

INSIDE War is an election issue



By Roger Cole
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Bertie spins Fianna Fail corruption



Photo: Paula Geraghty

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Resisting war crimes is not a crime



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McDowells racist
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Cops protect Shell in Mayo

... AND THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE!



Gardai mass to remove demonstrators and to force a path for work to begin on the Shell pipeline, Below Maura Harrington grabbed by cops

Photos: Peter Wilcock

"I will never forget the feeling of standing in the dark of night and seeing hundreds of luminous jackets coming towards us and hearing the clanking of chains being used to tow away our cars.

"I never thought I would see this in the West of Ireland", leading campaign activist Maura Harrington describes the scene on the morning of 3rd October when the police were used as Shell's private security firm.

The Gardai corralled in hundreds of local people, workers, farmers, fishermen, students, to escort in the scabs doing Shell's dirty work in laying the pipes for an on-shore refinery.

For over a year the people of North Mayo have kept watch over the gates leading to the proposed refinery at Bellinaboy in Co. Mayo.

Their courage, determination and commitment have been amazing.

Despite the long terms in prison by five of the local activists the people fighting Shell are not going to give up.

Shell Oil said they would liaise and co-operate with local people following the huge protests in response to



the jailing of the Rossport Five last year. But look at what they are doing today?

As another local activist put it "This is the inevitable consequence of dealing with Shell oil in any part of the world.

"The only difference is in other parts of the world they have reddened the area with the blood of the local people."

Each morning the Gardai protect the gates of Bellinaboy and enforce the will of Shell by escorting the workforce through the lines

of local protestors.

Over two hundred Gardai are being accommodated in local hotels.

They have food provided to them on the picket line.

They are paid overtime and away-from-home allowances.

The police commissioner and his assistant have spent nearly a full week in Mayo.

The Mayo Chief Superintendent is constantly on duty in this area.

All of these have to be accommodated, fed, paid

overtime and other allowances.

The 200 cops are booked into hotels for one month with another month in reserve.

The Garda Press Officer is present at all times and declares that they will stay as long as it takes to ensure that the work goes ahead.

It is reminiscent of Margaret Thatcher's war against the miners.

On the orders of Minister for Justice McDowell, the total bill to us - the Taxpayer - will run into millions of euro. The average weekly earnings of a Garda is at least €1,000 per week.

Two years ago the Chief Superintendent grade got a 16% increase in pay while the rest of us got 4%. Who took the decision to spend our money in this way to bully the people of Mayo?

Did anyone consult the people of Ireland as to which they would prefer - extra hospital beds or assisting Shell to destroy the North Mayo area?

As Maura Harrington says, "We think we live in a democracy but this is sham.

"The people of Mayo have no choice but to fight them. We love where we live and

we won't let them destroy this place."

But all of us have good reason to fight Shell. Gas prices were increased by 34% from October 1st. Shell have the rights to all the gas from the Corrib basin - not a penny of that natural resource will come back to the people of this country.

And only two months ago Minister Noel Dempsey issued similar licences for an area of ocean - 25,000 sq k. - the size of Northern Ireland to oil companies for exploration and development.

These licences were issued under the same conditions as that issued to Shell in the Corrib Basin in a deal done by Fianna Fail Ministers, Ray Burke and Bertie Ahern. That was the early 1990's!

The consequences are being lived out today.

We urgently need to organise solidarity protests and action in every town and city to support the people of Mayo and to challenge this rotten Government and their policies.

Send Shell to Hell.

QUOTES OF THE FORTNIGHT

"I would ask people to question the motives of these individuals"

Professor Drumm of the HSE responds to the 8000 strong Monaghan Hospital protest

"It's getting to the point now where there are 800 to 900 attacks a week by insurgents."

"That's more than a hundred a day. That is four an hour attacking our forces"

Bob Woodward the investigative journalist who has just published a book entitled *State of Denial* that claims Bush is denying the gravity of the situation in Iraq

"It'll be interesting for me to watch the body language of these two leaders to determine how tense things are."

George Bush prepares for his meeting with the Pakistani and Afghan leaders

"The intelligence director told me that [Armitage] said, 'Be prepared to be bombed. Be prepared to go back to the Stone Age.'"

President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf on how former deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage told Pakistan's intelligence director after 9/11 that the U.S. would bomb his country if it didn't help fight terrorists

"It is quite unacceptable that a member of Dall Eireann, and in particular a Cabinet minister and Taoiseach, should be supported in his personal lifestyle by gifts made to him personally."

"It is particularly unacceptable that such gifts should emanate from prominent businessmen within the State."

"The possibility that political or financial favours could be sought in return for such gifts, or even be given

without being sought, is very high and if such gifts are permissible, they would inevitably lead in some cases to bribery and corruption."

A voice from the past - Bertie Ahern's response a number of years ago to the report of the McCracken tribunal into payments to politicians

"I might have appointed somebody, but I appointed them because they were friends, not because of anything they had given me"

Bertie Ahern explains why some of the lads who did the whip around ended up on state boards

"There is a concern that we have become more materialist, maybe even more selfish, and if we have, I believe many people would conclude that for all our new wealth, we are much the poorer."

Bertie Ahern in a recent speech to the new task force on active citizenship

"Why do Sunnis kill Shi'ites? How do they tell the difference? They all look the same to me."

Sen. Trent Lott following a closed-door meeting with President Bush and other Republicans at the Capitol

"Afghanistan is on the brink of becoming a failed state once again. It's ours to lose again."

Beth DeGrasse senior program officer with the U.S. Institute of Peace, a non-partisan think tank funded by Congress

"The Ryder Cup has for some come to be something of a withering commentary on modern Ireland, where money trumps tradition, where big is always better"

from the Boston Globe, one of the many less than complimentary comments in the international press on Ireland's hosting of the Ryder Cup.

FINGER PRINTING, IDENTITY CARDS, DEPORTATIONS... McDowell's racist bill

Minister Michael McDowell is bringing draconian new immigration legislation to the Dail in the next few months.

The Scheme for and Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill was published in September. The provisions of the Scheme are certain to create a climate of insecurity and fear among the non-national population.

Despite the promptings of migrants' rights group, the Scheme fails establish a rights-based Immigration or Protection regime: "It is a matter for the government to determine whether a foreign national should be allowed to enter and remain in the State or required to leave..."

■ Non nationals may not get married in the State without the permission of the Minister, any marriage without his permission will be null and void.

■ Foreign nationals must have on them an identity card with residence permit and biometric information (finger prints, etc) and will be required to produce it on demand by a garda or immigration official.

■ There will be national database of foreign nationals, with biometric data.

■ Non nationals will be required to give biometric information at any time (by, for example, having their finger-



Workers demand equal rights for all last year

prints taken to confirm their identity).

■ They will also be required to submit to a medical examination at the frontier and will be refused entry if they suffer from a range of medical conditions.

■ The Minister may issue an exclusion order against any foreign national if he or she considers it necessary in the interests of "public security" or "public policy".

Immigration Officers at the State's frontiers are to be given enormous discretion in deciding whether to let someone in or turn them back:

■ If the officer is "satisfied" that the person has insufficient means, or intends to seek

employment or suffers from one of a number of medical conditions, they can be refused entry.

■ Also if they have been convicted of an offence under a foreign country's laws that could carry a one year sentence, they will be similarly turned back.

Immigration Officers will guard the gates of "Fortress Europe" through refusing entry to those who are subject to a removal order from a Member State; who are subject to a Transfer Order; may at some time in the future intend to travel to the UK (including Northern Ireland) and would not qualify for admission to the UK if arriving from anywhere else.

Ships and planes entering the State will be required to provide lists of those on board including nationality details and other personal information. This may be required before the ship or plane departs from a foreign country.

■ Foreign nationals may be deported on conviction for an offence in Ireland, even relatively trivial transgressions, or may be deported for any reason if the Minister sees fit.

The Scheme represents a draconian series of measures aimed at making immigrants cowed and open to exploitation. In particular the national register of foreign nationals and the requirement for identity cards creates a class of people with inferior rights, easy meat for employers, landlords and the State.

But it is not just immigrants who will be in the firing line. If identity cards and biometric data are introduced for foreign nationals, their introduction for everyone else will not be far behind.

The Scheme must now go to Dail lawyers for finalising before being introduced into the Dail. Migrant rights groups, anti-racist campaigners and civil liberties organisations need to use the time to create a united campaign to defeat McDowell's racist plans.

Thomtons Recycling: A city dump in Ballyfermot

Two weeks ago local people who live in the immediate vicinity of Thomtons Recycling plant at Kylemore in Ballyfermot risked their lives by blocking the trucks getting in and out of the plant.

Police were called and protesters threatened with arrest.

The protest was called off after written assurance was given by management at Thomtons that new equipment would be installed within one month that would prevent the noxious smells that led to the protest.

Residents living in the area have complained regularly of fly infestation in their back gardens, of noxious odours, of unpalatable sweet tastes in the air and also of a high level of noise from trucks constantly coming and going to the plant.

There are an unusually high number of local people who regularly suffer from chest infections and other breathing problems.

There is also a high level of cancer related illness among the local population.

In July this year Thomtons Recycling issued a statement indicating that they had 'invested over €1 million in clean air technology to improve air quality and control the

problem of odorous air emissions' at its Recycling Centre in Ballyfermot. They say that the Clean Air System has been very effective since it was installed in late 2005.

Thomtons Recycling is one of the longest established and most successful recycling companies in Ireland and operates the country's largest recycling centre at Killeen Road in Dublin, processing 250,000 tonnes annually.

The plant started out recycling cardboard only but over the years its licence has been extended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to include the processing of domestic waste from the city council; hospital waste from most of the biggest Dublin hospitals; waste from Dublin City University; MacDonalds and many more large organisations.

All of this waste is being processed practically in the back yards of the working class community of Ballyfermot. So far this year, the EPA has inspected the facility eleven separate times and said they did not detect odour nuisance from the site at any time.

But the EPA or indeed the Minister for the Environment, Dick Roche don't have to live beside Thomtons. They would

not tolerate living next to what amounts to a city dump. Minister Michael McDowell says he is against an incinerator being built in his constituency backyard in Ringsend. So why should the people of Ballyfermot put up with living next to this health hazard?

Individuals who have close ties with big business have been appointed to the five person board of the EPA. They include Doctor Mary Kelly, a former assistant director of IBEC's Environmental Unit. Two years ago Laura Burke was appointed to the EPA Board.

She had been a project manager with Indaver and played a key role in seeking permission for incinerators at Ringaskiddy and Carranstown.

It is outrageous that a waste processing plant is allowed to function next door to where people live.

It should be re-located in an industrial area and well away from any large housing estate.

Since the protest took place, an action committee has been set up by local residents with the help of local community associations and People Before Profit. The Campaign Against the Bin Tax has also given full support.

People living in the area are determined to fight this company who are responsible for the odours, the tastes, the noises, the flies and possibly for suspected illness from the impact of Thomtons on this area.

The action committee will be carrying out an independent health survey of the area around Thomtons with the help of health professionals and will be sending questionnaires door to door.

Local people don't accept that Thomtons can guarantee a clean, safe environment and they don't trust the EPA to act entirely in their interests. Leaflets are being distributed by the group throughout the Ballyfermot area and future meetings and protests are to be planned.

Tommy Daly whose garden backs onto the plant told Socialist Worker, 'I have been fighting this company and the EPA for over five years now. It is impossible to have a decent quality of life living beside Thomtons.'

'You can't even enjoy your back garden and what we have put up with from smells, flies, rats and noise has been a nightmare. I won't stop fighting them until I see them leaving Ballyfermot.'

INSIDE THE SYSTEM

Transport accounts for one third of all carbon dioxide emissions in Ireland at the moment. The number of cars on the road are increasing, rising from 312 cars for every 1000 adults in 1990 to 507 in 2005. New cars purchased tend to have larger engines, be less fuel efficient and have higher CO2 emissions.

The 4th of October was the 70th anniversary of the battle of Cable Street

when Jews, trade unionists, Labour party members, Irish dockers and the people of the East End of London united to prevent Oswald Mosley and his British Union of Fascists from marching down their streets.

Bord Gals has just introduced a 34% increase in their bills, working out at €45 increase for the average two month bill. Electricity prices are also set to rocket.

An estimated 1.2m illegal immigrants were arrested last year trying to cross into the US along the border states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The US is currently building a fence along the border.

Segments are already under construction in California and when fully completed the fence will cover one third of the border. There has been widespread condemnation of the US actions

The crisis in social housing continues as recent reports in the media reveal the scandal that Cavan, Leitrim and Longford County Councils and Limerick City Council have not built any social or affordable housing in the past three years.

Yet these four councils have more than €5m at their disposal, handed over by developers to comply with the new social housing requirements. Meanwhile, Cork

City Council has built just six houses, but has over €2m set aside for housing. Galway City Council has built just two, but has €1.45m set aside. Roscommon County Council has built just one house; Carlow and Monaghan County Councils have built just four while Kerry has completed six

Comptroller and Auditor General John Purcell in his annual report has criticised Michael McDowell's

Department of Justice for paying at least twice the market price for the purchase of a €30m site for a new prison at Thornton in North county Dublin

Following Hugo Chavez's recommendation of Noam Chomsky's new book, "Hegemony or Survival: The Imperialist Strategy of the United States," during his U.N. speech. Chomsky's book shot to No. 1 on the www.amazon.com best seller list two days later.

Socialist Worker

EDITORIAL

The Dail opposition botched attack on Ahern cash

Bertie Ahern's receipt of money from wealthy business people is nothing new. Politicians from Fianna Fail and Fine Gael have often been before planning tribunals over their receipt of donations from wealthy developers. The Progressive Democrats are proud of the financial support they get from big business.

The issue that should dominate the concern of the opposition parties is not Bertie's €50,000 loan and Manchester collection but the existence of the Golden Circle in Irish Politics. Only Socialist TD Joe Higgins made that argument very clearly. The rest of the opposition were given a big opportunity to go after Fianna Fail's rotten record but they botched it.

The Irish political establishment reeks with corruption. This paper has consistently pointed out the simple argument that politicians suspected of involvement in corruption should be subjected to criminal investigation, charged and jailed if proven guilty.

Bertie may have survived this time. But in the long run this issue of political corruption will damage Fianna Fail and their future at the polls.

There used to be rival wings in Fianna Fail. One known as the "country and western brigade" was represented by the likes of Albert Reynolds and Pee Flynn. The other was the worker, respectable wing represented by the aronak-clad accountant from Dublin - Bertie was a man of the people. In the longer term that reputation has been hugely damaged.

Ahern should resign and this government should go. Unfortunately members of the alternative Fine Gael and Labour have also been linked to corruption and have repeatedly stated that in relation to key policy areas like public services, neutrality and tax they will not do anything fundamentally different from the current government.

We need to sweep away the current political establishment and replace them with politicians and a system that would genuinely work on solving the real issues that affect the people of Ireland.

This is one of the richest countries in Europe with the biggest gaps between wealth and poverty, a housing crisis where many working people cannot afford to buy a home, a crisis ridden health service, a lack of affordable childcare and facing the privatisation of our state services.

The death of Irish neutrality has allowed Bush and Blair to use our airports for war and torture.

It cannot have escaped the attention of any decent human being that in the week that Leinster House was caught up in the corruption scandals of the country's leader, the Gaurdians of the Peace (the cops) were heavily deployed in Co. Mayo to enforce the will of the giant Corporation Shell Oil, against the will of the vast majority of the people.

This should be the straw that breaks the camel's back. Join in a fight to build a real alternative to this rotten corrupt system.

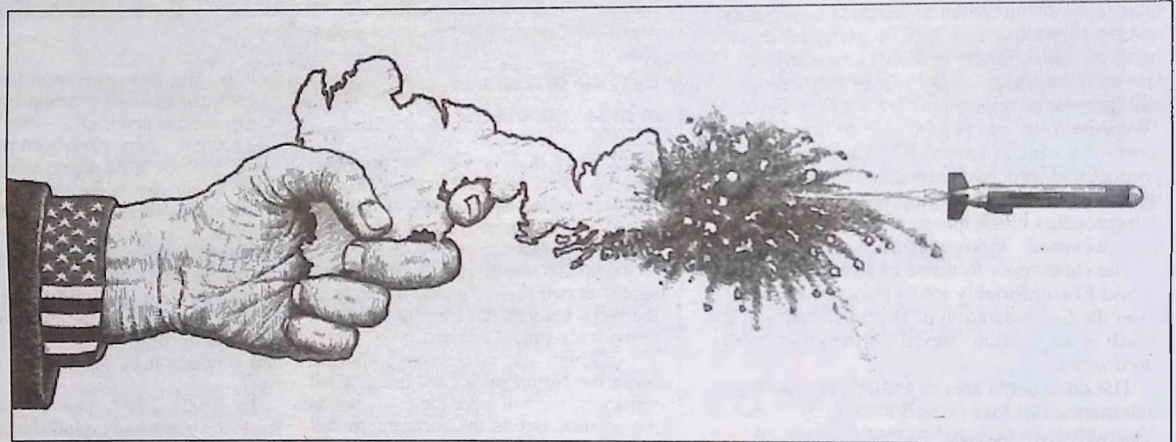


People Before Profit protest at the Dail while Ahern spoke in the Dail justifying taking the money

Photo: Paula Geraghty

BRITISH LABOUR PARTY:

An unrepentant Blair says the party's not for turning



In his final conference speech as Labour Party leader, Tony Blair passed a poisoned chalice to Gordon Brown - pledging that Britain will remain "America's strongest ally".

There was not a word of remorse over the war on Iraq nor any hint of apology for the lies Blair told to justify that war.

He even denied claims that the invasion of Iraq had been planned prior to the 9/11 attacks.

In fact within hours of those attacks, US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld had handed George Bush the invasion plans, which had been prepared well in advance.

Blair's speech promised us a continuing "war against terrorism" that would be "a struggle that would last a generation or more" - with no retreat from the occupations of Afghanistan or Iraq.

Criticising those demanding the withdrawal of British troops, he claimed, "We would not be safer. We would be putting our security in desperate peril."

In truth Blair's policies have made this country a prime target - and placed the security of millions of Iraqis and Afghans in "desperate peril".

Between now and the day he quits Downing Street, Blair pledged that he would be "dedicated to advancing peace between Israel and Palestine".

This comes from a prime minister who refused to condemn Israel when it rained down bombs on Lebanon, and who refused to call for an end to its murderous assault on that country.

Blair's sign-off message was that Labour needs to go even further down the modernisers' road.

On a day when delegates had

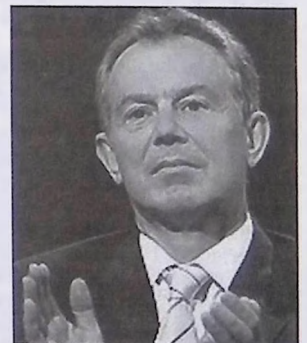
voted to defend and extend council housing, he expressed his regret that Labour had not taken the lead in selling off council homes in the 1980s.

Looking further back he argued that Harold Wilson's Labour government of the late 1960s should have done more to face down the trade unions.

Along with defending introducing identity cards he promised a "radical" energy policy that would include building a new generation of nuclear power stations

In the week that workers struck against the privatisation of NHS Logistics, which supplies hospitals across England, we were assured that the NHS was being "rebuilt, not privatised".

He went on to promise "radical" welfare reform. That included forcing single parents and those on invalidity and disability benefit



Tony Blair

back to work.

The fact that he was applauded so loudly and for so long by all his cabinet colleagues shows that the fight against his legacy is not won yet.

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Socialist Worker is your paper. It's the alternative voice, the voice of socialism and struggle.

Whether it's nurses protesting against underfunding, asylum seekers on hunger strike against their deportation, campaigns against the Bin Tax or support for the Iraqi resistance and opposition to the US use of the Shannon 'Wargort', Socialist Worker is giving the real opinions, the real voice of those movements.

The lack of a political alternative both North and South to oppose privatisation, war and racism has never been more obvious.

Socialist Worker is committed to building such a new alternative left voice, building support for the movements from below, and building toward a world without capitalism, the other world that we believe is possible and more necessary in 2005 than ever before.

Currently Socialist Worker is a completely voluntary production. We get no advertising finance and it is funded completely by sales.

In order to fulfil the potential that exists in this current period, and build support for the projects outlined above we need a higher quality paper and ultimately much higher sales.

Central to this will be raising the finance to cover a salary for a person to work full-time on the paper.

With this in mind we appeal to you to take out a subscription for Socialist Worker, donate whatever sum of money (large or small) to the paper fund, and if possible take extra copies of the paper to sell to work colleagues, friends, class-mates etc.

It's your paper; together we can make another world possible.

COMMENT

Eamonn McCann

NI parties sing from the same hymn sheet

Commentators are always complaining about Northern parties not being able to agree with one another. But the documents they published last month show a rare degree of unanimity.

The documents, on economic policy, were submitted to the Preparation for Government (PFG) Committee of the "Shadow" Assembly at Stormont. All our main parties focused on the need for any incoming Executive to serve the interests of business.

The DUP and Sinn Fein differed as to whether economic policy should be seen in a UK or an all-Ireland context. But that apart, there was little to distinguish them. Sinn Fein, taking an all-Ireland approach, wants harmonisation of corporation tax across the island. The DUP, seeing the Republic as a rival, wants an end to the "unfairness" whereby the South has lower corporation tax. They take different approaches but arrive at the same point.

On the general economic stance of an incoming Executive, the DUP says: "Northern Ireland needs a serious dose of introspection within its Government departments vis-a-vis their relationship with the business community and the promotion of a genuine partnership between Government and business with Government taking on the role of facilitating entrepreneurial opportunity". Says Sinn Fein: "We should say yes to goal driven tax incentives which increase R&D activity, aid new product and process innovation, enhance worker training and development, help our entrepreneurs break into new markets and aid environmental improvements."

The statements could be interchanged. Both would fit comfortably into a policy statement from the Confederation of British Industry in the North or an election appeal for the Progressive Democrats.

The documents are not formal party policy statements. But they were drawn up by Assembly members and formally submitted to a sub-group of the PFG Committee. They can be taken as indicating the broad outline of each party's thinking.

Perhaps the most startling aspect of the documents is that only one of the four parties emerges from them as Left-of-centre - the SDLP. This is not to say that the SDLP comes across as a Left-wing party, but that, on this evidence, it's to the Left of the Unionist parties and Sinn Fein.

The SDLP suggests a Programme for Government based on "working with unions, business and the voluntary sector on a new basis of real social partnership. The Government, the Public Sector, Trade Unions, Voluntary Sector and Public Representatives should combine in a working relationship."

Neither Sinn Fein nor either of the Unionist parties appears to envisage any role for trade unions or the voluntary sector in the formation of economic policy. Neither Sinn Fein nor the DUP even mentions the existence of trade unions.

The SDLP is the only party of the four to express opposition to privatisation and water charges, pledging to "oppose the proposal to turn the Water Service into a Government-owned Company (GoCo) as this would be a step towards privatisation."

It calls for "new, "not-for-profit" model for investment...in public services" and suggests that "income derived (might provide) a civic dividend for more hard-pressed communities."

This is centre-Left stuff, in line with the election pitch of Pat Rabbitte's Labour Party. So, to say that the SDLP stands to the Left of Unionism/Sinn Fein is not to say much. But it's worth noting all the same. And worth noting, too, that there has been no public dissent from the documents by members of the Ulster Unionist Party, the DUP or Sinn Fein.

SUPPORT THE RAYTHEON 9

WE SAY: 'RESISTING WAR CRIMES IS NOT A CRIME'



The Raytheon Nine outside the court in August

By Colm Bryce,
of the Raytheon 9

The Derry Anti-War Coalition members who occupied and decommissioned the Raytheon office on 9 August, were determined to close the arms manufacturer and force it out of Derry.

The action was discussed, debated and agreed at two packed public meetings in the week beforehand. Closing Raytheon remains our central demand.

Although we face serious charges under the Terrorism Act and possible jail sentences, we will enter the court, not as the accused but as the accusers, to call Raytheon to account for the war crimes it has committed.

In the last three days of the recent conflict, 100,000 lethal cluster bombs were dropped on the villages and fields of Southern Lebanon by the Israeli military. Already, these grotesque weapons have killed at least 13 people and wounded 40 more.

The cluster bombs, the missiles that open in mid-air to scatter them and the computer software that guides them, are all designed and built by Raytheon, the Boston-based weapons corporation.

So are the huge, 'bunker buster' bombs dropped on apartment blocks in Southern Beirut.

So are the Tomahawk, Sidewinder and

Javelin missiles and countless other weapons of mass destruction used daily in Afghanistan and Iraq.

People in Derry have been protesting since 1999 about Raytheon setting up an office in our city, at the scandal of being told that this was a benefit of the peace process.

It kept coming up as a key question during the mass street protests we had against the Iraq war, 'What can we do about Raytheon?' 'How do we increase the pressure on them to close, to break that connection between Derry and the war?'

In April 2003, the day after a Raytheon bomb had exploded in a market square in Baghdad (Robert Fisk in The Independent had found part of the bomb fuselage with Raytheon's name on it), we had protested at the Springtown office. Some of us got inside, read out Fisk's article, and held a peaceful sit-in until we were removed by the police.

In January 2004, Derry City Council, reeling from embarrassment at John Hume's role in bringing Raytheon here, was forced to pass a motion against the arms trade.

The motion states: '...Derry City Council acknowledges that Raytheon's core business is the arms trade. ...

'In particular we declare our opposition to the development or production of weapons or any software whose end use

is a military application and if that is shown to be the case at Raytheon in Derry then Council will declare the firm to be unwelcome here.'

Raytheon ignored all requests to explain their work and refused to attend any public meeting or any private meeting that included members of the Foyle Ethical Investment Campaign.

But new evidence emerged last week that is set to create a political storm in Derry. Documents obtained by the Belfast Telegraph under the Freedom of Information Act, confirm that since early 2005 Raytheon in Derry has been working on a multi-million pound contract for the British Ministry of Defence, called the 'Joint Effects Tactical Targeting System' (JETTS).

Raytheon described the aim of JETTS as being 'to improve the operational capability in the Battlespace by enhancing the combat effects of tempo, simultaneity, surprise, tactical agility, lethality and survivability, all whilst reducing fratricide.'

The Derry Anti-War Coalition has now written to the Council to ask for an urgent meeting at which the new evidence can be presented and to demand that the Council act on their promises.

What you can do to support the Raytheon 9

The Derry Anti-War Coalition is affiliated to the Stop the War Coalition in Britain and the Irish Anti-War Movement. We urge all anti-war groups, trade unions and individuals to raise the case of the Raytheon 9.

Sign the statement of support

An international statement has been launched, demanding the dropping of the charges against the Raytheon 9. It has already been signed by Noam Chomsky, Christy Moore, Tony Benn, Mark Thomas, Lindsay German (Stop the War Coalition), Richard Boyd

Barrett (Irish Anti-War Movement), Jeffrey St Clair (Counterpunch magazine), George Galloway MP, The Samidoun Network in Lebanon, Jimmy Kelly (President ATGWU), Salma Yaqoob (Respect councillor Birmingham), Terry Eagleton, Daniel Bensaïd and many others

We have also launched an 'In My Name' statement of support for all members and supporters of the action on August 9 to sign. You can view both statements at www.raytheon9.org

To add your name to the statements email resistderry@aol.com

Pass the following resolution in your union branch

This branch, notes the involvement of US-based arms multinational Raytheon in supplying many of the weapons of mass destruction used in the illegal wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon.

We welcome and support the action taken by member of the Derry Anti-War Coalition on 9 August in occupying and decommissioning the Raytheon offices in Derry, in protest at Raytheon's complicity in war crimes. This branch calls for the

dropping of all charges against the Raytheon 9 and pledges its support for their defence campaign.

Raise money for the defence campaign

The trail of the Raytheon 9 will involve high legal costs. Please rush donations to Derry Anti War Coalition, Halifax Building Society, Derry. Sort Code 11-09-68 Account Number 00178353

If you would like to invite a speaker from the campaign to address your meeting or fundraiser contact 0044 7771 781958 or email resistderry@aol.com.

THAILAND COUP

Resisting the military's assault on democracy

by GILES JI UNGPAKORN in Bangkok, Thailand

A MILITARY junta in Thailand staged a coup and overthrew the democratically elected prime minister Taksin Shinawatt on the evening of Tuesday 19 September.

In the tradition of all Thai military coups for the last 60 years, the dictatorship claimed to have staged the coup in order to "reform politics" and "protect democracy", and that it had "no interest in taking personal power".

It claimed it would "return power to the people as soon as possible". Past experience shows that military dictatorships cannot be trusted.

The last coup in Thailand occurred in 1991 with the same excuses and promises.

The military was only removed from power one year later after bloody clashes with thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators.

The junta has sought and received support from Thailand's monarchy. This underlines the anti-democratic nature of the monarchy.

The official name of the junta is "the Reform Committee in the Democratic System with a Monarchy as Head of State".

This is reminiscent of the doublespeak in George Orwell's novel 1984. It is read out in full every time the junta is referred to by the media.

"Democracy" means military dictatorship and "reform" means tearing up the 1997 constitution, abolishing parliament and independent bodies, and declaring martial law.

Opposition

Taksin's picture is banned from TV. When the BBC World Service shows his image advertisements appear on screen.

Contrary to the officially massaged images of the public welcoming the coup or pictures of happy foreign tourists posing for photos in front of tanks, an opposition movement has begun to organise.

Only 24 hours after the coup a group of students and young activists met to form the 19 September Network Against

the Coup. The encouraging thing about this network is its youth.

For years older activists have complained about how young people were passive.

Today, while the youth are defiant against the dictatorship, many of the old activists are backing the military.

The anti-coup network agreed to stage a protest in defiance of martial law on the evening of Friday of last week in the centre of Bangkok, Thailand's capital.

The protest was announced by word of mouth and e-mails. Despite the fact that our website was closed down, there was widespread knowledge of the protest among activists.

Dictatorship

It attracted huge interest from the foreign and local press and a group of supporters was mobilised to defend those taking part.

The 19 September Network Against the Coup made it clear that we were opponents of the Taksin government, but that we felt that a coup was not the answer to the problems of Thai society.

Democracy is not protected by coups and political and social reform cannot take place in a climate of dictatorship.

We have three demands—the military should immediately withdraw from politics, the 1997 constitution should be immediately restored and there must be immediate restoration of basic democratic rights, including a free media.

The military decided not to make arrests. Although the military-controlled TV largely ignored the protest, the newspapers carried the story.

We have put down a marker for democracy and we are determined to continue our fight.

Next month we will be organising a Thai Social Forum.

This will be an incredibly important event to discuss the struggle for democracy and social reform.

Giles Ji Ungpakorn is a member of the Peoples Coalition Party, Turn Left newspaper and Workers' Democracy



Troops have taken control of Thailand's streets as part of the coup

A left movement is needed to solve problems

THE PEOPLE'S movement was not dormant during the Taksin government. Some 200,000 workers took action against electricity privatisation in 2004. This helped to delay privatisation plans.

Some 10,000 people also protested against a free trade agreement with the US. Despite these protests, Taksin's government retained strong support among the poor because there is no credible left alternative.

Towards the end of last year a large protest movement rose up against the government.

This was a right wing movement led by media tycoon Sondhi Limthongkul—not to be confused with General Sondhi who is now the head of the junta.

It criticised government corruption and called for "power to be returned to the king".

Unfortunately, the more conservative sections of the people's movement decided to join forces with the right, creating the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD).

They saw Sondhi's protests as a way to oust Taksin because they believed that the people's movement was too weak to act independently. Government corruption remained the main focus of PAD.

Human rights abuses, especially in the south where there is a separatist insurgency, and neo-liberalism were largely ignored. The protesters also wore yellow "royal" shirts supporting the king.

Many progressive sections of the people's movement were very unhappy about this and refused to take part in PAD's mobilisations.

As the anti-government

protests by PAD grew stronger, Taksin dissolved parliament and called an election in April this year.

PAD and the opposition claimed that this was undemocratic and boycotted the election.

It became a referendum on the government. Some 16 million people voted for Thai Rak Thai, Taksin's party—57 percent of the votes—and ten million abstained.

However, the courts annulled the election after claims that there were irregularities. There is little evidence to support this.

There is a fundamental political argument at the centre of the current crisis.

The right, supported by many in the people's movement, believe that Taksin cheated in the election and that he "tricked the ignorant rural poor".

This is a convenient justification for ignoring the wishes of 16 million people.

This position leads to support for the military coup.

We on the left have always opposed Taksin, especially for his human rights abuses and neo-liberal policies.

But a military coup that tears up the constitution and tramples on basic democratic rights is not the answer.

We need an alternative party, which campaigns for a welfare state, progressive taxation and opposition to neo-liberalism.

The southern problem should be solved through peaceful political means.

This should include the right of the southern population's right to self-determination.

There is a pressing need for the defence of democracy and a strengthening of the people's movement.

The right wants to destroy policies that aid Thailand's poorest people

THE PRESENT crisis has roots that go back to the overthrow of the last military dictatorship in 1992 and the economic crisis that hit the region in 1997.

The 1992 victory against the military was the driving force for a new constitution, which appeared in 1997.

This constitution expanded rights, which were used to legitimise many struggles. Yet the constitution was also heavily influenced by right wing liberal politics.

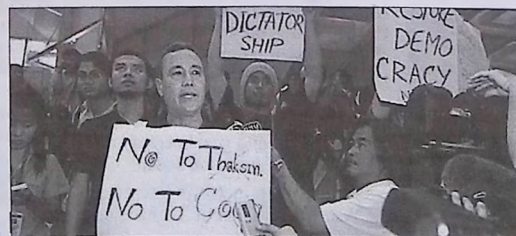
Workers and peasants were excluded from standing for parliament by regulations stating that all candidates must have university degrees. The constitution supported

the free market and gave advantages to large political parties. This helped Taksin Shinawatt's Thai Rak Thai party dominate parliament.

Taksin, a mobile phone and media tycoon, founded the Thai Rak Thai party soon after the economic crisis of 1997.

The Democrats, now the main opposition party, came to power in the wake of the crisis. It used taxes paid by the poor to prop up the financial system. The banks were in crisis due to wild speculation by the rich. In 2001 Thai Rak Thai won its first election.

The party was unique in recent Thai politics in that it spent considerable time developing policies.



Thai Rak Thai was a populist party which offered pro-poor policies. It pumped money into local projects.

But Thai Rak Thai also pursued neo-liberal policies such as privatisation, supported free trade agreements and opposed progressive taxation on the rich.

The poor, who form the vast majority of the Thai electorate, voted enthusiastically for the party's two flagship policies.

These were a universal healthcare scheme—the first ever in Thailand—and a one million baht (£14,000) fund loaned to each village to encourage small businesses.

Thai Rak Thai won a second term of office with an overall majority in parliament in 2005.

The Democrats have attacked the reforms and supported the coup in the hope that it will destroy Thai Rak Thai.

As well as pursuing neo-liberalism, during Thai Rak Thai's first term of office it waged a "war on drugs" in which over 3,000 people were shot without coming to trial.

In the three most southern provinces it waged a campaign of violence against the Muslim Malay-speaking population.

On 25 October 2004, 90 young men, who had attended a peaceful demonstration, were murdered at Tak Bai. Police and

army units forced protesters to lie down.

Their hands were tied behind their backs and they were then piled into open army trucks, one on top of the other.

After hours of transportation in the heat, many were dead on arrival at an army camp.

The Taksin government was also responsible for the murder of defence lawyer Somchai Nilapaichit, who was defending people from the south.

Taksin and his cronies have also avoided paying tax. Together they netted 70 billion baht (£1 billion) from the sale of their mobile phone company and did not pay a single baht in tax.

War is an election

By Roger Cole

Chair, Peace & Neutrality Alliance

The Stop Bush Campaign has been re-established in order to make the war and Irish participation in that war an election issue.

The Stop Bush Campaign was the coalition of the Peace & Neutrality Alliance, the Irish Anti War Movement and the NGOPA which organised the massive demonstration in Dublin on the 15 February 2003 against the war in Iraq and the use of Shannon Airport as a pit stop for US troops

The sustained campaign by the various peace groups against the war has had a major impact on the use of Shannon Airport by Bush's army.

The decision of one of the major carriers to transfer to Leipzig was a major victory for the entire Irish peace movement and not just those involved in the SBC. Nevertheless, the willingness of the Ahern led FF/PD Government to destroy Irish neutrality and integrate Ireland into the imperialist alliance led by President George Bush remains intact. We now need to make the war and the use of Shannon in that war an election issue. We need to seek the removal of the Ahern FF/PD Government from power and their replacement by a Government led by a Taoiseach committed to ending the use of Shannon Airport in the war.

The SBC now needs to actively start establishing groups in every Dáil and Westminster constituency. These groups need to start leafleting and knocking on the doors of every house in every constituency. We need to build up links with all the political parties, independents and NGOs in every constituency that took part in the broad anti-war alliance, including those not affiliated to those that now constitute the SBC, in order to maximize co-ordination. We need to seek meetings with all parties and independents seeking election to the Dáil for an assurance that they will not support a Government that would allow the continuation of the use of Shannon in the Iraq war or any other imperialist war, and that they would include that pledge in their election literature.

Our success depends on our capacity to ensure that when candidates knock on doors seeking votes that the people ask them about the issue and what their stance should be.

We need to produce a single clear

'We need to produce a single clear message on posters and leaflets saying: War is an election issue: US military out of Shannon'

message on posters and leaflets saying: WAR IS AN ELECTION ISSUE - US MILITARY OUT OF SHANNON.

We need to establish a media committee with the sole function of seeking meetings with journalists in order to put our case directly to them. We know that the owners of corporate media backs the destruction of Irish neutrality and Bush's war, but we should never give up on putting our case, and there is already ample evidence to support it. A recent Irish Times/MRBI survey showed that the main concern of the 50 plus age group, that makes up 25% of the electorate, is the conduct of the war by Bush and his allies. A Sunday Tribune poll showed over 70% of the Irish people believed Bush's war had made the world a more dangerous place, and in a recent Ireland.com poll, 52% of the respondents believed the war would be an issue in the election.

We need to maximize our use of our web sites and e-mail database systems in order to contact people directly. In time the web will weaken the power of the corporate media and supporters of imperialist war and will be a key tool in creating a global democratic society. While we are some way from doing so, by pooling and co-ordinating our web resources we can make a real and powerful impact on the election.

We need to link the inevitable cut backs in health, housing and education with the demand for increased expenditure on the military as we are dragged deeper and deeper into this war.

We need to organise national and local fundraising events. We cannot hope to match the money raised by Ahern and the rest of the imperialist political leaders in Ireland, but a Finance Committee charged with raising funds needs to be a key component of the SBC.

While the central core of this article is the need for the Irish peace movement to reconnect with the people by door to door campaigning, as we have seen, demonstrations etc, have had an impact, and a major rally outside the next FF party conference should be a key part of our campaign.

Finally, the Pentagon has declared this war is going to be a "long war", and they are right. This election will be just another battle between those us who believe in justice and democracy and those that support war and Imperialism.

It will not end even if we achieve our immediate objective of terminating the use of Shannon in this war. We are simply carrying the torch to the next generation. All Ahern/Bush/Blair and their supporters offer is war and inevitable defeat. We offer peace and justice. There is no middle ground.

Roger Cole is Chair of the Peace & Neutrality Alliance
www.pana.ie
Tel. 087-2611597



The crisis of imperialism and th

By Kevin Wingfield

Five years ago, 9/11 provided the pretext for the US neo-cons to announce an endless 'War on Terrorism', and to put into action their programme to re-shape the Middle East and central Asia. Central to this project was regime change: installing pro-western governments in the hydro-carbon-rich region. The intention was that of using military might to control key supplies of oil and gas, keeping a step ahead of China and Japan.

The first step in this project was the Western invasion of Afghanistan.

Despite huge opposition among populations, culminating in the 15 February 2003 monster protests against war around the world, the US Congress gave unstinting backing to Bush's war plans. Blair was able to dragoon the British Labour Party into supporting the UK's participation in the invasion of Iraq. The warmongers were riding high

and the anti-war movement was declared a busted flush. After a few weeks a strutting Bush announced 'mission accomplished' in Iraq and set his sites on Iran.

How different things look now.

The theory was that by employing hugely destructive air power but few ground troops, regimes could be defeated in lightning attacks, compliant US assets installed, democracy declared and the whole show moved on to the next target. But the theory didn't work.

In Afghanistan, a country that had defeated British and Russian occupation, the US relied heavily on the warlords of the ethnically based Northern Alliance. The US installed CIA agent Hamid Karzai to preside over a war weary and cynical population. But the failure of the new government to deal with the destruction of homes, its corruption, and that of the NGOs imported into the country, have set the population fighting again.

NATO has 20,000 troops in a country of 25 million. NATO commanders on the ground now say that they cannot hold on without substantial reinforcements, which no country except Britain is willing to provide. Resistance fighters pin down British troops across the country. Karzai's government is powerless. A widely expected Taliban uprising in the Southern city of Kandahar would see huge swathes of the country pass into their control.

In Iraq, the biggest front to date, the US is fighting and losing a counter-insurgency war against the disparate collection of guerrilla groups that sprang up within months of the invasion in March 2003.

The Chief of Intelligence of the US Marine Corps recently filed a report on the situation in the key western province of Anbar. One army officer summarised it as saying: 'we haven't been defeated militarily but we have been defeated politically, and that's where wars are won and lost.'

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To contain the resistance the US occupation adopted a strategy of divide and rule in Iraq, allying itself to the political representatives of the Shia Muslim majority, who were oppressed under Saddam Hussein. This has unleashed vicious sectarian killing among Shia and Sunni Muslims that could cause Iraq to disintegrate.

This US strategy has also had the consequence of strengthening neighbouring Iran. The Islamist regime in Iran has close links with the Shia politicians who dominate the US's client regime in Iraq.

Iran has been the number one enemy of the US in the Middle East ever since the 1979 revolution that overthrew the Shah. In an attempt to shift the regional balance of forces back in their favour, leading figures in the Bush administration have been pressing for 'regime change' in Iran.

Part of the build up to an attack on Iran was the green light the US gave Israel to attack Lebanon. Washington believed that Israel

would destroy Iran's ally, Hizbollah, paving the way for an assault on Iran. The fierce resistance of Hizbollah denied Israel the easy victory it expected.

The political fall-out from the failure of Bush's military strategy in the face of resistance in Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon and the stubborn opposition of the worldwide anti war movement has created a crisis for imperialism.

Governments in Spain and Italy, once part of the 'Coalition of Willing', were overturned at the polls and forced out of Iraq. Blair is holed beneath the water line and Bush's regime itself is in crisis. Bush's former Chief of Staff has revealed how twice he unsuccessfully demanded Bush sack Donald Rumsfeld, before himself resigning. Even the International Atomic Energy Authority has upset US plans by declaring that the US Congressional report on Iran's nuclear programme which accused Lebanon of processing weapons

grade material was based on lies.

Bush's ratings in the polls are falling and Republicans fear defeat in the mid-term elections later in the year.

Here in Ireland the anti-war sentiment is high. A survey in the Irish Times earlier in the summer reported that among over 55 year olds, the war is the biggest single issue concerning them. This and the continued use of Irish airspace and Shannon airport by US troops, makes the punishing of politicians at the election due in the next nine months a realisable and important tactic of the anti-war movement here.

The anti-war movement has not stopped the wars and occupations but it has helped create a political crisis for imperialism and its allies.

Kevin Wingfield is on the Steering Committee of the Irish Anti War Movement. He writes in a personal capacity www.irishantiwar.org

People's uprising in Oaxaca Mexico



Fighting for their rights in Oaxaca

By Antonio Jose

The people of the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, have risen in rebellion against a corrupt and murderous Governor.

They have held control of their state for more than 100 days creating the APPO (popular people's assembly in its Spanish initials), the assembly that effectively governs the state.

Oaxaca lies on the southwestern pacific coast of Mexico and has a population of 3.5 million people, 70% of whom are indigenous. Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas are the three poorest states in Mexico. These mainly impoverished and indigenous states are also the most corrupt and the richest in natural resources.

On May the 15th this year 70,000 teachers went on their annual strike demanding better pay and more state funding for improved school facilities (most state funding is siphoned off into the pockets of corrupt state officials). After a seven-day negotiation between the teachers and the state governor the talks collapsed.

In response to the failed negotiations 50 000 teachers occupied the Zocalo (the main square) of the historic state capital Oaxaca; they built an encampment and built barricades around the square. During three-and-a-half weeks of constant protests and two mega-marches of a 100000 people, opposition to the hated governor Ulises Ortiz grew; many other groups with grievances joined the protest.

Ulises Ortiz came to power as governor on the 1 December 2003 and since then has generated much hatred through his use of kidnapping, torture, baseless jailing and murder to crush anyone

opposing the corrupt and oppressive state-appointed municipal administration.

At dawn on the 14 June, Ulises ordered the state police to attack the encampment in order to crush the protest. The police moved on the encampment with teargas shot from grenade launchers and dropped from the air by a helicopter. The police destroyed the encampment, indiscriminately beating and shooting at the protesters. The protesters fought back bravely with sticks, machetes and with batons and shields taken from the police. After four hours of fighting they took back the square.

None of the protesters had firearms or Molotov cocktails, and the teachers' protest earned the admiration of the people in the state for not submitting to the state's repressive violence.

With the memory of the state's violent repression in Atenco earlier in the year fresh in the minds of the Mexican people, there were mass uprisings throughout the Oaxacan state, and civil organizations throughout Mexico announced their solidarity with the teachers' rebellion.

On 16 June 400 000 people marched in Oaxaca city all shouting 'Ulises out!' This became the official demand of the teachers' strike and of all the people of Oaxaca.

That day the APPO was created and the first assembly was held and declared itself the supreme authority in Oaxaca, asserting the illegitimacy of the entire political structure of the governing party's terrorist controlled state that has ruled Oaxaca for 80 years.

The APPO began

consolidating the defence of the Zocalo and other encampments, commandeering buses and state vehicles to strengthen the barricades against future attacks and for transport. The first meeting of the APPO was attended by 170 people representing 85 organisations; every citizen in Oaxaca was invited, all agreeing that

Ulises Ruiz Ortiz must go.

On 26 July, the APPO occupied all government buildings and shut down all branches of government. Ulises went into hidden exile, while lobbying the Mexican government for intervention.

There has been a continuing campaign of terror against the uprising, being waged by Ulises' paramilitaries. State thugs routinely beat and intimidate activists with reported assassinations, disappearances and torture. On 7 August, Ariosto Lopez, the Chief of Police, opened fire on a student protest from the back of a motorbike; the people repelled the police with rocks. That night, gunmen assassinated Marcos Garcia Tapia, a University professor, while he was in his car. Paramilitaries have succeeded in destroying radio equipment and antennas but the people have regained control of eight radio stations in Oaxaca.

Many sectors of Mexican society have mobilized for a revolution from below. The 'other campaign' in Chiapas, the peasants of Atenco and the APPO in Oaxaca are all now turning their attention on Chapultepec and taking advantage of the electoral crisis among the elite to reject impositions from above and declare themselves in rebellion.

1956: THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION



By Conor Kostick

Recent demonstrations against the corruption and duplicity of Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany Hungary have evoked the memory of the 1956 revolution. But the conservative and far-right parties who have tried to capitalise on the protests are insulting the memory of those who rose up fifty years ago.

On 23 October 1956 a crowd of about 100,000 gathered in Budapest. They were protesting against the harsh regime of Ernő Gerő and the Hungarian Communist Party. The march was peaceful and good-humoured. 'Everyone was happy and excited,' wrote one eye-witness, 'they were smiling and on all sides I heard expressions of approval. Neither before or since have I seen Budapest so happy.'

The crowds overflowed Bem Square, where a prominent writer was reading out a set of demands. They included free elections; the end of compulsory collectivisation of land; improvements in how workplaces were run and the right of Hungary to deal with the USSR as an equal.

These demands, and the size of the crowd, reflected the bitterness in Hungarian society that the ending of the Second World War had not brought liberation, but a subordination of the country to the USSR.

For ten years Russia had been draining Hungary of wealth; sometimes directly moving plant and machinery out of the country, more often setting up joint enterprises that shifted profits to the USSR. The consequence for workers and peasants was a drop in living standards to the point where starvation was a real threat to thousands. By 1956 Stalinist rhetoric about socialism was understood by all Hungarians to be a veil over crude exploitation.

Nor was the injustice of the regime simply economic. The Hungarian Communist Party copied its master in the forms of repression. The AVH, the hated secret police, conducted the vilest tortures on political dissidents. Approximately 100,000 people were in

Russian tanks move in to crush the Revolution: These Russian soldiers defected to the Revolution. Inset: Stalin's statue toppled.



prison in 1956.

The crowds that October night were not afraid. Their own army seemed to be sympathetic to the protests, with passing trucks of soldiers waving to the demonstrators.

By early evening the speeches were over, but no one wanted to go home, in fact the crowds grew as workers left the factories to join in. Ernő Gerő provided them with a reason to stay. He came on the radio and gave a short speech, which, far from offering any concessions, slandered the demonstrators. Thousands went to the radio station to demand a spokesperson be allowed to reply to Gerő.

Five hundred AVH men guarded the radio station, and when tear gas failed to disperse the crowds, those at the doorway resorted to opening fire with a machine gun. Despite the sudden shock of gunfire and sixteen deaths, the demonstrators rallied. The nearest AVH were overwhelmed, their guns seized and turned on the rest of the police who were now pouring down fire onto the crowds from the windows of the radio station.

The revolution was underway. Word quickly spread throughout the city. A general strike was proclaimed and embraced by the entire workforce. While the government imposed martial law, students and workers put up barricades and searched for weapons. The Hungarian army wavered, many soldiers joined the people, others gave away their guns to the demonstrators.

Thousands of people spent the early hours of Wednesday morning debating, arguing: what should they do to protect themselves? Was it true that Ernő Gerő had gone? How far could the trust the promises of the new government? A revolutionary council of workers and students was formed in Budapest and remained in permanent session to direct events.

Former premier Imre Nagy came on the radio, appealing for fighting to end and promising a return to the more lenient regime of 1953. This did not satisfy the risen population. They sensed the opportunity to achieve far, far, more. Complete freedom from the

USSR, along with workers' control of the factories and peasants' control of the land were now the key demands.

In any case, the nascent conflict between Nagy and the people suddenly became a secondary one, due to an onslaught by the forces of the USSR. Tanks poured into Budapest, determined to quell the uprising. But astonishingly, the lightly armed population brought the invasion to a halt. Young children would run through the streets, laying out plates that had been painted grey to make them look like land mines. When a cautious tank stopped to avoid them, a rain of petrol bombs would pour down on the vehicle. Such home made devices proved to be highly effective. More ominously for the Communist authorities, there were signs of fraternisation between the Russian tanks and the risen people.

By 31 October the Russian units in and near Budapest were demoralised and withdrawn. The revolution had won a breathing space. In the city itself, there was an uneasy political tension between the revolutionary committees and the reshuffled government. This dual power was not given the chance to resolve itself, although the strength of the workers' committees and growing disillusionment with Nagy suggests that the government was likely to be the loser.

Outside of Budapest the country was completely under the authority of Revolutionary Councils. These bodies of workers, peasants and students were elected, accountable, and filled with a fervent energy. The rooms of the buildings they commandeered were full of uproar, laughter, swearing, and shouting. All the lorries that could be spared were sent, full of food, to Budapest.

Everywhere the same demands emerged: withdrawal of Russian troops; workers' committees to run the factories; immediate pay rises; increase in pensions; a redistribution of land. Back in the 1950s the Communist Parties around the world were told that the uprising was the work of imperialists and fascists, many of them spread the lie. What is remarkable about the

Hungarian revolution, however, is how swiftly the working class had moved to take centre stage and far from looking to the West, they were striving towards independent working class control of society and freedom for all.

In fact the leaders of the West were alarmed by the radicalism of the upsurge. Fighting the Cold War did not mean supporting revolution. As US President Eisenhower put it at the time, 'we have never urged or argued for any kind of armed revolt. The US does not now and never has advocated armed rebellion by an undefended people.'

The tragedy of the Hungarian revolution was that it took place at a time when the USSR was still powerful enough to occupy and crush an entire country. Although the first attempt to quell the uprising had been defeated, on Sunday 4 November an overwhelming force of Russian tanks stormed into Budapest and wreaked massive destruction on the city.

The people fought bravely, extraordinarily bravely. In three days of fighting, some 20,000 people wielding small arms and petrol bombs lost their lives. In the country, especially in the mining districts, the fighting went on for a month. But military victory for the army of the USSR meant that a conservative communist government could be installed under Janos Kadar. Nagy, despite his relatively conservative role in the events was executed, so that he would not be a symbol for further revolts.

Passive resistance and strikes continued for months after the Russian invasion, the last independent workers' council was not dissolved for a year later. Nor had the revolution been in vain.

By their revolutionary deeds the Hungarian working class delivered a decisive blow to Stalinism. Never again would Communist claims to have achieved socialism be taken seriously. Moreover, the belief that the Communist regimes were so powerful that revolt was impossible was shattered by one of the most enduring images of the Hungarian Revolution: that of a giant metal statue of Stalin lying in the dust.

A revolutionary council of workers and students was formed in Budapest and remained in permanent session to direct events

COMMENT

Eamonn McCann

Pope joins chorus of Islamophobia



Pope Benedict: Regensburg speech

The pope has been at pains over the past few weeks to insist that he holds Islam in high respect. But he hasn't withdrawn a word of his rant at Regensburg on September 12th.

The real significance of his Regensburg remarks lay in the extent to which they harmonised with the propaganda line of Bush and Blair. Nor can it be entirely coincidental that he delivered his message so close to the anniversary of September 11th.

The pope has previous in this regard. In the immediate aftermath of September 11th, the then Cardinal Ratzinger declared on Vatican Radio: "It is true that the history of Islam...contains a tendency to violence, but there are other aspects, too: a real openness to the will of God. It is thus important to help the positive line...to prevail and to have sufficient strength to win out over the other tendency."

Compare that with Tony Blair's speech in Los Angeles on August 1st: "What is happening today out in the Middle East, in Afghanistan and beyond is...in part a struggle between what I will call Reactionary Islam and Moderate, Mainstream Islam. We want Moderate, Mainstream Islam to triumph over Reactionary Islam."

Blair argued that the conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon were part of "the wider struggle for the soul of the region," a contest "about the values which will shape our future."

Iraq correspondent Patrick Cockburn commented: "I only hope al Qaeda, Hezbollah or Hamas do not translate (Blair's) speech into Arabic, since every paranoid paragraph confirms their claim that they are battling a western crusade against Islam."

The same can be said of Benedict's remarks on September 12th.

This is the reason many Muslims around the world were outraged. It wasn't irrational sensitivity. It had to do with the war.

Benedict's specific charge at Regensburg was that, historically, Islam has justified "spreading the faith through violence." The dishonesty of this was not unexpected, but was nonetheless breathtaking.

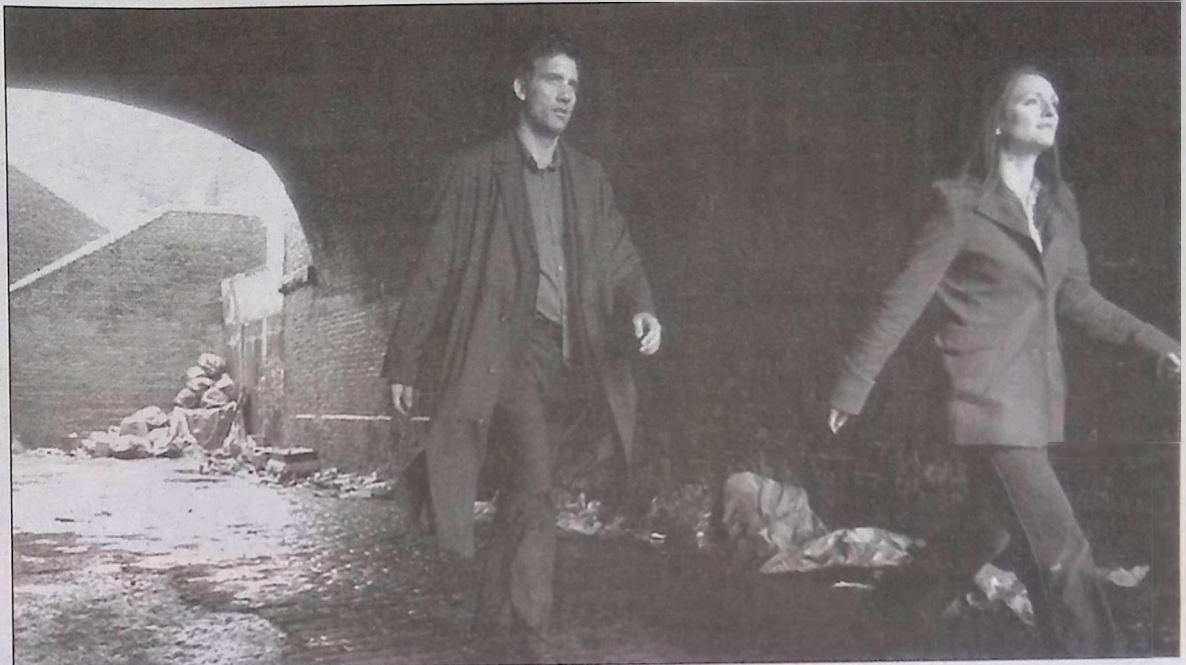
It was in the context of western invasion of what we now call the Middle East that the notion of suicide killers being rewarded by instant paradise was sucked from the thumb of a pope. Urban II, raising an army in 1099 to avenge the destruction of the Church of the Sepulchre in Jerusalem promised a Plenary Indulgence to any volunteer who died in battle. In 1198, Innocent III extended the offer to those who chose not to go to war themselves but who donated enough money to pay the costs of somebody who did. Not even the most demented imam in Islam has endorsed the idea of sponsoring suicide-bombers as a fundraiser.

Nor is the idea of killing for Christ in the hope of salvation a quaint relic from dusty history. There's scarcely been a western army gone into battle in the last millennium without some version of "Onward Christian Soldiers!" speeding them on their way. Cardinal Spellman of New York ceremonially blessed US warplanes before they set off to napalm villages in Vietnam, and greeted the aircrews as "warriors for Christ."

All religions are religions of peace, in that they can provide the personally troubled with an ersatz sense of ease. They are all, too, and more importantly as far as the rational world is concerned, ideologies of war, supplying a justification for slaughter transcending all earthly considerations. Institutionalised religions are always available to endorse the wars waged by their patrons. Benedict's speech was propaganda for war.

FILM

A bleak future where migrants are hounded



Theo (Clive Owen) and the leader of the Fish (Julianne Moore) in Children of Men based on a novel by PD James

Children of Men
Reviewed by Paddy Moen

'Children of Men' is the latest film by Mexican director Alfonso Cuarón. It is based on a novel by the author PD James, and features a plot which is simple but also terrifyingly believable. It is set in 2027, by which time no children have been born for 18 years due to universal infertility which science cannot explain.

The world has been reduced to chaos as a result, but Britain has fared better than most, and has become a beacon for desperate immigrants, referred to as 'fugees', from elsewhere.

The fascist government launches a huge crackdown on them, rounding up and caging them before they are deported. The opposition to the government is a resistance group called the Fish, formed by immigrants and their British supporters.

The scenes involving the immigrants bring to mind images from the so-called 'War on Terror'. Londoners are bombarded with messages telling them it is their duty to alert the authorities as to the whereabouts of immigrants, as the failure to do so could have dire consequences.

The film's central character is Theo, a disillusioned ex-activist played by Clive Owen. He is in a London café when news breaks that the youngest person in the world, an 18-year-old, has been murdered, leading to an outbreak of mass grief. As soon as he leaves the café, it blows up.

Theo is then kidnapped by the Fish and meets their leader, played by Julianne Moore, who turns out to be his former partner. The reason for the kidnap is that he knows a leading government figure, and can get a pass for a female immigrant to escape to the coast. This

is because the immigrant is miraculously pregnant, and the Fish want her to be sent to the 'Human Project', a benign institution that represents the only hope for mankind.

While the film is billed as science fiction, it has a very realistic look about it, due to the lack of special effects, handheld cameras being used throughout. The cinematography is highly impressive, with spectacular sequences of all-out urban warfare.

There are some welcome instances of black humour in the film which serve to alleviate the overriding bleakness, mostly involving Michael Caine, playing an ageing, pot-dealing hippy.

While it is not an uplifting film by any means, it is very thought-provoking and an interesting look at what the consequences for society could be if people suddenly faced the prospect of becoming extinct, and it is certainly worth checking out.

DUBLIN THEATRE FESTIVAL

Drama from around the world

By Paul O'Brien

The Dublin Theatre Festival runs through the first half of October and offers an opportunity to see the best of Irish and foreign Theatre.

The emphasis on international theatre is an important development because it exposes Irish theatre practitioners and audiences to the new techniques and forms in contemporary world theatre.

Any new production by the Belfast Company, Rough Magic, always finds an appreciative audience. This world premiere of *The Bonfire* by Rosemary Jenkinson is a comedy of violence that takes a satirical look at the loyalist community in Belfast as it prepares for the 12th of July.

Rough Magic has described it as "comedy of manners amongst the sectarian classes, where as the day approaches, UDA wannabes are drawn like moths to a flame." This is a hard-hitting must-see production at the Project Cube.

German Theatre influenced the experimental work of the Gate Theatre in Dublin in the 1930s and Sean O'Casey looked to the expressionist techniques of the German playwright Ernest Toller in an attempt to move beyond the realism of the Dublin

Rough Magic from Belfast performs *The Bonfire* by Rosemary Jenkinson

plays. Despite this, modern German theatre with its emphasis on the role of director has never been popular in Ireland.

Irish audiences will get a chance to become better acquainted with this tradition with two pared down productions of German theatre.

The Abbey Theatre celebrates the hundredth anniversary since Henrik Ibsen's death with a German production of Hedda Gabler, a provocative, unsparring

indictment of the bourgeois that still retains its capacity to shock. The Gaiety Theatre presents the Deutsches Theater Berlin production of Amelia Galloti, a powerful, haunting, Enlightenment tragedy of social conflict.

Both of these plays are in German with English subtitles, nevertheless, this is an opportunity to see two of the most distinctive and innovative theatre companies in recent times.

The Exonerated at the Liberty Hall Theatre is the story of six innocent survivors of death row in America, told in their own words. This is heart breaking documentary theatre that offers a powerful critique of the death penalty.

The Exonerated relates what it is like to be wrongly accused and convicted, what it is like to be on death row, and what it is like to get out and be in the world again. This is the original New York production with star guest performers to be announced.

The Abbey Theatre has always had a unique association with Tom Murphy and they present the Irish premier of the Alice Trilogy at the Peacock Theatre. This charts the life of Alice, a housewife lost her own wonderland as we follow her in a poignant study of a life half lived.

The Theatre Olympics is a diverse programme of special events, lectures, performances, forums and workshops designed to appeal to professionals and audiences alike, which has become a vital and essential component of the festival. Details of all these events and performances are available on the festival website: www.dublintheatrefestival.com.

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

BLUEBELL

Regeneration or De-generation?

Over 300 people attended a public meeting in the small west Dublin estate of Bluebell at the beginning of October to hear of plans for the re-generation of the area by Dublin City Council.

Bluebell is an old Dublin estate and lies between the canal and the Luas line on the Naas Road. Dublin City Council has earmarked the West Dublin area from the inner city to Drimnagh, Inchicore, Bluebell, Rialto and Ballyfermot for massive re-development.

The Bluebell plans are just in the drafting stages but already they have created massive anger among the local population.

The plans include

- Five storey apartment blocks at each end of the shops
- Eleven storey apartment blocks at Blackhorse Bridge
- Closing off Landsdowne valley park and building four storey blocks
- Eight storey apartment blocks on the grounds of Naistetra
- Apartment blocks along the space beside the canal
- Apartment blocks along Huband Road, Bluebell Avenue
- Massive building of houses in Carnac Park

It is easy to see why the local population are angry. The land around Bluebell is worth a fortune because of proximity to the city and the Luas line. Loss of green space is a huge issue for local people. So too the loss of privacy with apartment blocks to overlook housing estates and the total lack of preparation for the future population.

There are no plans for new schools. Already classes in the local school have to double up because of lack of facilities and the local St. Michaels in Inchicore is due to close.

There are no plans for a health centre, a dental clinic or car parking. Children are ignored in the plans. There is

an aspiration of building a skate board park, an urban farm and a playground. But these are subject to community groups owning them - What does this mean? Will local people have to pay for their maintenance and the employment of staff? This is not clear.

People in Bluebell who made submissions to the Council in the drafting of the plans have been completely ignored but there names have been printed in the draft document. There is huge anger because of this. As one local woman said at the meeting, "We are being associated with the plans but everything we said is ignored. This is not a re-generation programme - this is de-generation."

There was only one public consultation session before the plans were drawn up and that was not advertised properly. Local people believe the plans totally favour the developers and the builders. There is nothing in the plans for the refurbishment of the existing flats which are in a dreadful condition including dampness on the inside walls. Water pressure in the area has been a problem for years. There is nothing in the plans to deal with this.

The meeting was the first organised by community workers to allow local people voice their anger and objections to the plans. Another meeting with all local politicians invited will take place in two weeks. But as one woman said, "This is the very early stages in the council's plans. We have to look to other communities like Fatima and St. Michael's estate where people got together and forced the council to listen to their demands. We don't want to lose our sense of community here in Bluebell or our green spaces and we want democracy so we can influence what happens in our estate."

CHILDCARE

Labour Finglas crèche scandal

Like the rest of Ireland, the working class Dublin suburb of Finglas suffers a severe shortage of affordable crèche places. So the announcement by the Fingal ICTU Centre that it will close its Cardiffbridge Road crèche on the 15th December came as a big blow to the local community.

The closure of the crèche means the loss of 48 child places, as well as three full-time and three part time jobs. A further 11 CE places are threatened by the announcement.

Operating in an area of high deprivation, the community based crèche, which has been in operation for 12 years, has been a boon to the locality. Recently it received €100,000 government funding to move to its new premises. But the Board of the Unemployed Centre has decided that keeping it going is "too time-consuming".

Staff and parents are demanding the crèche be kept open until alternative management can be arranged.

The Board of Fingal ICTU centre has as its vice-chair local Labour councillor Mary Murphy. Officially Labour Party policy is to prioritise child care provision. But when staff and parents approached Pat Rabbitte he refused to comment. As one campaigner told Socialist



Cllr Mary Murphy

Worker, "Local Labour TD Róisín Shortall did say she would do what she could but so far has come up with nothing."

Parents of children using the crèche have expressed how they value its services. One mother commented, "My child has been very happy in the crèche, she has got friendly with the staff and other children. When I looked for an alternative I am told there is a waiting list of 90 in the area. Private crèches are just too expensive. If this closes I don't know what I will do."

Staff and parents are mounting a campaign to keep the crèche open with petitions and a planned protest at the Dublin City Council North West area meeting on Friday 20th October at Ballymun Civic Offices.

To contact the campaign telephone 086-3074060.

BIN TAX CAMPAIGN

Ballymun organises against non-collection



Photo: Frank Scalzo

Protest demo at Ballymun Civic Offices

Up to 150 local residents crowded into the Ballymun Axis centre in September to organise against non-collection of bins which had begun a few days earlier.

The meeting unanimously agreed to keep fighting the bin tax and to organise to safely dispose of refuse that the council refuses to collect.

It was agreed to organise street by street and two dozen volunteers from different areas agreed to be co-ordinators in their street helping their neighbours throw rubbish sacks in the back of the truck on bin days. The list of co-ordinators was then widely distributed in the area so that those finding their bin not emptied had someone to contact in their street for advice.

A well attended lunch time protest was held the following week outside the local council offices in Ballymun where volunteers agreed to meet regularly to review developments. In the longer term non-payers are likely to organise a mass dump of rubbish to highlight their opposition to the bin tax and the Council's non-collection policy.

Campaign co-ordinator Kevin Wingfield told Socialist Worker, "We were very pleased with the turnout at the meeting and the later protest. Feeling is running very high and the willingness of local people to organise themselves to deal with the fact that their rubbish is being left uncollected, shows the campaign here is very much alive and kicking."

To contact the campaign in Ballymun area phone 086-3074060

HEALTH CRISIS

Monaghan Hospital protestors heckle FF ministers

By Peadar O'Grady

On September 25th a huge protest of over 10,000 people engulfed the opening of the Monaghan town by-pass road by FF Minister Pat 'the cope' Gallagher.

Some protestors even threw clods of soil at Dail Ceann Comhairle Dr Rory O'Hanlon (FF).

O'Hanlon is notorious as the instigator of massive Health Service cutbacks in the 80s.

Workplaces closed so workers could attend and the protestors accounted for more than one in five of the entire population of Monaghan.

In August and September meetings were held all over Monaghan county with a final meeting of well over 2,000 meeting in Monaghan Town on

September 13th.

The people of Monaghan are incensed by the biased report into the tragic death of Pat Joe Walsh and a recent report by a UK hired gun, 'Teamwork Management', who refused to consult with local people or health staff.

Mr Walsh bled to death because emergency surgery had been closed down in Monaghan Hospital.

The report blames staff rather than HSE policy for Mr Walsh's death. Health Service Executive (HSE) Chief Brendan Drumm has backed a new 'Action Plan' based on these reports saying all acute inpatient services at Monaghan Hospital must close and that Monaghan General should stop calling itself a 'hospital'!

The HSE have argued that the service is unsafe

but this is entirely due to the sequence of closures of Paediatrics, Maternity, Orthopaedics and then Emergency Surgery that the HSE itself has imposed.

The Monaghan Hospital Community Alliance (MHCA) claim at least 17 people have died between 2002 and 2004 due to these cutbacks.

Across the country 22,000 surgical operations were cancelled by the HSE last year due to lack of resources.

The HSE previously used the Hanly report on medical staffing to justify cutbacks but had to shelve this plan due to organised opposition from campaigns in Nenagh, Ennis, Ballinasloe and Monaghan against cutbacks in care. Monaghan Campaigners believe that the new 'Action Plan' is just Hanly

under a new name.

The MHCA point out that cooperation between hospitals could be improved to provide the full range of medical services with the best standards of care.

Campaigners in Roscommon have recently fought off proposals to close their surgical services arguing for improved cooperation with the nearby hospital in Ballinasloe instead.

The campaigners vow to fight on promising more protests and an election campaign.

A national protest march would help to pull together the different campaign groups, activists and unions like the nurses into a much needed force to stop the cutbacks and privatisation in the Health Service.

TRALEE

Residents defeat Council's parking charges proposal

By Kieran McNulty

A campaign by residents of St. John's Park, Tralee has so far been successful in halting the imposition of a charge by Tralee Town Council for parking their cars outside their homes.

It was proposed that there would be an initial charge of at least €6 per annum but residents feared it may be the thin end of the wedge and could be greatly increased in future years.

Independent Cllr. Tommy Foley is a local resident and earlier this year was one of only two councillors on the twelve member council to vote against the motion to impose parking charges.

The other councillor who opposed the motion was Karen Tobin of the Labour Party.

Despite the left being in the majority on the council, both its Sinn Féin members and two of its three Labour members did not vote against the motion.

On Monday October 2nd., Tralee Town Council met again to discuss the imposition of a parking fee for the cars of local residents. Over fifty people protested outside the Town Hall and were supported by members of the Tralee SWP Branch and the local Green Party.

The residents were determined that if the Council went ahead with the proposed parking charges, they would refuse to pay.

There are about three hundred households immediately affected, so this represented a significant gathering.

The protestors then proceeded to enter the council chamber where the matter was discussed.

Under pressure the council overwhelmingly agreed to exclude residential areas from their plan, to consult with local people about future plans and to put forward a new proposal in the near future.

The retreat by the town Council from its initial proposal represents an excellent example of what people power can achieve.

The real problem in Tralee is that there is too much traffic in the town. What we need is Bus Éireann to provide a public transport service similar to the service in Sligo with more frequent bus and train commuter services.

For further information you can contact Cllr. Tommy Foley on 0667123587 or Tralee SWP on 0876716009.

Mass clean-up in Suir Road



Between 150 and 200 people attend this bin tax protest every Saturday morning. Most of them come with their wheeled bins from Drimnagh. Others come from Crumlin, Rialto and Ballyfermot. They protest from 11am to 11.30am outside the City Council depot on Davitt Road (along the canal and Luas Line). They bring their bags of rubbish and leave them outside the depot for the Council to collect. Anybody living in this area who supports the Anti Bin Tax Campaign should get to this protest on Saturday mornings. For further information contact Councillor Joan Collins at 086 3888151 Photo: Paula Geraghty

COMBINED RESIDENTS AGAINST INCINERATION

Over 3,000 objections to Poolbeg incinerator

The Combined Residents Against Incineration (CRAI - which includes residents of Ringsend, Irishtown, and Sandymount) handed over 3,000 objections that were collected from people across Dublin, including members of the Crumlin and Ballyfermot Anti Bin Tax campaigns, against the proposed incinerator for Dublin Bay to An Bord Pleanála last Monday.

CRAI opposes the siting of an incinerator on the Poolbeg peninsula on grounds of health fears and traffic and environmental concerns.

We call for alternatives to incineration such as public recycling and for democracy in planning and development.

Dublin City Council along with the other Dublin Local Authorities, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin County councils have applied to An Bord Pleanála for approval on the Poolbeg Peninsula of an incinerator that will burn 600,000 tonnes of household, commercial and industrial waste per annum.

The incinerator is not just a Ringsend or Sandymount issue but one that will at some point impact on everyone in Dublin through either dioxins in the wind, further increased waste charges or traffic.

The Public Private Partnership model has been proven with the Sewerage Treatment Plant to be more expensive for the tax-payer and detrimental to the health of people in the area.

Serious traffic, health and safety and cost issues relating to the plant remain to be explained by Dublin City Council and the Government. Dublin City Council have already given €10 million to private consultants for the incinerator.

Most of the local politicians have expressed their opposition to the incinerator, including local PD T.D. Michael McDowell.

However, despite this, Dublin City Council have gone full steam ahead for approval.

A motion was put to the Dail recently by the Green and Labour parties instructing the Minister for the Environment, Dick Roche, to drop the plans to build the incinerator but Fianna Fail and the PDs voted for the incinerator.

Instead of incineration and over-development the Poolbeg peninsula should be developed according to what is decided by the people of the area.

More appropriate

would be a nature park, light-impact community recreation facilities (walks, pitch and putt) and limited housing rather than the proposed

incinerator and massive high rise Fabrizia development.

The campaign to ensure the environment, communities and people

are prioritised over developer's profit will continue with people power and more protests to step up the pressure on politicians to ensure the incinerator

and other non-community friendly developments do not go ahead.

Contact Rory Hearne, People Before Profit Alliance & CRAI 086 1523542

IRISH ANTI WAR MOVEMENT

Irish Anti War Movement Public Meeting

BUSH, BLAIR & THE TRUTH BEHIND THE 'WAR ON TERROR'



Craig Murray

(former UK Ambassador to Uzbekistan, sacked for exposing torture)

& Colm Bryce
(Raytheon 9)

Tuesday October 10th at 8.00pm
ATGWU Hall, Middle Abbey St, Dublin
www.irishantiwar.org

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT ALLIANCE

No to privatisation, No to war:
Yes to people power
People Before Profit Alliance/Davitt League
Public Conference

Friday November 24th and Saturday November 25th
Dublin City Centre

Friday 24th November
6pm

Education and Privatisation for Profit - the dangers for public education.
Prof Kathleen Lynch (UCD)

7.30pm

War, Globalisation and Ireland
Dr Abdullah Sayed, Irish Lebanese Community
Richard Boyd Barrett (Chair Irish Anti War Movement)
Ailbhe Smyth (PBPA)

Saturday 25th November
11am

Neoliberalism, privatisation and Public services

Catherine Murphy, Indp TD
Kieran Allen (PBPA)
Catherine Connolly (Cllr Galway)

1.30pm

People power and strategies for resistance

Vincent McGrath (Rosport 5)
Rory Hearne (PBPA)

3pm

People Before Profit: time for a real left alternative

Joan Collins (Indp Cllr)
Carmel McKenna (PBPA)

GALWAY ALLIANCE AGAINST WAR

Spanish Civil War vet speaks out

Bob Doyle, the only surviving Irish veteran of the Spanish civil war, will address a meeting at NUI Galway Tuesday, 24th October at 7.30pm.

Galway Students Against War will host the meeting in the university, and there will be speakers from Galway Alliance Against War and Galway People Before Profit.

The meeting is free and open to students and all who are interested in hearing Doyle's experiences in the fight against fascism, and also angles on the same theme of international solidarity and people power today.

Bob Doyle is now 90 years of age, but is still an activist. He especially enjoys enthusing younger generations. Come along to listen, discuss and get involved in the fight against empire today. Salud.



Bob Doyle

Irish Anti War Movement Public Meeting

Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon, Iran...

STOP BUSH'S BLOODY WAR

Speakers:

George Galloway MP

Lebanese speaker & others

Saturday November 4th, 2pm
Royal Dublin Hotel, O'Connell St, Dublin

www.irishantiwar.org

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 we 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

SUPPORT FLOWS IN FOR WATER CHARGES CAMPAIGN



The campaign for non-payment of water charges has moved up a gear. Trades councils, Communities Against the Water Tax and the We Won't Pay Campaign are holding meetings across the North this month to spread and stiffen non-payment groups on the ground.

October 1st marked six months until proposed charges and privatisation come in.

Discussions have begun on a joint conference to produce a united campaign based on the single issue of non-payment.

If the charges are defeated, New Labour's plan to privatise water is also likely to fall. The stakes are high. The campaign is winnable. The Northern Ireland Office is worried.

Officials of the Department of Regional Development called selected community groups to a meeting at Stormont on September 29th to announce a major, million-pound propaganda effort to talk people out of non-payment.

The DRD has also launched a "road show" to try to convince the public that charges would be fair.

But anger is growing. On September 25th, Minister David Cairns announced the draft legislation to be rammed through Westminster without even parliamen-

tary scrutiny. Not one elected representative had any input into the measure.

Cairns lied that "households would not have to spend more than three percent of their income" on water. In fact, a childless single person on benefits will pay more than five percent.

Cairns says that an "affordability tariff" will protect the least well-off. But the tariff will last only three years—until the moment the proposed Government-owned Company (GoCo) gives way to full-blown privatisation.

To put limits on what the private owners could charge would be to interfere in the free market. To New Labour, that's as outlandish as amending the law of gravity.

At community level, the argument against non-payment which comes up most is based on the rent and rates strike of the 1970s.

But there is no real precedent

The rent and rates strike—a protest against internment—didn't operate outside the Nationalist community.

Water charges, on the other hand, will hit every household. The action will be unifying, not divisive,

and much stronger on that account.

The rent and rates strike was launched literally overnight. But this time around, we are six months away from the starting-line—time to put street-by-street organisation in place, if the work is done in the meantime.

The number of households involved in the rent and rates strike never topped 30,000. By the time the Payment of Debt Act was brought in to break the strike, this had fallen to under 12,000. Despite fierce commitment, the numbers were never enough.

The Payment of Debt Act has since been repealed. This time, every opinion poll and community vote testifies that, potentially at least, the numbers are there. What may be lacking is the confidence that can come only from bottom-up organisation.

That's why work on the ground, getting people to organise their own communities, is the vital necessity over the next months. Trades councils may be best-placed to launch local initiatives and perform a coordinating role.

None of the mainstream parties backs non-payment. So it is vital that those of us committed to non-payment keep our eyes fixed on the objective and work together.