste) has been found in ditches etc throughout the countryside.

The reports have made a direct link between that increase and the introduction of the Bin tax and non collection of unpaid waste.

In Dublin City, with over 160,000 dwellings, the implications for public health if waste was uncollected in

even a third of households could be disastrous.

The City manager can ignore this motion but if he does it will be in breach of the will of the elected council to keep our City disease free.

The meeting began with nearly 50 Councillors in attendance, when it came to the vote on this important motion 19 councillors were present. Myself, Sinn Fein and some Labour councillors voted for the motion.