

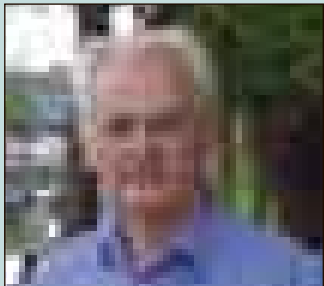
## INSIDE:

How the Roma were 'welcomed'



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Gormley leads the retreat of the Greens

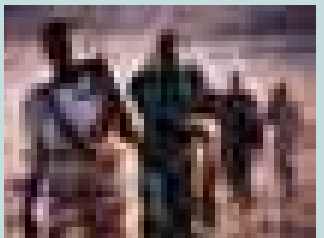


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# HARNEY'S HEALTHCARE MADNESS

Waiting Room



By Niall Smyth

Fianna Fail is hiding behind the 'PD mask' to push the private 'for-profit' model of Healthcare in Ireland.

Despite watching her party go into meltdown in the recent election, Mary Harney is, once again, in charge of our health service. The result, which saw the Progressive Democrats collapse from having eight to just two seats, was a clear rejection of the party and their right-wing neoliberal policies.

Harney, however, continues to insult us all and display just how out of touch her experience is with that of patients in public hospitals.

Mary Harney recently told the Dáil that she knew someone who had been treated on a trolley in hospital who found the experience a 'pleasant' one. That same week, according to INO figures, an average of 164 patients lay on trolleys in hospitals across Ireland, reaching 252 at one stage during the week.

Despite talk of improvements, this figure differs little from figures taken for 2006. She continues to preside over a health service in crisis. In a country where financial institu-

tions such as Bank of Ireland churn out profits of €1.9 Billion and enjoy a low tax regime, this is a disgrace.

The PDs have long been used as the scapegoat by a Fianna Fail government who, despite Bertie's protestations of his socialist credentials, share the same vision for the Irish Health Service. The Fianna Fail led government's solution is the imposition of a new privatised 'for-profit' American model of health care to further line the pockets of the rich elite.

This so-called 'solution' stems from Harney's Thatcherite neoliberal politics. The basis of neoliberalism is to remove all regulations that restrict the ability of companies to make profit. It promotes the idea that the market, left to its own devices, will provide the best possible services.

For the government this means the run-down of public facilities, the promotion of private medicine, the privatisation of state agencies like the VHI and the entry of private 'for-profit' health insurers and private 'for-profit' hospitals, Nursing Homes and Community Clinics into a 'health marketplace'.

The mantra of the government continues to be that funding the health service is like trying

to fill a bottomless pit or 'black hole'. However, when in 2001, Deloitte and Touche, were sent in to investigate this black hole, the report was quietly put aside, as it reported the need for more funding instead.

The reality is that the health service crisis is a result of the cutbacks in the 1980s and 1990s, which resulted in a massive shortage of beds and staff.

These issues were clearly articulated by nurses during their recent dispute.

The bed capacity deficit has its origins in the cutbacks of previous decades when 5,000 acute beds were cut.

These beds have never been replaced despite a promise in the Government's Health Strategy (2001) to replace 3000 beds. With an increasing population and that population rightfully having increasing expectations from its health service, the system has been thrown into today's utter chaos.

In the overcrowded A&E Departments queues of sick patients wait for days on trolleys for a bed on a ward, without even a semblance of privacy, unable to get rest in the chaos of what seems at times like a war zone.

TURN TO PAGE 3

## THE THINGS THEY SAY

**'We are first and foremost concerned about attempts to manipulate the Irish public with a blend of untrue declarations and distortions of fact.'**

Romanian Ambassador Silvia Stancu Davidoiu fails to come clean on her government's mistreatment of Roma people

**'Naturally I'm reviewing this case, to see if organisations which are funded by the exchequer here are performing their correct roles.'**

Minister for Justice Brian Lenihan threatens Pavee Point for their support of the Roma people at the M50 roundabout.

**'The Arabs call the war the nakba, a war of catastrophe, loss and humiliation, and the Jews call it the Independence War.'**

The words in a third grade textbook approved by the Israeli Minister for Education for use in state's Arabs schools which has caused outrage among right wing Israelis who claimed it was anti-Semitic and would spur Arab revolt.

**'I feel very strongly that economic links to America have made us very blind to the moral issues. Many people in Irish society were questioning, and for a while the Green Party were very much to the fore in questioning it, but I think as a nation there has not been sufficient questioning of these rendition flights and the link of Ireland with the war in Iraq, whether we like it or not.'**

Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin Most Rev John Neill in a Hot Press interview.

**'We would recognise frustrations and that some people have issues that are very close to their hearts. But we would hope to convince party members that we're achieving the vast majority of our policies in Government.'**

A Green Party spokesman responds to growing unease among sections of the party at the performance in government so far.

**'The cynical-clinical clones of construction seem to think that we're some kind of clowns. So we've got to pull together through this stormy weather to make those money-mad-men back down.'**

Lyrics from Liam O Maonlai's 'Tara's Eye', released in support of campaigners against the M3 route through Tara and available on Myspace.com/songfortara.

**'A clear concern that the experience of regeneration to date in Ballymun has eroded, rather**

**than enforced the community's social capital.'**

Ballymun Community Organisations Network (BCON) report, Building for Change, outlines some problems with the Ballymun regeneration experience.

**'This is a very skilled, respected, historic figure who is absolutely dedicated to democracy, to building a better Middle East.'**

US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice endorsing Tony Blair as Middle East envoy.

**'Appointing Tony Blair as special envoy for Arab-Israeli peace is something like appointing the Emperor Nero to be the chief fireman of Rome.'**

A columnist in Beirut's Daily Star.

**'Sure I have appeared at tribunals so many times it's like going to Croke Park.'**

Bertie Ahern tries to laugh off the growing questions about his finances. His tribunal appearance has been postponed until September.

**'There will be no integration without deportation. I don't want people to think just because a new Minister for Integration has been appointed, the doors are going to be flung open and Ireland is going to have open, unrestricted migration.'**

Conor Lenihan, junior minister with responsibility for integration, who received previous notoriety for referring to Turkish people as kebabs in the Dail.

**'This is the worst it's ever been for veterans, and it's only going to get worse.'**

Attorney Gordon Erspamer who filed a class-action lawsuit against the US Veteran Affairs Secretary Jim Nicholson Monday for denying mental health treatment and disability pay to Iraq war veterans.

**'[Social workers] deal with impossibly large caseloads, in a climate of scarce resources and crisis management.'**

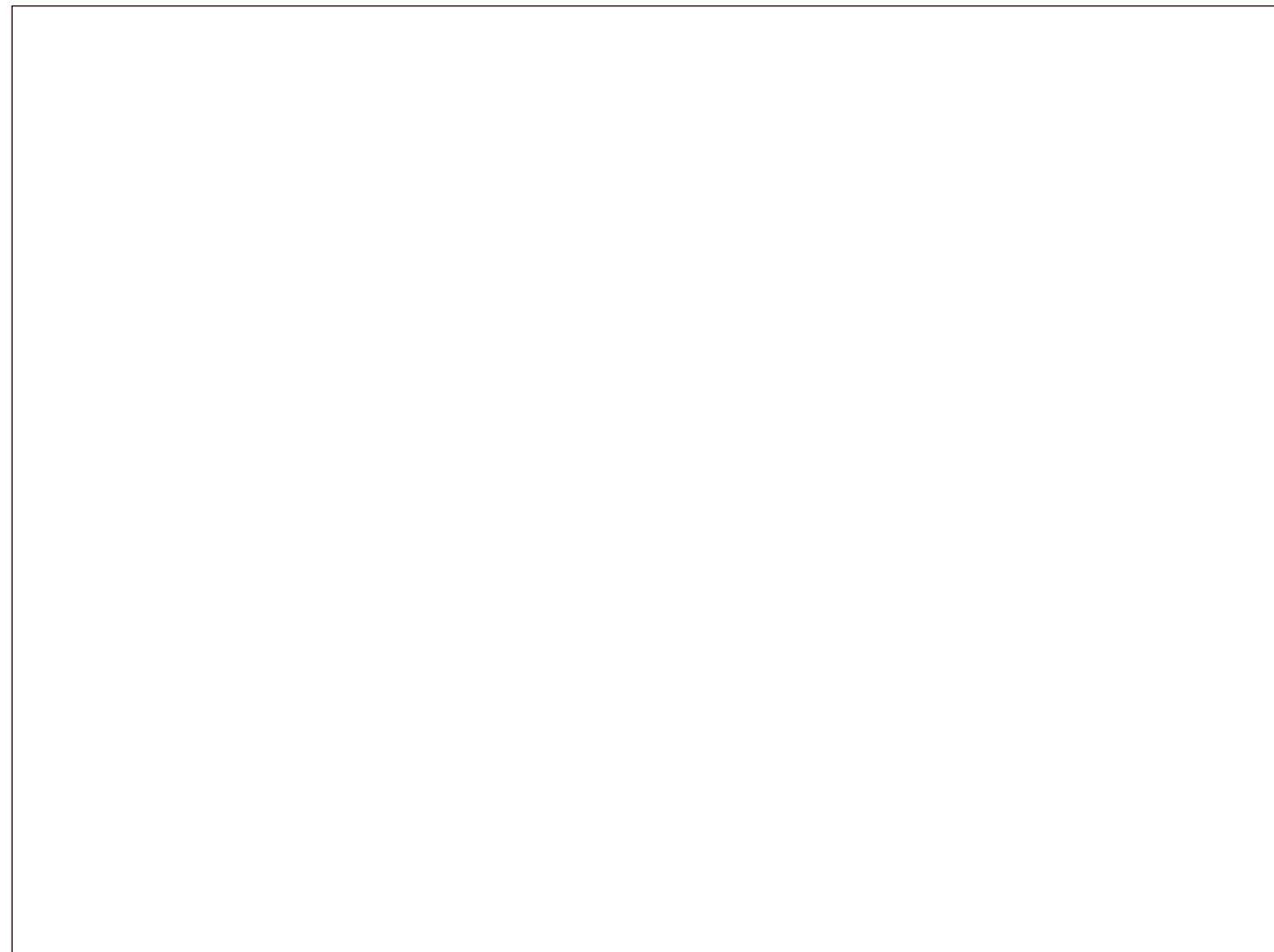
Judge Conal Gibbons in a paper on childcare, published in the Courts Service's Family Law Matters report.

**'The city council came up with the Ballsbridge scheme and the local councillors voted it down. They're not planners, or architects, they're only looking after their own vested interests.'**

Architects firm ELM cricising councillors for representing local opposition to large scale development in the Ballsbridge area.

## TERENCE WHEELLOCK:

# Will the investigation really get to the truth?



### Terence Wheelock: found dead in a cell at Store Street Garda station two years ago

Nearly two years have passed since twenty-year-old Terence Wheelock was found dead in a cell at Store Street Garda station.

Over those two years the family has fought tirelessly for a public investigation to answer crucial questions regarding Terence's death.

Why was he left unsupervised with cord, from his tracksuit bottoms - with which he purportedly hung

himself - when it is standard practice to remove such items?

Why was the fitting to which the cord was attached replaced before the Wheelock family's legal team could view it?

Why were his personal belongings removed and their return to the family delayed?

Why did the Gardai refuse access to medical records

and other documents?

Now it seems, these questions might be addressed. The first 'public interest' investigation to be launched by the new Garda Ombudsman Commission will take up this case.

Larry Wheelock, Terence's brother, said 'the family are delighted and it gives us the feeling that eventually we may get some justice for Terence.'

But the inquiry might limit itself to investigating whether there was a failure by the Garda to supervise Terence and not press for answers to the darker questions and concerns that he was mistreated while in custody.

It will be a crucial test of the new commission and of whether the Garda are now more accountable than before its creation.

## INSIDE THE SYSTEM

☠ According to the HSE, 40,000 operations were cancelled between 2004 and mid-2006. The trend is continuing. 2,837 were cancelled in the last two months.

☠ A Department of Finance briefing paper reveals that 'it is not clear what the cost will be of using any public beds freed by the creation of new private hospitals, whether the case mix will change or whether staff and equipment costs will rise.'

☠ This is quite an admission from a government that is going full steam ahead with its plans to hand over public land to facilitate the extension of private health care in Ireland.

☠ It has recently emerged that the €400 million treatment centres, equipped with the latest radiation technology to treat public patients, promised for opening in 2011, will not be ready until 2014.

☠ A report by the European Social and Research Institute reveals that while the difference in pay between men and women in Ireland appears to have decreased in recent times (to 9% last year), there remains a substantial difference between men and women's wages in the private sector where in firms with more than 10 people, women earned 26% less per hour than men.

☠ The proposal for a €200 million private healthcare park in Co Offaly, put forward by John Flanagan Developments, looks set to get planning permission.

The venture will be 'effectively a co-location' although the land is privately owned according to Denis Doherty, healthcare adviser to John Flanagan Developments. Doherty is former chief executive of the Midlands Health Board.

☠ Now that the election is over, the

Department of Finance can get tough. In its July budget strategy memo ministers were told that the large increases in public spending in recent years will have to be substantially scaled back in the coming year.

☠ Government plans to introduce legislation to regulate employment agencies, which formed a crucial commitment in the Towards 2016 agreement with unions, are meeting opposition within the European Commission.

It is another reminder, as pressure for a referendum to push through the European Constitution begins to mount again, that the Europe proposed is one for the benefit of employers and big business.

☠ Despite VHI Healthcare reporting a record surplus of €70.3 million for the year to the end of February, the government have approved their request to raise premiums by 8.5%.

☠ More than 600 families with children are living in one-bedroom accommodation owned by Dublin City Council.

The figures apply only to properties owned by the council and do not include families living in private rented one-bedroom dwellings, which is often paid for with rent supplements from the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

☠ According to a study by Eurofound, workers in the Republic are fourth from bottom in the league table of annual leave and public holidays among EU member states.

On average Irish workers receive 29 days of combined leave and public holidays each year.

This is the lowest among the 15 'older' EU member states. Sweden tops the list of holidays with workers receiving 42 days off on average each year.

☠ According to estate agents the value of

average priced homes in some areas of the country is plummeting by €10,000 each month.

☠ Despite the fact that 7,000 foreign nationals applied to join the Gardai in the past three years, just eleven have made it into the Garda training college in Templemore.

☠ In the most recent analysis of healthcare spending by the OECD, Ireland is ranked sixth from the bottom of the list of 30 OECD countries, spending just 7.5% of GDP on the health system in 2005.

Ireland is also in the bottom half of the list when it comes to doctor-to-patient ratios, with just 2.8 doctors for every 1,000 people.

☠ While the number of households with an Internet connection has more than doubled in the past five years, less than half of Irish households currently have access to the internet according to the CSO.



# Harney's healthcare madness

## From Front Page

In the Spring of 2002, nurses in A&E departments took national industrial action in protest against what had become intolerable conditions for both patients and staff in their Departments. Just months after that action, and the 2002 General Election, the FF-PD Government placed an embargo on recruitment in the public sector, including the Health Service, and closed almost 300 more beds in the Dublin area alone.

The present government continues this trend and is now pushing forward with its disastrous 'co-location' policy supposedly in a bid to solve the bed crisis. Despite standing in the election in opposition to such plans the Greens quickly ditched any principled stance on the issue and backed the FF-PD plan.

At the beginning of July, the Health Service Executive announced the successful tenders for the first stage of the scheme, under which private 'for-profit' hospitals are built on the same sites as six public hospitals. These private facilities will be located on the grounds of St. James's, Beaumont, Cork University, Waterford Regional, Mid-Western Regional and Sligo General. 47% of the cost of building will be state funded through tax breaks!

Among the noted medical professionals gifted with public land and massive tax breaks with which to make more millions, has been property tycoon, Bernard McNamara. Mr McNamara's Synchrony Group has been awarded the contract to build on the campus of St. James's Hospital.

This is nothing new, as property developers and billionaires have had their sights on our public health and education 'business' for some time to the delight of the political elite in the tents of the Galway races. The newly opened Hermitage Medical Clinic, in Lucan, is backed financially by disgraced beef baron Larry Goodman.

Interestingly, opening the hospital, Bertie Ahern said he was a strong supporter of private hospital facilities and boasted of taking political flak for supporting the private sector. In reality, Fianna Fail's dream healthcare system is the one being mapped out by the PDs and Mary Harney.

Co-location is being strongly opposed by many groups including The People Before Profit Alliance, Patients Together and the Health Services Action Group (HSAG). Harney claims 1000 public beds will be freed up by putting private beds into the collocated hospitals but these new beds won't give the full range of services. According to Marie



O'Connor, author of *Emergency: Irish hospitals in Chaos*, 'the number of extra beds the plan is supposed to free up is completely inaccurate. By my calculations there will only be just over two hundred extra beds and this will come at a cost of over €300 million to the taxpayer.'

During the elections Fianna Fáil claimed that tax breaks for its co-located hospitals would cost €40m annually, but Minister for Finance, Brian Cowen put the figure closer to €70 million. In fact, in papers released under the Freedom of Information Act on the 26 July to a national newspaper, there appears to be serious concern in the Department of Finance over the real, long-term cost

of co-location.

Despite this concern, the Department only warn that the situation be 'monitored'. The reality is that the public may only find out the real cost of co-location long afterwards, as has been the case with Public Private Partnerships.

Under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) grouped schools pilot project, the state had the private sector design and build five new secondary schools on publicly-owned sites and to maintain and operate the facilities for 25-years. The private operator, chosen in this case, was Jarvis, who were made famous as the maintenance company behind the Potters Bar rail disaster of 2003 in

Britain in which seven people died.

The Department estimated that the PPP would save around 6%. But the Comptroller and Auditor General (June 2004) found the projected cost of 'The Grouped Schools Project' was going to be 8-13% higher than traditional methods. Therefore, the PPP cost the Irish taxpayer an extra €30 million more than if it had been done by traditional public means.

There are also fears that many of those firms who are moving into private medicine in Ireland, like Jarvis, may have a shady record. According to campaigners within HSAG, massive fraud settlements are being made by US healthcare companies operating in Ireland on foot of federal investigations in the United States.

Peadar McMahon of HSAG claims to have 'compelling evidence that companies who have set up in business in Ireland in recent years, or who have been retained by our Government to provide health services, have reportedly paid huge fraud bills to the Federal Government of the United States'.

The Beacon Clinic is run by the Triad corporation whose parent company, Columbia HCA, was fined \$1.7 billion in fines for healthcare fraud: the highest fine for Federal fraud in US history.

Fraud and the financial cost to the taxpayer aside, there is another more immediate and serious concern around co-location. According to O'Connor, 'The reality of co-location will see these private hospitals leeching off the facilities available for public patients in relation to intensive care beds, laboratory facilities and the A&E'.

Consultants will be more easily able to leave to attend fee-paying patients too.

Through studies of the US healthcare system, O'Connor shows that despite claims to the contrary the FF led government's model of private 'for-profit' healthcare has proven to be of inferior quality and that patients ultimately suffer.

US director Michael Moore in his new aptly titled film 'Sicko' uncovers the reality of 'for-profit' medicine in the United States and how the greedy drive for profit leaves the most vulnerable behind, while massive corporations rake in billions.

This same pattern was never more evident than on 15 May of this year when our own Irish 'Sicko', Mary Harney, officially opened a so-called, private 'one stop shop' for cancer care at the Beacon clinic. On that very same day across the city cancer patients and campaigners with the People Before Profit Alliance stood on the streets of Rathgar protesting the closure of St. Luke's

Hospital in Rathgar.

It is an utter disgrace that in a country that is one of the richest in Europe, that cancer patients are left protesting on the streets to defend their services, while the Minister for Health opens private 'for-profit' cancer facilities and heaps praise on the facilities investors.

The Beacon Group have since been awarded the contract to build co-located services in Limerick Regional, Cork University Hospital and Dublin's Beaumont Hospital.

Despite this profit-driven onslaught by the government, there is a growing opposition to Harney's plans. This has not just been reflected in electoral results but in public protest over many of her plans. Protest groups exist across Ireland in defence of hospitals threatened with closure.

Just this month over four hundred people attended a meeting and hundreds marched through Dun Laoghaire against the closure of St. Michael's Hospital. It emerged recently that a private developer, Noel Smyth, and his company Alburn Developments, were holding discussions with the St Vincent's Healthcare Group (SVHG), about the possible sale or re-location of the hospital.

There is a national campaign organised by People Before Profit and the patients of St. Luke's Cancer Hospital Rathgar to stop the closure and relocation of the facility. Locally there is an extremely active campaign, a number of public meetings and demonstrations and momentum is building for a large demonstration in the autumn. Other long-standing campaigns such as the one to retain Monaghan General Hospital and other facilities exist around the country.

There is a huge unease among the Irish public over the proposed co-location scheme. A recent poll by Irishhealth.com showed that 75% of those surveyed believed that co-located hospitals would either not improve or make no difference to health care in Ireland.

The fact is that making profit a central motive is more expensive and distorts the objective of healthcare and leading to a worsening of services, inequality and exclusion.

'For-profit' healthcare breaks the traditions of hospitals which is one of care and makes doctors and nurses the instruments of investors, and views patients as commodities. There is a growing need for a co-ordinated response to this trend among campaigners and organisations in defence of public health facilities and for proper investment in services so that Ireland does not descend into the chaos of the American model of healthcare.

## EDITORIAL:

# Bertie cash: 'It was probably dollars'



Taoiseach Bertie Ahern

Bertie Ahern has been given a reprieve by the adjournment of the Mahon Tribunal until September. The last witness to testify to the tribunal, AIB currency expert Rosemary Murtagh said that it was most likely that money lodged in a Dublin bank by Celia Larkin was a dollar

sum of \$45,000.

This statement is a near accusation that the Taoiseach has lied. During the crisis of May 13, when Michael McDowell considered resigning from the government, Bertie Ahern assured McDowell: 'I never had \$45,000 either then, before then or since. I do not deal, nor have I ever deal in dollars.'

Ahern's legal team did their utmost to attack and undermine the statements of the currency expert. Judge Mahon has called Bertie Ahern's senior counsel 'offensive' and a 'disgrace.' But their antics have not been able to suppress the most damning statements to date about Bertie Ahern's financial affairs.

Two other issues emerged in the days before the Tribunal adjourned. One was that Bertie Ahern changed his explanation of IR£50,000 that went through his bank account. The other is that Jim McNamara, a senior AIB banker, admitted that he had failed to fully inform the tribunal about transactions in the accounts of

Ahern and Larkin.

In particular, McNamara had told the tribunal he had no recollection of any substantial cash transactions in relation to Larkin's account. It later emerged that he was aware of 18 different transactions involving her account and totalling over IR£120,000.

McNamara said that he had 'no explanation' of why he had not informed the tribunal of this. In re-

sponse the tribunal counsel replied that McNamara had better think about it. One possible explanation of McNamara's lapses is that he did not wish to increase the difficulties for Bertie Ahern before the election.

If, when it resumes in September, the Mahon Tribunal is able to demonstrate that the Taoiseach is a liar and a politician whose career is marked by dodgy payments, it will come as no great surprise to very

many people.

But it will pose a dilemma for John Gormley and the Green Party. Would they, in such circumstances, be even more slavish to their Ministries than McDowell was? Or would they be willing to bring the government down and fight an election with corruption as the major theme?

It is early days for the government, but the clouds that loom over it are dark and growing.

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## Comment

## Reclaim Our Foreign Policy

By Raymond Deane

The West never ceases urging Arab and Islamic nations to embrace democracy, which is fancifully characterised as a typically Western value. Nobody in the corridors of power seems to see any paradox in the fact that it is deemed necessary to support so many dictatorships and police states in the furtherance of this democratic ideal.

Admittedly Iran and Syria receive no such support, but these particular police states are unwilling to become pawns in the West's great game in the region, and hence are seen as 'extremist' rather than 'moderate' regimes, these characteristics being gauged on the scale of a regime's obedience to Western demands.

This must be qualified: in the course of pursuing the mythical War on Terror, suspects have been illegally 'rendered' through European airports - in all probability including Ireland's Shannon, with the connivance of the Irish government, to Syria as well as to Egypt and Jordan. In this case, the motto appears to be: hate your government, love your torturers.

The Palestinian elections of January 2006, although held under illegal occupation and under the persistent harassment and interference of the Israeli armed forces, were agreed by all Western observers to be exceptionally free and fair, indeed the first (and, if the West has its way, probably the last) such elections to be held in the Arab world.

However, the result was a success for the 'wrong' party, Hamas. This result had to be

ignored, the Palestinian Authority boycotted (although the world is dissuaded from boycotting Israeli institutions lest Israel - the oppressor and occupier - be isolated), and the election's losers - Fatah - bolstered even to the extent of supplying them with arms and urging them towards civil war.

The eventual and inevitable struggle in Gaza was brief and was convincingly won by Hamas forces despite - or because of - this Western backing for its enemies. Immediately PLO Chairman Mahmoud Abbas dissolved the government and installed an emergency cabinet, in violation of the Palestinian Basic Law.

This Vichy-style regime was recognised and applauded by the West, while the Hamas takeover of Gaza - broadly supported by the inhabitants of that tormented strip of land - was reviled as a coup d'état (without an 'état').

However, more than hypocrisy is at stake here. Although Israel withdrew its illegal settlements from Gaza in 2005, this did not end the Occupation. According to Sarah Leah Whitsun of Human Rights Watch, 'Under international law, the test for determining whether an occupation exists is effective control by a hostile army.'

Whether the Israeli army is inside Gaza or redeployed around its periphery and restricting entrance and exit, it remains in control.' If Gaza is still occupied, then the 4th Geneva Convention applies to its population just as it does to that of the West.

Bank and East Jerusalem, who technically constitute 'a protected people'.

The collective punishment of such people in the pursuance of a political end - in this case, the furtherance of Israel's hegemony in the region - is a war crime, in which all member states of the EU are complicit.

There is widespread agreement that the EU suffers from a 'democratic deficit', a sense that decision-making is remote from and fails to reflect the viewpoint of its citizens. In the case of Ireland, one often hears heated discussion as to whether our foreign policy is more in thrall to the EU or the US.

This argument fails to appreciate the degree to which the Western superpowers share common aims. The illusion that the EU reflects a counterweight to the US has long given Europeans an unmerited sense of occupying the moral high ground.

Transatlantic divergences usually amount to no more than shadings of emphasis, and what finally counts most is what the Japanese call cooptation, a mixture of competition and cooperation that ultimately shores up the rules of the game, the name of which is global Western hegemony.

The EU's common foreign policy - which in relation to Palestine in particular means that all EU countries defer to US/Israeli interests - makes a mockery of the notion of sovereignty. If there is no sovereignty, can democracy truly be said to exist? Has Irish democracy, along with that of all other EU countries save the most powerful, disappeared into the Gaza sands along with the aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people?

We shall shortly be given an opportunity to voice our rejection of the lightly disguised EU constitution; we should avail of the occasion to demand that our foreign policy cease to be in the hands either of Washington or Berlin.

Raymond Deane is a composer and a founding member of the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign. This article represents his personal viewpoint.

# Support the Postal Workers



Postal workers and their supporters into battle

by Charlie Kimber

The postal workers' campaign is a crucial one for workers in the UK, including Northern Ireland where a wave of twenty-four hour stoppages is included as part of the fight.

Everyone needs to get behind the postal workers. If at all possible they need to be fighting alongside them.

The strikes are magnificent: overwhelmingly supported, militant and defiant. They have united men and women, black and white, young and old.

On the picket lines you will feel both the seriousness of the struggle and the spirit of resistance.

This dispute matters more every day.

The complete refusal of Royal Mail bosses Allan Leighton and Adam Crozier to make even the most minor amendment to their original offer cannot be explained just by their desire to jack up profits in the industry.

At stake is the entire government policy - dictated by Gordon Brown - of holding down public sector pay.

If the postal workers get 4.5 percent instead of the offered 2.5 percent, who believes that 750,000 health workers will meekly accept 1.9 percent, or that 1.25 million local government workers will swallow 2 percent?

If the postal workers can block plans for 40,000 job losses, why should civil service workers knuckle under to demands for 104,000 job losses?

If the postal workers say no to the devastation of the publicly owned postal service, why should teachers allow academies and trust schools to despoil the landscape of education?

This is a crucial front, alongside the anti-war movement, against New Labour's pro-business and pro-imperialist policies.

It matters this much, and it matters to millions of workers and those who depend on public services.

The postal workers have courageously opened a major battle. They are fighting for us all and deserve every

bit of solidarity. But we also need to debate the way to break through.

This not like the 1988 postal strike or the 1996 strike. These were big battles, but they did not have the same general importance. So, after a series of strikes, bosses and government were prepared to offer concessions.

Not so this time.

The CWU union needs to escalate in a different way.

Postal workers need to combine harder-hitting strikes with coordinated action alongside others.

The strikes this week, with different functions striking on different days, are an attempt to escalate the dispute.

Mail centres were to strike on Wednesday evening and during the day on Thursday, deliveries on Friday night and Saturday morning.

Other groups were on other timetables.

Every postal worker must hurl themselves into building them, and every trade unionist, socialist and campaigner into supporting them.

Some people think this is a very

clever and effective strategy to disrupt the business.

But, although, these strikes may stretch Royal Mail management, they have also confused and frustrated many postal workers.

The delivery workers who are housed in a mail centre will strike alongside their mail centre colleagues. But they will then do deliveries while their mates in delivery offices are on strike.

Multi-function workers will be told to cover for strikers and will be unsure whether to obey the instruction or not.

Delivery workers will ask if they should unload a truck driven in by a manager scabbing on mail centre strikes.

More generally, the divided strikes have less public impact than a strike by everyone together. And crucially they are much less likely to become a focus for solidarity from others.

It's true that the CWU has given two weeks' notice of some of its strikes. But 250,000 civil service workers are not likely to be moved by the prospect of striking alongside the Heathrow Airport post section or the Network drivers.

They could be attracted if given four weeks' notice of striking alongside the entire postal workforce.

And such a strike would produce a political crisis for Gordon Brown.

It could be followed by even bigger united action.

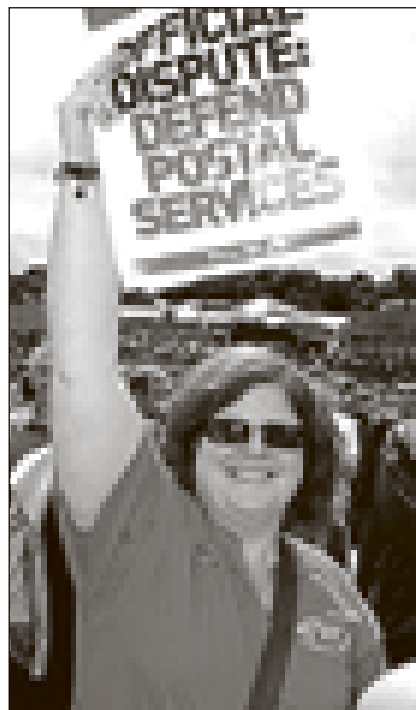
Postal workers are a powerful group, as their strikes have displayed. Extended strike action will hit bosses and the government hard.

But it will be immensely more powerful if coordinated with others.

This is the escalation we desperately need.

The post strike is at a crucial stage.

Everyone can play their part in helping it to win. Postal workers must push their leaders for joint action, and workers in other unions must raise solidarity and press their own leaders for united action.





## INTERNATIONAL

## SUDAN:

## A Humanitarian Intervention?

By Donal Mac Fhearraigh

A few weeks ago I went to see the film *The US vs John Lennon* hosted by Amnesty International. On arrival I was given a postcard and cheerfully asked to sign it to support Amnesty's campaign on Darfur.

On reading the postcard I was shocked to see it was calling for military intervention. Amnesty has launched a CD of John Lennon songs to promote the campaign. Quite what John Lennon, a committed pacifist, would make of this use of his songs we can only wonder.

Amnesty claim that hundreds of thousands of people have been killed in a genocidal war by the Muslim Arab government of Sudan against Black Africans in Darfur. Unwittingly they have signed on for the new scramble for Africa.

The UN World Food Programme estimates of 200,000 dead in Darfur are the most accurate. Of these they estimate 20% were killed and 80% died mainly from starvation and from diseases.

Calling the violence in Darfur genocide is problematic. Firstly there is a staggering hypocrisy in US officials classifying 200,000 dead in Darfur as genocide while the mass slaughter of 650,000 in Iraq is brushed off as 'civil war'. There is a politics to what gets called 'genocide' and it usually depends on how well it fits with the interest of Empire.

According to the UN Development Programme the main reasons for the violence in Darfur is Global Warming. Increased desertification, expansion of the Sahara, has resulted in the nomadic tribes in Northern Darfur encroaching further into the lands of peasant farmers in the South with resulting conflict over scarce water and food resources.

Farouk el-Baz a geologist from Boston University working on Darfur's water resources said: 'What most people don't really know is that the war in Darfur is all based on the lack of water, nothing else. If you find water for the farmers, in addition to that for the nomads, for agricultural production, then you resolve the problem completely.'

The second factor in the number of deaths in Darfur is connected to the 21 year Sudanese civil war between the North and the South that left 1.5 million dead. In 2003 a peace deal was signed, however a minority on both sides were unhappy with the outcome and con-



Displaced woman shelters from the rains in Al-Junaynah, West Darfur

tinued the war, in Darfur.

Sudan's government backed one militia, the Janjaweed, made up of the poorest Darfur nomads and refugees from Chad. The opposing militia, the Sudan Liberation Army, was backed by the government's opposite number in the civil war (who in turn were backed by the US). All sides are guilty of fueling the violence.

The characterisation of the conflict as Arab Muslims versus Africans is false. In Darfur, all parties concerned are Black and African and Muslim and indigenous to the region.

According to Alex de Waal, member of the African Union mediation team that negotiated the May 2006 peace agreement in Darfur, 'the Zaghawa, the main victims of the violence, originate

from the Bedouins. Similarly, their adversaries, the Darfurian Arabs, are "Arabs" in the ancient sense of "Bedouin," meaning desert nomad. They too, are indigenous, black, and African. In fact there are no discernible racial or religious differences between the two: all have lived there for centuries; all are Muslims.'

A recent survey by el-Baz's team of international geologists found a massive underground lake, 3 times the size of Lebanon, in Darfur. Farouq said, 'the potential water source could be the key to peace.'

So why is the UN now going into Darfur?

The answer is the US is opening another front in the 'war on terror'. Earlier this year it backed and helped Ethiopia's invasion of

Somalia. The US always classified Sudan as part of the 'axis of evil'. It also wants to face up to China over control of Africa's oil. The Sudan is the second largest producer of oil on the continent, and China controls up to 80% of Sudan's oil production.

Recently discovered oil fields in southern Darfur will produce an estimated 500,000 barrels of oil a day from a 5 billion-barrel reservoir of oil. 2011 will see a referendum on independence for Southern Sudan, with its oil wealth. The US and EU hope to intervene to fuel separatism.

Bush's October 2006 Darfur Peace and Accountability Act stated: 'the pervasive role played by the government of Sudan in Sudan's petroleum and petrochemical industries threatens U.S. na-

tional security and foreign policy interests.' A meeting of NATO EU Command in 2007 agreed to target operations in Africa for the next decade as the US is tied down elsewhere. The primary task was to counter China's influence on the continent.

A real solution for Darfur is not military intervention but demanding that the US keep its hands off Sudan, lift the sanctions and provide unconditional emergency relief to the populations affected by years of famine, 'structural adjustment', and wars that were manipulated, armed and financed from Washington.

Western military intervention, whether under a UN flag or not, have never been about humanitarianism. Rather they have always been about extending their Power.

## FIRST PERSON IMPRESSIONS OF OAXACA, MEXICO

By Antonio Jose

A feeling of rebellion hangs in the air like an electric current about to explode. With television screens blasting scenes of *oaxaceños* (people from Oaxaca) being water cannoned, pepper sprayed and driven back by the PFP (federal preventative police), the Zocalo (main square) of Oaxaca is alive with street vendors, musicians and clowns.

There are street stalls selling everything from watches to shirts and in between there are independent fundraisers for the APPO (popular peoples assembly of Oaxaca created in the 2006 uprising), on whose tv screens they show

the confrontation between the people of Oaxaca and the forces of the state in 2006.

There is always a crowd around the tv screens as people watch the scenes of the repression of the uprising of 2006.

As I have made my way south through Mexico, crossing the Rio Bravo at Loredo Texas, I encountered a people whose culture is filled with colour, music, laughter, dancing and ritual.

With plazas where amorous couples embrace and children play in the shade and where old men sit and talk in polished cowboy boots.

In these moments the people seem content as the sun lets out its last breath over the mountains and

begins its journey to be reborn again as the new day.

But the most obvious thing that I began to notice in Mexico as I travelled on was the extremely distinct class divisions that exist, and that these divisions are primarily based on wealth and race.

Every now and then I would catch a glimpse of a gleaming, giant, SUV truck with Texas plates and tinted windows glide past me like a wraith with its indifferent occupants chatting in their air conditioned luxury in the front and the children watching a dvd in the back.

I knew this kind of commodity to be well beyond the reach of the people I saw around me in the plaza, shopkeepers and

street vendors, labourers and farm workers who earn 80 pesos a day (6 euros).

This privileged caste in Mexico is indeed a world apart from all the rest, the small minority who accumulate the vast wealth produced by the majority and who live in their palaces well detached from the rest of the people.

It is this caste who's children are educated in elite private schools and have access to the best health care and can enter and leave Europe and the US as they please, while the impoverished majority die from the lack of money to buy basic medicines even when they work 60 hours a week.

It is the producers of the

wealth whose children don't go to school because they have to work, and there are those who take their chances at the border and are shot dead trying to enter Babylon to do the work 'they' don't want to do.

It is this privileged caste that manifests itself as the baton-wielding PFP, and the armoured beast machines that spit pepper gas and high powered water canon, and whose money pays the mercenaries who torture and assassinate.

It is with these machines and their newspapers and news broadcasts that they sow the seeds of misery in Mexico.

But through the blood and torture and death dealt out here in Oaxaca the

people hold firm in their fight for a new beginning. Defiance shouts at me from the very graffiti on the walls and the images and ambience of resistance in the zocalo.

Their demand is simple: the removal of a corrupt and murderous governor!

They also demand a form of direct democracy embodied by the APPO, which is a bottom-up democratic assembly that represents the whole of Oaxaca including the excluded parts of society.

As I asked a man at a stall representing autonomous communities in Oaxaca, 'who is part of the APPO?' He replied 'everyone here is part of the APPO!'





By Adam Larragy

**'All that is solid melts into air.'** — Karl Marx  
Financial capital and in particular, private equity firms have recently been making front page headlines in Britain after one of its leading figures, Nicholas Ferguson criticized the tax regime in many European countries for allowing him and fellow top executives in private equity firms to pay 'less tax than a cleaning lady'.

Even the right-wing British paper *Daily Mail* led with claims from 'Britain's richest man' that there would be 'riots in the streets' at historically high income inequality.

The chief executives of the private equity firms were brought before a House of Commons Public Accounts Committee to explain their secretive dealings and tax avoidance.

The largest private equity firms are incredibly powerful in financial markets, often buying up even large publicly traded companies, and making them more 'valuable', which usually involves job cuts and the rapid selling of assets.

A recent, infamous example would be the AA, bought by private equity firms CVC and Permira where almost immediately 3,000 jobs were cut.

An Irish example would be Eircom, where an impromptu consortium led by Tony O'Reilly took the company off the Irish stock exchange in 2001, stripped it of many of its assets and refloated on the stock exchange for a profit.

The growth of private equity, however, and the delisting of publicly traded companies, and the subsequent concentration of power into fewer hands, the acceleration of growth in income inequality are relatively recent phenomena.

Private equity firms provide the most visible change in the structure of capitalism in the past fifteen years or so, which has seen the 'transformation of mid-20th century managerial capitalism into global financial capitalism', as Martin Wolf [*Financial Times* economist] puts it.

This involves a massive growth in the financial sector in areas such as banking, currency speculation, the creation of new financial 'products' which facilitate further speculation, growth in information technology allowing 24-hour trading in stock exchanges, growth in private equity funds and hedge funds [imagine a very exclusive pensions firm where multi-millionaires money is 'managed'].

The number of hedge funds has grown from 610

in 1990 to 9,574 in 2007, with a value of \$1,600bn under management. The 'derivatives' trade provide the most shocking figures, with the value of swaps and interest rate options reaching \$286,000 (roughly six times the planet's GDP) in 2006.

Globalisation has led to the derregularisation of financial markets and the removal of currency controls in Western countries and increasingly, under pressure from the IMF and WTO, developing nations or 'emerging markets' as they have come to be known. This allows the rapid transfer of financial assets from one country to the next and a truly global market. This can be catastrophic for some countries such as Argentina, whose economy collapsed in 2001 following liberalisation of their financial markets and privatisation.

For many ordinary people this has led to a greater reliance on loans and other financial transactions, with a plethora of new financial options for individuals. This has led a growth in reliance on finance to pay for things in most Western countries. For example, in Britain liabilities rose from 108% of GDP in 1994 to 159% of GDP in 2005.

What all this amounts to is the concentration of capital in the hands of fewer people. Mergers and acquisitions in 2006 were worth \$3,861, the highest figure on record as large corporations merge with one another.

In turn, many previously publicly listed corporations are taken private by powerful private equity funds making them even more unaccountable, to the extent they pay less tax than ordinary people, despite their massive wealth. Many formerly socialist or social democratic parties, such as the Labour Party in Britain or the German SPD are unable, or unwilling to prevent this.

This transformation is also creating a new wealthy elite, accelerating already existing growths in inequality. In the US, young people will earn on average a quarter less than their parents! In Britain, Thatcherite era levels of inequality remain, while in Ireland economic inequality remains one of the highest in the Western world. Executive pay has skyrocketed throughout the world, even as those same executives put working people out of work.

There will be real anger at such inequality when the new capitalism is tested. Perhaps, in concentrating such power and wealth, the new capitalism will create it's own nose.

Adam Larragy is a freelance writer based in Dublin.

# Gormley leads the Greens into retreat



**A**t the time that the Green Party entered into Government with Fianna Fail and Mary Harney, those in favour of the move argued that the differences they could make in Government warranted the compromises in policy that were inevitably part of the deal. But already, only a few weeks into the term of office of the new government, it is abundantly clear that the balance sheet is going to make dismal reading. Not only will the Green Party provide cover for the policies of Fianna Fail, but even on the issues that are core policies for Greens, it is evident the party is failing.

With regard to economic policy the

Green Party has never been particularly radical. The introduction of bin charges was a key test in this regard.

Whereas socialists see the bin charges as an extra tax that hits working class homes disproportionately hard, the Green Party see them as a way to implement a 'polluter pays' policy. What they ignore is the privatisation agenda behind the issue, the disproportionate waste generated by businesses and the fact that without alternative recycling services, it is hard for homes to cut down on domestic waste.

Now Eamonn Ryan is the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources we are going to see the same

themes re-emerge on a massive scale, particularly with regard to An Post and the ESB.

Instead of siding with the workers of these industries, Ryan has made it clear that he supports the positions of the outgoing government. He will preside over privatisation and attacks on the workforce; in return he will be met by strikes, reviled and, hopefully, beaten.

The defence of public sector workers is a core issue for socialists, but not for the Greens. What will be more shocking for their own supporters is just how awful the start of their ministries has been with respect to three other issues: Tara, Shannon and water.

## Save Tara? Sorry, there's nothing I can do

John Gormley says that his powers as Environment Minister do not allow him to reroute the M3 to save the archaeological sites in the path of the projected motorway. He acknowledges that he has the power to put preservation orders on the sites, but says that the appropriate requests to do so have not been given him.

Even if this were true, there is nothing to stop him visiting the sites and supporting the protests. Nothing to stop him visiting those who were arrested trying to stop the diggers and demanding the charges be dropped. Nothing, that is, except his commitment to the coalition.

In any case, Gormley's statements, rather tragically for those who have known and respected him over the years, amount to mealy-mouthed evasion.

If he was willing to risk the wrath of the builders and genuinely wished to save the monuments, instead of pretending his

hands are tied, he could look to EU directives.

The chair of the influential EU Petitions Committee has written to Gormley calling for a halt to all construction work in the disputed area. The letter states: 'Urgent action is needed to halt existing works in this area and to review the routing of this section of the M3 motorway.'

The letter from Marcin Libicki, Chairman of the Committee on Petitions confirms previous correspondence with Minister Gormley where the EU indicated that continuing works on the M3 were illegal under EU law governing the need for Environmental Impact Assessments.

This letter and the EU argues that under law the discovery of the Lismullen National monument constitutes a 'material alteration' from the circumstances of the initial EIA. Michael Canney, a spokesperson for the Campaign to

Save Tara said, 'the removal or altering of a National Monument not previously subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment is illegal under European Law, and indeed the whole route selection process is flawed: you cannot pretend that the potential impacts were adequately assessed in this case because the National Monument was not discovered at the time of the 2003 Environmental Impact Assessment.'

As Kathy Sinnott, MEP, put it in an open letter to John Gormley: 'The European Commission has informed you it is challenging the National Monuments Act on which the continuation of the M3 project in its present route is based.'

'Had you opened the file as promised and in a timely manner rather than leaving me to unearth the truth only recently, the public would have discovered that the government is in the European Court of Justice

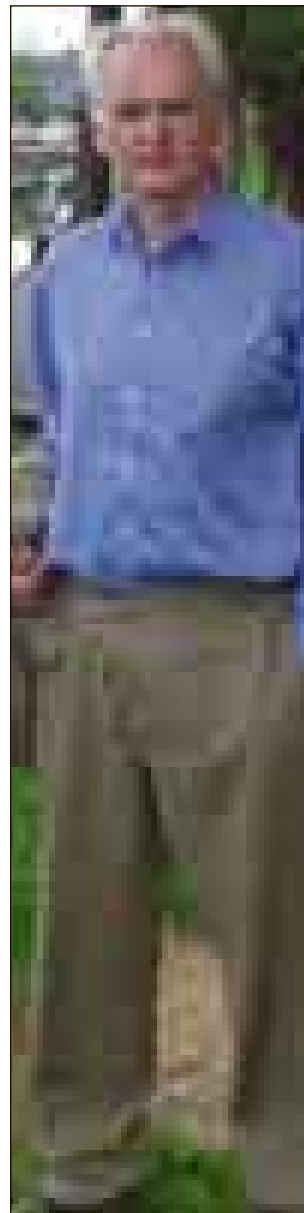
this autumn over the current illegality of the M3 project and clearly road works should be halted until the ECJ makes its ruling.'

'The NRA would also have been unable to claim ignorance of the illegality of the project as they are currently doing.'

'With this in mind, I must demand that you open the entire Tara/M3 file to the public as promised and that you do so now.'

In the interest of the transparency and dedication to our environment we all hoped your party would bring to this government, I insist that you release the Tara/M3 file to the public, the petitions committee and to me.

'Tara is a treasure which cannot be replaced, I would have hoped that you would move heaven and earth to preserve it. If you are willing to sacrifice Tara, what hope have we of preserving anything else?'



John Gormley and top Tara protestors point to GP sell-out

## Falling down on Shannon

By Peadar O'Grady

How far can the Greens fall? The decision by the Green Party leadership to enter government with Fianna Fail, with no commitment on Shannon, has shocked many anti-war activists.

The Green Party had an honourable record on opposing the use of Shannon by the US military on their way to and from Iraq.

John Gormley, Trevor Sargent and Patricia McKenna spoke on anti-war platforms, and hundreds of Green Party members took part in protests against the use of Shannon by US troops. Green Party member Ed Horgan proved in court that there are no examples in the past of US troops being granted official permission to use Shannon during a war.

Ireland has allowed more than 500,000 US troops to pass through Shannon airport since March 2003. The war has caused over 650,000 civilian deaths, million injured and millions more displaced as refugees. However, 58% of the Irish population is against the use of Shannon by US troops, as the recent independent poll commissioned by PANA found.

Before the election, Green Party leader, John Gormley said: 'the Green Party is totally committed to ending the use of Shannon for the illegal war in Iraq and to opposing the abuse of human rights through rendition flights.'

'Our election manifesto states unequivocally:

■ End the use of Shannon Airport by US military forces involved in the war in Iraq.

■ Insist that any aircraft suspected of involvement in illegal movements of prisoners must be searched.'

Liar  
Ireland has no legal obligation in International Law arising from our membership of the United Nations to allow US planes to land in Shannon Airport on their way to and from the war in Iraq.

Under International Law (Hague Convention, 1907), by allowing Shannon Airport to be used, the Irish Government is declaring that Ireland is not neutral, but is, in legal terms, part of a military alliance.

The Green Party is now guilty of actively taking part in a murderous imperialist war to gain control of the oil in Iraq and to consolidate US/Israeli military domination in the Middle East. Can you fall any lower than that?

## The Green Party and Water Charges

By Peadar O'Grady

The Green Party in government poses a major threat to our water services. Fianna Fail's determination to privatise all public services, and the Green Party's belief in charges as 'incentives' for reducing waste, mean water charges and the privatisation of water services are now a real threat.

Green Party policy emphasises 'water conservation' to improve the quality of water services. This summer, the wettest summer in Ireland's history, billboards are going up around the country discouraging the use of garden hoses to 'conserve water'. While the Greens oppose a flat charge for water, they favour using water meters and charging households by the litre, over a certain 'quota'.

In a Dail debate on the Water Services Bill, in February 2005, Green Party TD, Paul Gogarty, said: 'a measure must be introduced to ensure proper recycling or conservation of water, so we support for example tags on bins.'

The Green Party supports measures which encourage conservation. In that context, water metering with the introduction of a water charge down the line could be quite welcome. If one has to pay for something, one will conserve it; that message must go out in terms of all forms of waste, though people must still be

allowed a free quota of water.'

The Greens have also used the poor funding of local Council services as an excuse to introduce charges. In a press statement in March 2006, Green Party Environment spokesperson Ciarán Cuffe said: 'I believe that if we want effective local government and efficient local services we have to pay for it. The Green Party has criticised the Minister for the Environment Dick Roche TD for refusing to implement the recommendations of the Indecon Report on Local Government Financing Reform.'

'The report recommends that water charges on holiday homes and property tax on second homes be introduced as a much-needed method of supplementing local authority income. The report predicts that local authorities will face a financial shortfall of €1.5 billion by 2010.'

Why not just tax holiday homes instead? While the Green Party policy document on Water doesn't mention water charges, it doesn't mention any opposition to water privatisation either. In contrast, Dr John Barry of the Northern Ireland Green Party said in 2003: 'the Green Party calls on the Environment Minister, Angela Smith MP, to clearly state that the Water Service will not be privatised and for the main political parties here to state their outright opposition to

privatisation.'

Green Party policy in England also states: 'the Green Party is opposed to the private ownership of water, which will have severe environmental and social consequences.'

In Northern Ireland, the Communities Against the Water Tax has led a fantastic grassroots campaign of opposition, calling for a mass campaign of non-payment. The Green Party and Sinn Fein have refused to support a call for non-payment. Charges have been initially set at £100 (€150) but charges in England are already £400 (€600) a year!

The Greens cannot be trusted to stand up to Fianna Fail on privatisation of healthcare, transport, water or any other public service. They won't seek to punish developers or industry in wasting and polluting our water or emphasise the massive wastage through leaky pipes or poor maintenance of reservoirs. In fact they may use arguments about 'conservation' or 'local government funding' to give cover to Fianna Fail.

The previous attempts to introduce water charges in Ireland have been defeated by mass non-payment campaigns. Privatisation and double taxation will meet major opposition. Activists need to be ready to launch a similar campaign of mass non-payment in the very near future.

## The Electric Underground:

# The trials and tribulations of the G8 Conference



Protests at the G8 summit in Germany

By David Brecht

Before getting to the protest I was taken to a dark room with double mirrored windows where I was confronted by three large Germans all dressed in black. I was interrogated and searched on suspicion of being a left wing terrorist but I, the dear author, am nothing but a drunken reprobate, not a terrorist.

A few hours later I was confronted by my associate Antonio Jose, who had scampered as it was better that one of us got locked up than both of us. A car was hired with due expediency as we curtailed at break neck speeds for Rostock (our first port of call).

Pushing the car to its limits really clears one's head I thought, as we sped past a whole line of police cars, water cannon tanks and APCs with their flags hanging out of their cars like a bunch of rowdy British football hooligans.

After a few hours, Antonio and I had arrived in Rostock. Everyone was here and they were here for the same cause: you could feel the electricity in the air.

My sleep was disturbed by screaming; I awoke to the noise of 'Polizei, Polizei!'. The camp was being raided. As the camp blockaded the front and back entrances it was announced that it was nothing but a false alarm.

Relief swept the crowd and also me. It meant that we could save our energy for the protest today. As the members of the different factions of the left met and squabbled, a decision was made to march on the west gate en masse while smaller guerrilla groups operate on the east. So Antonio and I marched with the movement, once again with a euphoria that is impossible to describe.

Satellite maps, compasses and their own knowledge of the forest guided us through for three hours as we approached closer to the gate. It is as if the Saxon blood still ran strong through their blood; a natural attunement to the forests which served their ancestors for a similar purpose.

Police helicopters had been following us all the way trying to discover our position so as to alert the riot police of our location. The number of protestors had risen quite substantially and we marched across the field emerging from the forest in a torrent of excitement.

The police had found our position and it was clear that they had alerted the riot police. Water cannon tanks positioned themselves and tried to cross the field only to be defeated by the muck and high grass. 8000 people had marched upon the gate that day and here everyone was ready for action.

Bandanas were put on, jumpers pulled up over faces, the fight was on. Everyone marched slowly towards the gate chanting in German. The time was now!

We marched towards the police with our hands held up, no hostility was going to be shown towards the police. We were here to protest against the injustices of the G8 not beat up policemen.

We are not thugs but citizens of the world like everybody. The water cannons fired blasting the crowd back. All of us sitting on the ground linked together: a human barrier against injustice. Tension everywhere, people huddled up waiting with bated breath from that inevitable burst and tear gas.

Horsemen, patrol dogs and everything were out in force so no one could harm their six million euro security fence. We had achieved what we set out to do, make our presence felt and to voice our concern.

As we set off into the sunrise that next morning my mind floated off to that previous day. For the first time in our lives we had actually been part of something that was more than some small protest against some small time issue.

It was part of a movement: a movement of one mind, one idea: justice for all. This hope is what will save this world from the injustice that has been plaguing it for centuries. This hope is what connects all us together and what makes us human.

As I finished my cigarette and drove onto the autobahn, the sign saying Berlin was 300kms away, all I knew was that whatever it was that held us all together it was nothing short of electric.

David Brecht is a freelance journalist, currently traveling in Europe.



# The Richness of Life

## The essential Steven Jay Gould

By Tom Williams

**T**he American biologist Steven Jay Gould was a populariser of science and a commentator whose influence was only rivaled by Richard Dawkins. Like Dawkins, Gould was a staunch Darwinian and an expressive writer who had important things to say to scientists and nonscientists alike.

Gould and Dawkins, however, took different sides in the debates within evolutionary biology during the late twentieth century, and also held opposing views on the relationship between science and religion.

*The Richness of Life*, out this year in a new edition, is an anthology of Gould's writings which gives an overview of his arguments in all spheres of intellectual life.

Despite his importance as an evolutionary biologist, Gould is most widely remembered for his criticisms of sociobiology and scientific racism. This aspect of his work is represented in a substantial extract from *The Mismeasure of Man* in which Gould examines the pseudoscience of craniometry, which aimed to deduce personality and intelligence from the shape and size of a person's head.

Rather than writing a polemic, Gould carefully picked apart the methods and motivations of the craniometrists, showing how they abused their data to reach preconceived conclusions. The main goal of craniometry was to demonstrate that women and black people were inferior by comparing their heads to white men, thereby justifying the prevailing racist social order.

**G**ould revealed that for some craniometrists, this took the form of 'cooking the books' to show, for example, that blacks generally have smaller heads than whites: even though this wasn't the case for the samples used, or for the population in general.

There were also craniometrists such as Paul Broca, who collected their data in an unbiased way. However, when Broca's own results demonstrated that there wasn't a difference in average head size between blacks and whites, he began looking for ways to differentiate the black and white skulls, comparing the size of individual parts of the skull along with every proportion and ratio he could think of.

Whenever he found a difference of this kind in his sample, he presented it as proof that whites were more intelligent than blacks, a hopelessly circular argument, since it requires assuming what you are trying to prove (that blacks are inferior). Indeed, in many of the individual comparisons, blacks came out ahead of whites: Broca's solution was to discard these parts of the skull as not contributing to intelligence.

Gould's analysis stands as a warning for scientists today, demonstrating how not only bias in data gathering but also selectivity in data use can produce false results. The extract is so effective largely because it uses the data of the craniometrists against them: the head-measurers were continuously coming up against embarrassing exceptions to their racist rule of 'bigger is better'—from small-brained Nobel-winners to large-brained-Eskimos—and Gould reveled in exposing their ridiculous justifications for these cases.

Among Gould's most important contributions to evolutionary biology were his critiques of the obsession of biologists with adaptation, and of the idea of progress in evolution. These key ideas are skillfully expounded in a series of accessible essays that make up the core of the anthology.



Right: Steven Jay Gould, Above: Accessible books on biology

Although many concepts in biology are easy to understand, there is often a wall of background information that needs to be surmounted first. Gould had a rare talent for leaping this wall and getting right to the important concepts, as is illustrated in two lucid essays on evolutionary progress: *The Power of the Modal Bacter* and *The Ladder and the Cone*.

**T**he idea that evolution is progressive and lead to us—that life began with the amoeba, progressed to worms, flies, then mammals and finally humans—is entrenched in our culture, even though it is a remnant of religious philosophy that should have been overturned with Darwin. In these two essays, Gould explained why evolution does not lead to progress and demonstrates how this preconception distorts our view of life's history, given that bacteria—the 'simplest' lifeforms—are also by far the most successful.

In the mid-twentieth century, the prevailing view among evolutionary biologists was that adaptation by natural selection was the main force in evolution. As a paleontologist, Gould realised that this view ignored the important role that chance events play in evolution.

As an extreme example, if the dinosaurs had not been wiped out by a mass extinction 65 million years ago, humans would not be around today: but randomness has also played more subtle roles.

In *The Spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian Paradigm*, Gould argued that chance and contingency need to be taken into account when investigating evolution.

He also felt that a single-minded focus on adaptation went hand-in-hand with some of the more extreme claims of sociobiology: such as the claim that humans have innate racist tendencies, regardless of social influence. Sociobiologists attempt to explain human



behavior and society in terms of the adaptive evolution of the brain.

**I**n *Challenges to Neo-Darwinism and Their Meaning for a Revised View of Human Consciousness*, Gould argued that this approach fails because the assumption that all features of our brains are adaptive is false, with chance and other factors also playing a role: in other words, we don't really know how the brain evolved.

Further, he attacks much of sociobiology as the invention of 'stories' which are consistent with Darwinian evolution, but which cannot be tested and are therefore unscientific. Both of these arguments are highly controversial, but it is certainly true that few of the sociobiological claims about humans have an experimental basis.

Indeed, Gould's writing on the science and politics of biology is so good that it seems a shame so much of this anthology is given over to his other pursuits. Towards the end of his life, Gould became preoccupied with the relationship between science and re-

ligion. His unconvincing conclusions are outlined in the essay *Non-overlapping Magisteria (NOMA)*, where Gould argues that science and religion have no bearing on each other: science is concerned with how the natural world works, while religion is the search for morality and spiritual meaning.

**P**resumably, Gould hoped this compromise would halt the creeping influence of creationism on the teaching of science in the United States.

There are, however, several problems with the NOMA concept, for instance, science and religion make competing claims about the origin of the universe and the origin of life, while religion does not have a monopoly on morality.

Further, it is the absence of scientific evidence in support of religion that makes the compromise attractive to many people: if hard evidence for the Flood was to be discovered tomorrow, how many fundamentalists would claim it had no relevance to their religion?

Generally, Gould was on stronger ground when he stuck to science. But he was much more of an institution in the States than on this side of the Atlantic, perhaps explaining the degree of autobiography—homely musings on family and baseball—that fills out *The Richness of Life*.

It's a collection that clearly aims to provide an overview of 'Gould the Man', with the result that less space is devoted to the scientist than might be desired. And the science is not best served by Steven Rose's introductions to each section, which persistently set up Gould as more of an iconoclast than he ever really was. It is, nonetheless, an impressive anthology which summarizes most of his important work while letting the large personality shine through.

*The Richness of Life: A Stephen Jay Gould Reader (Paperback) Vintage Press £9.99*

**Gould's analysis stands as a warning for scientists today, demonstrating how not only bias in data gathering but also selectivity in data use can produce false results**

## COMMENT

# Opportunities for All?

By Tina MacVeigh

Recently I had the privilege, and I do use the term quite loosely Comrades, of listening to our Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin, at the launch of a study of early school leaving in Dublin's south inner city.

As she began to speak, so I began to furiously scribble, so incensed was I by what she had to say.

Her starting point was that in this wonderful Ireland that we live in today, there are educational opportunities for everyone who wants them. Unlike in the past, now we have free second and third level education and a host of other educational options. After all, anyone you would ask if what they wanted in life was a good job, to have opportunities for promotion and to make money, was likely to say yes.

Forgetting for a moment how she framed the whole debate about the value and potential of education within the context of the neo-liberal market model's limited conception of equality, what about asking people first whether they have any belief in their own abilities?

Do they feel respected, safe, listened to and hopeful in an education system that is answerable only to the needs of a ruling elitist class? The Minister made several references to the importance of the home setting and the partnership between the school and the community as being integral to the educational achievement of young people.

If this link is so important, then why do we still see a chasm between the school world and the manner in which it engages with and communicates with the family and the community?

This deficit in awareness of cultural diversity is evident throughout the entire education system. The curriculum, class room style, teacher training, all components of the sector adopt the language and culture of the middle and upper income groups.

The schemes that are targeted at alleviating disadvantage adopt the same language and culture, even though they are trying to reach a different group. Teachers have middle class expectations of working class children, and as they don't behave in a middle class way, their expectations are lowered.

There is a wealth of research demonstrating the link between poor teacher expectations and pupil achievement. But then, as the Minister pointed out, who can blame the teachers when they are presented with children in their classrooms who have no books in the home, have no language skills and, can you imagine it, don't even know nursery rhymes!

Well, at least we have Early Start, its virtues extolled by the Minister. Not in Dublin 8 we don't. And did I mention the eleven-month waiting list for Speech and Language Therapy in an area which boasts one of the most concentrated levels of disadvantage in the state?

At least now Young

People have, not only the right to progress, but also the opportunity to do so, the Minister continued. We need to stop talking about the system and recognise how wonderful it is for young people to see the opportunities, to decide to get involved and to stick with it.

The Minister spoke so touchingly of the role of the teacher in instilling confidence and a sense of belief in their pupils, after all, no one can help 'them' if 'they' don't have 'this'.

Then, I am supposing, she addressed the young people in the audience: People believe in you. If you believe in yourself there are enough supports there to help you. Gone are the days when we decide in isolation what is best for young people. We listen and have improved links so young people can participate. Then, I suppose, to the wider audience again: this is essential if we are to achieve our 90% target.

On this inspiring note, the Minister finished her Party piece.

What followed was even more depressing, although not surprising. Lots of photos, gushes of thanks for humbling us with her presence, more lovely words from the Minister about how this report definitely won't stay on the shelf (because all the rest of them have?).

What did not follow was a chance to respond to or challenge the Minister. So much for listening. But at least we all have the same opportunity to participate in our *unit of labour* producing education system.

Tina MacVeigh is a Community Worker and Freelance Writer

## FILM:

# Sicko: Moore's call to action



Michael Moore in a scene from Sicko

By David Gaughran

Michael Moore is a much more intelligent film maker than people give him credit for. No his documentaries don't reach an intellectual level of say Mark Acbar's *The Corporation*. But Moore's films do reach a far wider audience.

He does this with a fusion of comedy and politics. His documentaries are made to tap into people's sense of sentimentality.

His newest documentary, *Sicko*, is a call to arms against the United States' health care system and you could say a call to arms against all for-profit healthcare systems.

Media critics in the USA expected *Sicko* to be a commercial failure there. However *Sicko* has now become one of the highest grossing documen-

taries in the USA second only to *Fahrenheit 911*.

In the film Moore compares the US healthcare system to others around the world to show how ruthless it is. The movie opens with a shot of a man stitching up his own leg because he doesn't have health insurance. Things get a lot more shocking from here on in.

Much of the comedy in the film comes from the shock Moore gets when he visits other countries to observe their health care systems; he asks a couple in Britain how much they had to pay to get their baby for instance, doctors in France explain to him that you don't have to pay anything to get your arm fixed there.

He carries out his usual tricks like demanding that 911 fire-fighters get the same treat-

ment has (the evil doers) prisoners in Guantanamo bay, afterwards taking them to Cuba himself to get treatment.

Tony Benn makes an appearance in the film to talk about the NHS; his interview is entertaining.

The film is uncritical of the faults in the European model and tries to portray the US system as an aberration, when in fact the for-profit ethos is a global trend that is putting pressure on health systems the world over.

But the main thought you are left with after coming out of the cinema is how ruthless the US ruling class are. Moore exposes this part of the system by showing how health insurance companies will do anything to avoid paying out on a claim, even if that means condemning people to death.

Stories of people who are forced to choose which limb to save and images of hospitals dumping patients at the side of the street because they can't afford their treatment serve to underline the callousness of a for-profit healthcare system.

The tag line for this movie is, 'see the movie, start the revolution'. Michael Moore said that he wants has many people has possible to see this film.

When a copy of the film was leaked to the internet he said that he didn't care because it would mean more people would see the film.

He intends the film to be used has a call to action. When Moore shows images of

French Strikers and Protesters filling the streets he is saying that this is the way to fight for a better healthcare and hospitals for all.

## EXHIBITION:

# Lucian Freud's portraits: 'sonnets to individuals'

By Eoin Martin

The Irish Museum of Modern Art in Kilmainham is currently hosting a spectacular exhibition of the work of the British artist Lucian Freud, grandson of the father of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud.

Freud is widely considered to be one of the foremost artists of the late twentieth century and one of the greatest portrait artists in art history. Walking around the exhibition one can see why. Freud's work, mostly portraiture, is amazingly moving, if often morose.

To understand Freud's work one has to understand the process of the portrait. His nude portraits have been described as 'sonnets to individuals'. Freud's portraits are all about one thing, namely time.

The portrait is usually taken to be a reproduction of the sitter but with Freud, he takes the idea of the portrait a step further. He sees the portrait as the representation of a person in time.

Thus if one looks at one of his most famous pieces,



'Leigh Under the Skylight', one can see that the figure is slightly distorted. Certain parts of the body seem highlighted while others

appear out of proportion, this is because Freud is capturing different aspects at different periods of time, the work is not supposed to

be a coherent unit.

For Freud, the portrait process is about so much more than the end result, the portrait is a 'self sufficient entity'. The actual painting of the portrait, however long it may take, is not painted with the end result in mind but rather with the actions and emotions of the sitter as they happen.

In other words if Freud takes six months to paint a portrait then he is attempting to capture those six months rather than attempting to capture the end result. One sitter for Freud was the famous artist David Hockney who said of the process 'all the time of the sittings-and the time around the sittings, the chatting and shared meals in restaurants that for Freud are part of the process-are "layered" into the final image.'

One of the most beautiful pieces in the exhibition is entitled 'Head of a Boy'. It is a stunningly moving piece and represents Freud's outstanding ability to capture the sitter's emotions through their eyes, often the most important part of the portrait. Without understanding the essential

element of Freud's work, namely the passing of time, his portraits can seem depressing and almost hideous.

As part of the element of time the exhibition also includes a number of excellent photographs of Freud at work in his studio. This concept of art within art is surprisingly one of the most interesting and endearing aspects of the exhibition. The photographs are quite moving, capturing as they do Freud capturing time.

This exhibition is presented in an excellent manner. It is small enough not to overwhelm and daze the visitor, allowing you to see as much or as little as you like, and yet it contains within it a spectacular range of Freud's works, including most of his most famous pieces, which is amazing considering most of his work is in private hands.

I would highly recommend a visit to this exhibition.

To find out more about the Lucian Freud exhibition visit the Irish museum of Modern Art's website at [www.imma.ie](http://www.imma.ie) The exhibition runs until the 2nd of September.



## CWU

## Eircom workers to ballot for strike

The National Executive of the Communications Workers Union has decided to ballot all its Eircom members in pursuit of full payment of the 2% pay rise due since 1 May under Towards 2016.

Senior Eircom management have informed the CWU that they are unwilling to pay the increase unless the union sign a Memorandum of Understanding, which would give the company carte blanche to do almost whatever it likes for the payment of what is a cost of living increase.

The other three unions in Eircom have also decided to carry out ballots of their membership. These developments arise from the management style of the new owners of the company, Australian based Babcock and Browne. The actions of this company reflect the anti-union regime that exists in Australia.

The current Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, is a close ally of George Bush and a fanatical champion of the neo-liberal agenda. As a

result of his government's onslaught Trade Unions in Australia have been on the defensive for the past decade with a subsequent roll back in working conditions. This is the type of regime Babcock and Browne wish to impose on Eircom workers.

It is vital that the ballot results in an overwhelming majority in favour of industrial action, as any other outcome will only give management the confidence to continue attacking workers pay and conditions. The CWU should use this opportunity to consider the partnership arrangement it has with Eircom.

This has allowed many changes to be implemented that did not have the support of the members affected. The result has been a falling off in active involvement in the union.

A huge majority in favour of industrial action should be used by the leadership as an opportunity to withdraw from the partnership process and to become a fighting union that fully represents its members interests.

## PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT ALLIANCE



Dun Laoghaire residents demonstrating in July to stop the sell-off of St Michael's Hospital

Photo: Paula Geraghty

## GALWAY ALLIANCE AGAINST WAR

## Salthill war show was, and remains, an accident waiting to happen

The Galway Alliance Against War (GAAW) publicly offered its best wishes for a speedy recovery to the 3 people injured at this year's Salthill Air Show when an RAF helicopter door fell onto the audience below, just after take-off.

The accident caused three adults to be hospitalised.

The peace group has described the event as 'an accident waiting to happen'.

GAAW spokesperson Niall Farrell stated: 'the accident could have been much, much worse. If the door had fallen on a child or onto a busy road we could be talking of fatalities. The organisers present this event as a family day out, but their website warns people that they will be attending at their own risk!'

'Let us be clear, this air show is a danger not simply to those who attend the event but it is a danger to all the people in the greater Galway area, as foreign air force planes and helicopters fly over not just Galway Bay but over large areas of the city and county as they carry out their combat manoeuvres.

This air show, like all military air shows, is an accident waiting to happen.'

The airshow displayed the USAF Thunderbirds in their F16c jets.

Last time the US Thunderbirds had a display accident was in 2003; and they have suffered two fatalities and unaccounted damage.

Because it is 'a great money-spinner' as FG councillor Mulholland described it, the powers-that-be in this city try to belittle the inherent dangers in such an air show.

Hence when we have previously raised these issues we have been scoffed at or ignored.

The water crisis has already shown for all to see that the health of the people of Galway is not an issue; profits appear to be the first priority.

As for the GAAW 99 Red Balloon event that was held earlier on the same day as the warshow - it was attended by 400 people.

Speeches were given by the Mayor of Galway, Independent councillor Catherine Connolly, Retired Army Commandant Ed Horgan, and a committee member of the Irish Anti-War Movement, with Labour councillor Collette Connolly as announcer.

This was dotted with poetry, music, dance and song, and dinners by 'Food Not Bombs'.

The fact that this year Gardaí did not prevent those assembled from releasing their 99 red balloons, plus more besides, demonstrates that their balloon-bursting antics last year were just an attempt to criminalise the peace movement in Galway city.

## 02 IRELAND

## 450 workers face outsourcing

450 Technology staff are to be outsourced by anti-union employer O2 Ireland.

A growing number of workers at O2 Ireland are joining the Communication Workers Union.

The CWU have contacted O2 Ireland requesting recognition following two well-attended union meetings.

O2 Ireland have committed to meeting the Communication Workers' union following contacts from the CWU and questions from union members during the TUPE consultation

process. The union members have also been pressing for recognition of the CWU.

O2 Ireland is part of the Telefonica group that recognises unions in Spain and also at O2 UK.

The Irish management have consistently refused to recognise unions in the spirit of Denis O'Brien and Michael O'Leary.

It seems that Spanish and British workers can join unions, but not Irish workers at O2 Ireland.

So much for Partnership!

## RATHMINES

## Public meeting over the future of Public Services

The People Before Profit Alliance held a public meeting in Rathmines to discuss issues surrounding the future plans for St. Luke's Cancer Hospital in Rathgar and Rathmines Swimming Pool.

The new Government are pushing ahead with their plans to move cancer services out of St Luke's to St James' by 2011. Speaking prior to the meeting Rory Hearne, who ran in the recent general election as a candidate for People Before Profit.

He said, 'they claim they will retain the land for public health use. But politicians have already broken health promises. Why should we trust them now? Michael McDowell lost many of his votes because he failed to support St Luke's. Other politicians will face the same fate in the next elections if St Luke's is not saved.'

The Alliance believe St Luke's

cancer hospital should be provided acute medical facilities and be retained in Rathgar. St James' is already overcrowded with operations cancelled there very recently. Patient's needs should come before profit: Big developers and speculators are set to make millions from the St Luke's site

Meanwhile, Rathmines Swimming Pool is due for redevelopment under a Public Private Partnership (PPP). A developer will build the new pool, a sports hall, and other facilities. They will also, however, be allowed build on the site 46 apartments for sale.

In similar circumstances back in 2005, Ballymun the public swimming pool was privatised and the private company that operated the pool would not allow local schools access the pool.

Rory Hearne believes, 'the council is giving the developer pub-

lic land to build and sell profitable apartments when there is a desperate need for social and affordable housing. We are campaigning for the swimming pool site to be used for public and community use only.

'There should be no privatisation of our pool and better opening hours and services in the pool. The council must ensure the park remains public and there are more youth and community facilities provided.

'There needs to be proper public consultation over the future of the swimming pool site. Large community protests and opposition stopped the privatisation of Dun Laoghaire Baths. Community action and people power can save our public services.'

For further details contact: Rory Hearne on 086 152 3542

## REILLY BOOKBINDERS

Reilly Bookbinders of Wicklow specialise in restoring and binding antique books, obtaining work from the government, universities and the courts.

Recently, its workforce found out that the company was planning to relocate to the Czech Republic and sack its workforce.

The fourteen employees have therefore occupied the company premises. Most of the experienced workforce has been with the company between 15 and 20 years, with some having 28 years service.

Message of support and solidarity visits will encourage the workers to stick it out until, at the very least, the company is obliged to recognise the contribution of its staff by sizeable redundancy payments.

If you have a story you would like Socialist Worker to report on contact [info@swp.ie](mailto:info@swp.ie) or (01) 872-2682

## BALLYMUN

## People Before Profit launch campaign

Over sixty residents from across Ballymun crowded into a public meeting organised by Ballymun People Before Profit and local residents last month.

Matters came to a head in recent months when residents in Silloge and Owensilla became aware that a new development would severely restrict access to their homes. As one resident pointed out, 'already we have been told the bin lorries will not come into our laneway, so what happens if the fire brigade or ambulance needs access in an emergency?'

The meeting discussed these grievances as well as those of residents of other areas of Ballymun. Ballymun Regeneration Ltd, the

Dublin City Council subsidiary responsible for the rebuilding of the area, has spent the last decade 'riding roughshod over the people of Ballymun' in the words of one of the meeting's organisers.

Residents' complaints included the selling-off to private developers of areas of parks and green space, substandard new housing and amenities, health and safety issues and a complete lack of genuine consultation in planning matters.

One local community activist expressed the mood of the meeting when she said, 'it's no use complaining about the past. We now need to unite to fight for the future.'

It was unanimously agreed to organise a protest campaign, starting

with a demonstration at the Ballymun Civic Offices on Wednesday 1 August at 2pm. The meeting agreed to support protests by residents in Belclare over developments in their area in August as well.

The campaign agreed to draw up a letter to be handed in to the civic offices demanding an Inquiry into BRL and Dublin City Council in relation to the regeneration of Ballymun.

Residents are also demanding that all planning applications be notified to residents and posted on the BRL website and that all proposals to sell land to private developers are also notified in advance.

To contact Ballymun People Before Profit telephone 086-3074060; 086-8726664; 086-8277047.

# How the Roma were 'welcomed'

By Diana Kelly

Last month, Wednesday 25 July, 100 members of the Roma community were repatriated in Romania in a flight chartered by the Irish government.

Around 60 men, women, and children lived in dire conditions at the Ballymun roundabout for more than two months and were soon joined by further 40 members a week before their repatriation.

Two days earlier, as I was passing by the M50 roundabout I stopped to say hello and see for myself what the situation was. The Romas showed me into their camp composed of make-shift tents, mud, garbage and a rotten smell of decomposed food. They were all worried and confused; not sure of what their future was.

Around eight of the men were expected to return from the Ballymun Garda station after having been rounded up by the Garda. One of them told me 'the Garda took them about an hour ago, we don't know what's happening, they took our children as well, they are trying to intimidate us but we don't want to go.'

I was approached by a member of the Pavee Point, and the legal adviser provided by Pavee for the Roma community who had not been informed by the Garda that such 'friendly chat' would take place.

Marius, one of the Roma told me, 'when the eight men returned I was told that the Gardai had made it clear that they were all going to be rounded up the next morning at 5am, and sent back home.'

'If they were cooperation and went voluntarily, they would receive €30 each, which was soon negotiated to €40.'

Danila another member of the Roma community told me, 'the translators were very rude, defensive and did not help us bring our point of view across. I tried to explain to the Garda that I have an injunction from the high court to stay in the Republic for further 15 days, they said I'm going anyway injunction or no injunction.'

'At one stage I told one the Immigration translator that he was paid good money because there are



Clockwise from top: Roma family in Ballymun; Gardai escort Roma during round-up; 'Apartments' owned by Roma in Romania  
Pictures: Diana Kelly and Derek Spiers

people like us who need help, so he needn't treat us like third class citizens. We are European citizens if you didn't know, we have rights.'

I decided to stay and give the Roma's a chance to express themselves as I am a fluent Romanian speaker. The legal representative asked me to make a list with all the people who wanted to stay in the country and a list with those who wished to leave.

About 75 people

clearly stated that they wanted to stay and bring their case to the High Court and around 27 said that they want to leave. The ones who wanted to leave were mainly part of the group who had arrived few days ago in the midst of the scandal.

Confusion reigned in the camp. 'First they told us that we would be given proper accommodation and our case would be considered, then they told us we were to be deported (members of the

EU cannot be deported but merely repatriated).

'Later they told us that we cannot return to Ireland for at least five years, then they told us that if we go now, we can come any time we want, and then we heard that we would have a three years interdiction.'

'We are uneducated people we don't know what to make of all this information we are fed every day.'

Mihaela told me that some of the children were

taken early in the morning but were brought back later in the afternoon. 'They told us that we are to get our children back only if we leave the country voluntarily, they were still holding two of our babies.'

The Romanian embassy made claims that the Roma are not homeless in Romania, some of them having permanent addresses at apartments situated in blocks of flats.

This claim is refuted

by Pavee Point and the Roma Support Group who point out that some of the Roma lived in makeshift tents on a rubbish dump back in Romania.

These organisations have worked closely with the Roma community providing them with a warm meal every day, clothes and basic necessities.

The Romanian government is hoping that work restrictions on its citizens will be soon

removed and are ashamed of the Roma. They deny vehemently that racism against Roma is still an issue in Romania.

But the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance third report on Romania and other international bodies had clearly shown that: 'the Roma minority was particularly disadvantaged as regards education, with high levels of absenteeism and dropping out of the school system.'

'Roma children are still segregated, relegated to the back of the classroom or placed in separate classes, or in schools for the mentally ill. Also members of the Roma community face high levels of unemployment and are confined to low-level positions and jobs chiefly on account of the discrimination against them'

In the end they all left, after being pressurised by the Gardai. There was no force used but instead very smart intimidation techniques were used. Although 35 of them had decided to stay and take their case before the High Court, on the Wednesday when the flight chartered by the Irish government was due to return them to Romania they received an unofficial Romanian government call.

They were told that they would be in a lot of trouble, and that they would suffer greater consequences if they tried to stay in Ireland.

The Romanian Government threatened to make sure they were returned and if they did not leave voluntarily their situation would become desperate, i.e. confiscation of passport, incarceration.

The Roma told me that they didn't come here to beg. They want to work and build a better life for themselves and their children.

Discrimination against Romas is an international issue all over Europe. We should have let them stay and challenged this discrimination.

The Irish government is now threatening Pavee Point because of the humanitarian assistance it provided. Minister Brian Lenihan has begun a witch-hunt into the public funded activities of Pavee Point. This needs to be fought.

## 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.....





# STOP THE SELL OFF

By Sean Mitchell

The People before Profit Alliance, local residents, and independent activists recently launched the Stop the Sell Off campaign in West Belfast.

The SSOC was formed to campaign against the proposed sell off of public land on the Glen road.

Local people had eagerly awaited the announcement concerning the future of the site.

Once home to an unwanted PSNI barracks, it was hoped that the land could be used to the benefit of the area. Local expectations were not met; in fact they were utterly ignored.

The Department of Social Development announced that it was to hand the land over

to private developer 'Carvill'.

This unaccountable band of profiteers, plan to build a five storey apartment block. This decision was taken without any consultation, with residents. The SSOC call for this undemocratic move by the DSD to be reversed.

They should end their dealings with Carvill and open a wide-ranging consultation in the area, which they must be accountable too.

The campaign also calls for the site to remain 100% public and be used for 100% community purposes.

Privatisation, in any form is not an option. This site is public property and should be kept as such, to ensure its usage is primarily for the good of local people.

Private developers such as Carvill do not have the interest of the community at heart and should have no say in determining the future of the site. Their primary aim is to make as much money as they can.

Any development on the site should be of social nature and have local resident participation and consent from the onset.

The reaction in the area has been enormous.

The Stop the Sell Off campaign went door to door and in the process collected over a thousand signatures. Its launched meeting attracted around 150 local residents.

Significantly, the campaign has also received considerable support from the Protestant working class area in the village, who are facing similar problems in

their area.

Local politicians from the SDLP and Sinn Fein, who both originally welcomed the proposal have now backtracked significantly and have come in line with much of the campaigns demands.

Despite their acceptance that the site should be 100 % community, they still insisted, at the campaign launch, that some form of private finance is needed.

This was rebutted by several speakers, who argued that this was a contradiction in terms, private finance means private profit, and this isn't welcome.

The SSOC believe that this to be a winnable campaign.

We plan to mobilise people out on the streets, to halt the DSD in its tracks.

## Public buildings, land, and services.

By Mark Hewitt

The sell-off of public land and buildings is much more widespread than community facilities.

Under 'Workplace 2010' the Strategic Investment Board together with the Department of Finance and Personnel, headed by Peter Robinson, are pushing through the privatisation of Civil Service Buildings across the North.

Using the discredited 'Private Finance Initiative' (PFI) model, the buildings are handed over to private developers who modernise them and then rent them back to the public sector.

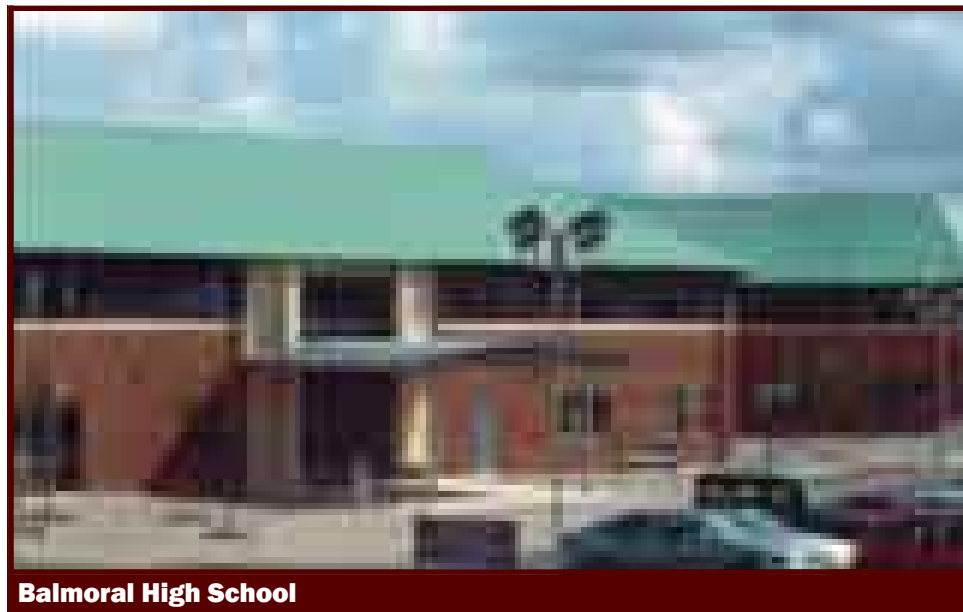
This is just plain madness. It means that thousands of pounds are wasted on negotiating the PFI deal.

The private developers borrow money at interest rates way above those of the public sector: but we pick up the tab.

The jobs and conditions of those maintaining the buildings are lost to the public sector.

In the case of Civil Service at least 77 buildings will be gifted to the private sector resulting in the loss of 500 jobs. The developers are to rake in millions.

The biggest argument against PFI or privatisation is that it simply does not work:



Balmoral High School

### Balmoral High School.

Built under PFI conditions five years ago, Balmoral will close next year because of falling pupil numbers.

Last year £370,000 was paid out by the Department of Education to 'use' the building.

Despite it being closed – at least this amount will be paid every year for the next 20 years to the private owners – a

neat £7.4 million.

This figure is 'inflation proofed' and is likely to be much higher.

### Metronet

This was the consortium that was to maintain and upgrade two thirds of the London Underground again under PFI: encouraged by Gordon Brown. Very quickly they amassed debts of £1.9

billion and went bust; the public sector will have to sort out the mess. This is despite the five major companies behind the consortium including Balfour Beatty, Bombardier and Thames Water, grabbing £70 million a month from the taxpayer.

### Keep it public

Privatisation is inefficient even in the short term. The alternative is simple.

The buildings of the education system, the NHS and civil service were all built using public money.

This is much cheaper since governments can borrow money at a lower rate.

Private companies might have been used to do the actual building but ownership was retained by the public sector.

This has been the model for nearly 100 years and means resources are there for future generations. PFI only fills the pockets of the rich and leaves nothing for our children.

NIPSA, the largest public sector union, has launched a campaign against Workplace 2010.

They need to be supported by everybody who wishes to see a decent health system, education service and thriving public sector.

# Support the Postal Workers >PAGE 4