

Socialist Worker

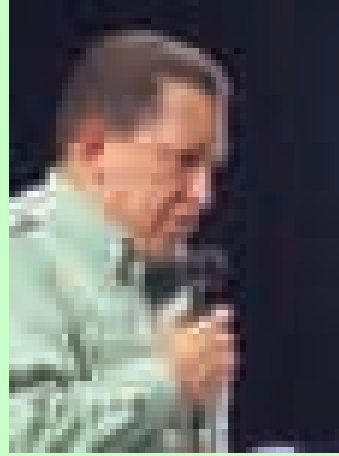
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INSIDE:

Venezuela, Chavez and Permanent Revolution



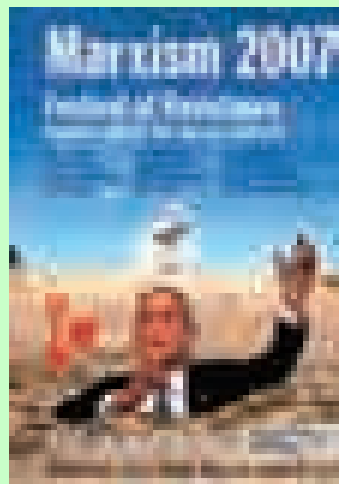
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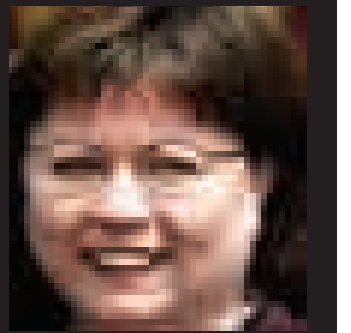
**21,500 EXTRA TROOPS SENT TO IRAQ
STOP IRISH COMPLICITY
IN BUSH'S WAR
U.S. MILITARY OUT OF
SHANNON**

National Demonstration
Fianna Fail Ard Fheis City West Dublin
Saturday 24th March 2.00pm
Assemble 2.00pm Lidl car park CityWest
Feeder bus shuttle provided from Red Cow LUAS car park

Irish Anti War Movement www.irishantiwar.org info@irishantiwar.org 011 872 7912

VICTORY TO THE NURSES

HARNEY'S HEALTHCARE MARKET MADNESS



Peadar O'Grady

New figures from the HSE show the closure of Crumlin and Monaghan hospitals are part of plans for more cutbacks in the public service. These cutbacks will make even more space for private 'for-profit' hospitals like the Beacon Clinic.

The HSE recently announced its budget will increase by only 5.6%. Just taking into account general inflation (5%) and population growth (2%) will wipe out this increase and mean pressure on the HSE to impose even more cutbacks.

Harney's claim that she is 'taking on' the hospital consultants and offering them all a public contract is a lie. The truth is she will only offer a minority a public contract, as she still wants most of these elite specialists to work in both public and 'for-profit' private hospitals. Harney even plans to build more private hospitals on

public hospital sites and to increase the number of public beds reserved for private patients.

Private fees for consultants cost the health service about 4% of its budget. Paying consultants twice is wasteful and means the wealthy rather than the sick are prioritised. But Harney's plan for private hospitals will make the waste and inequality of access even worse. For-profit hospitals waste over 30% of funding on costs like profits, billing and advertising not spent by the public service.

Mary Harney argues that for-profit hospital beds are cheaper and more effective. This is a lie. Firstly, they will be given massive state handouts of billions in tax breaks and land and will not give full services, only cherrypicking straightforward elective surgical cases.

The new private hospitals: The Beacon Clinic in Sandyford, Dublin, The Whitford

Clinic in Waterford, The Galway Clinic, The Hermitage Clinic in Clondalkin and plans for a private hospital on the grounds of Cork University Hospital, and one in Adare Manor, Co Limerick are all further proof that Mary Harney and the Fianna Fail-PD government are putting profits before people.

The government's policy since 2001, 'The Health Strategy', is to put back 3000 public hospital beds. Overcrowding in wards and the back-up in A&E are directly due to this bed shortage. So too is the rise in hospital-acquired infections like MRSA, VRE or Clostridium Difficile. Harney's lack of action is no error for her. Failing public services scare people into 'going private' artificially increasing the private market through fear of waiting-lists.

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**END IRISH COMPLICITY IN BUSH'S WAR
DEMONSTRATE
Fianna Fail Ard Fheis
Saturday 24th March City West Dublin
US Troops out of Shannon**

THE THINGS THEY SAY

'We would not see serving military flights which do not have the support of the UN as consistent with the policy and aims of Ireland West Airport. We would have ethical problems and we wanted to make an unequivocal statement to people to say that we do not ever intend to handle those flights.'

Liam Scollan, CEO of Knock airport.

'The Irish Government has attempted to muzzle the work of this EU rendition committee, and that has backfired.'

Director of the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, Mark Kelly, on MEPs vote in the committee by 28 votes to 17 in favour of a report calling for all CIA aircraft to be banned from Irish territory unless the Government institutes a proper random inspection regime at airports as recommended by the IHRC.

'Over one million artisanal diamond diggers in West Africa are at grave risk in places like Sierra Leone, where 28% of children die before the age of 5: the highest child mortality rate in the world. Many of the people mining our diamonds are so poor they cannot keep their children alive.'

Martin Rapaport, President and CEO of diamonds.net.

'In general a critically ill patient who is denied any intensive care has a significantly increased chance of dying. Patient care is suffering and the society has no doubt that patient outcomes are being affected. The ratio of adult acute ICU beds to acute hospital beds in Ireland is 1.64 per cent, even lower than the UK ratio of 2.44 per cent which is one of the lowest in Europe.'

President Dr Michael Power of Intensive Care Society of Ireland.

'Since the president is adamant about pursuing his failed policies in Iraq, Congress has the duty to

stand up and use its power to stop him. If Congress doesn't stop this war, it's not because it doesn't have the power. It's because it doesn't have the will.'

Wisconsin's Democratic senator Russell Feingold, who is proposing a motion that the Senate refuses to approve funding for the escalation of troop numbers in Iraq.

'Prices are going up, petrol is going to go up, and now they're going to impose new taxes. The government will steal it all and they will live on it, not us.'

Christian protestor during a Lebanese general strike against government economic reform.

'We are handing away all our civil rights. They can arrest you just because they don't like the look of you. It seems to me New Labour have gone mad. The Government is totally lawless.'

Rumpole creator John Mortimer on super-Asbos in Britain.

'In 2005, 37 million people, approximately 13 percent of the total population, lived below the poverty line, as defined by the Census Bureau.'

The recent report by the U.S. Government's Accountability Office.

'It just makes sense that if somebody is trying to harm our troops or stop us from achieving our goal, or killing innocent citizens in Iraq, that we will stop them.'

President George W. Bush, following a report that he authorized the killing of Iranian agents.

'We know, for instance, that there is too little being spent on suicide prevention. There's over £18 million ring-fenced in Scotland for suicide prevention; that's not happening here, [where] the allocation this year is going to be €1.85 million, which is really a very paltry sum.'

Dr John Connolly, secretary of the Irish Association of Suicidology

ANTI WAR NEWS

All out March 24: National protest at Fianna Fail Ard Fheis

The Irish Anti War Movement issued the following statement in February.

Bush's wars are based on lies—and the Irish government has tamely swallowed and backed up those lies without challenging them.

Indeed, Bertie Ahern and the Irish government have been actively collaborating with this monstrous and illegal war. They have allowed over 1,000,000 US troops to pass through Shannon since 2003.

They have turned a blind eye to secret "renditions"—torture flights. At least 147 secret CIA have flights landed at Shannon according to a recent EU Parliament report.

But the Irish people reject Irish complicity in Bush's war crimes. A majority have long opposed the war and the use of Shannon airport by US military.

The US/UK invasion and occupation of Iraq has so far cost over 650,000 Iraqi lives. Over 4,000 more Iraqi civilians were killed in January 2007 alone.

Over 3,000 US soldiers have been killed and the war is costing the US \$8.4 billion a month according to the Pentagon.

Iraq's civil infrastructure is in pieces with 48% unemployment and just 4 hours electricity a day in Baghdad.

Bush's response to this disaster is to order an extra 21,500 troops to be sent, to launch attacks on Baghdad like the criminal assault which devastated Fallujah, its hospitals and its civilian population two years ago.

Bush is intensifying his threats against Iran and backed Israel's brutal invasion of Lebanon, as well as its continuing oppression of the Palestinians. In the US the tide is turning, with the election of a Democratic majority and a protest of half a million in Washington DC in January.

Most of the American people reject this war, and hundreds of thousands are prepared to continue demonstrating to stop it. SO SHOULD WE.

In election year we can make a difference by making rejection of Irish complicity in Bush's war an election issue.

Demonstrate at the Fianna Fail Ard Fheis at CityWest Conference Centre on Saturday March 24. Assemble at 2pm at the Lidl car park in CityWest for the short march.

Buses: 65B from Eden Quay; 69 from Aston Quay; 50 from College St; 201, 202 from Tallaght

IAWM Feeder bus shuttle provided from Red Cow LUAS to CityWest

Called by Irish Anti War Movement

www.irishantiwar.org
info@irishantiwar.org (01) 872 7912



CORK

ON TRIAL FOR RESISTING BUSH'S WAR

THE RAYTHEON 9: THEY DECOMMISSIONED A BOMB FACTORY TO SAVE LIVES

PLUS: SHOWING OF BACK FROM BEIRUT

Film produced by Derry Anti War Coalition including Raytheon 9 members on a delegation to Lebanon during November of 2006

Followed by discussion with:
Ciaran Gallagher (Raytheon 9)

Thursday 15th February, 8.00pm sharp
Metropole Hotel, McCurtain St
Organised by the Irish Anti War Movement
www.irishantiwar.org

GALWAY



INSIDE THE SYSTEM

✘ In an outrageous move, the Government has granted Irish Ferries €4.3 million of taxpayers money towards the cost of statutory redundancy payments to Irish staff who were replaced by Eastern European workers on lower pay.

✘ The bulk of the €184 billion in spending commitments under the recently announced National Development Plan were already promised under different plans, agreements and other commitments published by the Government in the past 12 years. No one was fooled, as support for FF and the PDs fell sharply in the most recent poll, with the PDs down to a record low of 1%.

✘ The government's record of meeting targets from the first NDP is appalling. None of

the inter-urban highways from Dublin to the cities of Cork, Galway, and Limerick as well as the Border, were completed by the 2006 deadline. Costs have risen from €6 billion to a possible €20 billion and the new completion target is 2010.

✘ Dublin Bus was promised 275 new buses, which have not yet been delivered in fully. Many larnród Éireann approved projects are still incomplete

✘ Royal Dutch Shell reported record annual earnings of 25.36 billion US dollars, 21% higher than the previous year.

✘ New figures from the Central Bank show that credit card spending in December was up 15.8% on a year earlier. Irish consumers now owe €2.738bn in total, which is up 18.8% on

December 2005 and 70% more than in 2003.

✘ Consumers will face higher grocery bills, with chicken, eggs, bread and soft drinks among the items set to rise in coming weeks. The increased use of biofuel crops to replace oil is being blamed for many of the price increases as well as the drought last year that affected grain yields.

✘ After its €57m e-voting machines fiasco, the government has now discovered it doesn't have enough polling booths for the general election. It will have to spend hundreds of thousands of euro on new booths for every electoral area across the country.

✘ Iraq is experiencing the biggest exodus in the Middle

East since Palestinians were forced to flee in 1948 after the creation of Israel. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees said 50,000 Iraqis a month are abandoning their homes.

✘ In Britain Liam Byrne, Immigration minister, and his team are deporting failed asylum seekers at a record rate of one every 27 minutes.

✘ Since it opened in 2004, a four-story steel-and-glass sports complex with a roof-top football pitch in a tough neighborhood of the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, has been inundated by local youths who are given free membership. According to municipal statistics, muggings, killings and other crimes in the area have fallen by 30 per cent.

Asylum protest

About 270 people including asylum applicants from Somalia, Congo, Iraq and Sudan and housed at a former army barracks at Knockalisheen Asylum Seekers Centre on the outskirts of Limerick city went on hunger strike to protest against the appalling conditions in which they have to live.

In a letter to the Department of Justice protestors stated, 'in meals, we find foreign objects such as hair strands, broken plastic shards, rough particles of shells, especially in bean porridge.

Only one toilet roll is given out once a week, which is not enough because before the week runs out it finishes. Then you are asked to wait till the next date of supply, which we find inconveniencing.'

As figures for those seeking asylum fell to their lowest point since 1997 Justice Minister Michael McDowell raised the spectre of detention centres and citizenship tests for those seeking the right to live and work in Ireland.

With just 4,314 applications sought last year compared to 11,634 in 2002, it is a deliberate pre-election strategy to whip up fears around the issue of race and immigration in the hope that government health care policy and corruption can be sidelined in voters' minds.

Socialist Worker wonders what kind of citizenship test Michael McDowell would come up with.

The cultural questions that he knows the answer to include: how many years is the wait for an Irish citizen to obtain a Ferrari 430? (Three); how much is the Beluga Caviar as Shanahan's on the Green in Dublin? (€145); where can you buy 'The Essence', a €2,000 anti-aging cream? (Only by appointment through Harvey Nichols); what's the fashionable way to get to the Galway Races? (By helicopter) and where has been the most rapid growth in Irish citizens availing of tax-free shopping? (Dubai).

Socialist Worker

Global warming: Ireland's guilt

New figures show that Ireland is one of the worst offenders in Europe with regard to the greenhouse emissions that are contributing to global warming.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, Ireland is only permitted to have a 13% increase in CO2 emissions between 1990 and 2010. But according to a new report by the EPA, emissions are already over 25 per cent above 1990 levels, 12 percentage points higher than the Kyoto target.

A huge proportion of this increase is due to the growth of traffic, with the increase in private car use accounting for 40 percent of the increase in energy consumption in Ireland. Other vehicles also are responsible for an increase in energy consumption of the same amount.

The figures are a reminder that growth in the economy alone is not to blame for greenhouse gases; it is also a matter of policy.

A Sustainable Energy Ireland report in 2003 blamed the dominance of road transport for travel and the trend towards larger cars for the increases. The report revealed that up to 441,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions could be avoided if the average annual mileage in private cars was reduced from 20,000 km to 18,000 km.

A massive level of investment is urgently needed in public transport systems as well as in renewable sources of energy supply.

Global warming is the most serious issue to face humanity and how we respond to it may well determine the long-term fate of our current civilisation.

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has conducted the broadest scientific study so far of the human effect on climate change. With 2,500 scientists from more than 130 countries participating, its conclusions are significant.

The IPCC report believes there is at least a 90 per cent chance that human activities, mainly burning fossil fuels, are to blame for most of the warming in the last 50 years.

It projects that Arctic ice will shrink and perhaps disappear in summers by 2100, while heat waves and downpours will get more frequent. The numbers of tropical hurricanes might decrease but the storms will become stronger.

The Gulf Stream bringing warm waters to the North Atlantic could slow, although a shutdown is highly unlikely, it says. And sea levels are likely to rise by between 28cm and 43cm this century.

The report predicts that global average temperatures will rise by another 1.5° to 5.8° this century, depending on emissions.

Such a rise in average global temperatures will mean an increase in severe weather conditions and bring the planet dangerously close to the tipping points that could lead to runaway temperature rises.

Will there be a co-ordinated response by the world in the face of this problem?

One small but damning incident is a reminder of the reality of how politics is conducted at this level.

Letters sent by the American Enterprise Institute offered scientists and economists \$10,000 each to undermine the IPCC report. Travel expenses and additional payments were also offered.

The American Enterprise Institute has received more than \$1.6 million from ExxonMobil and many of their staff have worked as consultants to the Bush administration.

From their perspective global warming and the fate of the planet is less important than getting as much profit as possible from fossil fuels. As a consequence they sent out the unsolicited letters, trying to find scientists who would be willing to write articles that 'thoughtfully explore the limitations of climate model outputs'.

Ben Stewart of Greenpeace said: 'The American Enterprise Institute is more than just a think tank, it functions as the Bush administration's intellectual Cosa Nostra.'

'They are White House surrogates in the last throes of their campaign of climate change denial. They lost on the science; they lost on the moral case for action. All they've got left is a suitcase full of cash.'

Big business is both the most destructive force against the environment and the strongest political opponent of the measures necessary to halt global warming. Campaigning for the environment means putting people before profit and supporting every campaign, such as Shell To Sea, which stands up to the multi-nationals.

Harney's healthcare market madness



Health protest at Leinster House last year

Photo indymedia

Continued from page 1

In the medical literature several studies show a poorer standard of care in for-profit hospitals and clinics.

These studies show that when for-profit hospitals move beyond cherry-picking to give public health services, these services involve worse standards of care – more complications and more deaths.

The reasons for this are simple and straightforward. In the US, more than \$1 in every \$3 in for-profit hospitals goes on bureaucracy or profits.

As a result the US has the worst value for money in the world with the health status of American citizens ranked in the thirties while health spending ranks number one!

There is simply less money being spent on healthcare in for-profit hospitals – like nursing staff and cleaners.

The US has the largest private 'for-profit' health sector in the world. Health services there are the most expensive in the world but rate poorly for quality or access.

An average American family now faces an annual bill of over €10,000 for health insurance and 50 million US citizens, includ-

ing 10 million children, cannot afford it and have no health cover. Health bills are now the number one cause of bankruptcy in the US.

Why would Mary Harney lie about for-profit healthcare? Why refuse to fund public beds and solve the trolley crisis? Harney's plan to introduce more markets in health reflects an ideology that making profits, by

buying and selling healthcare as a commodity, makes healthcare better and cheaper. This ideology is called neoliberalism or Thatcherism and is being introduced (with state funding!) into the Irish Health Service by stealth.

Private instead of public means more profit. Insurance instead of tax means more profits. Fees rather than salaries means more profit. All of these mean more bureaucracy too.

Better community health centres and more hospital and nursing home beds and staff would solve the health crisis overnight. The greater the involvement of staff and local people, in the running of our health service, the less waste and profiteering will occur.

The low level of opposition to private health care from the traditionally 'left' parties, like Labour, Sinn Féin or the Greens, is largely as a result of their need to keep open the possibilities of coalition government with right-wing parties, like Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael, who agree with neoliberal policies in Health.

Labour has watered down its proposals for universal and comprehensive health cover to a scheme that only includes children under 18. In the election campaign votes for left-wing alliances will be votes for a properly funded public health service and against privatisation and profiteering in healthcare. Votes for alliances with right-wing parties will mean more privatisation.

Jo Tully, Vice-President of the Irish Nurses Organisation recently outlined the link between decent conditions for healthworkers and privatisation.

'The fight for decent conditions is also linked to our campaign against privatisation of hospitals and other health facilities. For-profit health care companies like BUPA, Triad or Comfort Keepers spend money on ads, billing, executive salaries and profits by cutting back on workers' conditions.'

This is why for-profit care is worse care. Also, keeping down pay and conditions in the public service is crucial for the for-profit sector to keep their sector's costs low and their profits high.'

Victory by the nurses in their strike for better conditions would be a blow to privatisation of the health service.

Community campaigns against cutbacks, like the closure of Crumlin or Monaghan Hospitals, need our support too. Strikes and mass marches are the way to show Harney and Aherne that our health is not for sale. Now is the time to put people before profit. Our very lives might just depend on it.

OUR VIEW

Healthcare should be:

★ **Universal – Services should have equal access for everybody regardless of wealth.**

★ **Comprehensive – Services should include all medical needs.**

★ **Tax-funded – Health should be funded by taxing wealth not by costly insurance or out-of-pocket payments.**

★ **Democratically planned – Services should be controlled and planned by elected councils of frontline health workers and the communities they serve.**

VICTORY TO THE NURSES

The Irish Nurses Organisation and Psychiatric Nurses Association have announced an extraordinary level of support for their campaign of action that seeks the introduction of a 35-hour working week, for nurses and midwives, and progress on other priority pay related claims. The result of the

nationwide ballot was an endorsement of the campaign by 96% of nurses. The two unions have served notice on the Health Service Executive. At the end February both unions will then consider implementing elements of their action plan, which includes a nationwide work to rule and short duration rolling work stoppages.

In addition, the two unions have announced three lunch hour protests as follows:

- Monday, 26 February: Cork University Hospital;
- Friday, 2 March: University College Hospital, Galway; and Regional Hospital, Limerick;
- Friday, 9 March: Mater Hospital, Dublin.

 These lunch hour protests

will not affect patient services.

Socialist Worker encourages its readers to attend their nearest public protest, to which local candidates have been invited.

A victory for the nurses will lead to a better health service and will give a boost to all those opposed to Harney's privatisation plans.

A Real Alternative at the Stormont Election

EAMONN MCCANN

From page 12

By Eamonn McCann

The Socialist Environmental Alliance is not running in the election just to make a point. We are in to win a seat, and we believe it can be done.

It's assumed the only issue is whether Sinn Fein and the DUP will consolidate their positions. We don't accept this. We are convinced that there is a seat in Foyle for the SEA and we will campaign in every part of the constituency to deliver it.

We have put the issue of water charges at the top of our agenda. There are many thousands of people across the North in favour of non-payment. But there hasn't been a single MLA supporting them. That's a travesty. We need a loud voice in the Assembly speaking up for non-payment. I am the only candidate in Foyle who will do this.

We need the anti-war movement represented in Stormont, speaking for all who are angry at unlimited expenditure on war, while the government pleads poverty when it comes to public services. Individual members of other parties are genuinely against war and the arms industry.

But their parties don't make this a priority. An Assembly without someone raising the anti-war case at every opportunity would be un-

representative of the people.

We need someone to speak up for trade unionism. This week, we have seen college lecturers and civil servants forced onto the streets to highlight legitimate grievances over jobs, pay and grading. There ought to be elected representatives amplifying their case and urging the public to support them. The SEA will do this.

We need to encourage a public mood of positive support for unionisation of private sector jobs in Derry. None of the four centre parties will take this on. Union activists in Foyle are entitled to have their trade union aspirations expressed by their elected representatives. Again, we will do this.

All parties these days pay lip-service to the environment. The threat to the planet is so stark they have no option. But on transport, for example, they regard concern for the environment as a nuisance.

They support evictions at Donnybrewer Road to facilitate growth in aviation, while rarely mentioning the neglect of our railways. In Stormont, I will shift the balance of argument back towards the environment.

We will not be lured into an Orange-Green argument on policing. I have spoken up for young Protestants and Catholics on the receiving end of police bullying, and will



Eamonn McCann

continue to do so. We do not believe that proposed changes in policing will make much change in the working class experience of policing. If more Catholics was the answer, the Gardai would be perfect. Tell that to the McBrearty family in Donegal.

At Stormont, I will speak for young people deprived of resources and facilities. Anti-social behaviour cannot be addressed by sending in the police to crack youngsters' heads, nor through tougher sentences.

The victims of hooligan behaviour have to be protected. But if harsh measures could do it, hooliganism would be long gone. I will encourage a fight in communities for a huge increase in youth spending and facilities, and for including young people in all discussions of policing and anti-social behaviour.

I stand for the defence of the public service, against closures and cut-backs.

At Stormont, I will fight against the school-closure programme, which treats our school system as

a business which has to balance its books. Falling numbers should be seen as an opportunity to reduce class sizes and provide for children with special needs, not a chance to shut schools and sell off the land.

I will campaign for guarantees for the future of the Fountain Primary School. This case can be made in the context of opposing closures and cut-backs generally. But if a special case has to be made, we will make it. We hope we will not be alone.

I am totally opposed to the neo-liberal agenda of New Labour, which lets the free market rip through every aspect of our lives. I will use the platform of an Assembly seat to amplify the voice of all who are being left behind by the peace process and to encourage grass-roots organisation in every workplace and community.

I believe an Assembly in which these views were not expressed would be unrepresentative.

We need the maximum number of first preferences. Our hope of a seat depends crucially on staying in the race. Voters can choose between the main parties with their later preferences. We need number ones to be in at the shake-up. We believe we can do it. We call on all who agree with us to get actively involved. We are going to give this a real run.

SEÁN MITCHELL

Seán Mitchell has already made history in the Northern Ireland elections by forcing the Northern Ireland Office to accept him as a candidate. Seán, 19, had fallen foul of the fact that the NIO had opted out of a law allowing young people in England, Scotland and Wales to run for office.

Socialist Worker asked Seán how the NIO came to change their mind. 'After being selected to stand I contacted the electoral office and at first they were not sure of the situation, because there had been the legislation allowing anyone over 18 to stand for election in Scotland, England and Wales.

'But then when I got back to them, they told me that I'd been disqualified because of my age. Against my objections I was told that they couldn't do anything about it, because introducing the necessary legislation would take too long for the coming elections.

'Effectively they were disenfranchising those between 18 and 21 in Northern Ireland, which is ironic given all the talk about Asbos and anti-social behaviour. The Government was denying young people the chance to engage in the political process.

'I got legal advice and we threatened to take Peter Hain, the Sec-

retary of State, to court over the discrimination. After the story was widely published, on radio and in newspapers, the NIO backed down to some extent, contacting us to say that I would be allowed to stand.

'The press release they sent though did not make it absolutely clear that I would be able to stand in the coming elections. So we pressed ahead with the court case until the NIO requested us to hold back and finally confirmed the necessary legalities had been put in place.'

Now that Seán has won the right to stand, he is going forward as a candidate for the People Before Profit Alliance.

'The People Before Profit Alliance is the only party in this election that is taking a principled stand against water charges. We are the only party to advocate non-payment; the rest, whatever their views on water charges, are undermining the campaign against them by arguing with people to pay the charge.'

'We are standing in the election in order to encourage people not to pay, the charges are completely unfair and they can be beaten by a non-payment campaign. Not only that, but we see the water charges as part of a wider agenda by Peter Hain to introduce a neo-liberal agenda to Northern Ireland.'



Sean Mitchell

'Recently I was at a protest at the Royal Victoria Hospital against a Private Finance Initiative for health care there. PFIs are basically privatisation plans and they will be as disastrous for public services in Northern Ireland as they have been elsewhere.'

'I will be using the election as a platform to fight all such privatisations.'

Seán Mitchell is a member of the Student's Council at Queens University; he was involved in or-

ganising for 150 people to go across to the Make Poverty History demonstration at Gleneagles in 2005 and he is a member of the steering committee of the Belfast Anti-War Movement.

The war in Iraq is another reason why Seán is standing.

'We are the only organisation that will make the war an election issue. The war in Iraq is deeply unpopular and the People Before Profit campaign gives people the chance to express their opposition

to it in coming election. Hopefully the election will serve also to build the anti-war movement.

Socialist Worker asked Seán about his opposition to sectarian politics.

'On Friday I was at a protest in the Village, just across from West Belfast. It was organised to lobby for the regeneration of the area: for proper liveable housing. There were around 150 people present in what is an overwhelmingly Protestant area.'

'We are fighting the same kind of policies in the Village as are affecting the people in West Belfast. One day I was at this very militant protest in the Village, two days later another at the Falls. One staunchly Protestant, the other Catholic.'

'But both are connected by their opposition to neo-liberal policies. People Before Profit want to be the voice that connects the entire community and represents the new movements of resistance to privatisation.'

Seán's campaign is off to a vibrant start and is gathering support from people disaffected with the conservatism of the other political parties. Together with Eamonn McCann he is reintroducing to Northern Ireland the kind of radical working class politics that has not been visible in strength for decades.

LABOUR ON THE RUN OVER WATER CHARGES

By Eamonn McCann

The success of the campaign for non-payment of water charges is clear from New Labour's last-minute 'consultation' on how charges are to be enforced on non-payers.

The eight-week consultation ends on 5 March: two days before polling in the Assembly election. After that, NIO officials say they will assess people's views before finally deciding how the scheme is to work.

The new Assembly is scheduled to meet on 26 March, when it is intended that a new power-sharing Executive is formed. Charges are scheduled to come in six days later, on 1 April.

The enforcement of charges has been the subject of widespread debate since the publication of the first consultation paper on water 'reform' back in April 2003. The reason for this last-gasp move is that the government had totally miscalculated the

strength of the strength of the non-payment campaign. They are trying to bring in harsh measures at the very last minute to browbeat the vulnerable.

The consultation paper envisages non-payers being taken to the Magistrates' Court, not, as had been anticipated, the Small Claims court.

This would mean that trade union and community activists couldn't provide representation and costs could be awarded

against non-payers.

The silence of Sinn Fein, the SDLP and the Unionist parties about this threat has been deafening, despite the fact that a new power-sharing administration would have the power to ditch the entire scheme if it chose.

NIO Minister Lord Rooker told the Lords in December: 'If we have devolved government by 26 March next year, as we sincerely hope we will, when the new Ministers will take the pledge of office, the Assembly

could repeal this legislation. It will have the power to amend it as it wants. It will be within its ownership.'

But in a debate during the final meeting of the outgoing Assembly on 29 January, not one MLA suggested that a new Assembly should take Rooker at his word.

Every member who spoke railed against water charges. But not one argued for the Assembly to stop them.

The MLAs were debating the report of the Committee on the

Programme for Government. The most radical speech came from Sean Neeson of Alliance. He was angry because his party had been excluded from the Committee.

'It has been interesting to listen to various members this morning,' he said. 'Six months ago they were all saying that there was no way that we were going to have water charges. Everyone that I have listened to this morning seems to have done a U-turn and accepted the whole

prospect.

That is a convenient way for them to avoid having to make the decision that should have been made by a devolved Government.

We all know that certain parties did not want to take on the responsibility for deciding on water charges.'

Two things are clear. One, New Labour is running scared from the non-payment campaign. And two, the campaign can't depend on Sinn Fein, the SDLP or the Unionists.

Venezuela, Hugo Chavez and permanent revolution

Chavez is talking of 'permanent revolution' in Venezuela – but, argues Chris Harman, there is a fight for the future of the revolution and for change from below

Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez recently announced a shift to the left in his government.

"Trotsky said that the revolution was permanent, it never finishes. Let's go with Trotsky," he said.

Chavez has already caused anger among the Venezuelan upper classes by using some of the revenue from the state owned oil company to provide special welfare provision in the poor areas.

Now he has announced the re-nationalisation of the electricity network and the biggest telecommunications company.

He has reshuffled his government, getting rid of ministers from the two small social democratic parties that are part of his electoral alliance.

Among the new ministers is one from the Communist Party and another – minister of labour Jose Ramon Rivero Gonzalez – who warned Chavez, "I have Trotskyist ideas."

Chavez replied, "But I am a Trotskyist too, I follow Trotsky's line of permanent revolution."

Chavez has called for the replacement of his four party electoral coalition by a "united revolutionary party" involving not just the parliamentarians, but also the many thousands of activists not belonging to any party.

Radicalisation

What has brought about this radicalisation? The habit of the mainstream media is always to see political changes as resulting from the actions of political celebrities. It is a habit which easily infects the left.

But the radicalisation in Venezuela has been driven from below – by the reaction of the mass of the urban poor, the workers and the peasantry to attempts to overthrow a government that started off backing only very mild reforms.

Chavez has moved to the left as he reacts to the feelings of the million or more people who have played the key role in these movements from below.

The latest example of the mood to the left was the presidential election at the beginning of December, where Chavez got 62 percent of the vote.

The result easily saw off the latest challenge from the right. But the election campaign also brought to a head activists' discontent with the Chavista electoral parties.

They were seen as cut off from the movement, with repeated complaints of their "bureaucratism", "clientalism" and "corruption".

Chavez is responding to these feelings. But there are still limits to his radical actions.

Most of Venezuelan big business remains untouched – and Chavez insisted in a recent speech that there was still an important role for the "national bourgeoisie".

Chavez's moves are not going to stop the corruption and bureaucracy which affects not only the parties of the electoral coalition, but the non-elected hierarchies of the state machine.

The top ranks of the civil service remain stacked with people appointed under the corrupt pre-Chavez system. And the armed forces continue to be full of career officers who share the values of the Chavez-hating upper-middle class.

Such elements do not dare move against Chavez at present, but they



Chavez handing out land titles to the rural poor

find it easy to sabotage government decisions they do not like.

So serious left wing analysts talk not only of the corruption and bureaucracy, but also of endless muddle, in which even a lot of money for the welfare programmes goes astray.

Chavez's own references to corruption show that he recognises some of these faults.

The call for a new party is his attempt to pull together a structure that can give some direction to the attempts to reform the state as well as society.

But permanent revolution is about more than trying to impose change from above.

Karl Marx first conceived the idea analysing the revolutions of 1848-49. Leon Trotsky took up the

idea after the 1905 Revolution in Russia.

For them it was about how movements that begin around demands for democratic political changes mobilise the mass of workers to take action and, in the process, to take the lead in the revolutionary process.

Mass activity from below may start with the democratic demands voiced by middle class leaders, but it develops a momentum in which the mass of workers begin to take control of their own destinies and fight for full blooded social revolution.

Chavez merely decreeing from above that all the political forces that have defended him should unite into a single party will not make this happen.

There are very different conceptions about the direction Venezuela should go in among those who back Chavez – conceptions that mean that any apparently united party would involve four distinct tendencies.

The first, to be found among parliamentarians and some elected officials, holds that the government should be more conciliatory towards big business and the right wing.

The second would be for moving towards what its adherents call socialism, but at a very slow pace. For them, the aim of a single party would be to slow down the revolutionary process.

A third tendency looks to establishing a Cuban-type society.

In Venezuela, the hostility to Cuba from the US has led many people to see it as a model – a way of running society that can lead to socialism and a better, freer life for the mass of people.

In the 1960s and 1970s the Cuban leadership accepted a model of running society strongly influenced by the old Soviet Union. That meant denying the mass of workers and peasants the right to discuss and vote over the direction of government policy or even to have independent trade unions.

Today, despite talk of socialism, Cuba is marked by enormous disparities of wealth and income.

State control

Supporters of the Cuban model might try to use the movement from below to establish state control of industry and control of the state by a single party. But they would stop the movement in its tracks if the mass of people took decisions into their own hands.

What their approach means in practice was shown in the spring of last year. The majority of delegates to the congress of the new UNT union federation voted for proper elections for the officials of their union, to make it into an organ of working class democracy.

A minority of delegates walked out to prevent the elections, arguing in effect that workers electing their own leaders was irrelevant to the revolutionary process.

This is the opposite to permanent revolution as meant by Marx and Trotsky. It is an attitude which tries to stop the mass of workers democratically taking their fate into their own hands and playing a leading role in the revolutionary process.

Finally, there is the genuinely revolutionary tendency – those groupings of activists for who making the revolution permanent means organising the mass of workers, the urban poor, the indigenous groups and the peasants to fight for their own demands.

One such grouping is the Class Struggle Tendency. It is the majority in the UNT and is influenced by Trotskyism (of a very different variety to that of the new minister of labour).

Another is the organisation Por Nuestras Luchas ("By Our Struggles") that is influenced by traditions of urban guerrillaism and autonomism and looks to organising the poor, the peasants and the indigenous groups.

Revolutionary

In the great revolutionary movements of the 20th century, permanent revolution meant workers throwing up their own democratic institutions from below, workers' councils, and then drawing behind them the rest of the exploited and the oppressed.

The workers, bound together in the workplaces by a common battle against exploitation, found it easier to develop an organic unity in struggle than did the peasants or the urban poor.

Disillusion with the parliamentarians means there is a great deal of talk about "popular power" as an alternative in Venezuela.

But for the first three tendencies it simply means councils elected to mediate between the government and the mass of people.

For the revolution to become truly permanent workers would have to go much further than this. They need to establish their own democratic organs so as to take control of the government, to replace the existing corrupt state structure and to reorganise industry so as to end the poverty and huge inequalities that still characterise Venezuela today.

The fact that these things are being discussed is a sign of the degree to which the movements from below have shaken up Venezuelan society.

But the movements still have a way to go if revolution is really going to turn society upside down, so that the exploited become the ruling class.

Chris Harman is the editor of *International Socialism* journal



Chavez and Castro

COMMENT

Nuclear Iran?



Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

By Paul O'Brien

The United States and Israel claim that Iran is on the verge of developing nuclear weapons.

This was the basis for the UN Resolution 1696 in July 2006 proposing sanctions on Iran if they continued to breach their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Resolution 1696 also demanded that Iran suspend all nuclear enrichment related and reprocessing activity by August 2006.

Iran has always claimed that its nuclear programme complied with the NPT and was developing nuclear technology for energy and medical use. In late 2006 Iran had requested the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for assistance in developing safety procedures at its heavy water reactor site at Arak.

This site is similar to its facility at Osirak, which is the site that the United States objected to. The IAEA secretariat reported that the project at Arak did not contravene resolution 1696 and therefore there was no legal basis for refusing Iran's request. However, assistance was refused due to pressure from America.

The reactor at Arak is not due to go into production until 2010 and will be subject to regular inspection by the IAEA.

Unless Iran withdraws from the NPT this facility and the nuclear plant at Natanz will be inspected and its operations subject to the control of the IAEA.

This will consist of monthly inspections and cameras will be installed at Natanz.

Similar arrangements will be put in place at Arak. Any enriched uranium or plutonium will be made under the control and seal of the IAEA and will not be available for use in nuclear weapons.

Given this supervision it will not be possible under the present arrangements for Iran to develop a nuclear capability in the foreseeable future that would not be immediately apparent and preventable.

There is no pressing nuclear threat from Iran at the moment.

Despite this United States and Israel insists that Iran presents a significant danger that needs to be dealt with without delay.

They insist, without a shred of evidence, that Iran has a hidden nuclear capacity in addition to its

declared programme. Seymour Hersh in the *New Yorker* magazine has revealed details of a CIA report on Iran's nuclear capabilities.

Their assessment, based on satellite and insider information, concluded that no such programme exists. Hersh went on to report that Bush, Cheney and the White House hawks are determined to deal with Iran, despite the recent electoral setback, 'with or without the approval of Congress'.

Bush has already dismissed the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, headed by James Baker, which recommended negotiations with Iran as a way of stabilising the situation in Iraq. Bush's response has been to ratchet up the war in the Middle East.

Over 20,000 extra US troops have been sent to Iraq and a second aircraft carrier with supporting warships has been ordered to the Persian Gulf to pressurise Iran.

Last December the UN Security Council found Iran in breach of Resolution 1696. This, according to Seymour Hersh, has laid the foundation for an American strike on Iran. This is a repeat of the model used by Bush and Blair to justify the Gulf War in 2003.

The Americans will order a strike on Iran facilities and say that it was carried out 'in support of the authority of the UN'. Some American commentators are predicting a US attack sometime this summer.

American analysts who are familiar with Iranian nuclear facilities, however, estimate that at least 400 targets would have to be hit to destroy Iran's nuclear industry.

An attack on that scale would lead political shock waves against anyone in the Middle East who aligns themselves with the US and massive protest in the West also.

It's hard to believe that Bush would actually go ahead with such strikes. But as the situation in Iraq worsens, the neo-cons are capable of lashing out desperately in order to reassert US domination of the world.

The stronger the anti-war movement around the world, capable of mobilising the anger that would follow such a strike, the more likely the neo-cons can be held in check, fearful of the damaging political reaction that would ensue.



Clean Water: A basic right or a source of profit?

By Niall Smyth

'Water, water every where... nor any drop to drink... unless you can pay!'

'It's quite simple', say Dublin City Council of waste charges, 'the less you throw away the less you will pay.' And so it would seem only fair. The logic of their system is that the polluter pays and in this case the polluter, it appears, is the householder.

If you study the figures in a report published by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2000, just prior to the introduction of bin charges on domestic households, you will find, however, that householders were not the biggest polluters.

The amount of waste produced in Ireland increased by almost 40% between 1995 and 1998. According to the report, the biggest rises were in manufacturing, mining and construction demolition waste. Household waste was up just 23%, while commercial or business waste was up a massive 44%.

Collection of refuse is no longer treated by government as a public good, free to all, but something we now must pay for. Householders are asked to foot the bill, despite the fact that industry and big business are the biggest producers of waste.

Ordinary people are patronised by expensive publicity campaigns and awful television adverts and called upon to 'reduce



reuse recycle'. Yet there is little has been done to stop companies which produce goods with include huge amounts of unnecessary and wasteful packaging which we are then charged to dispose of.

This same logic applies to the notion of water privatisation and water charges levied against ordinary people. The role of multinational corporations in providing water and sanitation services is relatively new. Historically, water has been viewed as a public good, not a market commodity to be bought and sold.

Most countries have only recently begun to consider privatisation of their water utilities. Water and sanitation services have been until recent years been publicly run because private

companies were not interested in owning or managing water services where there was little or no profit to be made. With the prospect of growing freshwater scarcity, however, a change has seen in this trend.

Again it is the case that the same big industry and large agri-business multinationals who are the main contributors to freshwater pollution are the ones who want us to believe that the privatisation of water services in their hands will solve the water crisis.

The multinational water corporations, the IMF and the World Bank claim that privatisation (or public/private partnerships) in water and sanitation service provision will ensure access to water to the more than a billion people worldwide who

lack clean and affordable water, and the 2.4 billion who lack sanitation services.

In many cases though, where privatisation of water has been implemented, the consequences have proven disastrous. From the UK, to Bolivia, Argentina and Indonesia, water privatisation has not meant increased access to clean fresh water.

In fact many companies, despite making huge profits, have pulled out of countries when their demands for new loans, guarantees, and currency exchange insurance from governments and the international financial institutions have been refused.

Claims that the arrival of multinational water corporations to many of these countries would lead to more efficient and cost-effective operations have proven false. Instead, research has shown that privatisation has led to increases in consumer water rates, bad quality of the water, public health crises, and a lack of investment in water infrastructure, jobs cuts and pollution.

Moves to privatise water in South Africa provoked an outbreak of cholera. According to leading campaigner Trevor Ngwane 'we had an outbreak of cholera - a waterborne disease - because people who, ironically, had been getting free water under the apartheid regime now found themselves without water

Case Study: The Battle for Water in Bolivia



Confrontation in Cochabamba

The proposed privatisation of water companies by the IMF in Bolivia was met by popular protests and ended with Bechtel, an American engineering firm based in San Francisco, pulling out.

In Cochabamba, Bolivia, 10 April 2000, after seven days of street battles, of civil disobedience and angry protest in the streets, Aguas del Tunari, a subsidiary of the Bechtel Corporation, was forced to leave the city.

As a result, the privatisation of the local water system was effectively reversed.

The privatisation of water in Cochabamba was set in motion through a series of agreements bypassing Congress and the Water Law.

Privatisation was established through a 'gentlemen's agreement'

between representatives of the three right-wing parties, MNR, ADN and MIR, agreed to in the private residence of former president Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada.

On 3 September, 1999, the concession contracts were signed granting a 40-year contract to Aguas del Tunari.

By April, however, the president of Bolivia was forced to terminate the water privatisation contract granted to Aguas del Tunari.

Water rates had increased immediately; by 100 to 200 percent in some cases. In a country where the minimum wage is less than \$100 per month, many families were paying water bills of \$20 or higher.

In January 2000, a four-day general strike over the water price hikes, organised

by a coalition of community groups and trade unions, left the city at a total standstill. The strike culminated with a mass march to the city's central plaza where protest leaders and city officials were negotiating.

In February 2000, the government sent for army and police officers from outside Cochabamba, declaring the protest marches banned and illegal.

During the ensuing protests, strikes and marches 175 people were injured, two youths blinded, and one killed. The government first promised a full rate rollback and a review of the water company contract.

But, protests continued and in April the government finally agreed to terminate the contract.

Slaves to the Mushroom Flush

By Kieran Allen

Virtually every shop and supermarket in Britain and Ireland sells white, bland mushrooms which are produced in dark factory like tunnels. The people who pick them are subject to gross exploitation.

Mushroom picking became an industry in the nineties when farms were consolidated and the number of growers reduced from 500 to 120. The Department of Agriculture and Food helped this consolidation by pouring in millions in grants and setting up a 'taskforce' composed solely of industry representatives. Today the industry accounts for 40 percent of Ireland's horticultural exports and employs 3,000 people.

The majority of mushroom pickers have always been women. In the past, it was seen as a part time job for housewives but after the Celtic Tiger many local women found better paid work. From 1999, the industry turned to migrants and within three years the majority of workers came from Latvia and Lithuania.

There is increasing talk of 'displacement' of Irish workers by migrants and politicians use this rhetoric to justify more restriction on migrants. But Irish workers were not 'displaced' from the mushroom industry – they just left. And the problem is not migrants but the legal restriction they have to work under.

The mushroom industry is governed by a Joint Labour Committee which lays down minimum wages and statutory conditions of employment. The Health and Safety Authority is also supposed to protect workers health.

But despite this formal appearance of regulation, the actual conditions of workers are governed by fear and economic terrorism.

The JLC rate is supposed to be €8.12 an hour but the pay of most workers ranges from between €2.50 an hour and €6.00. Wages depend on the amount of mushrooms you pick when there is a 'flush'. But employers have manipulated the piece rates to put more pressure on workers.

Three years ago you needed to pick 34 pounds of mushrooms per hour to get the JLC rate but today that has increased to 54 pounds an hour.

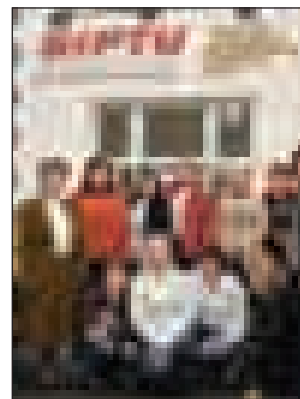
Most workers do not receive overtime rates, premium payments for Sunday or annual holiday leave – even though these are their legal entitlements. Few receive a contract or even a wage slip which outlines the hours they are paid for. Instead many still receive cash in an envelope.

The pickers are

pressured to work excessive hours, especially when they are housed in mobile homes on the farms of the growers. Some speak of working 16 hours a day and 80 hours a week as they are constantly called on for 'help' during the mushroom flushes.

The growers also show little concern for the health of their staff. Some are asked to enter tunnels soon after spraying although they are supposed to wait for days. Many have been asked to mix chemical sprays without proper training and suffer chronic health problems.

How can all this happen in modern 21st century Ireland? After all Lithuanian or Latvian are not any less interested in their rights than the Irish. The answer lies in the work permit system



Lithuanian and Latvian mushroom pickers join SIPTU in Cavan

By imposing serf-like conditions workers so that they had to stay with the one employer and are made dependent on that employer to renew the work permit, workers were terrified into submission.

In cold bureaucratic language, the Report of the Mushroom Taskforce recognised this when it pointed to the problems the industry faced when Lithuania and Latvia joined the EU and their nationals no longer required work permits. 'In this new scenario, reliance by the industry on the ongoing availability of low cost work may be unsustainable into the near future'.

To get over the problem, however, it recommended the importation of more non-EU labour – on the work permit system.

As long as the unevenness of the global capitalists system persists, migrants will travel from one part of the world to another to take dirty, dangerous and difficult jobs. Calls to restrict this movement only leads to more workers being undocumented and placed in a worse situation than even those who are on work permits.

Mushroom pickers need full legal rights to move where they please – and strong union to fight their unscrupulous Irish bosses.

under the democratic government because of privatisation. As a result more than 200 people died from the cholera outbreak.'

The World Bank assisted with privatisation of the city of Manila's Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Systems in the Philippines.

This led to a water charge increase of between 26-81% in the first six years. As the service became more expensive and inefficient under privatisation, access to clean water was reduced for poorer households, resulting in outbreaks of cholera and other gastro-intestinal diseases.

Water privatisation is a live issue across Ireland. Just last October it was announced that Celtic Anghian Water (a subsidiary company of NTR) had landed the contract for the Waste Water Treatment Plant, part of the Waterford Main Drainage Project.

Presently in Northern Ireland, water 'reform' is a central element in New Labour's neo-liberal agenda, which includes the selling off of virtually all public buildings in the North and the wholesale use of Private Finance Initiatives in health, education and infrastructural development.

Water Charges are due for introduction in Northern Ireland in April. The average charge has been estimated by the Government to be £314 a year, but people could end up paying as much as £770 a year.

A glance at what happened with the bin tax in Dublin shows how this can occur.

Yet opposition to the charge has been building for some time now. The campaign of mass non-payment of the charges is backed by both ICTU and NIPSA trade union. Billy Lynn, President of NIPSA stated that 'the unions affiliated to NIC-ICTU represent over 200,000 working class people.

It has long been absolutely clear that a majority of the population are opposed to the imposition of water charges. It is now clear that a majority will refuse to pay these charges.

The decision of the NIC-ICTU conference is an important milestone in building a solid and determined mass campaign that will defeat the water charges'.

Trade Unions against Water Charges are posting leaflets to every household in the North urging non-payment of the charge.

The arguments against water privatisation are crystal clear. Water is a necessity for life for all. As such everyone should have free access to clean water. Privatisation removes water from public control and thus robs citizens of their democratic say over how this important resource is used.

In turn, privatisation poses a serious threat to the provision of water to all because once privatised, water will no longer be available on the basis of need but provided on the ability to pay. Our vital water services must be kept out of the grubby hands of greedy multinationals, which have poisoned our waters for decades and now want to charge us for the luxury of providing us with clean fresh water.

The battle against water privatisation is an important one for us all.

A defeat for the introduction of water charges in the North would be a major set back to similar plans held by the FF/PD government.

See People and Planet: <http://www.peopleandplanet.net>
Report: "Water Privatisation Fiascos: Broken Promises and Social Turmoil" <http://www.citizen.org/documents/privatizationfiascos.pdf>



Would a US withdrawal create a bloodbath?

By Kevin Wingfield

Member of the Steering Committee of the Irish Anti War Movement, in a personal capacity.

Many people who opposed the war in Iraq still fear that a US withdrawal would intensify sectarian conflict and create a bloodbath.

There can be no denying the increased sectarian conflict, especially over the last year.

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 50,000 Iraqis a month are fleeing from their homes and two million Iraqis have fled abroad in fear of their lives.

The UN says Iraqis are being killed at the rate of 3,000 every month.

Independent and Financial Times journalist Patrick Cockburn reported at the beginning of February, 'there are fewer mixed areas left in Iraq. In Baghdad, militias now feel free to use mortars to bombard each other knowing that they will not hit members of their own community. Shia and Sunni both regard themselves as victims responding to provocation. The most common destinations are Jordan and Syria, which have taken 1.6 million people.'

'At first it was the better-off who fled, including half of Iraq's 34,000 doctors. Now it is the poor who are arriving in Amman and Damascus with little means of surviving.'

But although the picture is grim, it has to be remembered that this situation is a direct result of the US occupation.

Outside of officially promoted divide and rule tactics—whether the British in the early 20th Century or Saddam's campaign against Shia clerics—Iraqis have little history of serious sectarian conflict.

The US mounted the invasion of Iraq in 2003 with a relatively small military force. It depended on massive bombing and hi-tech weaponry to accomplish the invasion.

It is generally reckoned that a ratio of one soldier to every 50 civilians is necessary to secure the occupation of a country. This would require between five hundred thousand to a million US troops in Iraq. Such a number would require the reintroduction of the draft in the US. The political consequences of that have so far proved too dreadful for the US rulers to contemplate.

The occupation has instead relied on



War planners: Stephen Hadley and Condoleezza Rice

A secret memo from National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, published by the New York Times in November revealed US plans. The all-out war between Sistani's and al-Sadr's forces that the US is promoting will further cause untold carnage.

stirring up sectarian tensions and using sectarian political parties and militias.

As Patrick Cockburn has pointed out, 'whatever the Iraqis called a state, the US had largely dissolved or taken over its functions. It dissolved the army, it dissolved the Baath party, it dissolved the institutions to which all Sunnis and Shias belonged.'

The key local force that the US has relied upon is Sistani's Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

Ironically, SCIRI was set up by Iran in 1982 during the Iran-Iraq war. SCIRI was a member of the U.S.-sponsored Iraqi Opposition Coordinating Committee formed prior to the March 2003 invasion. It served on the U.S.-selected Iraq Governing Council and has supported the occupation for the most part (and relies on it for protection). It controls the Interior Ministry from which many of the sectarian death squads are organised. It runs the Badr Brigade.

According to analyst A. K. Gupta, 'Badr operates death squads under the banner of special police commandos. Beginning in 2004, U.S. forces organised, trained, and equipped the police commandos, drawing from former Hussein-era security forces to create a neo-Baathist militia and death squad that would hunt Sunni insurgents.'

'Under the Iraq government that took power in April 2005, Bayan Jabr, a former high-ranking commander in the Badr Brigade, took control of the commandos as head of the Interior

Ministry. Jabr ousted Sunni personnel in the commandos, putting in place up to 3,000 Badr militiamen and they quickly began a reign of terror against Sunnis in general.'

To describe the conflict in Iraq as purely a civil war is therefore an oversimplification. As Sami Ramadani points out, 'there are Iraqis who are working with the US and they are part of the overall conflict. But if one thinks of Vietnam, the Vietnamese Liberation forces were fighting the South Vietnamese government as well as the US forces that backed them. So on one level it was a form of civil war and on the other it was a conflict against occupation.'

'I think the occupation has succeeded in making religious, ethnic and sectarian tensions in Iraq worse. Differences between these groups have existed for hundreds of years, but have never in Iraq's history led to communal civil wars. There were chauvinist wars against the Kurdish people, and there were wars conducted against this or that sect. But these were all state-inspired, state-led rather than communal in the sense of people in the street targeting each other based on any of these differences.'

'The US has followed a conscious policy of elevating these differences by using death squads and financing sectarian political forces. US generals are on the record admitting the existence of US personnel in death squads belonging to Special Forces.'

Opinion surveys have shown sectarian opinions among Iraqis to be not at all widespread. Outside the Kurdish areas the overwhelming majority oppose the division of Iraq on sectarian lines. Those who strongly support such separation amount to only 2-7% outside Kurdish areas. The majority of Iraqis oppose the US occupation of their country and 61% of Iraqis approve of attacks on US-led forces.

Of course nobody can honestly claim that period of inter-communal strife after a US withdrawal is impossible, the question is whether a prolonged US occupation can possibly be imagined to reduce rather than stoke up sectarianism.

Bush's recent announcement of a 'surge' in US deployments in Iraq is focused on one of two possible strategies. One is called the 80 percent solution. 80 percent of the population is either Shia or Kurdish. US strategists now

talk of fomenting a civil war to destroy the Shia by coming to an arrangement with the hostile Sunni community and their political leaders. This would, of course, entail a blood bath even more horrific than anything seen so far, but would have the advantage of permitting the US to hang on to some influence in the country.

What is more certain is that the additional US troops will be used to crush radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army. Sadr is a popular leader among the Shia poor of Baghdad's sprawling Sadr City and the south of the country. Al-Sadr has in the past sought to unite Iraqis, despite the fact that some of his supporters have been involved in sectarian attacks.

For example, when the US launched the ferocious assault on the Sunni city of Fallujah two years ago, al-Sadr organised for their aid. At the moment al-Sadr, although an opponent of the US occupation, has 30 deputies in the Iraq parliament which constitute an important pillar of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government.

A secret memo from National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, published by the *New York Times* in November, revealed the White House plans, with the Bush administration wanting to reshuffle Maliki's coalition so that it does not need the support of assembly members loyal to Sadr. Because this action would lead to 'major Shia disturbances in southern Iraq' the Hadley's memo recommended that the United States 'provide Maliki with additional forces of some kind', hence the surge.

A. K. Gupta has concluded from this that 'Hadley wrote this memo on November 8 and the plan is now being put into play. On the one hand is the political component: Sadr's forces shut out in the National Assembly; on the other the U.S. military would try to wipe out Sadr's Mahdi Army militia.' The all-out war between Sistani's and al-Sadr's forces that the US is promoting will further cause untold carnage, yet this is essentially the US plan.

Every day the US occupation remains the poison of sectarian strife is further injected as imperial policy. This means that the US can play no role in reducing the sectarian killings other than getting out, and getting out fast. That is why the anti war movement internationally has to continue to demand immediate US withdrawal from Iraq.

Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness

By Gavin Kostick

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Joseph Conrad (1857 – 1924), seafarer and novelist. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* was first published in episodes in 1899. Though the narrator Charlie Marlowe, and based on his own experiences, Conrad tells the story of a steamboat journey upriver through the Congo to find the enigmatic Mr Kurtz. It is the book on which *Apocalypse Now* is based.

It is undoubtedly a racist work. It is racist to the modern reader through its casual use of unpleasant terms – he would certainly be kicked out of the *Big Brother House* – and more crucially through representing the black indigenous peoples of the Congo as little more than a virtually incomprehensible extension or expression of untamed Nature.

In the book, white men and women have a voice, black people – with the notable exception of the words 'Mr Kurtz, he dead' – do not. Why then should we bother with it?

The first answer is, as with most questions about literature, because it is exceptionally well written in and of itself. It is short, subtle, gripping and nightmarish. The second answer is that it is impossible to read and not grasp that the book is a sustained, detailed and savage attack on the imperial genocide carried out by Belgian colonists on the black population.

It is a work that may make the reader uncomfortable at times, but its central achievement in exposing colonialist exploitation is devastating. The critique of the book holds resonance today.

In 1884, Leopold II (1835 – 1909) King of Belgium, had brokered an extraordinary deal in Berlin, whereby he gained personal sovereignty of the specially invented Congo Free State: an area 76 times the size of his own country.

That is by the terms of the deal, he could do whatever he wanted with it and with its people, without reference to his own parliament even (there was of course, no consideration given to whether the people of the Congo wanted a white king).

It turned out that what Leopold wanted to do was set up companies to ransack the country for as much profit they could get. During the period of his rule, which lasted until 1908, it is estimated that anything from 2 to 15 million people were killed. This says nothing of the appalling misery, mutilation and dislocation suffered by many more.

All for the vast profits to be made from ivory and rubber, and smothered under a thick layer – recognised at the time by Conrad for what it was – of a disgusting philanthropic hypocrisy. *Heart of Darkness* is an absolutely devastating attack on the destruction and hypocrisy of white European adventurers in Africa.

It is as if, at some future date, a highly-literate white, American Neo-Con who had gone out with Haliburton to Iraq full of idealistic notions about the superiority of his people and his cause, were to come back, shamed, changed and furious at what he had perceived.

He might still be full of unpleasant language and reductive notions about the 'natives', but the whole thrust of his anger and purpose would be to bring to the attention of the world of the disgraceful behaviour of the West. His anger would only be doubled and redoubled by the perception that the worst of the crimes are committed, not by those who simply wish to exploit the situation for profit – morally rotten as they are – but by those who profess to have the best concerns of the inhabitants at heart.

It is the abject failure of those who try to impose top-down ideologies which is the true destroyer of a county.

This highly charged political sense of the book, an anti-imperialist critique by 'one of our own', is the spirit with which Conrad's original readership took the work. Indeed it was Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* along with the reports of Roger Casement (later of Irish gun-running fame), whose works were key in bringing a shocking truth to an appalled public and helped to break Leopold's grip on his own private colony.

After reducing the population of the Congo from 20-30 million to less than 9 million over 23 years, he finally gave it over to the Belgian government in 1908; though not without a hefty payout for his good works.

As a beautifully crafted, exceptionally perceptive, morally raging and politically incisive work, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is worth its place on the shelf.

Gavin Kostick is Literary Officer of Fishamble Theatre Company.



Joseph Conrad

FILM

The babble of modern civilisation

By Karen McCormack

The Bible says God was angry when a united humanity tried to reach heaven by building a tower. Observing the unity of humanity in the construction, he stopped the work by devising different languages that made understanding impossible. It became known as The Tower of Babel, meaning noise, confusion and miscommunication.

The brilliant Mexican director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu and screenwriter Guillermo Arriaga, following on their success with films such as *Amores Perros* and *21 Grams*, have applied the concept of Babel to the way we live now, in a world threatened and divided by fear.

Babel tells four interconnected stories through five languages. It has a large, international, multiracial, multi-class cast mixing professional and non-professional actors.

From the comfortable suburban neighbourhoods of San Diego, to the poverty across the Mexican border, this film takes on issues such as globalisation, language, class, the 'war on terror' and the babble of modern civilization.

There is the jangle of different languages and dialects across four countries, sign language is introduced and the time frames are splintered always adding to the disorientation.

The story follows several characters: Richard and Susan on holidays in Morocco to mend their own marital problems; their Mexican Nanny, Amelia, taking care of their other two young children; an isolated family of goat herders who live in the harsh conditions of the Moroccan desert hills and a rebellious deaf Japanese teenage girl, Chieko.

Chieko has been traumatized by the recent suicide of her mother and a sense that she is not even seen by others. This is shown in her frustrated scenes of interaction with her father. Rinko Kikuchi is outstanding in



Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu and Brad Pitt on the set of Babel.

Photo by Murray Close

her role.

She engages in a series of provocative sexual acts to attract the attention she is not receiving from her uncommunicative father.

The sight of her, standing naked and vulnerable on a high-rise balcony while a noisy city oblivious to her bustles down below is unforgettable.

It is in Morocco that the pivotal event occurs which changes the lives of all the characters forever. Susan is shot in the shoulder whilst on a tour bus.

The bullet comes from a young boy's gun while he is out hunting jackals.

While she lies bleeding and near death in the humble home of their sympathetic local guide in a remote rural village, Richard and the guide try to arrange treatment and evacuation.

Richard phones and directs his rage to the U.S. embassy and the accidental shooting is media-hyped into a terrorist incident.

Because of the accident Ame-

lia is forced to take care of the children longer than anticipated. Unable to find another babysitter, she takes them across the border with her nephew Santiago to attend her son's wedding in Mexico.

The image of Amelia stranded at the Mexican border, a victim of Bush's immigration policy is heartbreaking.

The bureaucratically numb police officers of the Border Patrol and Homeland Security are intent on stopping and deporting the nanny, but are unable to process the detailed and touching human elements of the situation.

From the Mexican Border to the terrorist hunt in the Moroccan hills confusion and miscommunication stop these human catastrophes from being solved, usually exacerbated by those in position of authority.

It is a beautifully crafted, ambitious and thought-provoking film but unfortunately there is nothing triumphant in Babel. Humanity merely suffers while

the rich and powerful thrive.

It gives us heart-wrenching scenes, but it does not inspire us with any hope of success or change. It conveys a hopeless, pessimistic future for the interconnected world that it portrays and we are left with the sadness of survivors mourning their loss, those whose lives are overwhelmed by fate and a feeling that we are all passive with little chance of making change.

Just look at the ordinary working people rising up in Mexico in the past few months to see how untrue this sentiment is.

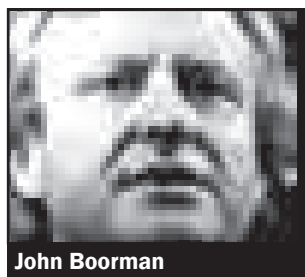
Babel is, however, an ambitious masterpiece from a director whose each effort re-enforces his international reputation and is certainly a welcome antidote to the contrived, scripty Crash.

It is this complex storytelling, forceful character development, and superb cinematography which has Babel picking up Golden Globes, nominated for The Palme D'Or and seven academy awards.

Marxism 2007: Festival of Resistance

The Marxism 2007 weekend festival on March 9-11, will see debates on everything from Global Warming to the Left movements in Latin America to the new US offensive in the Middle East. It's also a chance to find out about Karl Marx's ideas from economics to alienation and how they relate to today's world.

The introductions are by some of the best speakers on the Left today. We will have over 40 meetings, workshops, film screenings and discussions. This year we'll also have a culture café with theatre workshops, art and photographic exhibitions.



John Boorman

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

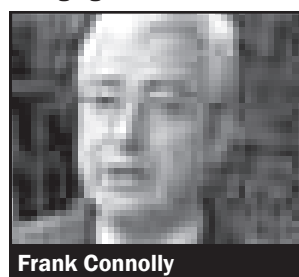
Richard Boyd Barrett, chair of the Irish Anti-War Movement, Haifa Zangana from the Iraqi Democrats Against Occupation, and others ask are we seeing a re-

run of Vietnam with The US's gamble for power in Iraq?



David McWilliams

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



Frank Connolly

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

Duncan Stewart, presenter of RTE's *Eco-Eye*, Eamon Ryan Green Party TD and Owen McCormack from the SWP



ask Can Capitalism stop Global Warming?



Bernadette McAlliskey

Bernadette McAlliskey looks at the politics of

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

Tickets: are only €20 normal price, €10 for students and unemployed and €5 for school students. You can buy your ticket online at www.swp.ie or from our ticketline: (01) 872 2682.

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New Left Journal

Winter 2006



Journal produced by the Socialist Workers Party

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SHELL TO SEA CAMPAIGN

Opposition to Shell is growing in Mayo

Over 450 people from around county Mayo gathered in Castlebar to support the Shell To Sea Campaign.

The occasion was a fund raising night of music in a local hotel which took at the end of January.

The event was a huge success in raising finances and in raising awareness of the issues. There was an excellent line up of traditional musicians, including Liam O'Maonlai of Hothouse Flowers and Ronan O'Snogaigh of Kila, making for a vibrant night of sounds and dance.

The crowd was very young and for many of them this was their first time to get involved in the campaign in any way.

Mark Garavan from the local campaign spoke alongside Vincent McGrath on behalf of the Rosspoint Five. There was rapturous applause for the five when they appeared together on stage and a huge endorsement of their demands to send Shell to sea.

Mark Garavan told the crowd that the renewed growth of the campaign in Mayo was



Vincent McGrath (left) of the Rosspoint Five

very encouraging. There are now active local action groups functioning in Ballina, Castlebar and Westport, as well

as the main Shell to Sea campaign in Erris.

The occasion was also used to help build support for the upcoming

Day of Solidarity in Bellinaboy on 16th February and the National Demonstration in Dublin on February 24th.

ROSSPOINT 5 BOOK TOUR

The Rosspoint 5 will be touring the country in February to promote their book, *Our Story*.

The book, which will be launched in Britain later in February and in

America in April, sold out its first print run. Easons, whose stores are expected to host some of the events during the tour, have ordered an extra 3000 copies.

Details of the tour will be announced in local media.

For more details about the publication see <http://www.activelink.ie/ce/active.php?id=1390>

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT ALLIANCE

On the campaign trail in Ballyfermot

Canvassers are reporting a very positive response to the People Before Profit election campaign on the doorsteps.

Canvassing teams have been getting around the estates in Ballyfermot on Monday and Wednesday nights and more and more canvassers are coming out each week.

Newsletters have been distributed all over Ballyfermot, Inchicore and Rialto.

The issues that are current in the area are the proposed new housing project in Cherry Orchard, the loss of services for senior citizens, the closure of Crumlin Hospital and the fight against the bin tax.

People Before Profit meet in Ballyfermot and in Inchicore each fortnight.

The last meeting was attended by Councillor Joan Collins from the Crumlin Kimmage ward who is running

in the election alongside Brid Smith. Both candidates are calling for a transfer of votes in the hope of taking at least one seat in the South Central constituency.

Around 35 people attended the meeting and also heard a detailed account of why Harney's plans will not fix our health service from Dr. Peadar O'Grady, author of a recent booklet on Why the Irish Health Service is in Crisis.

After a full interesting discussion it was decided to campaign all over the constituency against the closure of Crumlin Hospital.

Regardless of the arguments on the re-location of the National Childrens Hospital, it was agreed that we should fight to ensure that Crumlin remains open as a hospital/health centre for the area.

Two public meetings have been organised to defend

Crumlin Hospital, in Inchicore and Rialto.

It was also agreed to host a public meeting in support of the Nurses dispute in their campaign for a 35 hour week and a 10% pay increase at the end of February.

There was a lot of interest in the upcoming demonstration to support the demands of the Shell to Sea campaign with everyone taking away leaflets to distribute in their workplace.



People Before Profit Alliance candidate Brid Smith

WHAT'S ON IN GALWAY

Thurs 15 February, 'The Fight Against Empire: Then and Now'
6.30pm NUI Galway
Hosted by Galway Alliance Against War.

Thurs 15 February, 'An Audience With Bob Doyle'
8.30pm Galway Arts Centre, Dominick St., Galway
Hosted by Galway Labour History Group.
Seventy years after the Spanish Civil War, guest speaker Bob Doyle

is the only surviving Irish veteran to have joined the fight against Franco's fascists. He will address the meeting with Harry Owens, co-author of his book 'Brigadista'. The film 'Spanish Earth' will also be shown.

Thursday 22 February 'Meet Members of the Raytheon 9'
7.30pm NUI Galway
Nine anti-war protesters disrupted business at Raytheon arms factory, Derry

during the Israeli attacks on Lebanon. They have been charged with scheduled offences; this allows the state to prosecute in front of a Judge and no jury (the notorious Diplock court system).

Also, showing 'Back From Beirut', a documentary of the Derry Anti-War Coalition solidarity visit to Lebanon. Come along to hear them: stopping war crimes is not a crime.



LETTER

A chara, In 1995 Relatives For Justice, a group formed by people who had loved ones killed directly or indirectly by the British state, published a 57-page pamphlet entitled Collusion.

It raised serious questions surrounding murders by Unionist Paramilitaries in the early 1990s; from Sam Marshall's killing in Lurgan in March 1990 to John O'Hanlon's murder in September 1994 in North Belfast. You the media ignored this pamphlet.

I vividly remember in 1995 the hostility RFJ members received from the southern political establishment when we addressed the Forum for

Peace and Reconciliation. They simply didn't want to know about Britain's shoot-to-kill policy or its policy of collusion with Unionist murder gangs. For these reasons I find the surprised outrage now being expressed disgusting.

Of course, there are the southern politicians who feign concern. Martin Finucane, whose brother Pat was murdered by British agents, dubbed it the nodding dog syndrome. And no doubt these nodding dogs, when they had the temerity to raise shoot-to-kill and collusion with their British betters accepted their assurances that no such murderous

practices were taking place.

Just like the Irish government accepts the assurances from Bush and Rice that no prisoners are being flown through Shannon airport onto Guantanamo or worse.

However, if it was Irish republicans not US republicans behind the CIA and military flights, you can bet RTE's Tommie Gorman would be a permanent fixture in Shannon airport and Michael McDowell would be down personally searching those planes. Nothing but the same old story but the truth will out.

Is mise, **N. Farrell, Co. Galway**

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Holiday Entitlements

By John Kavanagh

All employees working in the Republic of Ireland are entitled to four working weeks of paid holidays in a year. Holidays are earned and calculated on time worked by the employee.

Employees who work less than 117 hours in a month earn their holidays at the rate of 8% of hours worked, up to a maximum of four working weeks in a year.

Employees who work more than 117 hours in a month earn their holidays at the rate of one third of a working week per month worked.

For example an employee working five days per week earns 1.67(1 2/3) days holidays per month worked, similarly an employee working four days per week earns holidays at the rate of 1.33(1 1/3) days per month worked.

However, no annual leave or statutory holiday entitlement is accrued if a worker is out on sick leave. Holidays are only earned on time worked, time spent on annual leave, time spent on maternity leave, additional maternity leave, parental leave, force majeure leave, adoptive leave and time spent on the first 13 weeks of carers leave.

In relation to entitlement to Public Holidays only full-time employees have an immediate entitlement to benefit from a Public Holiday.

Part-time employees must have worked a total of 40 hours over a five-week period ending immediately before the Public Holiday to qualify.

There are nine Public Holidays in a calendar year:

1 January; St. Patrick's Day (17 March); Easter Monday; the first Monday in May; the first Monday in June; the first Monday in August; the last Monday in October;

Christmas Day (25 December); St. Stephen's Day (26 December).

If the public holiday falls on a day on which you would normally work you will be entitled to one of the following:

1. A paid day off on that day
2. A paid day off within a month of the day
3. An additional day of annual leave
4. An additional days pay

If your employer does not nominate one of the above options, you will automatically be entitled to a paid day off on the day of the Public Holiday.

If the Public Holiday falls on a day on which you do not normally work then you will be entitled to 1/5 of your normal weekly wage as payment for the Public Holiday.

However, this is only the statutory minimum entitlement to holidays, many workers especially in trade union organised workplaces enjoy additional holiday entitlements, for example: extra leave based on years of service, extra leave entitlement for working shift or additional company holidays, for example: Christmas Eve and Good Friday.

Complaints in relation to holidays and Public Holidays can be made to a Rights Commissioner under the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997, this is best done through a Trade Union.

The best way of ensuring your holiday entitlements are upheld or even enhanced is by strong union organisation in your workplace.

Due to the detailed and complex entitlements in relation to Holidays and the limited amount of space available here, the holiday entitlement as it applies in Northern Ireland will be published in this column in the next issue of Socialist Worker.

Got an industrial relations question for John Kavanagh? Send it to editor@swp.ie

WATERFORD

Brewery development contested

Waterford Council of Trade Unions have presented an official submission to Waterford City Council Planning Department on the proposed Brewery development.

They have made the case that the development will make the quality of life for local residents worse as a result of increased traffic; loss of light and damage to the history and heritage of the site.

They argued that the development is inappropriate for Waterford, being out of character with the existing streetscape.

Local residents have formed a campaign, one that is offering an alternative plan for the development of the area.



Our picture shows the Trades Council's John Cluno and Dick Roche of Waterford Trades Council with the publication of

the Trades Council's policy on the Brewery Development proposal.

For further infor-

mation contact John Cloono, Vice-President Waterford Council of Trade Unions Tel: -

BOYCOTT COKE CAMPAIGN

Trinity students prepare for referendum

By Eoin Martin

Students in Trinity College are battling this month to continue a much-publicised and much commended ban on the sale of Coca-Cola products in its student union shop.

A referendum is due to be held on the issue on 6 March.

Groups on the left within the college are campaigning to maintain the ban.

It was implemented four years ago in protest at Coca-Cola's practices in Colombia. Coca-Cola's subsidiary Kofemsa is licensed to produce and distribute Coca-Cola products in Central America.

The company has a horrific record of rights abuse and outright violence against trade unions in its plants.

On the 12 May 1996, a union leader, Isidro Segurdo Gil was shot by thugs in a successful attempt to intimidate the trade union in the plant of Carepa.

Membership of the union fell from 1,300 to 450. In 2001 the International Labour Rights Fund, United Steelworkers Union and Sinaltral (the union in the plant itself) filed suit against the Coca-Cola

Corporation for abuses committed by right-wing paramilitary groups in the company's plant.

Despite this, no one has yet been held accountable for the murders.

The Corporation was widely criticised across the globe for its abuse of human rights in Columbia, and in other countries such as India, Turkey and Indonesia.

In a pitiful attempt to stamp out anger at its actions the corporation launched a public relations drive, rather than actually change their ways.

Their website now includes a prominent section on the issue of 'corporate responsibility'.

Before informing the reader that 1.3 billion Coca-Cola Corporation products are drunk each day, the website goes on to talk about the corporation's responsibilities.

The Trinity College Student Union has been recognised globally as an important attempt to voice the widespread disgust felt at the company's actions and to show that a P.R. gloss is not a satisfactory response.

The importance of the ban lies not in any financial harm it inflicts on Coca-Cola (Coca-Cola products are sold in

Trinity's catering facilities).

The ban's importance is one of principle.

It sends a very public message to people across the nation and around the world that people will not tolerate such behaviour.

If you want to see

Coca-Cola's website regarding Corporate Responsibility, go to: www.thecoca-colacompany.com/citizenship/.

If you want to see the evidence stacked against the Coca-Cola Corporation then go to: www.killercoke.org

TRALEE DAYSCHOOL

RESIST 07 A Day of Real Politics in Tralee

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



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

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

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

INDUSTRIAL NEW

DUBLIN PORTS

Workers in Dublin Port have made an important advance against a Thatcherite management that has attacked their conditions for years.

The workers have faced constant pressure for more flexibility which has meant that the workforce has halved in recent years. 'Every time they want more, they bring in a consultant' is how one worker put it.

The final straw came when TEEU members refused a management instruction and were suspended.

They placed pickets and SIPTU members also took a ballot to place an 'All-Out picket on the port'. Some SIPTU members also joined the strike immediately.

The result was that suspensions were lifted and the whole matter was referred to the Labour Court.

UCD STAFF

Staff in UCD staged a novel protest by turning up at the clinic of the Minister for Education to express anger at not getting a 3 percent pay rise.

Most public sector workers are unaware that they no longer entitles to get a pay rise to compensate for the rise inflation, currently at 5 percent. Instead they have to submit 'action plans' to a special committee located in the Department of Education, - the Education Sector performance Verification Group.

This committee imposed an effective wage cut because they said staff were not giving enough 'measurable outputs'.

UCD staff are re-submitting an action plan and if it is refused again there could be major conflict at the college.

WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

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

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

REVOLUTION

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

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

greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

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

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

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION

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

working class.

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

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

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

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

We want to see an Irish workers republic where all

workers gain.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

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

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

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

Join the Socialists

Fill in the form and send to

SWP PO Box 1648 Dublin 8

Name.....

Address.....

Email.....

Phone.....



WHY WE ARE STANDING IN THE ELECTION

Eamonn McCann



The Socialist Environmental Alliance is not running in the election just to make a point. We are in to win a seat, and we believe it can be done.

It's assumed the only issue is whether Sinn Fein and the DUP will consolidate their positions. We don't accept this. We are convinced that there is a seat in Foyle for the SEA and we will campaign in every part of the constituency to deliver it.

We have put the issue of water charges at the top of our agenda. There are many thousands of people across the North in favour of non-payment. But there hasn't been a single MLA supporting them. That's a travesty. We need a loud voice in the Assembly speaking up for non-payment. I am the only candidate in Foyle who will do this.

We need the anti-war movement represented in Stormont, speaking for all who are angry at unlimited expenditure on war, while the government pleads poverty when it comes to public services. [READ MORE > PAGE 4](#)

Seán Mitchell



Seán Mitchell has already made history in the Northern Ireland elections by forcing the Northern Ireland Office to accept him as a candidate.

Seán, 19, had fallen foul of the fact that the NIO had opted out of a law allowing young people in England, Scotland and Wales to run for office.

Socialist Worker asked Seán how the NIO came to change their mind. 'After being selected to stand I contacted the electoral office and at first they were not sure of the situation, because there had been the legislation allowing anyone over 18 to stand for election in Scotland, England and Wales.

"Effectively they were disenfranchising those between 18 and 21 in Northern Ireland, which is ironic given all the talk about Asbos and anti-social behaviour.

The Government was denying young people the chance to engage in the political process. [READ MORE > PAGE 4](#)