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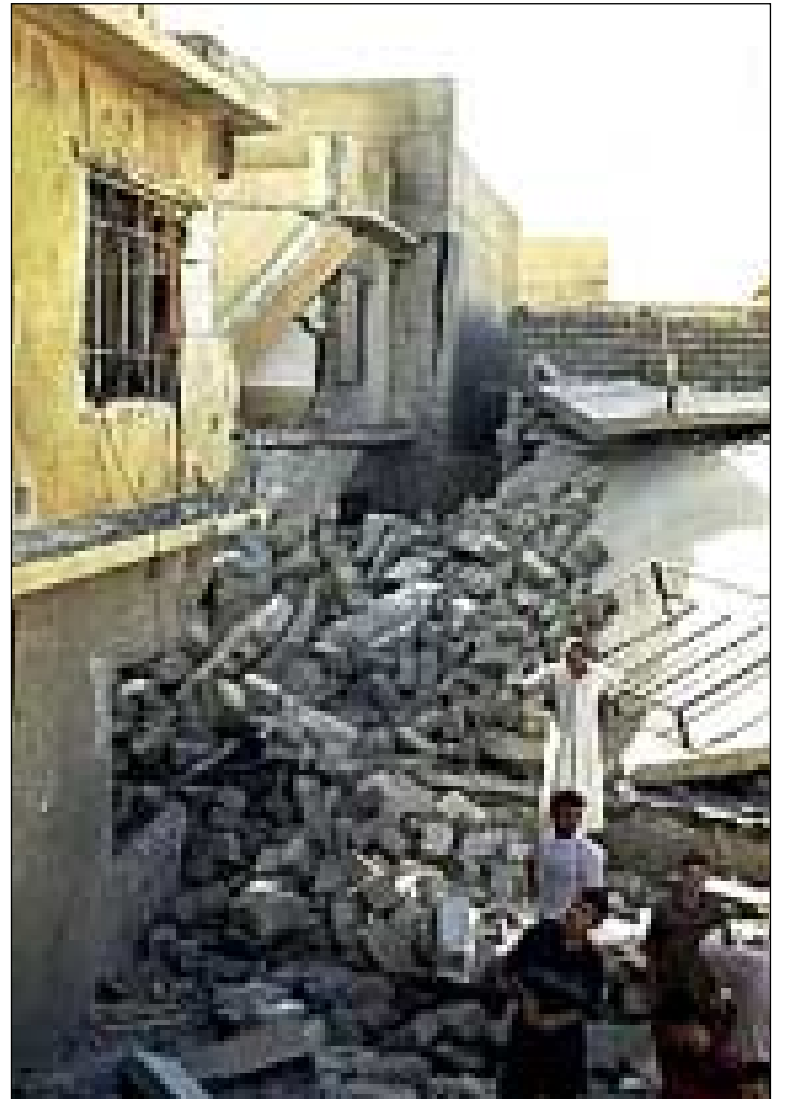
NOT IN OUR NAME!

156 killed and 500 wounded on one day in Iraq

Tal Afar destroyed



US forces bring death and devastation



By Rory Hearne

Wednesday, September 14th was another bloody day in Iraq. Attacks killed 150 people and over 500 were wounded.

Meanwhile, reports from the northern Iraqi city of Tal Afar indicate that the US has destroyed the city, just like they destroyed Falluja last November.

The majority of Tal Afar's population fled last week but, just as in Falluja, the US made no attempt to avoid casualties among the remaining civilians.

The head of the Red Crescent in Tal Afar, Doctor Mohammed Qassem, told an Iraqi newspaper:

"We are aware of civilians being wounded by falling debris, the result of US shelling and the collapse of their houses."

The assault on Tal Afar is part of a broader offensive by the US military and the puppet Baghdad government to suppress opposition in order to ensure the constitution is passed in a referendum on October 15th.

Cindy Sheehan reawakens US antiwar movement

"You know as well as I do that the majority of the people of this country oppose the war."

"It's looking like the September 24-26 weekend will be the largest gathering so far of the movement to end the war in Iraq."

"It will also be the first opportunity, since Katrina hit our shores, to raise our voices in a call for new priorities. It's time to bring the troops home."



If passed, the constitution will enshrine federalism and sectarian division and facilitate the privatisation of Iraq's public services while ensuring the oil will remain in the hands of the US.

The Iraqi parliament did not even debate or vote on the final draft. The constitution is not in anyway democratic.

As long as US troops remain in Iraq the resistance and bloodshed will continue.

The relatives of US soldiers

know this and their campaign to bring the troops home is gaining huge support across the US.

Here in Ireland Bertie Ahern and Mary Harney are deepening the role that Ireland plays as a poodle to US imperialism, against the wishes of the Irish people.

The extent of Ireland's complicity with Bush's war is being revealed by a UN investigation. The UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) is including the government's policy of allowing

US military and CIA aircraft use Irish Airports in an investigation into human rights abuses of prisoners detained as part of the war on terror.

The UN will investigate whether or not Ireland is taking action to prevent torture and, therefore, keeping or breaking international law.

Numerous sightings have taken in place in both Shannon and Baldonnell Airports of US military Aircraft used for the transportation of prisoners to places like Egypt, Pakistan, Kuwait and Guantanamo Bay, where prisoners are tortured during interrogation.

One CIA-controlled aircraft used in December 2001 to take two Egyptian men from Sweden to Egypt has been spotted at Shannon a number of times.

The men were allegedly tortured during interrogation in Egypt.

Continues inside page 2

Irish Complicity in Iraq War

>>From front page

Amnesty International published a report in June which said: "Frankfurt, Mallorca and Shannon Airports are known stop-off points for unmarked CIA jets carrying irregular renditions. Member states that allow their territory to be used for stopovers are colluding in serious breaches of human rights."

When asked about these allegations the Department of Transport admitted they just don't know because they don't inspect the US aircraft to see what they are carrying.

Shannon Airport is now central to the US war machine. Over 453,388 US troops have stopped off at Shannon airport since the start of 2002 and the numbers are rising each year. Almost as many US troops passed through Shannon during the first six months of this year as in the whole of 2004.

From January to June of this year 153,381 troops stopped over at Shannon compared to 158,549 troops in the whole of last year. The Irish Government subsidises the US military's use of Shannon with public money to the tune of €10,000 a day!

Another nail was added to the coffin of Irish neutrality with the proposal to introduce new legislation that could allow FF Defence Minister, Willie O' Dea, to proceed with Irish troops joining EU battle groups, which will also involve foreign troops training on Irish soil.

Until the US/UK war machine is removed from Iraq, violence and instability will continue. By facilitating the US war machine Fianna Fail and the PDs ensure Ireland is playing a key role in the war in Iraq.

So despite what Ahern and others claim Shannon matters and we must ensure on September 24th and after that it is not a 'dead issue'.



(Left) Slaughter of a family in Iraq by US forces; (right) Bertie Ahern: complicit

Anti-war voices for September 24th

Rory Gallagher, lead singer of the Revs, on why they are supporting the Shannon peace rally:



"Ireland should be completely neutral yet our neutrality has been given away without any say from the people. We are now an automatic ally of the UK and the US.

"But we haven't seen any bombs in Germany or France. They have been in Madrid and London; in countries like Ireland, supporting US foreign policy.

The people of Ireland have not been given a choice in a popular referendum whether or not to be part of the US war."

Abdul Haseeb, Dublin Mosque South Circular Road

"The London bombings of 7 July were wrong. And they were as wrong as the bombing of any city or village in Iraq, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Palestine or anywhere in the world.

"But the 7/7 bombings did bring to light the fact that hate breeds hate - war causes only damage.

"It is very easy for people to understand that the genocide taking place in Iraq is wrong. What is

wrong is wrong, and to assist in genocide is equally wrong.

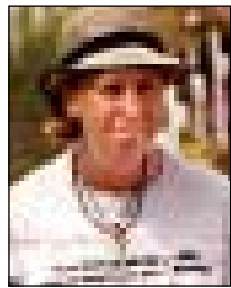
"If we allow the Americans to use Shannon to continue their unjust war today, which is being fought for the benefit of a select few, we the people of Ireland are accomplices in the criminal genocide taking place in Iraq.

"Imagine if you were an accomplice in the murder of just one man, or a woman, or even a child. You would be complicit. Then what about the murder of a whole nation?"

"24th of September is an opportunity for us to tell the world that we will not accept to become

accomplices in a crime against humanity. We must stand up together, against injustice, even if it means to stand against our own brothers Bertie and Michael."

Cindy Sheehan from US anti-war movement



Support for the war in the US is crumbling as a result of people like Cindy Sheehan, whose son was killed in Iraq, raising their voices against George Bush. Cindy held a vigil

outside Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas for three and a half weeks calling on the President to meet with her and explain why her son had to die.

She said: "Our nation is at a crossroads: will we continue to squander resources and take lives in a war that never should have happened, or will we commit ourselves to the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast and the lives torn asunder by Katrina?"

"It is clear that both cannot happen at the same time, and in this context our urgent call to end the war in Iraq must be as clear and strong as ever."

INSIDE THE SYSTEM

By DEIRDRE CRONIN

Skull and crossbones icon According to the 2005 UN Human Development Report the richest 10% of the Irish population have more than nine times the wealth of the poorest 10%. Ireland had the third highest level of poverty of the countries surveyed.

Skull and crossbones icon Dublin City Council and Fingal County Council have admitted that they send all garden waste to landfill because they have no green waste-recycling facilities. Meanwhile, as

many as three-quarters of a million people - one in five households - are burning their rubbish as they defy the bin tax.

Skull and crossbones icon According to a Probation and Welfare Service report published this month 54% of Ireland's 3200 prisoners have a history of homelessness. The report criticises plans to increase the prison population by 1000 and instead calls for funding for welfare and probation services, so that vulnerable

people can be dealt with in the community.

Skull and crossbones icon The state could cut its prescription drugs bill by over €21 million by promoting cheaper generic drugs. In the UK, 70% of drugs used in the NHS are generic, whereas in Ireland the figure is 10%. The big pharmaceutical companies must love our government!

Skull and crossbones icon Benedicta Attoh, who stood as a local election candidate in Dundalk, has reported Permanent TSB and AIB to the Equality Authority.

African people applying for mortgages are being asked to take HIV tests.

Skull and crossbones icon The number of racist attacks in Northern Ireland has increased almost four-fold in two years. In the year 2002/2003 there were 226 attacks. In 2004/2005 it had risen to 813.

Skull and crossbones icon The Health Services Executive has invited tenders from private companies to provide out-of-hours GP services in Dublin. Privatisation

instead of investment has become the buzzword since Harney arrived in health. The government still hasn't funded its primary care strategy, which would greatly improve GP and other services.

Skull and crossbones icon The latest Sunday Business Post poll shows Fianna Fail with a 32% first preference vote. This represents a drop of 10% on its 2002 election result. This would mean a loss of 20 seats in the next general election.

QUOTES OF THE FORTNIGHT

Barbara Bush, on a visit to Houston
"And so many of the people in the arena here, you know, were underprivileged anyway, so this, this is working very well for them."

Jesse Jackson, civil rights leader
"Today I saw 5000 African-Americans on Highway 10, desperate, perishing, dehydrating, babies crying. It looked like the hold of a slave ship. The issue of race as a factor will not go away."

Kayne West, rapper, breaks from the script live on NBC
"George Bush doesn't care about black people."

Extract from Business Week magazine
"Engineers have known for years that New Orleans levees couldn't withstand anything above a Category 3 hurricane... and just this summer, the proposed funding for the New Orleans Army Corps of Engineers district was cut by \$71 million for fiscal 2006."

Walter Maestri, emergency management director of, now submerged, Jefferson Parish
"It appears the money has been moved in the President's budget to handle homeland security and the war in Iraq. I suppose that's the price we pay."

Bertie Ahern on Rip-Off Republic
"I haven't seen the programmes and anyway they don't bother me."

Conor Lenihan, Fianna Fail TD, who snored his way through an attempted phone interview from Cavan on a TV3 morning show
"I wasn't on the tear. You stay up late talking to colleagues but there wasn't that much wild drinking."

Elizabeth Odunsi, deported from Athlone to Lagos, March 14, speaking from Nigeria
"I have nothing here. No money, no job, no house, no relatives. Most of the time I want to kill myself because there is no future for me here."

Protest/Reports/Struggle

email to swped@eircom.net Phone 01 8722682

SHELL TO SEA



Launch of October 1st demo at 'Corrib House' Shell's headquarters on Leeson St, Dublin

CORRUPTION

McBrearty launches civil rights campaign

Four hundred people from all over Ireland packed Frankie's Niteclub, Raphoe, Co. Donegal, for almost five hours on Saturday, 3 September.

The meeting aired people's grievances against the Gardaí, legal profession and judiciary.

So many people wanted to tell their own stories of corruption, abuse of power, collusion, harassment and the injustice, pain and fear caused, that the close of the meeting was repeatedly pushed back.

There was a mood of anger, but also of relief: one could sense the growth in confidence of individuals as they realised that others shared their plight.

Frank McBrearty Jr.'s call for a proper police ombudsman, akin to the role of Nuala O'Loan in Northern Ireland, was widely supported. Calls by Independent TD Finian McGrath and Green TD Dan Boyle for the resignations of Michael McDowell, the Attorney General, the Garda Commissioner and other government ministers were greeted

with thunderous applause. Jerry Crowley, Independent TD, made the link between Garda corruption and the treasonable disposal of natural resources that lies at the heart of the Rossport 5 case.

Eamonn McCann of the SWP made the point that when establishment politicians in the Republic pressure Sinn Féin to join policing boards and support the role of the ombudsman in Northern Ireland, their bona fides should be questioned regarding the accountability of the police in the Republic.

A new civil rights movement was established at the meeting to campaign on the issues raised. An organising committee was also set up.

It was agreed that further meetings would be convened in regional venues to tap further the deep vein of anger and pain occasioned by Garda, legal, judicial and other corruption. We owe the McBreartys an enormous debt, for they have done the people some service.

BALLYMUN PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT

Community activists link up

A network representing community activists in each area in Ballymun came together last week to found Ballymun People Before Profit (BPBP) to voice the grievances of locals against Ballymun Regeneration Ltd.

Grievances include shoddy building of new homes; lack of adequate consultation; lack of resources for community organisations, youth clubs, etc; the sell-off of public land to private developers and concerns over health and safety of the building sites

and new roads.

Kevin Wingfield, activist from BPBP said, "We need to pull the whole community together to oppose the big business agenda that is selling off our green spaces to private developers but leaving the deprivation in the area untackled."

Contact; Kevin Wingfield 086-3074060/Martin Kinsella 085-7447590/Mick Burke 085-7468289

HOUSING

DUN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN

Council leaves Antoinette homeless

Since 1st September, Antoinette Tate, 28, homeless mother of three, has mounted a round-the-clock protest in a tent outside Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Co. Council offices.

She turned to the Council when the private rented sector failed to accommodate her family on rent allowance.

The Council offered only unsatisfactory emergency accommodation: a single room on the South Circular Road - two of the children go to school in Sallynoggin - or a squalid flat in Monkstown with no heating.

The Council refuses to accept that Antoinette is homeless and refuses to negotiate with Antoinette while her protest continues.

The Council's Homeless Services Co-Ordinator described the emergency accommodation Antoinette declined as "perfectly adequate".

Campaigning on Antoinette's behalf, Richard Boyd Barrett said: "Her case highlights the total failure of public housing policy in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and else-

where.

"If government, local and national, was serious about a 20% 'social or affordable housing' part of every private housing development, local authority housing lists would soon disappear."

Dún Laoghaire Housing Action Group has just been formed to campaign both for a satisfactory resolution of Antoinette's case and for a wholesale change in public authority housing policy.

BALLYMUN

Balcurris 24-7 housing protest



Balcurris residents and supporters protest at Ballymun Civic Offices

Residents of Balcurris Road flats in Ballymun are protesting round the clock at the Council Offices demanding promised rehousing.

The flat blocks are half empty as many of the families have already been moved leaving the blocks semi-derelict.

It has become a hang out for anti-social behaviour and residents have received constant harassment and

intimidation and fear for their safety and that of their families.

Ballymun Regeneration (BRL) promised in 2000 that they would be rehoused within three years but have recently told them that they will have to wait several years to be rehoused.

One of the protestors told Socialist Worker, "Land wanted for commercial development has been cleared

and residents rehoused but because BRL do not plan to sell this land they are keeping us waiting for years in intolerable conditions. Our protest will continue until we get satisfaction."

The residents are demanding that the promises they received are honoured and they are rehoused in their new homes without further delay. Contact Ruth Kelly 087-2810890

DUBLIN SOUTH CITY ANTI WAR VIGIL



Vigil held by South City Anti War on O'Connell Bridge to demand people before war and US military out of Shannon.

RINGSEND

Poolbeg opened to profiteers

The Poolbeg Peninsula area is about to be transformed to the detriment of both people and environment.

The development company Fabrizia recently bought 12 acres of reclaimed land from the AIB for €22 million, and has now made an application to the City Council to build a new town consisting of high-rise investment apartments, a shopping mall and restaurants.

This proposed development will destroy an area officially recognised as a Wildbird Habitat and also increase the risk of flooding in the area. This land was originally sold to the AIB by the City Council for a low-level sports field for the local community.

Nearby, the site of the former Irish Glass Bottle factory is about to be bought by South Wharf for €750,000 even though its market value is €300 million.

Thanks to a legal loophole in a piece of legislation introduced by Minister Micheal Martin to prevent state owned land being sold for less than its market value.

Private high-rise developments with no provision for social housing or even local employment are rapidly swelling up the Ringsend area.

Residents are opposing a bridge over the River Dodder. Although the bridge is supposed to be only for public transport, there are no plans to bring to the Luas to Ringsend and Dublin Bus is not aware of the proposed bridge.

Therefore, this bridge will be key to opening up the Poolbeg Peninsula to developers and the construction of an incinerator.

The Save our Seafront campaign in Dun Laoghaire serves as an example of what is needed to knock back the ambitions of the developers and their loyal servants on Dublin City Council.

This type of campaign is now needed in the Sandymount/Irishtown/Ringsend area, bringing together residents groups and local activists.

Contact 085 1279165 for info

ENVIRONMENT

Protest to save Tara

Tara SOS - M3 to the West campaign held a protest at the NRA Archaeological seminar on September 15th, 2005 at the Gresham Hotel, Dublin.

Organiser Proinsias Mac Fhearghusa said, "Many of us in this group are from Meath and are commuters that travel the N3 every day. We see the traffic, where the bottle-necks are, and we know that they are not at Tara."

We feel "that Meath needs Infrastructure but Ireland needs Heritage too, and this current meandering route is a complete waste of Tax Payer's money."

Contact Tara SOS - M3 to the West 0863213755, email: tarasos@eircom.net

Workplace news
email swped@eircom.net phone 01 8722682

Support ESB workers on strike

The ballot for industrial action at the ESB Networks is hugely significant. For the first time in years there is a sense of militancy among the most powerful group of workers in the country.

And it couldn't come at a better time.

The neo-liberal project of privatisation of the entire public sector has been hurtling ahead with no challenge from the workers in the industries being sold off to the highest bidder.

This is the first real challenge by the unions to the wholesale sell off of the public sector, even if it is an indirect challenge to privatisation.

It's about jobs for apprentices but clearly it's also about what sort of treatment is meted out to the workforce and the why the company is breaking its own agreement with the unions.

Already the media have launched a vicious attack on the workers and the ATGWU official Brendan Ogle. Leading the assault is Tony O'Reilly's rag, the Evening Herald.

Who remembers the last attack by that paper on Brendan Ogle when he led the train driver's dispute, when it declared him "the face of Evil". Free copies of the Evening Herald distributed to crowds in Dublin City Centre last week labelled ESB workers as 'greedy'.

The ESB has decided not to give employment to half of the apprentice elec-



The first real challenge by the unions to the sell off of the public sector, even if an indirectly

tricians it trained as part of negotiations with unions for temporary general workers. Instead it wants to further its employment of contractors.

In response to this ATGWU members balloted in favour of industrial action to ensure employment at the ESB remains permanent, and with terms and conditions; something which will be undermined by the employment of contractors.

The tradition of young workers gaining skilled employment in the public

sector runs deep in the labour movement. Who will protect jobs for the future if not the workers of today?

Disgracefully, the other union organised in the ESB Networks, the TEEU, have declared that they will not support the strike, and urges members to scab on the pickets.

As Brendan Ogle pointed out, it is outrageous that another trade union sets out to organise blacklegging on the backs of fellow workers.

The TEEU is tied in with the SIPTU bureau-

cracy and social partnership. It has given up on any fight back and worse still is prepared to stitch up a principled stand by a majority group of workers.

A return to workers militancy could inspire others to stand up to the neoliberal agenda and to a rotten corrupt Government that has put profit before people at every turn.

Solidarity and support is what is needed throughout the union movement for the ESB workers, not the treachery of scabbing.

THE PRIVATISATION CON

The source of the problems at the ESB is the government's drive to open the electricity market to competition.

The recent price increases are part of the same drive, which is aimed at making the market more profitable to invest in.

Driving down labour costs and temporary minimal conditioned employment will be part and parcel of this new 'market'. Just as with the opening of the telecommunications market to competition in the form of privatising Eircom, both the workers involved and the taxpayer stand to lose out massively if the government gets its way.

EU legislation is driving the current policy that seeks to end monopolies as well as opening electricity markets to private competition.

The mantra of the neoliberals is that allowing competition into the market will force down the price of electricity to the consumer; yet Ireland up to recently had the third lowest priced electricity in Europe.

The only places with cheaper electricity were Sweden and Greece; Sweden because it subsidised indigenous fuel producers, allowing them to sell power more cheaply to the consumer, and Greece because of its dependence on nuclear power; a price that is

misleading given that charges do not provide for future decommissioning of nuclear plants

Many of the profiteers who scrambled to make a quick buck in the Irish market realised that it would not sustain huge profits, and so the regulator granted price rises to tempt them into the market.

The result of this is that in the past number of years electricity prices have risen dramatically, solely to bring in the people who were supposed to make it cheaper in the first place.

Effectively the government says, 'bring in competition to get prices down but in order to tempt them in we have to put prices up'.

The fact that the government are willing to allow the price of electricity to rise in order to privatise the electricity market is proof that this whole agenda is driven purely by the ideology of neoliberalism and not by social or in this case even economic factors.

And in this context the future jobs and security of apprentices just do not register. Except of course with the workers who have it in their grasp to change the agenda of the fat cats, the only ones who stand to gain anything from the privatisation of this essential public service.

—from an ESB Shop Steward

Job losses at Dublin Airport Union Membership

There was more bad news for jobs at Dublin Airport last week. FLS, the aircraft maintenance company which bought out TEAM Aer Lingus in the mid 90's, announced another 195 redundancies.

Twelve months ago FLS was bought over by a Swiss company SR Techniques.

They announced at the time that there would be three rounds of redundancies at the Dublin Airport plant in order to maintain competition with other airline maintenance companies. TEAM Aer Lingus was the focus for a major

fightback in the public sector in the 1990's.

The threats to jobs and security at TEAM led to a six month lock-out by the company and workers at the Airport took dramatic direct action to protect their jobs and conditions.

Aer Lingus attempted to renege on a "letters of comfort" deal with the TEAM workers and finally many jobs were lost but none through compulsory redundancy.

Following years saw pay freezes and productivity deals forced on the workers in order, it was claimed to

"maintain competitiveness".

One of the shop stewards in the FLS told Socialist Worker, "Where military bases in Eastern Europe no longer look after military aircraft they are opened up to civilian work.

This along with competition from China has meant that recent figures quoted show the wage costs for 150 maintenance personnel in these countries is equal to the wage costs for 5 maintenance personnel in Paris or 8 in Dublin."

Morale at the plant in

the Airport is at an all-time low according to the shop steward,

"Pay freezes over the years have meant that the skilled craft workers at the airport could earn more in a garage downtown and the company is always trying to get on our case about small things like smoke breaks, lates and sickness.

But really there is no more lates or sickness here than in any job.

They are just running it down because Dublin is losing money but the company intentionally is making money."

Recent figures released by the Central Statistics office show a decline in the proportion of workers in membership of a trade union.

This was greeted with the usual tiresome clichéd chorus from the pro-business media, who claim that unions or more precisely employees organising outside of management direction is a relic from the past. It is wishful thinking on their behalf.

A question the CSO survey did not ask of those not in a union was, would they join a union if asked. What these figures

did show however was that the concentration of non-union membership is in low-skilled service industries.

Nearly half of employees designated professional/technical are members of a union, whereas only 1 in 10 in hotel and catering are union members. Unionising the services sector is possible as shown by the unionisation of large supermarket chain's in the 90's but it will require combative tactics to give confidence and victories to these workers.

—Denis Redfern

Council to implement non-collection of bins



By Brid Smith

The campaign against the bin charges in Dublin is gearing up to fight the council's attempts to introduce non-collection.

Management in the Council have indicated that they will implement the computerisation of bin trucks this month.

All of the rubbish collection trucks are now mechanised so they can reject the bins of the non-payers in the city which amounts to tens of thousands of households.

This method gives the council the advantage of by-passing any decisions the workers might make in relation to non-collection - it won't be the workers rejecting our bins but the computer.

Meantime the council and the unions have been meeting regularly to work out a deal for the implementation of computeri-

sation and the knock-on effects of the new pay-by-use system.

The council will engage consultants to look at the way the new system has impacted on routes and duties and to devise a plan to alter the working day of the bin-men in line with the council's requirements.

For the workers this could mean re-deployment to other departments, more routes to be covered in any given day, a loss of overtime and possible redundancies.

For the householders engaged in the non-collection campaign opposing the bin charges it means that the campaign has to take to the streets again.

Recently delegates from all over Dublin City anti bin tax groups met to make decisions on agreed strategies to fight the council's double tax.

The city wide campaign meeting

agreed for mass meetings in local areas, leaflets and poster distribution, attempt to put injunction on the council, dump rubbish bags in back of trucks and/or mass dumping, city wide protests at the bin depots, dialogue with trade unions and workers at the depots.

The recent EPA report proved that bin taxes don't improve our environment. The report showed that illegal dumping and backyard burning are on the increase.

The only environmental and social solution is for waste management to be entirely state run.

Re-cycling facilities must be in public hands and big business, agriculture and construction must reduce or pay the price for the waste it generates.

This will only be done by people power resisting the bin charges and demanding a proper waste management policy.

Green Party opts for coalition

By Sinead Ni Bhroin

John Gormley Chair of the Green Party stated recently that the Green party would not enter a pre election pact with any parties but had a "clear preference for a coalition involving Fine Gael and Labour".

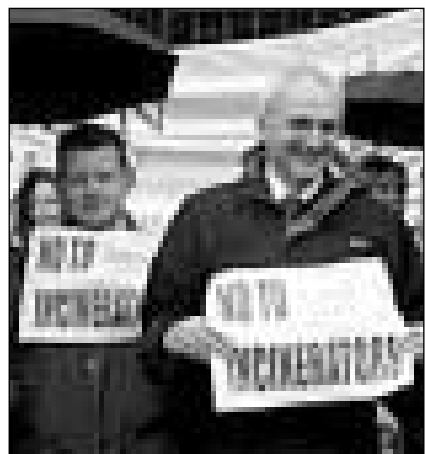
He added that the poll "shows clearly that the Greens are an essential component for any future alternative government".

This statement must be disappointing to Green Party supporters because the membership voted against a pre-election pact with Fine Gael and Labour at this year's conference.

The leadership has reversed the spirit of the resolution by indicating their willingness to be part of the coalition.

Gormley focused on the input Green politics could make in Government with regard to climate change, the energy crisis and oil production.

By creating this political niche market



Incinerating Green Party policy?

for the party within Government Gormley already diminishes what members can hope to achieve during power sharing (or perhaps more accurately power propping

up).

This must be a disappointment to the many Green members who have over the years developed relatively progressive policies on housing (with a sensible focus on the differing needs of urban and rural), a city and nationwide integrated public transport system, much needed childcare & participatory democracy.

Impending environmental crises must be a concern for all parties.

But Fine Gael mirror Fianna Fail in their opposition to the Green's carbon tax proposal (and in support for US stopover in Shannon).

The Greens would achieve more by becoming a strong opposition force.

The recent statement suggests that the best Green Party supporters can hope for from the rainbow coalition is some climate change committee work within the Dail with little or no hope of making any real political progress for the people or environment of Ireland.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

By Donal MacFhearraigh

Irish companies at arms fair

The DSEI arms fair in London is the biggest international arms fair in the world and includes manufacturers of fighter aircraft, missiles, nuclear weapons, missiles, armoured vehicles, tanks and nuclear submarines.

At least 15 cluster bomb producers attended. Three companies from Ireland also took up stands.

The companies were Calmark Ireland, Silcorec Ireland and Europlex Technologies.

ESF Preparations:

30,000 march in Greece

30,000 demonstrators marched in Salonica, Greece last week against attacks by the neoliberal government.

Precarious Fire Brigade Workers, sacked textile women, Olympic Airways, Bank and Postal employees, electric Power workers marched jointly with activists of the antiglobalization and antiwar movement.

Campaign Genoa 2001 and Stop the War Coalition coordinated forces with the Trade Unions to organise the demo.

The mobilisation followed when Bank employees organised a permanent strike that lasted one month. In June the Greek TUC called two general strikes in solidarity with Bank Employees.

The programme of the next ESF should reflect the need to link unions and activists and organise the people who marched in Salonica

Petros Constantinou,

Greek Coordinating Committee for Athens ESF

New Left party 'Linksparti'

The new radical left party in Germany Linkspartei has been picking up significant support across the German working class.

The entire neo-liberal establishment is worried - because they know the voters don't trust them.

Linkspartei has issued a call by over 1500 trade unionists who say "We vote left".

Many are middle ranking officials, such as regional union leaders.

A similar call to vote SPD only got 300 signatures. German workers want a change. They want a real left in parliament - a left that speaks out for ordinary people, and not for big business.

Lula mired in corruption

Lula and the PT (Workers Party) government in Brazil are in crisis following the exposure of a massive corruption scandal that reaches to the heart of the government and to Lula himself.

Millions of workers voted for Lula in 2002 in the hope that he would bring change. But his first act was to cosy up to the bankers and the IMF.

As Heloisa Helena, leading leftwing MP and previously a member of the PT, said "The PT, to which we gave the best years of our lives, is dead. Its very raison d'etre lies buried." 25,000 trade unionists marched against the PT government in recent weeks.

At the centre of this resistance is the new leftwing party P-Sol. Opinion polls put P-Sol's presidential candidate, Heloisa Helena, on 7 percent.

Chavez death threat from US

Venezuela's president Hugo Chavez is in the spotlight again following an extraordinary call for his assassination by Pat Robertson, one of the US's most prominent right wing Christian fundamentalist preachers.

The next World Social Forum (WSF) will take place simultaneously in three cities - Caracas in Venezuela, Karachi in Pakistan and Bamako in Mali. It is set to take place from 25-29 January 2006.

All three will be vital gatherings for the movement, but the Caracas event assumes a special importance given the continual threats from the US against the government of Hugo Chavez.

Egypt's sham democracy

Thousands of Egyptian activists took part in a march organised by Kifaya (Enough) through Cairo chanting "Mubarak is a thief" after a presidential election marred by fraud and intimidation.

The government announced that the 77 year old dictator had won 88.6 percent of the vote in the country's first multi-candidate poll. The majority of people supported the boycott of the elections - officially only 22 percent voted.

THE UNITED STATES

'RACIST TO THE CORE'



New Orleans: A young black man pulls groceries through the flood waters—the media call this “looting”

Acclaimed black political scientist and activist Manning Marable told Kevin Ovenden how the New Orleans disaster has exposed the racial and class divisions at the heart of the United States

WHEN SOMEONE who, as a teenager, reported on the assassination of Martin Luther King and who has analysed every turning point in black America since tells you they are enraged, you take notice.

Manning Marable is calm and forensic, but there's no concealing his anger, shared, he notes, by millions of Americans at the “criminal response” to the New Orleans tragedy.

“What stuck me most,” he says, “was that the feeling that has swept African Americans, regardless of political affiliation, is the outrage. They have simply been enraged by the inaction, contempt and ineptitude of the Bush regime towards this crisis.

“Black Republicans, few in number as they are, were appalled and enraged by the racist contempt of the government. Perhaps the possible exception is Bush's secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice.

“The second most striking thing about the socio-economic and moral crisis represented by the tragedy of New Orleans is that so many millions of Americans were deeply surprised by what they saw.”

Marable's account of the disaster will be familiar to many, but in being retold loses none of its power to shock.

“The disaster eminently could have been avoided. There had been long

discussions with civil defence authorities about the dangers of a hurricane or tropical storm hitting New Orleans.

“The city is well below sea-level. When you visit the city it's impossible not to notice, even when you are on relatively high ground such as the French Quarter, that the Mississippi river looms over it.

“Ward nine, which is historically the poorest African American neighbourhood, is most vulnerable because it is right next to the levees. The danger of flooding is worst in the parts of the city that are most economically disadvantaged.

“Everybody knew this. Everybody knew that the levees weren't safe if even a category three storm hit the city. It was truly a disaster waiting to happen.”

The hollowing out of New Orleans may be especially pronounced, but it fits a pattern of what has happened to other US cities over the last few decades of neo-liberalism and sharpening social division.

“The population of the city itself had shrunk. In the core area were about 500,000 people. The wider metro area had a little over a million.

“In a city like New Orleans the wealthy and upper class residents live in their vast majority—about 90 percent—in the suburbs. They live near the airport or further out—out of harm's way—and simply commute into the city to work.

“The white middle class, almost to a person, was able to get out. It was the poor, the African Americans who were left behind. You are talking about people who had no assets, who most often didn't own a car. There was no physical way for them to leave.

“Yet within 24 hours Fema, the agency responsible for responding to disasters, began a mantra saying that these were people who chose to deliberately ignore warnings about evacuation.

“That was not only a gross distortion of the truth, it was deeply racist—and the Fema representatives knew it.

“Out of the half a million people in the central city, there were about 200,000 who are overwhelmingly African American and very young or elderly.

“Many of the elderly suffer from diabetes or other kinds of chronic illnesses. Others have never lived anywhere else in their entire lives. Their networks, support systems and families are wrapped up in those communities.

“Where were they going to go? They don't have discretionary income to be able to fly out at a moment's notice.

“Even if they did, there weren't enough planes to accommodate them. Fema made no provision for mass public transport to evacuate the city. To then blame the people who died as irresponsible for not getting out is so outrageous it's hard to wrap your mind around it.

“Yet that's what they did on the television. That's why millions of black people and progressive white people were totally outraged by it. Even the media, after being embedded for so long in Iraq, began to reflect the truth.

“Even reporters for Fox News began to defect from the right wing line. These are journalists accustomed to parroting the pro-American, patriotic line.

Slaughter

“There was nothing patriotic about this mass, wholesale, deliberate, federal slaughter of innocent people, who had done nothing wrong except, perhaps, to have a misplaced trust that federal authorities would intercede to protect them.”

The images of “corpses left to rot” and of “elderly women left to die outside the Superdome” are set to haunt the Bush administration throughout its second term.

The statistics on the class and racial divisions in the US may not be viscerally visual, but they are just as shocking in their own right.

“The typical white household has a net wealth of about \$90,000,” says Marable, “for African Americans it's about \$6,000.”

In 1983 his book, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America*, Marable documented the murderous social divide that existed at the onset of the neo-liberal offensive.

‘One third of all black households have negative net wealth ... they owe more than the totality of the clothes on their back and the possessions they have built up in the course of their lives’

“The figures today are much worse,” he says. “The media focuses not on net wealth, but on median income. If you do that, you ignore wealth accumulation, asset control and asset ownership.

“For example, 70 percent of all white Americans are owner-occupiers. For African Americans the figure is 46 percent, for Hispanics, less than 40 percent.

“One third of all black households have negative net wealth. That's hard to do—they owe more than the totality of the clothes on their back and the possessions they have built up in the course of their lives.

“About 21 or 22 percent of black households are today below the federal government's established poverty line. Again that minimises the extent of poverty because the government's statistics do not truly reflect the levels of poverty.”

The last such wholesale transfer of wealth from the bottom to the top of US society was in the 1920s. Following a hurricane in 1927 the New Orleans authorities flooded the poor areas to save the property of the wealthy who, as today, also had the means to escape.

Two years later the Wall Street Crash punctured the facade of prosperity and plunged the world into economic depression.

“There are parallels. The 1920s also coincide with the consolidation of white supremacy in the South—the Jim Crow regime in Louisiana and Mississippi.

“The administrations of Calvin Coolidge and later Herbert Hoover were extremely pro-business, anti-labour and anti-black—just like the Bush regime.”

So why has racist division persisted, despite a civil war in the 1860s that ended slavery, the transformation of the US into the world's dominant power, immense economic development and the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s?

“I've written several books trying to answer that question, at least for myself. In 2002 I wrote a book titled *The Great Wells of Democracy*.

“The first chapter is called *Structural Racism, a Short History* and I've got a new book coming out in December or January called *Living Black History*.

“The short answer is: because the US was constructed on a racial foundation.

‘The typical white household has a net wealth of about \$90,000. For African Americans it's about \$6,000’



Armed police and army patrol the flooded streets, more concerned with keeping people in order than helping alleviate distress

By that I mean that the state is, in effect, structurally racist.

“Prefiguring the state was a political economy based on chattel slavery of people of African descent. So the state apparatus and all institutions given licence by the state are riddled through and compromised by the existence of slavery as foundational to the society.

“There are so many ways to document this. The White House itself was partially constructed by slave labour. That statue of freedom on top of the Capitol dome was lifted up and placed there by black slave labour.

“Most of the major corporations are descended from businesses that in the 18th or 19th centuries profited from slavery. Many of the founders and original trustees of the institution I teach in, Columbia University, got their money from slavery. You could go on and on.”

Marable outlines four, what he calls, racial domains, which have characterised US history. “By racial domain I mean a social formation with a specific political economy and a set of relations of inequality which are grounded in notions of white supremacy and black inferiority.

“These four domains were slavery, Jim Crow segregation in the South, urban ghettoisation and the fourth domain, which has emerged in last quarter of a century—what I call the New Racial Domain.

“It is characterised by three things, an unholy trinity—mass unemployment, mass incarceration, and mass political disenfranchisement.”

The three seemingly colour blind elements come together in to reimpose racist divisions. “By unemployment, I don’t just mean occasional joblessness,” explains Marable. “There are millions of blacks and Latinos who are outside of the paid labour force, not just occasionally unemployed, but outside the formal economy.

“So in a community such as where I live, I’m looking outside right now at Harlem in New York, something like 50 percent of the male adults have been

unemployed at some point in the last 12 months.

“Something like 40 percent of the population of this community is in the informal sector. That kind of unemployment drives who is going to go to prison.”

The expansion of the US prison population is staggering. “The US has 2.2 million citizens incarcerated, but that’s not a static group. About 650,000 people enter prison every year and a similar number are released.

“Then you have the people on probation, parole or awaiting trial. If you add those to the number it’s about 5.5 to 6 million people a year who are sucked in to the criminal justice system.”

Undemocratic

One result is that millions of people are shut out even the limited electoral process just as surely as when black people were denied the vote across the Deep South in the 1950s.

“The reason is that in most states prisoners cannot vote and neither can those on parole. In about seven states you lose the right to vote for the rest of your life if you have a single felony conviction.

“In virtually every state a single conviction means you lose the right to be employed in a whole series of jobs for the rest of your life.

“Here in New York, for example, you have to have a licence to be a barber, a plumber, a beautician... you are prescribed from all of these jobs for a single felony conviction.

“Because the police operate in a racialised way, blacks and Latinos are disproportionately arrested and receive longer sentences for identical crimes to those committed by white people.

“Consequently, what is being constructed is a two-tiered, racialised society.”

All this is nearly half a century on from when Rosa Parks sparked the civil rights movement by refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white man in the city of Montgomery on 1 December 1955.

“Sure, the white and coloured signs have long since been taken down. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed segregation in public accommodation.

“The 1965 act gave blacks the right to vote—this is 100 years after the end of the Civil War, don’t forget. Yet in a state like Mississippi today one third of all black males are disenfranchised from voting because they have a conviction.”

While the state’s repressive arm has strengthened its grasp on society, it has retreated from intervening in welfare and public life.

“Neo-liberalism has left local government truncated, unable to expand services. The white upper class and upper middle class flees to the suburbs, leaving the core central cities to rot.”

Marable is an activist, who was part of the movement around black Democrat Jesse Jackson’s bid for the presidency in the 1980s and who has documented the retreat from radicalism of many progressive and black organisations since then.

“The real question is what’s to be done?” he says. “In the 1990s I was involved in an effort to create something called the Black Radical Congress (BRC). A network of radical activists that was explicitly anti-capitalist, anti-racist and anti-sexist.

“It was committed to working with broad, progressive multi-racial and multi-ethnic forces.

‘One hopeful sign is that firm belief now among millions of people that the government is criminal’

“We did a lot of different things. We focused in part on the issues surrounding the prison-industrial complex and also on school privatisation issues—turning over our schools to corporations is just about as outrageous as what happened in New Orleans.

“There is no denying that 9/11 had a deep negative impact on the progressive movement. There was an upsurge in anti-war and anti-racist activity in 2002, but it failed to consolidate and sustain organisations that could deepen and broaden that movement to reach sections of the working class in an effective way.

“The same was true of the BRC. Part of our problem was objective, sectarian errors that we committed. There was a lot of success at some levels, but there was an overall failure to consolidate a national centre which would help to sustain movement across the board.”

As for today—there are signs of hope amid a rampant crisis.

“Many people are now talking about how we fight back. I really wish that we had an effective BRC now, because that could be a conduit.

“In the absence of a coherent socialist or left political pole the rage of many younger African Americans may take them to the arguments of other oppositional groups to the US war machine.

“There has, for example, been what I would estimate as a threefold increase in the number of African Americans converting to Islam over the last four years.”

Could the response to New Orleans, the revitalised anti-war movement and other strands come together in new political formation?

“It may. One of the things that might compromise these hopeful signs is the disarray of the US labour movement. Over the summer the national union federation, the AFL-CIO, split at a time of enormous weakness and backwardness of leadership.

“Progressives are not of one mind about how to interpret this split.

“If we had a stronger, clearer labour movement I would feel much more

hopeful about what can come out of this.

“However, there are developments. There are meetings taking place right now among, for example, younger African Americans who are influenced heavily by the hip-hop community.

“I’m on the board of the national hip-hop summit action network. We are having a meeting next week to discuss what can be done around New Orleans but also more generally how can hip-hop culture respond to the crisis.

“The same thing is going to happen in policy way with the Congressional Black Caucus.”

But there is no escaping from the fact that “in the absence of a strong left, grounded in labour or in the black freedom struggle, there is a sense of a lack of organisation to immediately respond to a crisis.

“One hopeful sign is that firm belief now among millions of people that the government is criminal, that it’s shown itself to be deeply, irresponsibly racist.

“So universities have stopped teaching the curriculum over the last few days. Instead there are intense conversations and meetings about what does New Orleans mean.

“One student said to me that this is the most profound thing that had happened to illustrate racism to him—he was a white student.

“He said he didn’t live through the Selma march or the Montgomery bus boycott. He was an infant when Jesse Jackson ran for president and during the anti-apartheid mobilisations of the late 1980s.

“But New Orleans highlighted to him the race/class chasm that cuts to the heart of power in this country.

“The challenge is to build organisations, resistance, agency and leadership to challenge a regime that is trampling over nearly 300 million people at home and many more abroad.”

Manning Marable’s Z-Net homepage: www.zmag.org/bios/homepage.cfm?authorID=76
Manning Marable’s pathbreaking book on racism in the United States, **How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America**, is available from Bookmarks, www.bookmarks.uk.com or from www.swp.org.uk

Socialist Worker

Editorial

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UN failure

Bertie Ahern told the UN in 2002 that Ireland would spend 0.7 per cent of GNP on overseas aid by 2007.

Last week at the special UN summit to mark the organisation's 60th anniversary Ahern announced that the 0.7% target would not now be reached until 2012.

This is just one in a long list of failures of the FF/PD government such as the hospital bed crisis, reduction in school class sizes etc. It demonstrates once again the twisted priorities under neo-liberalism.

They can dish out millions in state pensions to previous Taoisigh such as Charlie Haughey and Albert Reynolds, yet claim at the same time that they do not have enough money to fulfil overseas aid targets.

Their penny pinching results in the death of thousands in poverty across the world. According to NGOs, 11 million children will die from extreme poverty for each year that the international community delays increasing its aid budget.

However, Ahern wasn't the only one at the UN putting the needs of the poor at the bottom of the agenda. At the summit the leaders of the world's wealthiest nations have once again failed to deliver on their promises to the third world.

The US refused to increase its aid contribution which is a mere 0.15 per cent of its GNP. Instead Bush, Blair, Putin and others have demanded that all countries increase their support for the war on terror. The US also ensured that there was no mention of nuclear disarmament.

Resolutions were passed to encourage the introduction of new anti-terror laws. But surely global leaders would be better addressing the root causes of terror, for example, the mass poverty caused by neo-liberalism and the death and anger caused by the Iraq war.

Instead, they use every method possible (such as banning the Make Poverty History add in the UK), to avoid attention focussing on the failures of their globalised neoliberalist policies, such as the response to New Orleans, the Tsunami, the Iraq War, the famine in Sub-Saharan Africa and the fact that 1 per cent of the world's population holding more than 57 percent of total global wealth.

It is up to people at the grassroots level to protest and shove the failures of neo-liberalism squarely in the faces of our leaders until they are forced to listen and act.

'Alternative' Coalition takes shape

Fianna Fail is facing a collapse in its vote if current trends continue until the election. None of the existing opposition parties are benefiting significantly from Fianna Fail's losses.

This is not surprising given Fine Gael and Labour's clear indications that they will slavishly follow the current government's policies of low taxation for the rich and under funding of public services. T

hey said last week they intend to "use resources effectively".

No mention of taxing the wealthy in order to raise essential funding for public services like health and education that people are crying out for.

Richard Bruton of Fine Gael said: "We will not increase the corporate rate of tax...and indeed the leader of the Labour Party has made it clear that it is his view also that we need to adopt that approach...because a Labour minister for finance, Ruairí Quinn, was the minister who introduced and pioneered the idea of having a low, single rate of corporate tax".

COMMENT/OPINION

Send your views to swped@eircom.net

Eddie Hobbs' Rip off Republic



Eddie Hobbs, presenter of Rip-Off Republic

Eddie Hobbs' programme Rip Off Republic represents one of the biggest hits this government has taken.

The usual sleepy summer season was set alight by the smart and funny presentation of rip off facts—many of which were already in the public arena—but never before had they been so expertly and effectively packaged.

Government backbenchers complained about lack of balance, others of inaccuracies while many of the most senior figures in the governing parties claimed never to have watched the show.

Whatever backlash may emerge against Hobbs, it is unlikely that he will lose the mantle of the people's hero.

The message he constantly hammered home was that we have a right to stop the rip off.

In constantly pointing to the gap between the top of your pay cheque and the bottom, Hobbs was reminding people it is OUR money that is being frittered away.

The inadequate health service, appalling transport system and the massive cost overruns across whole sectors of

the economy were proof of the complete mismanagement of our money.

He has also beaten back the myth that we live in a low tax economy.

The trade union leadership accepted miserly pay rises for workers during the Celtic Tiger years in return for tax reductions.

Yet it is now clear that these reductions were illusory.

While PAYE tax rates were reduced from the dizzy highs of the 1970s and 1980s they were cleverly tacked back on in the form of indirect or stealth taxes.

Rip Off Republic was a wake up call for many people who feel aggrieved in the new 'prosperous' Ireland, but the question is what needs to be done. And it is on this question that the programme fell down.

The solution offered by Hobbs—getting rid of the Groceries Order, ending monopolies and cartels and introducing competition—was fairly standard stuff. In fact very few PD members would have a problem with it.

The radical expose of the problem was unfortunately not matched by a radical response.

The problems with Hobbs' solutions are that they would perpetuate a system that is fundamentally flawed.

All the problem areas that the show covered—doctor's fees, the cost of running a car, the price of groceries—could be solved if the state played a more direct role in providing all those necessary services to its citizens.

If we had a proper national health service our taxes would be used to provide every person in this country with free access to a doctor.

Likewise if we had decent public transport options car usage would fall and people would not have to bear the burden of running their own private transport and the ensuing environmental problems for the whole of society.

The cost overruns in infrastructure projects are fuelled by private companies out to maximise their profits.

Yet if the state took full responsibility for these projects they could be delivered on time and on budget in the interests of the people.

Rip Off Republic showed that despite the rhetoric of the free market economy, we actually have no choice and no control. The private sector and their cronies in government have robbed us blind.

Yet Hobbs never once raises the idea of reinvigorating the state sector and channelling public investment into all the areas that would raise our quality of life such as health, education, playgrounds, public transport etc.

Such action would be a real solution to the Rip Off that we currently endure.



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

Loyalist riots and poverty

By Goretti Horgan

The ferocity of the loyalist riots after the Whiterock Orange march astounded commentators, but came as no surprise to anyone who lives or works in Protestant working-class areas.

The riots began as part of a plan by loyalist paramilitaries to take attention away from their increasingly bloody feuds and their frequent attacks on Catholic homes in many parts of Northern Ireland. But, having begun like this, for reactionary reasons, the riots quickly showed a passion and fury that suggested deeply felt injustice.

It is important to start by pointing to the horrific level of sectarian attacks that have been seen over the summer months – Catholic churches vandalised; Catholic schools, even integrated schools, burnt; homes petrol bombed and windows put in. And all the while, the loyalists were shooting and killing each other. It's been like a return to some of the worst times of the Troubles.

The bit of the Springfield Road that the Orange Order were so determined to march down has been the site of trouble before. There is only one reason they want so much to go down it and that is to assert their 'superiority' over the Catholic residents. It has nothing to do with respecting Protestant culture and it is an insult to Protestants to say that it is.

So what is behind the dam-burst of anger on the streets of Belfast? Look at where the worst of the rioting was – in North and West Belfast. The area is part of the two square miles where most people (both Catholic and Protestant), killed in the course of the Troubles, died. It is also the poorest part of the North, after parts of Derry.

The riots were most fierce in the areas that suffered most in the course of the Troubles, but have gained least in the course of the peace. Any examination of inequalities in the North shows a growing gap between the rich and the rest. 46% of Protestant households live in poverty, compared to 47% of Catholic households. Because of the larger size of Catholic households, this means more individual Catholics are poor. Also, there are more Catholics living in severe poverty.

But while the gap between the number of poor Protestants and poor Catholics is narrowing, the gap between the rich and the poor within the Protestant community and within the Catholic community is widening.

Even Direct Ruler, Peter Hain,



Loyalist rioters in Belfast

admitted that poverty played a part in the riots: "These communities are alienated, they are deprived", he said. "They have not benefited from the prosperity and record number of jobs that apply right across Northern Ireland now." Well, who has benefited? Not working class people of either community.

Northern Ireland is the most unequal part of these islands. The top quarter of wage earners here takes home NINE times the money of the bottom quarter. Half of all workers in Northern Ireland, in 2004, earned less than £305.60 a week. But the top 10% take home more than £1,000 a week. Some people, particularly those in the 'business community' (where religion doesn't seem to matter) have done very well indeed from the peace process.

While Protestant workers have

done better than Catholics – historically "tuppence ha'penny looking down on tuppence" – whatever edge they had is being steadily eroded by the kind of economic development being pushed by all the political parties, from Sinn Féin to the DUP. In 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.

It used to be that Protestant workers could get a job for life in one of Belfast's heavy industries, these jobs have gone now – along with the shipyards and engineering plants that were once the mainstays of the economy.

When you knew you were guaranteed a trade and a job, education wasn't seen as crucial. There was no great

pressure to improve the schools in Protestant working class areas. The statistics for the Shankill are well-known, fewer than two in every hundred people – including mature students – make it to third level education. This kind of educational disaster is repeated in working class Protestant areas across the North. Some schools don't even teach the Eleven Plus curriculum, much less enter children for the exam.

An East Belfast youth leader says, "Things have been building up since 1998. I think the biggest is this sense that people think the government has let them down while the middle class of unionism has effectively pulled up the ladder behind them and ignored what is happening here."

There is a similar sense of abandonment in many poor Catholic areas – reflected in young people from the

Bogside and Gobnascale attacking Protestant homes in the Fountain and Irish Street. If young people look around their area and see widespread unemployment, poverty and hopelessness, they are going to look for someone to blame

Increasingly, the way politics and society in Northern Ireland is organised makes it seem 'common sense' to blame 'the other side'. Sectarian politicians on both sides point at 'the other side', the better to stop anyone looking at the growing inequality within their 'own' community. The result is often that it's the poorest in each community attacking each other while the well-off move to the leafy suburbs, driving each weekend to their holiday homes away from the cities.

If things are left to the powers-that-be, there is unlikely to be much change. The agency 'InvestNI' continues to advertise Northern Ireland as a place where wages are a third lower than the rest of Europe. In the aftermath of the riots, there was a lot of talk about 'regeneration'.

The British government has handed over several army bases to the 'community' for 'regeneration'. But because of all the political parties' acceptance of New Labour privatisation, the 'community' these sites are going to is the 'business community'. We have already seen what that means along the Lagan – and the Liffey – plush hotels, exclusive apartment and office blocks, but little to benefit the working-class people of the area and nothing at all for the young.

There were vicious sectarian elements to the riots – attempts to breach the peacelines and attack Catholic homes. But there were also real elements of class anger. A digger was hijacked from an East Belfast 'regeneration' site and used to ram an ATM machine. Several banks were attacked and attempts made to gouge ATM machines from the walls. One bank was burned to the ground, as were the offices of the DUP's Sammy Wilson in East Belfast and Nigel Dodds in Newtownabbey.

The brightest sign of hope is the growing realisation of working-class people, both Protestant and Catholic, that things are equally bad on 'the other side'. This has come through particularly in the campaign against water charges. It is in the fight against privatisation and against the race to the bottom that this consciousness can be built into a real challenge to the Northern establishment.

Why the Love Ulster campaign is no solution

By Gordon Hewitt

A few weeks ago amid much fanfare (the Newsletter carried a double page and more) the "Love Ulster" campaign was launched

The arguments were put forward bluntly. Ulster is at crisis point. The genocidal campaign conducted by the IRA (compared, in the special publication accompanying the launch of the campaign, to the Holocaust) has not ended but rather has entered a new phase, ably supported by Ahern and Blair.

The appointment of "Provo" Peter Hain, the release of Sean Kelly, the disbanding of the RIR, the removal of the Army bases and watchtowers, all evidence of a sustained and calculated effort to destroy Protestant culture. Ultimately this would lead to a United Ireland where Protestants at best will be second class citizens and

at worst will be subject to massacres as in the 1920's.

"At all times, remember that it will only be by a collective, concentrated effort, that we as a people will survive this onslaught on our nation, our culture, our identity and our heritage.

"We must meet this attack head on, and we must be united in doing so, for to contemplate any other response is to invite defeat. After what we have been through, this past 30 years, that is unthinkable - it is simply not an option."

However as Newtown Emerson, and various unionists pointed out, there appears little evidence that a United Ireland is bounding round the corner.

Others have pointed out how incredibly one sided the violence of "The Troubles" has been portrayed. Secondly the campaign slogan "we

are all victims now" is hardly one which inspires confidence. Beyond that the few hundred thousand copies of "Love Ulster" papers and posters which arrived at Larne, the date and the venue synonymous with the arming of Carson's UVF in opposition to Home rule, were unloaded by a number of UDA and UVF leaders. Almost immediately prominent unionist politicians and others within the Protestant community began to distance themselves from the campaign. More importantly, recent victims of Loyalist paramilitary violence had letters printed in various papers adding to the criticism. The campaign appeared to have hit an iceberg.

Perhaps one explanation can be found in what is missing entirely from the literature. Any analysis of the situation for ordinary working

class Protestants, (which by and large is the same as for working class Catholics). Life on benefits too low to allow survival against poverty, wages lower than the US and Europe, something bragged about by bosses in Northern Ireland.

There is no talk of education cuts, health care cuts, the possible loss of civil service jobs, the attacks on pensions and the selling off of large swathes of land for either private housing developments, often in poor Protestant areas, or new superstores built by multinational companies.

In terms of the headlong rush to a united Ireland, not a word about the appalling poverty rates in Ireland, the crisis in the health service or the privatisation of various public services, something that would undercut Sinn Féin's promotion of the benefits of unity.

There is clearly a crisis in

working class Protestant areas, but the Love Ulster campaign derails any serious attempt to address it, instead driving forward its ideas on the most reactionary basis.

However the recent violent expression of disaffection in those areas has meant that "Love Ulster" has seen an opportunity. The campaign has called for a rally in Belfast city centre on October 29th.

If we are not to see poor disaffected working class Protestants driven in a nakedly sectarian direction, there needs to be an alternative to "Love Ulster". There is an international day of action against local poverty on October 17th. That could be a focus for working class people from both communities to demand action on local poverty and to reject the sectarianism of Love Ulster which offers no solution at all.

HISTORY OF MICHAEL DAVITT:

RADICAL AT THE HEART OF THE LAND LEAGUE



By Conor Kostick

The Davitt League has emerged as a response to all the events leading up to the jailing of the Rosspoint Five. It has a strong, clear, set of aims, 'the people before profit charter.' The inspiration for the League comes from Michael Davitt, one of Ireland's most talented radical organisers and a person whose political ideas are extremely relevant to the campaign today.

Michael Davitt was born 1846, at the beginning of the most terrible years of famine, to an impoverished Mayo family, who were evicted from their home in 1852. They emigrated to Lancashire where Davitt obtained an education from his parents but also from the Protestant and Dissenting churches competing for followers in the local working class communities. It is perhaps from this experience that Davitt formed his life-long opposition to any form of religious sectarianism, a spirit that is echoed in the principle of the modern Davitt League's advocacy of 'a multi-cultural Ireland that respects everyone equally.' For someone without any formal schooling Davitt developed an astonishing skill with the written word, especially evident in his political writings.

At the age of 11 Davitt went to work in a cotton mill. The Victorian cotton mills of Lancashire are now notorious for the callous indifference with which they used up the lives and limbs of their child workers. Within a year of starting work Davitt was a victim of the non-stop machinery, with his right arm being trapped and crushed. It was amputated near the shoulder. Determinedly he taught himself to write again, now with his left hand.

Davitt's disability did not prevent him throwing himself wholeheartedly into political life. He joined the Fenians and participated in the 1867 Rising. By 1870 he was a key organiser of the scattered rebel movement but infiltration by British Intelligence led to his being



**Captain
Boycott (top)
could get no
one to work for
him; Michael
Davitt (above)
imprisoned
without trial**

arrested. Prison at that time was an ordeal designed to shatter body and spirit. Davitt was put to hard tasks, such as stone breaking one-handed with a pick, or being strapped into a harness in order to haul a cart. Only after the harness wore away his shoulder stump did the prison authorities relent to the extent of making him instead pound rotten bones into manure.

The desperate conditions faced by Davitt were drawn attention to in Westminster and in 1877 he was paroled, on condition of good behaviour. Davitt soon recovered from his prison years and proved he was far from being broken. He emerged determined to implement a new course of action that embodied two fundamental organising principles: that political action had to be open and gain a popular following and that the way to stir the people of Ireland was to organise around the question that most materially affected their lives, which in the 1870's and 1880's was the question of tenant rights to land.

Davitt was the first I.R.B. member to conduct open political rallies and his new approach was supported by John Devoy in America. These two Fenians then sought for allies in the political elite of the national movement and found one in Parnell. The Land League was born of a fusion of two political traditions, those physical force nationalists willing to abandon conspiracy in favour of building a mass movement and those parliamentarians willing to sanction popular demonstrations and activity for the sake of revitalising support for Home Rule. Both wings had to face criticism from within their own ranks, but while the alliance lasted it was phenomenally successful.

Massive rallies took place across Ireland in 1879 and 1880, laying the basis for action. Landlords were to be stopped from making evictions by a tactic so successful that its implementation, first of all against Captain Boycott, gave a new term to the world. Landlords who attempted evictions were now met with a complete embargo. In Captain Boycott's

case he could get no one to work for him, no labourer, coachman, servant, stableman. No shopkeeper would serve him; even the twelve year old post boy would not deliver his mail. Although Boycott became a cause célèbre for loyalists, who raised funds and voluntary labour for him, Boycott was defeated by these means and left Ireland.

Michael Davitt was at the heart of the Land League, its tireless organiser. This was his greatest moment. The British Government's response was to break the movement with the carrot and the stick, arresting Davitt in 1881 and imprisoning him without trial on the grounds of breach of his release conditions. A thousand other activists soon followed Davitt to jail, but at the same time a Land Act made considerable concessions to the demands of the movement.

Protest at Davitt's arrest was massive, including tens of thousands marching in London, from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. In Parliament itself Parnell and his followers were expelled for their disruption to proceedings. But here the movement faltered and divided along its main fault line. Davitt urged the immediate calling of a complete rent strike across Ireland. At that moment such an act would have been immensely popular.

The Irish parliamentarians hesitated, met together, and then came back to Westminster to make hot-tempered speeches to the kind of audience they were comfortable with. The alternative, to lead a truly huge mass campaign, frightened them. Their surrender of the initiative was an exact repetition of O'Connell's cancellation of the 1843 rally at Clontarf.

By the time of Davitt's release the energy had gone from the Land League, the reforms on offer being sufficient to fragment the enthusiasm of the tenant farmers as, piecemeal, they sought to obtain what they could from the new legislation. Davitt himself, however, was still hugely respected as a champion of the tenant farmer and Mayo returned him to Parliament in 1892.

It was in his second period of impris-

onment that Davitt formulated the goal of nationalisation of the land. In theory, he argued, it should be done without compensation for the landlords, not even the cost of their ferry ticket to Holyhead. In practice it could be done by government purchase of the land, at a cost of £140 million, which while an immense sum, could be gradually repaid by a ten percent land tax; a tax which would leave the tenant paying only half the rents they were currently paying but with the security of knowing they now owned the land and therefore the incentive to improve it.

This idea was eminently practical but philosophically alien to both Irish and British politicians, committed as they were to private property. Davitt's supporters in this idea were not to be found in Westminster but in the emerging socialist movement in Britain, to whom he now associated himself. Nor did political games among the British elite suit a man who had grown up in the harshest of conditions and who had built a movement that had awoken a country. Davitt resigned his seat in 1896 telling Parliament that 'no just cause can succeed here unless backed by physical force.' Until his death in 1906 he remained an ally of the Irish poor and British trade unions, although he did not live long enough to appreciate the revolutionary significance of the emerging Irish urban working class movement.

In words that are uncannily relevant to the struggle of the Rosspoint 5 today, James Connolly summed up his view of the power of Davitt's movement when he wrote that 'the strength and power of the political agitation of the Land League lay in the fact that its representatives were the servants and mouthpieces of a class who were already organised and holding the means of production with a revolutionary intent. They were not asking government to give them possession, they were already in defiant possession and demanding that such possession be legalised. Their base of operation was secondarily at the election booth, primarily on the farm.'

REVIEWS

Leftmusic...pop is rocking

By Karen McCormack

Green Day are back to lead the kids against the Bush administration, stealing the show at the recent MTV Awards, picking up 7 Awards for their album "American Idiot".

The album, a scathing commentary on Bush is based on the political climate fuelled by the rule of the current administration. Released during the election campaign, American Idiot immediately appealed to a large percent of the American population with its anti-Bush content.

In the UK, **M.I.A. (Missing In Action)** was recently nominated for the Mercury Music Prize. Maya Arulpragasam is a 27-year-old Sri Lankan Tamil who moved to England when she was 9 as hostilities between the ruling Sinhalese and the Tamil minority were ramping up. Her debut album "Arular" is a cross between Dance Hall & Hip Hop with stitched together political lyrics such as "They say river's gonna run through / work is going to save you / praying you will pull through / suck a dick, he'll help you / don't let them get to you / if he's got one you get two / Backstab your crew sell it out to sell you."

On the album, MIA talks about teen-age prostitution, "part-time jobbers in call centers," and "comfort bars." "From the Congo to Colombo!"—the Sri Lankan capital— She sings, "Can't stereotype my thing yo / I salt and pepper my mango," and, later, "Like P.L.O., we don't surrender."

Dedicating her album to the struggles of her mother, MIA's distinctive sound is



Patti Smith attacked big business and George Bush

certainly one of the most exciting acts to come out of Britain of late.

US musician **Patti Smith**, who helped change the face of rock music in the 1970s attacked big business & George Bush at a press event in St. Petersburg on Thursday, where she received an excited response from the local journalists and fans.

Addressing a 100-strong crowd she said "The world right now is being run by assholes like George Bush and pharmaceutical companies, these greedy people who don't care about the environment, who don't really understand the poor, who don't understand other cultures. We are the underground and we have to

get strong, because the world is being run by business."

According to Smith, "people have the power...rock and roll is not a business, it's a voice that we can use politically, artistically, poetically. ... And hopefully new young people will infuse new blood into that idea. That's what my band was trying to do!"

This was also what **Bob Dylan** was trying to do once-upon-a-time. Once the voice of a generation, a counter culture movement with the spirit of rebellion, Dylan has released his new album of rare & sought after material from his early years via an exclusive deal via **STARBUCKS!**

The Rolling Stones on the

other hand are back with a bang. Their latest song "Sweet Neo Con" shows them getting angry again with lyrics such as: "the gasoline, I drink it every day But it's getting very pricey And who is going to pay? It's liberty for all 'Cause democracy's our style Unless you are against us, Then it's prison without trial But one thing that is certain, Life is good at Haliburton. How come you're so wrong My sweet neo con Where's the money gone - In the Pentagon"

More than a week after his emotional off-script statement at a September 2nd Hurricane Katrina telethon **Kanye West** is sticking by what he said where he went off script and

criticized President Bush for his response time to the tragedy.

As the cameras turned to the rapper, he proclaimed, "I hate the way they portray us in the media. If you see a black family they say 'They're looting', If you see a white person, it says 'they are looking for food'."

"The lethargic federal reaction to the catastrophe occurred because most of the affected population is black. **George Bush doesn't care about black people**".

Co-presenter Mike Myers appeared stunned. West, who characterized the last two weeks as "crazy" has said since that he wasn't interested in reading the scripted words that scrolled across the teleprompter during NBC's "A Concert for Hurricane Relief" telethon, and instead spoke from the heart.

West remains unconcerned by any subsequent public backlash and said he stands by his critique.

He felt that Americans largely close their eyes to the problem of poverty, including politicians. "I just feel like America's always been pushing the [impoverished] under the counter, trying to act like it's not really there," he said. "And what happens if you're cleaning the kitchen and you're always dusting something under the counter? If you spill something, it's going come up and be in your f—ing face." Despite the controversy his latest release, "Late Registration", has sold more than 860,000 copies to debut as Billboard's #1 selling album!

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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.

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

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Socialist Worker

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT JUSTICE FOR THE ROSSPORT FIVE

MARY CORDUFF, wife of Willie Corduff, one of the five men jailed by Shell, spoke to *Socialist Worker* about the importance of the national march on October 1st.

The five men have made huge sacrifices.

Would any politician be prepared to take a step like that? They refer to people breaking laws.

We don't feel we have broken any laws. The men are protecting their families.

It's a disgrace this has gone on so long.

Shell keeps saying it can't withdraw the injunction that is keeping the men in prison, but we don't believe a word of it.

Nobody can trust what Shell says.

All over the world they have lied to ordinary people.

They carried out work on the pipeline when they claimed nothing was happening and just the other morning, at five am, they sneaked onto a site to carry out work.

We rang the Mayo County Council and the North-West Regional Fisheries Board who are on the Corrib project monitoring committee and asked them to come out.

But they didn't come. Why not?

This proves the monitoring committee doesn't work.

This is the committee that is supposed to turn up if there are problems with the proposed pipeline.

Why didn't they come out? It's a mockery.

The whole thing is very sad.

The Council and government are not doing anything in the people's favour; they are acting for

Shell. It's a very sad time.

On October 1st the people of Ireland should come out and show unity, with all the injustices that have been done to people on the ground.

This story is an issue like others happening every day around Ireland.

The compulsory purchase order that Shell has used to take our land could be used against anyone. Rossport could be any corner of Ireland.

This step that Shell has ploughed on top of us is just the powers-that-be forcing their way onto small communities in Ireland.

There is no democracy here in Ireland.

What we are doing is for everyone. It's for the people of Ireland.

It started with health and safety, but now it's also about the bigger picture; the deal that gave away Ireland's resources.

The Irish people are getting nothing from the deal.

While we struggle with shortages in our hospitals, and our schools and are getting no gains whatsoever, our resources have been given away.

People should come out and protest to the people in power to stop this crazy situation.

The rally on Saturday, October 1st needs to be the wake-up call for Shell, the government and the opposition.

The spouses of those politicians should wake them up to see our suffering.



Rossport Five supporters in Castlebar

A struggle against money and power

Throughout the 90's, **DERRY CHAMBERS** was campaign co-ordinator with the **Cork Environmental Alliance**. Below he argues that all disenfranchised opposition groups should support the **Davitt League**, which was launched recently in **Co Mayo**.

Nowadays, instead of empires dominating and colonising us, Ireland is ruled by global corporations who dictate our educational, industrial, environmental, social and foreign policies.

I regularly drive the three miles, from the top of the Pass of Keimaneigh in the Sheehy Mountains, to the village of Ballingeary in the West Cork Gaeltacht. It is a journey through the history of the struggle of Ireland to free itself from foreign domination.

Through this pass in December 1602 O'Sullivan Beara led his people in their march north to Breifne in order to join forces with Hugh O'Neill. At the top of the pass there is a monument to the Whiteboys who died fighting Crown forces in 1822. Just beyond Gugan Barra, stone tablets remember two local IRA men who died in 1921 and 1922 while, as

the memorial puts it, "defending the Republic".

Official histories would have it that the common enemy throughout those years of struggle was 'perfidious Britain', but the reality is of course different. There was never a race war between Britain and Ireland, but, just like today, the conflict has always been one of the oppressed against money and power.

In my work during the last 20 years I have discovered that wherever environmental conflicts arise, the common consequence has been a community left isolated, to fight alone the power of corrupt officials and the money of global corporations.

Today communities in Mayo, Limerick, Tipperary, Offaly, Kerry, Meath, Cork and elsewhere stand alone in environmental conflicts which are David and Goliath battles in nature and struggles which they cannot possibly hope to win on their own.

Likewise, groups working in many other areas such as health, civil and human rights, educational equality, industrial relations etc, are surely weakened by their insularity. Make no mistake, we have all been abandoned by a self-interested cartel

of business, government (and the so-called 'opposition' parties of Fine Gael and Labour), media and unions.

The founding principles of the Davitt League, which reflect a true republic of an equal and sovereign citizenship, seems to be an ideal banner under which all those disparate campaigns can come together to reclaim ownership of our country. Such an alternative political voice for the people is urgently required.

Experience has shown that there will be no succour in turning to the state for help, because, as the writer Frank O'Connor put it at the end of the civil war, when he abandoned political involvement with the new state, "We had a chance to build a country from scratch. The best country we could possibly imagine. But for the victors, independence meant nothing more than the freedom to paint the post boxes green and carry on as before."

The choice is ours now. We can make the decision to join the lads with paintbrushes and do the cosmetics, or get together under the banner of the Davitt League and make this a country in which we all have an equal share.

National Demonstration October 1st. Assemble 2.30pm Parnell Sq