

# Socialist Worker

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# FREE THE BIN TAX

## WHERE'S THE JUSTICE?



**BRID SMITH** is a full time carer from Ballyfermot.

She has paid taxes as a PAYE worker throughout most of her life. She was sentenced to two weeks in jail for defying the bins tax.

Two weeks ago, Brid Smith, Chrissie Heffernan and Karen Heffernan blocked a truck in Mount Tallant because refuse collection was being withdrawn from non-payers.

For this terrible 'crime' they are locked up in Mountjoy.

■ Chrissie is a grandmother of five. She lives on a Disability Pension of €124 and suffers from Asthma. She was sentenced to two weeks in jail.

■ Karen is the mother of a five year old daughter and a 14 month old baby. She lives on a Single Parents Allowance and has never spent the night away from her baby. She was sentenced to one week in jail.



**DENIS O'BRIEN** has a plush house in Ballsbridge but claims to live in Portugal as a tax exile.

That has saved him a staggering €55 million in taxes.

O'Brien made a fortune after he won a mobile phone licence from the corrupt former Minister Michael Lowry.

Evidence has been presented to the Moriarity Tribunal of alleged payments to Lowry by agents of O'Brien.

But the Gardai have never arrested O'Brien and he has just had to appear at Tribunals.

# PROTESTORS

**THE political establishment is trying to crush the bin charges campaign.**

Fifteen anti-bin charges activists from around Dublin have been sent to jail – including two elected representatives.

In a number of cases, local authorities have gone for huge costs.

Their aim is to have people declared bankrupt so that they are rendered ineligible to stand in the local elections next year. Socialists are their main target.

These disgraceful tactics

stand in sharp contrast to the way the wealthy have been treated.

Take the former Dublin City manager, George Redmond.

He took bribes off property speculators to undermine his only planning department.

But he is still walking about

as a free man.

Or look at Ray Burke.

He received huge bribes from corrupt builders to re-zone land – but he has not spent a night in jail.

The trade union movement should respond vigorously to these attacks on working class

people.

Brid Smith is a member of the Dublin District Committee of the ATGWU.

In response to her jailing and that of other trade unionists, a number of union activists are pushing for the Dublin Trades Council to call a work

time protest stoppage.

The unions should now form a real partnership with working class communities that are fighting the bin tax.

They could make a start in this by calling for: Free the Bin Charges Protestors: Jail the Ansbacher gang.

# JAIL THE ANSBACHER GANG!

## Irish working life longer

A NEW report on employment in Europe shows that the working life in Ireland lasts longer than in any other country.

According to the EU report, the average Irish male works until 63 years, five years longer than male workers in Belgium Irish women do not retire until 62—six years later than their counterparts in Luxembourg.

## Former FF Taoiseach in mystery Bahrain deal

THE former FF Taoiseach Albert Reynolds has fallen out with Bula Resources over a \$1.5 million cheque he handed over to a mysterious Bahraini general.

The deal was not recorded in the company's minutes and an official investigation is now underway.

'I was wasting my fucking time with those boys, you know' Reynolds said of Bula.

## TDs on rugby junket

EIGHT TDs from Fianna Fail and Fine Gael took two weeks off from their hard work in the Dail – to play rugby in Australia. The junket came after a 15 week long summer holiday.

The rugby trip was sponsored by AIB – the same bank which concealed 53,000 bogus accounts in the Dirt tax scandal.

The overall parliamentary games were also sponsored by the British American Tobacco company.

# Report slams garda culture of violence

**THE report from the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) outlined a 'persistent culture of violence and poor oversight in the Irish police'.**

The CPT highlighted "the number and consistency of the allegations of ill treatment".

It also called on the authorities "to intensify their efforts to prevent ill treatment by the police".

Minister for Justice, Michael McDowell has had the report since last December, but has refused to act on the findings.

### Allegation

He claims that, "the mere making of an allegation is not proof of the truth".

There have still been no successful prosecutions of gardai involved in the Reclaim the Streets attacks, the McBreaty

affair, the murder of John Carthy at Abbeylara and several allegations of corruption within the force.

Instead the government has introduced plans for an independent inspectorate, which will be a "seriously watered down version of the Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman Office" according to Father Peter McVerry who works with homeless young people.

The CPT's findings on the

Irish prison service are just as disturbing.

The delegation from the CPT heard of many complaints of assaults against inmates and highlighted one case where a prisoner's head was kicked "like a football".

In the three prisons visited it found that inmates in need of psychiatric care were "frequently placed in unfurnished padded cells" where conditions were often "filthy".

## US marines test tear gas in Curragh

**MARINES from the US Embassy in Dublin tested crowd control weapons containing tear gas in the Curragh.**

The incident became known after two men came across the gas canister while walking on the Curragh.

The gas is used in crowd control weapons used by marines who guard the US embassy in Ballsbridge and the US ambassador's residence in the Phoenix Park.

The US marines are the only foreign personnel allowed to carry weapons in this state.

The incident follows a pattern whereby Shannon airport is increasingly used by US soldiers who help to maintain their occupation of Iraq.

The official excuse for the tear gas incident is that the marines fired the weapons without permission.

A more likely explanation is that they were instructing Irish soldiers in the use of crowd control weaponry – in preparation for future protests.

## Family skeletons

**THE BUSH family has a long history of disregard for the feelings of indigenous populations.**

George W Bush's grandfather dug up the bones of Apache leader Geronimo in 1918, and gave them to the US secret Skull and Bones Society.

Leaders of Geronimo's Apache tribe have been campaigning to have the bones returned since they heard of the grave robbery in the 1980s.

Despite Skull and Bones Society members, including George Bush's brother Jonathan, saying they had Geronimo's skull, they refused to return it.

Now they claim they do not have it. The Skull and Bones Society is made up of the US rich who are inducted into it at the elite Yale University.

George W Bush said in his 1999 campaign autobiography, "In my senior year I joined Skull and Bones, a secret society, so secret I can't say anything more."

Membership into the Skull and Bones Society ensures financial security for life. "Bonesmen" are offered jobs at investment banks and law firms owned by fellow members. The society even has its own island.

# Anti war protest at Fianna Fail Ard Fheis

**NEARLY 40 anti-war protestors, mainly from Cork and Kerry, made their presence felt at the recent FF Ard Fheis.**

Foreign Minister Brian Cowan had to scurry inside when he was confronted by a group of activists.

Members of the Tralee Anti-War groups handed in letter to Ahern alongside petitions they had gathered in Killarney.

Their letter read, 'Have you no sense of this nation's history.

At least 100,000 people made it clear to you on February 15<sup>th</sup> this year that they wanted you to reconsider your stance. Do you really believe that they have changed their minds in the light of subse-

quent events.

*Do you really believe that the inflow of capital from the USA will increase as a result of your support for the invasion? Or that existing US firms will become less footloose? .*

*It is not too late for you to salvage some dignity on our behalf –*

**End the use of Shannon as a re-fuelling station for WMD**

**Re-instate our Neutrality so that we are not complicit in future pre-emptive campaigns in defiance of international law**

**Acknowledge the sincerity of those who sought to stop the killing via civil disobedience – drop all charges.**

**Explicitly state that Irish troops will not have their lives put in jeopardy to placate US demands in Iraq or elsewhere.**



■ Anti War protestors in Killarney

# ITALY SET FOR GENERAL STRIKE

**THE THREE major trade union federations in Italy have organised a four-hour general strike for Friday 24 October.**

This is the first stage of their battle against the attacks on pensions by the right wing government of

Silvio Berlusconi.

After talks broke down, Berlusconi appeared on all the major television stations giving the government's side of the story and demanding pension "reform".

Berlusconi owns three TV channels and the government controls three oth-

ers. Workers across the country were disgusted by this "invasion" of their homes.

There were spontaneous strikes against the broadcast the next day. Building workers at Port Marghera struck for two hours.

Workers also struck at the Pirelli tyre factory in Milan and the Candy factory in Milan, on the Milan underground and in the Fiat factories in Sicily and around Naples.

The trade unions called pickets outside TV stations.

Berlusconi's government has seen massive protests from the unions and the anti-capitalist movement since it came to power in May 2001.

His last government was brought down by a revolt against pension "reform"

**IRISH SOCIAL FORUM  
Summit on Solidarity and Co-Operation  
Friday 17th/ Saturday 18th October  
UCD Student Centre.  
Plenary session of fighting war, privatisation and racism and protecting the environment.**

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# BIN CHARGES: Action, Not Words



PHOTO: PAULA GERAGHTY

**'THIS IS the revenge of the bourgeois classes on the poor'. This is how Newstalk radio presenter, Damian Kiberd, described what is at stake in the battle on bin charges underway in Dublin.**

Scores of protesters are set to face jail sentences while the rich change laws and bend rules to protect their privileges.

In the same week that ten more anti-bin tax protesters were jailed, a leading builder told the Mahon tribunal that he handed Liam Lawlor £40,000 to get the address of a housing estate changed from Clondalkin to Lucan.

No attempt was made to arrest Lawlor, the builder or the post office executive that organised this snobbish manoeuvre to increase the price of houses.

Within days of this scandal, another followed. Judge Mahon, who presides over the tribunal, was revealed as a tax defaulter who claims to have made a 'mistake' in declaring the vast sums he earned in legal fees.

So if you are a rich, corrupt

politicians you are dealt with by powerless tribunals presided over by a former tax defaulter.

However, if you are a 69 nine year old grandmother who did not pay her bin tax. You are jailed.

What else can you call all this but 'the revenge of the bourgeois classes on the poor'!

## The workers united

**THE MAIN obstacle to achieving this is the role that the unions are playing. David Begg from the ICTU issued a disgraceful attack on the bin charges campaign.**

The two main unions, SIPTU and IMPACT, who represented council staff have told their members to obey the council directive not to collect the rubbish of non-payers.

But the job of the union should be to challenge management – not do their dirty work.

The bin charges campaign should be making an open and direct appeal to rank and file workers not to implement non-payment.

We should organise blockades when there is a threat of non-payment but all the time use these blockades to appeal to the rank and file council workers to

take action.

If this is fought for consistently, it can have huge success. Most council workers have not paid their own bin charges bills. They do not want to work under police protection. They come from the working class communities that have huge non-payment levels.

Where the campaign has approached these workers asking them to take up a petition for a special union meeting to condemn the policy of the ICTU, it has met with success.

The council workers have been put under huge pressure by their employers and by union leaders who backed them up.

However, through the protest actions of a militant anti-bin tax movement, they can gain the confidence to reject being used as a political tool by the council management.

## Needed: A strategy to win!

One activist who from the Finglas Bin Tax campaign made a brilliant point at a recent rally.

He said, 'The big stick they used to beat us with was fear of being sent to jail.

'But that stick is being taken away because working class people are now prepared to do what it takes to defeat this tax'.

The courage of bin tax activists is heroic. Through mass civil disobedience, they have put the state under huge pressure and slowed down the councils' policy of non-collection.

This courage now needs

to be backed up by a clear strategy for victory.

It is not enough to believe that the state will cave in, if hundreds of working class people are sent to prison.

During the struggle to 'Ban the Bomb' in Britain in the sixties, activists once thought that if the jails were filled with anti-war protesters, the state would be embarrassed enough to give in.

But the establishment will not simply be embarrassed into accepting defeat. They will fight with everything they have - including mass jailing to

behead and demoralise the movement.

Nor is it sufficient to tell people to wait until the next elections to sort things out. The Labour leaders Pat Rabbitte has refused to give a commitment to abolish bin charges.

The only strategy that is likely to bring victory is one which links the anger of working class communities with the power of organised workers.

If the bin workers were persuaded to refuse to implement the policy of non-collection, this fight would soon be over.

## THIS STRUGGLE IS A POLITICAL FIGHT

**TENS OF thousands of workers are now looking for a political alternative to the right wing parties.**

And as the movement grows, every political strategy will be openly assessed in front of newly politicised

layers of workers.

The Labour Party and Sinn Fein said that they are against bin charges. But

they must now be told to back up their words with action.

At every mass meeting in the coming weeks, resolutions should be put down to demand that every political representative of a left wing party join local blockades when non-collection begins in their area.

### Mandated

When this occurred in Ballyfermot recently, all 300 people present voted unanimously to mandate the Sinn Fein TD Aengus O Snodaigh to join the blockades.

This example should be spread across Dublin to force the reformist parties either to act – or to show

where their loyalties really lie.

In the meantime it is becoming clear that it is parties like the Socialist Party and the Socialist Workers Party who are leading the campaign at ground level.

Only genuine socialists will fight to the finish to resist bin charges and privatisation – by whatever means are necessary.

This is why it is vital that in the coming weeks, hundreds of working class people are encouraged to join the socialists.

Irish politics is undergoing a major transformation. And it is vital that a strong socialist force is at the heart of the changes.

## Join the Socialists!

To join the Socialist Workers Party or for more information:

Fill in the form and Send to:

ROI: SWP PO Box 1648, Dublin 8,

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comment

## Eamonn McCann

# Bloody Sunday: The cover up continues

ONE OF the most striking revelations emerging from the closing stages of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry is that whether or not there was a conspiracy in advance of the Derry massacre, there was a conspiracy in the aftermath to cover it up.

Among those centrally involved was Britain's current top soldier, the Chief of the General Staff, Sir Michael Jackson.

This wasn't a long-ago youthful indiscretion. On the witness stand last April, Jackson continued the cover-up he had maintained over the previous three decades.

As to whether Lord Saville and the two Commonwealth judges who sit with him will acknowledge this truth in their report, we must wait and see. But we don't need to wait for the truth itself. It's already on the record.

A month after Jackson's evidence, in June, the Tribunal unearthed a series of documents showing that within 24 hours of the paratroopers' shooting which left 26 unarmed civil rights marchers dead or wounded, Jackson was personally writing out a phoney version of the shots which had been fired and false accounts of how five key para officers had seen the events. Jackson had made no mention of any of this in his evidence in April.

### 'Shot-list'

The documents included a "shot-list" purporting to show, with the help of grid-references, where every soldier had been when he fired and where his target had been located. All the targets were identified as either gunmen or bombers.

Re-called to give further evidence this month, Jackson claimed that a "vague memory" had suddenly returned to him of producing the documents.

The shot-list had originally been given to the Tribunal in typescript. A month after Jackson's first appearance, Major Ted Loden testified that this was a word-for-word transcription of a document which he'd written within an hour of the shooting and handed over to administrative staff for typing.

But within 24 hours of Loden's sworn testimony, the original of the typescript was produced, and immediately identified as being in Jackson's hand-writing, not Loden's.

How on earth could this have come about?, Loden was asked. "Well, I cannot answer that question," came the lame reply.

Lawyers for the Bloody Sunday families have shown that the grid-references on the shot-list don't conform to where the soldiers actually fired from or where the casualties actually fell.

Some of the shots depicted went through brick walls. In other words, it's a list of lies—in the hand-writing of the Chief of the General Staff.

Jackson was adjutant to Lt. Col. Derek Wilford on Bloody Sunday. Loden was commander of Support Company, the unit which probably inflicted all of the casualties.

### False version

Apart from the shot-list, the documents written out by Jackson included the alleged personal accounts of Loden, Wilford, the commanders of the other two para companies which had been present, plus the account of the battalion's intelligence officer.

Jackson thus produced by his own hand within a day of the massacre the false version of Bloody Sunday which the British Army has stood by ever since.

In his recall evidence, Jackson insisted that he couldn't remember the circumstances in which he'd been ordered to compile the documents, or where the order had come from. He did admit that, "the requirement may have been instigated in London."

In their evidence, none of the other officers involved recalled Jackson conducting the exercise.

Just as significantly, none of the paratroopers who'd opened fire recalled any debriefing session where they'd been asked for their locations and the locations of the people they'd been aiming at. It was all sheer invention.

From January 1972 right up to this month, Jackson, Wilford, Loden and the others have stood by the cover-up. All of them, Jackson especially, were, at the least, accessories after the fact of murder. The test of the Saville Tribunal is how close it will dare come to this obvious conclusion.

# Socialist Environmental Alliance to stand in North's elections

**ASSEMBLY elections are expected to be announced any day now.**

The main socialist presence in these elections will come from the Derry based Socialist and Environmental Alliance.

Unfortunately, despite repeated efforts by the SWP, it now looks like there will be no broader united socialist alternative in these elections.

A meeting held in Belfast on 1st Oct of 50-60 socialists, many of whom were not members of any organisation, illustrated a real hunger for left unity.

But the problem is that the parties of the old Left are lagging behind recent movements.

Activists in trade unions, anti-war and anti-capitalist movements want to see the unity that has emerged in those movements reflected at elections. In Derry, that continuum of left unity from street activity to elections has worked for



■ A mood for unity exists which the Left must respond to

some time in the Socialist Environmental Alliance [SEA].

The SEA grew out of campaigns against incineration, the arms trade and for debt relief.

### Trust

People on the Left who in the past had been suspicious of each other worked together and grew to trust and back each other up.

That cooperation deepened in the course of the

anti-war movement.

The SEA is one expression of the anti-capitalist movement and, as its Constitution makes clear, exists to further the fight for a just and sustainable world - rather than to win elections.

One positive outcome of the failed talks recent talks on socialist unity was the agreed 16-point platform which included opposition to militarism and para-militarism, rejection of all privatisation and of water charges,

support for trade union rights, the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act and the legalisation of cannabis.

### Opposed

The platform stated that "All that is on offer are two states, equally dominated by the interest of capitalism, both of which are relentlessly imposing the agenda of corporate globalisation.

"We are opposed to the sectarian head-count

mentality that suggests that a change in the status of the border depends on 50 per cent plus one of the population of either religion.

"We stand for a break from this pattern.

"We want to bring working class issues to the fore in the sure belief that this will create the best conditions in which to resolve all other questions on the basis of trust, solidarity and co-operation."

However some parties insisted on explicit support for the Good Friday Agreement as a prerequisite for unity.

While those, like the SWP and the Newtownabbey Labour Group, who oppose the Agreement were willing to 'agree to disagree' on this, it proved a major stumbling block.

The SEA is to stand in the Assembly elections, at least in the Foyle Constituency using the manifesto agreed by the broader Left. Anyone who wants to contact the SEA can email [resistderry@aol.com](mailto:resistderry@aol.com).

# Budget proposals bring more corporate welfare

**IN THE same week pensioners were offered an extra few pounds a week, if they could fill in a 12-page means-testing form, Stormont direct rule Ministers announced budget proposals that include £30 million of corporate welfare to subsidise electricity costs to businesses.**

The budget proposals have been trumpeted as good news. Ian Pearson, the relevant minister boasted that around £7 billion will be spent in the North each year for the next three years.

But the British government will have spent that

**Electricity prices to homes is 11 percent higher than in Britain**

much on the war and occupation in Iraq by the end of this year.

He also announced that 'reform' of the Water Ser-

vice will go ahead and water charges will be introduced, in spite of massive opposition.

The sewerage and water system does need modernisation.

It will cost between two and three billion.

But again that's less than Blair spent in Iraq in just the first two months of the war.

Pearson claimed that the strategy of making water self-financing "was made in the Executive's Draft Budget last year".

That was his way of warning the main establishment parties not to complain too loudly about the pro-business and privatisation programme they agreed before the collapse of the Assembly.

In the same week the budget was announced, a new "fuel poverty" strategy was published.

### Admitted

This admitted that thousands of pensioners die from the cold each year because they cannot afford to heat their homes.

There were, however, no proposals to cut the price of electricity to homes, although it is widely agreed that prices in the North are 11 per cent higher than in Britain or the South.

Electricity is even more expensive since privatisation.

But astonishingly, instead of paying for cheaper electricity for pensioners, the budget offers cheaper electricity for business.



## CALIFORNIAN ELECTION:

by MIKE DAVIS

## WAS IT JUST ABOUT SCHWARZENEGGER?

*'People are living on a mountain of sewage'**Voters in California recently went to the polls and elected Arnold Schwarzenegger from among a list of 135 candidates.**MIKE DAVIS, whose books include City of Quartz and Late Victorian Holocausts, writes on the issues which the media's election coverage has ignored.***EVERY candidate in California's dark recall election comedy should be obliged to answer the question, "Whither Duroville?"**

Duroville is the California visitors never see and that pundits ignore when they debate the future of the world's sixth largest economy.

Officially this ramshackle desert community of 4,000 people in the Coachella Valley doesn't even exist. It is a shantytown—reminiscent of the Okie camps in The Grapes of Wrath—erected by otherwise homeless farm workers on land owned by Harvey Duro, a member of the Cahuilla Indian nation. The Coachella Valley is the prototype of a future—Beverly Hills meets Tijuana—that California conservatives seem to dream of creating everywhere.

**Resident**

The western side of the valley, from Palm Springs to La Quinta, is an air-conditioned paradise of gated communities built around artificial lakes and golf courses. The typical resident is a 65 year old retired white male in a golf cart. He is a zealous voter who disapproves of taxes, affirmative action, and social services for the immigrants who wait on him.

The east side of the valley, from Indio to Mecca, is where the resort maids, pool cleaners and farm workers live. There is an artificial mountain built out of 500,000 tons of sludge (solid sewage) trucked in from Los Angeles, but not a blade of grass.

In Duroville the largest body of water is the sewage lagoon, and the local playground is a dioxin-contaminated landfill.

The typical resident is 18 years old, speaks Spanish or Mixtec, and works all day in the blast-furnace desert heat. She or he, most likely, is not yet a citizen and therefore ineligible to vote. Squalor, exploitation and lack of rights are not confined to California's agricultural valleys and "facto-

ries in the field". There are urban Durovilles as well, like the sprawling tenement district just a few blocks west of downtown Los Angeles.

On the gilded coast north of San Diego an estimated 10,000 immigrant day-labourers and service workers sleep rough in the wild canyons behind \$800,000 homes. Throughout the state, hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers live in illegal garage conversions, derelict trailers, even chicken coops.

Economic inequality has soared in the last generation, particularly in the southern half of the state. In the Los Angeles area, for example, the top 20 percent of the workforce earns 25 times more on average than the bottom 20 percent.

Similarly, a third of Los Angeles residents lack medical insurance and depend on a handful of overcrowded county hospitals whose doctors have recently given chilling testimony about the rising number of needless deaths from shortages of staff and beds.

This Third World California, which Duroville poignantly symbolises, is no accidental creation.

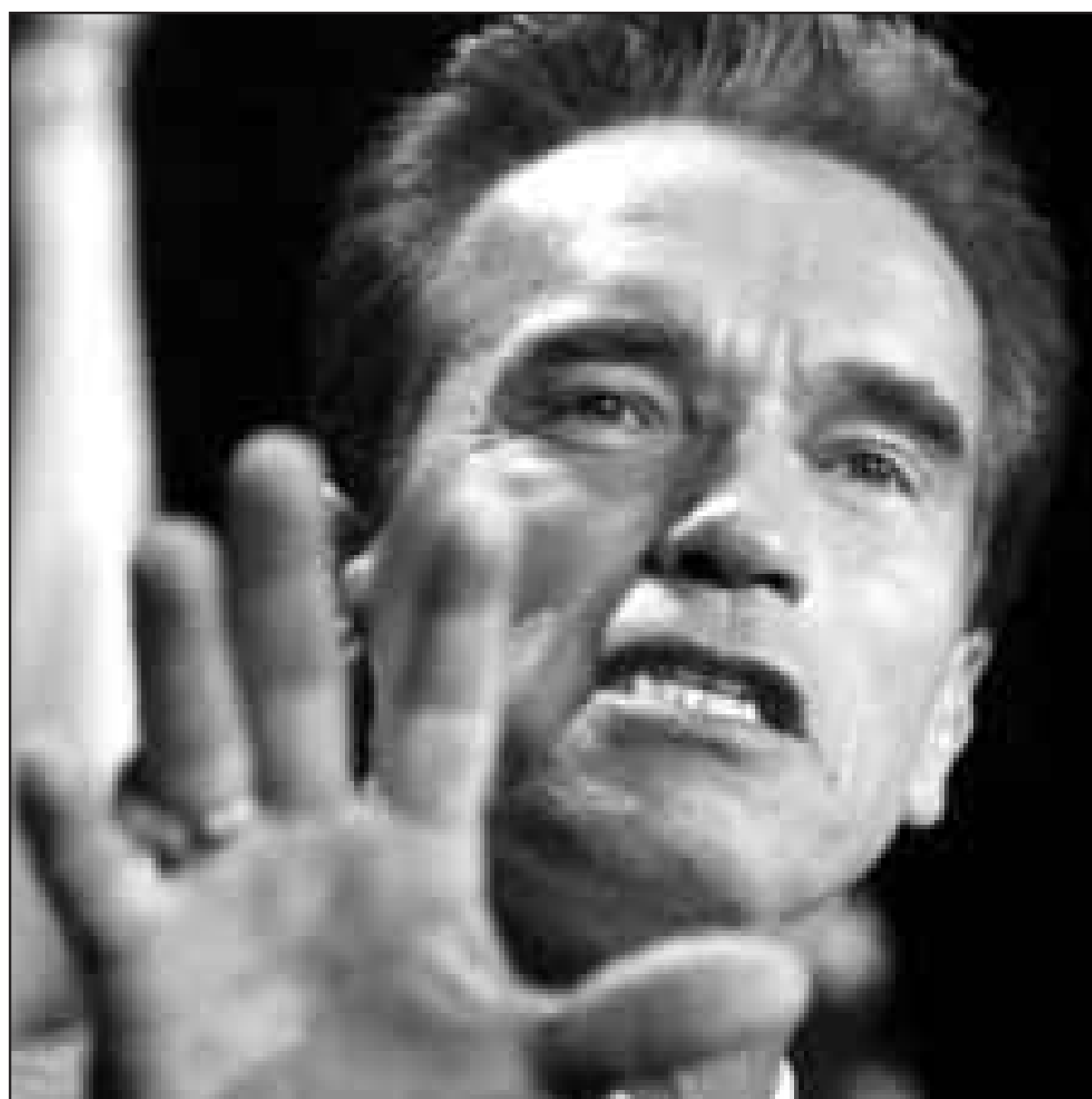
**Tax Revolt**

The famous California tax revolt of the 1970s was racial politics coded as fiscal populism. As the Latino population soared, white voters—egged on by right wing demagogues—withdrew support from the public sector.

California became a bad school state in step with becoming a low wage state. Overcrowded classrooms and dangerous playgrounds are part of a vicious circle with sweatshop jobs and slum housing.

The California labour movement, reinvigorated by a new generation of organising, has fought to halt creeping "Mississippiisation" with demands for living wage regulations, increased school spending, and the closure of tax breaks for the rich.

There have been some victories (mainly in funding education) but progressive



■ Arnold Schwarzenegger

politics fights uphill against two huge structural obstacles. First is the legacy of Proposition 13 itself which requires super-majorities to raise most taxes. Second, and more daunting, is the glacial pace of the enfranchisement of new immigrants.

Although Anglos are now a minority of the population, they still constitute 70 percent of the electorate. Even in 2040, according to the projections of the Public Policy Institute of California, whites (only 35 percent of the population) will still cast 53 percent of the votes.

If current trends continue, this geriatric white minority will also consume a majority of entitlements and tax resources. The conservative worldview, of course, inverts these realities. Led by former governor Pete Wilson, Republicans argue that the state has become a dumping ground for shiftless and uncultured beggars from the South.

Mexico, as depicted in a notorious Wilson campaign ad ("They're coming!"), is invading Anglo California

and imposing huge burdens of taxes, crime and pollution upon its honest burghers. The true wretched of the earth are long-suffer-

ing, overtaxed white guys in their golf carts.

Reason dies screaming in the face of such nonsense, but it is peddled 24

hours a day by the pitbull talkshow hosts who dominate California AM radio and, increasingly, commercial television.

**Democrats paved the way for Arnie**

Now that the rats are on dry ground, it has been easy for many Democrats to dismiss the former Governor Gray Davis as a singularly unfortunate choice — a charisma-less robot with an open palm who let the state be pillaged by Enron during the phoney energy crisis three years ago.

But, again in fairness, Davis exemplifies precisely those qualities — pro-corporate, politically centrist, and hard law and order—which the Democratic Leadership Council has so long recommended as the salvation of the Democratic Party. Nor is his disintegration unique.

His cunning and unprincipled lieutenant governor, Cruz Bustamante, Bustamante may have been preferable to Pete Wilson hiding inside the Trojan horse called Schwarzenegger,

but the difference is probably less than most Democratic voters imagine.

Some years ago, Bustamante got into a pissing contest with (then governor) Wilson. They were talking about amending state laws to allow the execution of minors. When Wilson suggested death sentences for criminals as young as 14, Bustamante responded that he might "with a tear in my eye, cast a vote to execute 'hardened criminals' as young as 13".

The major alternative to child killers is California's Green Party. In last year's governor election, Green candidate Peter Camejo won 5 percent of the vote and emboldened thousands of progressives to envision life after the Democrats. He's one of the first Greens to make some impact in unions and among Latinos.

Unfortunately much of the media attention that otherwise might have accrued to the Greens was hijacked by Arianna Huffington, running as an independent.

A professional television guest and columnist, formerly married to one of the state's richest Republicans, she's undertaken an unusual journey in the desert of American politics—moving from the far right to the moderate left.

Huffington, for example, has been an eloquent and effective critic of the Bush "war on terror". But unlike Camejo, selected by a poll of the Green membership, she was strictly freelancing with the aid of Hollywood money and her privileged access to media.

Her populist credibility, moreover, was diminished by the revelation that, although she owns a \$7 mil-

White rage is also the steroid that Republican strategists pumped up Arnold Schwarzenegger for heavy lifting in the recall election. Liberal commentators have attacked the movie star for his singular lack of articulate positions on decisive issues. But the criticism is unfair.

The Terminator, in fact, has a long history of ideological commitment which, for tactical reasons, his campaign-minders wanted to downplay. Most striking has been his extensive involvement in the crusades to deny healthcare and education to undocumented immigrants, and to make English the exclusive official language.

The poor boy from the Alpine boondocks was a key endorser of anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in 1994 and, even more sinisterly, a longtime board member of US English, a national organisation with notorious ties to men in white hoods.

But it would be a mistake, in any case, to think that Arnie is the actual star of his latest and most lavish film. As all the punters in Sacramento have pointed out, the real title should be "Return from the Grave: Wilson Part Three". The ex-governor was the spectre haunting the recall.

His veteran staff (including George Gorton, who recently ran Boris Yeltsin's re-election) control all the important strings moving Schwarzenegger, while Wilson himself drives a sales campaign which has successfully recruited most of the billionaires in the state.

lion mansion, she has paid virtually no income tax in recent years. The effect of her candidacy, despite promises to coordinate with Camejo, was set to reduce rather than enhance the vote to the left of the Democrats.

Republicans, on their side, have gained tremendous confidence in their ability to thwart any future legislative effort toward tax reform or economic justice. Liberal Democrats, on the other, have had their faces rubbed in the moral rot of their party.

In Duroville, meanwhile, they look across their sewer lake at the fat life of a rapidly receding California dream. The America that gets ignored—homelessness, poverty, racism and inequality



# Weapons of mass instruction Touching a chord with the people

## Socialist Worker begins a short new series about rebel newspapers

By PAUL McGARR

**THE FRENCH** Revolution between 1789 and 1794 was the first time in history that revolutionary newspapers played a decisive role in shaping the course of events.

The revolution was the key battle in the birth of the modern capitalist world.

It swept away the old feudal order of aristocrats and kings. In its place it forged a national state dominated by the middle class of merchants, doctors, lawyers.

The old order fought ferociously to hang on to power.

Time and again the revolution only went forward when a section of the new capitalist class allied itself with the mass of ordinary people to defeat counter-revolution.

Jean-Paul Marat was one of the most radical and influential of the revolutionary leaders.

His influence was entirely due to the revolutionary paper he produced, *L'Ami du Peuple* (The People's Friend).

Its circulation was around 2,000 copies a day. It was widely read among the key activists who led the revolution on the ground.

Marat's paper was read aloud in the new political clubs and local area "section" meetings which drove the revolution forward.

It was mostly written by Marat himself. Letters from readers played a big part too.

The paper constantly railed against complacency and demanded firmer action against the old order.

### Foolish

Marat warned his readers, "I am indignant against our foolish regard for our cruel enemies-fools we are, we fear to cause them a scratch.

"Let them be masters for one day and you will see them overrun the provinces, fire and sword in hand, striking down all who offer resistance, massacring the friends of the country, slaughtering women and children, and reducing our cities to ashes."

Marat knew that the middle class could only defeat the old order by mobilising the mass of ordinary people.

That is why he insisted his audience were "the unfortunate, the oppressed, the persecuted who each day ask for my support against their oppressors".

He was scornful against those who attacked him for writing in plain popular language and not the literary style of the middle class:

"It is for the people and not for the learned or gentlemen of the world that I write. My first aim is to be well understood."

Throughout 1790 and 1791 Marat warned that the revolution was in danger: "The royal family is planning again to flee. The monarch plans to put himself at the head of the enemies of the revolution to attempt a counter-revolution."

He was proved right in June 1791 when the royal family fled from Paris heading to the border to join counter-revolutionary armies. Had they succeeded the revolution may have been crushed.

The "moderate" leaders then in power did nothing. But Marat's warnings, and those of fellow revolutionary journalist Camille Desmoulins, had found an audience. One history describes how, "Their message was so well spread that when the royal coach was fleeing it found everywhere on the route people on the lookout."

At Varennes, a few hours short of the border, the king was halted and arrested by the local postmaster, Jean-Baptiste Drouet. Marat's was only the most important of the papers of the French Revolution.

### Influence

There were others that sought to influence the mass of people.

After the summer of 1794 the revolution had crushed the old order. A more right wing section of the middle class came to power.

The poverty and injustice which ordinary people still suffered led some people to radicalise and argue for a new revolution.

Gracchus Babeuf looked beyond just getting rid of the old feudal and aristocratic order to a fight for a new more equal society. Babeuf organised a network of supporters around his paper *The Tribune of the People*. One history gives a flavour of how:

"A letter from Babeuf's son Emile, aged at the time ten and a half, gives a graphic picture of the distribution of number 41 of the *Tribune of the People*.

"He visited the local cobbler and various male and female citizens. In each case they took six or a dozen papers, paid for their own and one for a friend and promised to pass on the rest."

The increasingly reactionary government smashed Babeuf's group, and he was executed in 1797.

But his legacy, and that of the French Revolution, inspired the next generation of revolutionaries-this time those fighting the capitalist society the revolution had helped give birth to.

# The case against bin charges

*Bertie Ahern called the bin tax protestors 'spongers'.*

*The media denounces them for not recognising the 'polluter pays principle'.*

*But Socialist Worker provides the information to back the case against bin charges.*

## 1. They are a double charge.

**B**in charges mean a withdrawal of an essential public service that was previously free. The councils in Dublin are bringing them in at a low entry fee. However, once they are established, they will rise.

Environment Minister Martin Cullen has claimed that the real cost of local authority collection is €600 per household. Already some councils are charging more than €400.

Bin charges are the cutting edge of neo-liberal policies. Across the world, multi-national 'service providers' are pressuring governments and local councils to turn public services into a commodity that is bought and sold.

Once bin charges get in, water charges will follow.

Dublin City manager, John Fitzgerald has publicly stated that he wants to bring in water charge. Mary Harney has said that Ireland will have to revisit the issue.

The OECD, which is one of the main think tanks for corporate globalisation, wants water charges introduced at the level of €200 per household.

Workers have always fought for essential public services to be provided free through a system of national taxation. Retreating from that, means a return to the dog eat dog world of nineteenth century capitalism.

## 2. It's another attack on PAYE Workers

**B**in charges are a double tax on people who already pay the bulk of taxes. They are part of a strategy for increasing indirect taxes, which disproportionately hit the poorest.

A low-income earner on €300 euro a week pays the same charge as a millionaire who lives in a six bedroom mansion.

The Fingal amount of paying according to the amount of waste you produce does not change this class inequality. A young working class family will still pay more than a millionaire who lives alone and mainly eats in restaurants.

Successive Irish governments have adopted a dual strategy on taxation. They have cut taxes on wealth so that capitalists now enjoy the most favourable tax regimes in the EU.

Corporation profits tax has been



slashed to 12.5%; Capital gains tax has been cut from 40% to 20%. Inheritance tax has been cut. The employers also enjoy the lowest social security contribution in the EU.

In a more modest fashion, successive governments also cut taxes on PAYE workers. However, these tax cuts were in compensation for accepting low wage rises during the Celtic Tiger boom.

Workers got tax cuts in return for wage restraint. The rich got tax cuts as a bonus on top of spiralling profits. However, the overall result was that the tax take dropped to the lowest in the EU.

This is the main reason why local authorities are under funded.

The left wing solution is to reverse this trend and force the rich to pay taxes. The right wing solution is to carry the process further and push for more charges, which hit the poor hardest.

This is why we are seeing bin charges, increased university registration fees, hospital charges. They are all new stealth taxes to make up for the low tax regime the rich enjoy.

## 3. We are waste receivers not waste producers.

**W**e must respect the 'polluter pays principle' says the Green Party - and so they back the bin charges.

They assume that each individual chooses how much waste they produce and so should be charged accordingly.

However, individuals in modern society are not waste producers but waste receivers.

Food is presented in most supermarkets in unnecessary wrapping. Vegetables are available in polystyrene trays and plastic wrapping.

Milk is only sold in cartons of Tetrapak rather than in bottles that could be recycled.

Modern capitalism spends vast amounts on 'branding'. It sells its goods in bulky coloured packaging. It markets images and so produces vast amounts of waste to outdo rivals.

This waste is dumped on the individual consumer who is then told they are responsible for it.

However, if you really want to tackle waste you have to hit the supermarkets and companies who are producing it - not the individual household.

## 4. Bin Charges can add to the waste problem

**R**ight wing politicians always claim there has to be a 'financial incentive' to encourage people to use less. They think the only individual solutions work - and so people have to be financially penalised for the waste.

However, there is also evidence that it can easily backfire.

A survey carried out in the South East showed that a staggering 37 percent of households burn their waste, always or sometimes. A senior official in one of the councils said that rising bin taxes was partly responsible.

This leads to greater environmental destruction because the burning of domestic waste releases of all sorts of poisonous dioxins into the atmosphere.

Bin charges will also lead to greater indiscriminate dumping by the poor who cannot afford to pay for the charges.

These are all the consequences of failing to provide an essential public service that is necessary for people's health and their environment.

## 5. Bin charges do not lead to more re-cycling facilities

**M**artin Cullen says that bin charges are necessary to pay for re-cycling. But money collected from bin charges in councils outside Dublin has not led to any marked increase in re-cycling. 93% of paper waste still goes into landfill rather than re-cycling. 99% of household plastic also goes to landfill.

The case of glass is even more scandalous. This government allowed the Irish Glass Bottle plant in Ringsend to be closed - even though it was the only re-

cycling facility in the state. Now all glass for recycling has to go to Northern Ireland or abroad.

Household waste makes up only 15% of all waste going to landfill sites. If Cullen was serious, he would be penalising companies who dump their waste severely.

Yet companies are allowed to write off the costs of waste disposal for tax purposes.

Re-cycling needs serious investment in facilities so that they are easily accessible at every estate.

It needs proper public education campaign to make people aware.

Yet in most towns bottle banks or facilities for re-cycling paper are miles away from where the majority live.

In these circumstances re-cycling waste is like taking a moral stand - rather being part of everyday life which people, naturally engage in.

## 6. The Bin Charges mean privatisation.

**E**verywhere bin charges are introduced, the threat of privatisation soon follows.

Most councils outside Dublin have bin charges - and most have been privatised.

The real agenda behind bin charges is a strategy worked out at the World Trade Organisation.

The General Agreement on Trade in Service (GATS) states that all public services must be opened to competition from international service providers.

Under these rules negotiated at the WTO multi-nationals will eventually be able to take governments to court if services like waste are not de-regulated.

Multi-nationals who operate in waste collection are usually involved in the business of water supply as well.

The three big ones who have started to operate in Ireland are:

■ **Greenstar:** This is a joint venture of Anglian Water and National Toll Roads. Nationals Toll Roads bribed the former Dublin City manager, George Redmond, and favours close links with local politicians.

They are an anti-union firm that is involved in major battle to de-recognise SIPTU.

■ **Onyx:** This is the waste collection arm of Vivendi Environment. Vivendi are a large French multi-national.

Vivendi began by taking over municipal water works in France and then established itself as a huge conglomerate.

■ **Sita:** This is a subsidiary of the other big French rival, Suez. It operates in 31 countries.

These companies cannot make a profit if there are no bin charges.

This why the battle over bin charges is a part of a major struggle to halt this country going down the Thatcherite road.

# Teflon Taoiseach comes unstuck

By DAVID LYNCH

IT'S all beginning to stick to our Teflon Taoiseach'.

Having lived a somewhat charmed life as leader of Fianna Fail, Bertie Ahern's popularity is beginning to fall through the floor and FF's ratings are dropping just as quick.

FF core support is at its lowest poll rating since MRBI polls began. At 27 percent FF's popularity continues to shrink and this poll was conducted before the revelations about tax dodger Michael Collins and the jailing of the Bin Tax protesters.

### Controlled

Twenty years ago the two major right wing parties in the state received as much as 85 percent of the vote at election time.

But according to the latest figures FF and FG combined only scrape 50 percent. FF was once a huge political institution that controlled many unions, sporting organisations and local authorities.

The recent polls show there is a seismic shift underway in politics in Ireland. The space for 'progressive' politics has never been larger.

More people are voting for and supporting leftist parties than at any time in the history of the state.

Historically over the past two decades the support for FF and FG has been dropping.

The class basis of their traditional followers and the reluctance of young people to just vote the same way as their parents did has undercut their core support.

While FF's vote remained in consistent free-fall, the popularity of Bertie Ahern put a brake on the spiralling FF support.

The FF media machine has been very adept at portraying their leader as an 'ordinary working man', a decent skin Dub who understands the urban working class.

But it should also be noted that the Labour Party and the Greens have not ruled out an alliance with FG.

There are also plenty of signs that R a i n b o w Government - even one with Rabbitte as Taoiseach - will not bring fundamental change. Rabbitte has not promised to remove bin charges - and has denounced socialists who have 'broken the law'.

He claims there is a conflict of interest between 'consumers' and public sector workers - and is not opposed to certain forms of privatisation.

Booing the Taoiseach at public functions (even at Croke Park!) is probably Ireland's quickest growing sport and it reflects the contempt that the FF leader is now held.

Many of the left were shattered by the results in the last General Election. However the more foresighted of commentators pointed out a few things.

Although FF won, they did so with their third worst election result ever. The left grew in support with Sinn Fein, Green's and Independents making gains.

The socialist independent from Tipperary South, Seamus Healy TD has called for an alliance between the large leftist parties, a grouping that he believes could receive up to 48 percent of the vote at election time.



■ Ahern: Plummeting in polls

an alliance with FG. There are also plenty of signs that R a i n b o w Government - even one with Rabbitte as Taoiseach - will not bring fundamental change. Rabbitte has not promised to remove bin charges - and has denounced socialists who have 'broken the law'.

He claims there is a conflict of interest between 'consumers' and public sector workers - and is not opposed to certain forms of privatisation.

### Controlled

In the election of 1992 the Labour Party received their best election result ever on the back end of a campaign that lashed the 'cosy cartel' between FF and big business.

But Labour rewarded working class voters by giving a tax amnesty to the rich and water charges for the rest.

Working class voters in turn rewarded Labour by not voting for them five years later as Labour lost half their TD's in that election. It is not beyond Pat Rabbitte to do the same thing again come the next poll.

There is no point having Labour Party or Sinn Fein ministers in power if they are just going to carry on the economic cuts demanded by big business.

This is why it is vital that a strong far left alternative that takes advantage of the political radicalisation and builds a serious opposition to the political and economic system we live under.



# State to pay out €2bn in child abuse deal with church

by **CONOR KOSTICK**

**ON 5 June 2002 Michael Woods, himself a much celebrated 'old boy' of the Christian Brothers, struck a deal with the representatives of 18 religious congregations.**

By way of compensation for the abuse that had taken place in their institutions, they would pay €128 million, with the state covering the rest of the costs.

This was a scandal because the taxpayer was being obliged to take the burden of compensation off the shoulders of those responsible.

The threats that the religious institutions brought to the negotiations made a complete mockery of their belated public apology to their victims- the representatives of these institutions had fought hard against admitting any liability.

They had argued that for technical reasons they could avoid having to pay many of the potential claimants.

## Fight

They made it clear they intended to fight over every single case and every inch of ground.

But in detail the scandal is even greater.

For only €41.14 million of the package was new cash from the religious institutions.

The remainder consisted of credit for property previously transferred to the state and €10 million in order to offer counselling.

The latter figure is a bitter joke for some victims of abuse who were offered counselling within the walls of buildings that held terrible associations for them.

## Total

The total bill to the taxpayer will probably end up around the €2bn mark as it is now estimated that some 10,000 victims of abuse will come forward.

## How much do the religious own?

ACCORDING to Bertie Ahern, it was necessary to limit the costs to the religious institutions to save them from bankruptcy.

How he knows their financial situation is a mystery as cloudy as the murky depths in which these organisations hide their money.

As registered charities, religious organisations like the Sisters of Mercy do not have to file accounts. Their moveable assets are hard to trace, with a large number of financial trusts moving millions around the world on their behalf. The Christian Brothers, for example recently moved large amounts of cash to Rome.

However they undeniably hold great swathes of property. Two years ago an investigation by RTE calculated that the value of the property held by the Christian Brothers in Ireland was roughly €500m.

The Sisters of Mercy hold a great range of properties, from individual houses to schools and the Mater Hospital in Dublin.

It is illegal for a company faced with liquidation to transfer its assets to another company. Yet the religious institutions, anticipating multi-million costs from their legacy of decades of abuse, are strategically organising to meet claims by placing their property into local trusts.

As the solicitor for the Christian Brothers in the US explained in a leaked letter: "In order to make CBI less of a target in any suit for damages we have been incorporating each school as a separate corporate entity with its own board of Trustees and Directors and transferring title to the school from the CBI e.g. to All Hallows Institute. This helps give some protection from liability."



■ Cardinal Desmond Connell and (inset) Michael Woods

## Why were they so generous?

**THE extraordinary generosity of the Irish state to the religious institutions needs an explanation.**

Is it that the current government, which fought tooth and nail over payments to victims of the Hepatitis in blood scandal, has had a change of heart?

That it now wishes to make payments to victims of abuse generous and easy to obtain? Since this scenario is utterly implausible, the explanation for their willingness to make massive payouts has to be sought elsewhere.

Newfoundland in Canada is a state with very strong Irish Catholic traditions. Many of the schools and public care institutions were run by religious orders, especially the Christian Brothers. As with Ireland, several years ago it emerged that for years a high level of abuse had been

taking place in many of these institutions.

A state enquiry took place into one in particular, Mount Cashel and this enquiry was televised.

The shocking, sober, testimony of the former boys of the school deeply affected public opinion. The State fully compensated the victims, and then sued the Christian Brothers for the money with massive public support.

The Christian Brothers response was not one of charity and contrition.

They quickly set up offshore companies, including in Ireland.

Nor did they have any compunction spending millions in legal fees and obliging the State to do the same in an effort to establish the true state of their finances.

While the Christian Brothers declared they only had \$5m in cash assets, the liquidator suspected that the

true figure of their original wealth had been nearer \$100m.

However, at least their property could be obtained, in part by parents in the more prestigious schools buying out the Christian Brothers.

In the space of four years from the enquiry, education in Newfoundland has moved from being very Irish Catholic to being secular.

Now transfer the same scenario to Ireland.

What would be the situation if the religious institutions blackmailed the government along the following lines: 'we own hundreds of schools, hospitals and other public health care buildings.

If you pursue us for the full costs of compensation, we will be obliged to sell these to property developers and they will cease to function.'

## We need secular education

A SOCIALIST or even a secular liberal government would simply take the property off the institutions without a qualm, bringing them into state ownership. After all, it has been decades since they were staffed by religious.

At the moment the thousands of teachers, nurses and other staff working in these properties are all paid by the taxpayer. To all intents and purposes they are already public institutions.

But for a government dedicated to the market and private property, they do not dare extend public ownership. This right wing government also knows that church run schools are good breeding grounds for conservative propaganda which stress respect for traditional authority.

This is why they did not dare push the institutions too far because they cannot call their bluff.

Not to mention the fact that quick settlements suit the interest of those who may have been in positions of responsibility while the abuse was happening, those who when it was drawn to their attention ignored it, or worse, actively concealed it.

The top echelons of the Department of Education is still full of Catholic fundamentalists who hate to see their church criticised. They received many allegations about abuse – but did nothing. So they too had a direct interest in the cover up.

From the establishment's point of view, the sooner and more quietly the issue of child abuse is dealt with the better, even if that costs an immense amount of public money.

The balance sheet is this. The abusers are set to escape their responsibility, the public are set to pay in their stead.

But the issue is politically explosive. There still remains the possibility of a Canada style meltdown of control of the religious over schools and hospitals. And even if the government holds the line it has chosen to take, it will pay a huge political price.

Every group of public sector workers told to face cuts, every person faced with a new bin charge bill, every student faced with fees, will be wondering why they must suffer when, instead of pursuing the relevant guilty parties, the government is prepared to hand out €2bn of taxpayers money.



## obituary

# Edward Said—An appreciation

by RAYMOND DEANE

The death, aged 67, of a Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University might normally be expected to elicit mourning from only a select few.

When that Professor is Edward Said, the mourning is universal and the sense of bereavement personal, even among those who never met the man.

His links to this country were both indirect – he wrote incisively about Swift and Yeats – and direct, mediated by his personal and professional links to such writers and engaged academics as Brian Friel, Declan Kiberd, Kevin Whelan, David Lloyd and Joe Cleary.

Edward Said was simultaneously the most audible voice of the Palestinian people, and the conscience of Western intellectuals, whom again and again he exhorted to emerge from their ivory tower and accept their responsibilities within the world and, above all, towards the so-called third world.

The concept of Orientalism, defined by Said in his influential book of the same name (1978), acquires fresh relevance in these days when the mandarins of the New American Century employ droves of self-styled “experts” to tell them what they want to hear about the uncivilised world, while the corporate media obediently take dictation.

Many intellectuals resented such a claim upon their conscience, and Said was the butt of more defamation than that which predictably emanated from Zionist quarters – it must be said that most of the latter came from the USA rather than Israel.

The courage with which he single-handedly represented his endlessly maligned people in America was matched by that with which from 1991 onwards he faced leukaemia, the enemy which made each lecture tour a feat of unimaginable endurance, each eagerly-awaited article for *Al-Ahram* a triumph of indomitable energy, and which finally defeated him when admirers and foes alike had come to fantasise that he was indestructible.

In his essay *Secular Criticism* Said wrote “I have been more influenced by Marxists than by Marxism”, a heterodox stance that places him in the tradition of early Lukacs, Benjamin, Adorno, Gramsci and Raymond Williams. Further, he asserted that “criticism modified in advance by labels like ‘Marxism’ or ‘liberalism’ is... an oxymoron.” Such ideological contrariness earned him fierce criticism from more doctrinal third-world Marxists such as Aijaz Ahmad and Mahdi Amil.

## Canonic

For others, Said’s exemplary deconstruction of the colonial infrastructure of canonic literary texts in his *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) suffered from his refusal to condemn those texts. Indeed Said’s unapologetic love for the works of Austen, George Eliot, Conrad and even Kipling, combined with his cursory treatment of modernism and of contemporary Arabic writers – such as his friend Mahmoud Darwish – could arouse a mixture of bafflement and hostility.

Similarly, in his writings on music Said concentrated on the high classics: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Verdi, Wagner. He had little to say about more recent or non-western music. Nonetheless his writings on politics, literature and music alike provide us with conceptual tools with which to perform those critical tasks which he, in his exilic restlessness, left undone.

After his resignation from the Palestinian National Council in 1991 and his rejection of Arafat’s 1993 Oslo Agreement, Said put little faith in any of Palestine’s political alignments. It was only towards the end of his life that he backed Mustafa Barghouti’s National Political Initiative, which he saw as free from tribalism and corruption.

Again, however, it was music that sustained him towards the end, and a considerable amount of his extraordinary energy was channelled into the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra which he founded with Barenboim, in which young Arab and Israeli musicians played side by side.

Edward Said’s ashes are to be brought to Lebanon at the end of October for interment in the Protestant cemetery in the village of Broummana, home of his wife’s family. He has requested that Beethoven’s music should be played at his funeral.

■ Raymond Deane is chairman of the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign [www.supportpalestine.org](http://www.supportpalestine.org), and a classical composer and pianist.

## book

# ANTI WAR: Remixing propaganda to blast

## Bush

by ANGELA STAPLEFORD

**FORMER US soldier Micah Ian Wright had what he called a “moment of clarity” when he was part of the US invasion of Panama in 1989 and witnessed first hand the carnage of war.**

After the 11 September 2001 attacks he realised that the US National Security Association was using imagery from Nazi posters to promote the “war on terror”.

### Posters

Sickened, he began to work on “remixing” Second World War propaganda posters to challenge Bush’s “war

on terror”.

The posters are very effective, with slogans like “Daddy, why don’t YOU or any of your friends from Enron have to go to war?”

The book also takes on attacks on civil liberties and racism.

There is also a useful commentary by the Center for Constitutional Rights.

The artist encourages anti-war activists to photocopy, enlarge and use his posters freely to spread the anti-war message. To see more go to [www.antiwarposters.com](http://www.antiwarposters.com)

■ *You Back the Attack! We’ll Bomb Who We Want! Remixed War Propaganda* by Micah Ian Wright Seven Stories Press, £10.99



## book

# Laying bare the system

by DAVE HARKER

*The author of a new book about the left wing classic The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists explains the novel’s appeal*

**THE RAGGED Trousered Philanthropists is no ordinary novel.**

It’s been in print for 90 years, been translated into at least six languages and sold well over a million copies. It gets passed from generation to generation. It has been read by tens of millions of workers and taken to their hearts.

Robert Tressell was born in Dublin in 1870. By May 1902 he had arrived in Hastings,

where he worked as a low paid house painter.

He became politically focused by the 1906 general election.

A few of the newly formed Labour Party’s candidates became MPs. Labour separated economics (the union’s business) and politics (that’s for parliament), and they believed that the state was neutral.

Tressell scorned such reformism. So, late in 1906, he became a founder member of the Hastings branch of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF), which was influenced by Marxism.

Tressell kept a “diary” of the arguments he was involved in, and began writing them up.

The resulting novel describes how socialist activists can feel on a bad day, going over lost arguments in their head.

The Philanthropists’ working class hero, Frank Owen, is clear

that the fundamental problem is the “present system-competition, capitalism” and that “it’s no good tinkering at it.

“There’s only one thing to be done with it and that is to smash it up and have a different system altogether.”

Owen demonstrates how the “system” works but he offers no strategy, or even a set of tactics, about what should be done.

Eventually, he takes a back seat and a middle class socialist type, Barrington, takes the lead.

Barrington has a strategy-“you must fill the House of Commons with Revolutionary Socialists”. He doesn’t understand that the state is part of the capitalist system.

The book is hard on workers and how easily they can be influenced by the ruling class. Yet at the same time, the book never lets the “idlers” off the hook, or stops criticising the

capitalist system.

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists was finished by 1910 and it was at the cutting edge of British socialism. Then, in 1911, Tressell died.

The first edition of the novel was published in 1914 and then in 1918, a cheaper, thinner version was published which was a great success with radicalised workers.

It has been reissued many times since, and adapted successfully for the stage.

In the 21st century the book still sells around 5,000 a year and second-hand copies are scarce because so few people want to part with the book.

The book’s critique of the system will remain relevant as long as the system remains in place and the idlers at the top of society continue to benefit.

■ *Tressell: The Real Story of The Ragged Trousered Philan-*

*thropists*, by Dave Harker, is published by Zed Books, priced £12.99

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# Civil Servants to vote on insulting pay offer

**TWENTY THOUSAND** civil servants in the North's largest union are to be balloted over pay. In a consultation exercise on the proposed pay deal, 92% rejected a 2% 'with strings' offer opting instead to strike. NIPSA now propose a formal ballot for industrial action.

NIPSA negotiators met with management on 10th October and advised management they would not accept the 'strings' under any circumstances.

They were informed the pay offer was being withdrawn, leaving nothing on the table.

At this point NIPSA walked out announcing they would proceed to a ballot.

## Refused

Management had been turning up the heat on union members in recent weeks.

All NIPSA Branches in the Social Security Agency were refused permission to hold meetings to discuss

owed to the workers.

The fact is that contrary to popular belief, civil servants are mainly low paid.

The 2% offer will mean an extra £3 per week for a large number of workers

with service of 2-3 years, who currently take home as little as £180 per week.

## Eligible

In the Child Support Agency many workers earn

so little they are eligible for working families tax credit - most are in the £10-13,000 bracket.

Because of the centralisation of civil service jobs in Belfast many social

security workers commute up to 150 miles per day from Derry, Coleraine and Enniskillen draining their already paltry wage by over £100 per month.

When told the news that

NIPSA were issuing a ballot one worker in the CSA said "It's about time, NIPSA should bring in animal welfare officers, because management are treating us like animals".

# VTOS students want creche

VTOS students organised a 40 strong protest outside the VEC offices in Waterford last week to demand the opening of a crèche for the students use.

The crèche, which cost €68,500 to renovate, was due to be opened this month at the Voluntary Education Committee. But because of the 37% cutbacks in funding from the government to VTOS, there is no money to pay for the running and maintenance of the crèche, leaving it lying unused.

The budget for childcare

support for the VTOS in Waterford will only be €20,286 this year.

The cost of childcare support in 2002 was €69,071. The cutbacks will mean that many young mothers, for which the VTOS is the only avenue back to education and formal qualification, will not be able to take up courses.

The students converged on the local VEC office to protest the cutbacks.

One of the protesters, Rosie told the *Socialist Worker*: "I wanted to get back into full-time education to get a proper

job to provide for our future, but cannot take the course without a childcare grant and facilities.

Jacqua, also on the protest added: "These cuts are shocking and must be fought."

"One girl started her course last Monday and dropped out on Wednesday because of the closure of the crèche".

Siobhan who organised the protest said: "We're protesting at the Fianna Fail childcare cuts because it's forcing people to choose between our children or our education."

"I'm about to start my first

year at the adult education centre, but I don't know how I'll manage.

"My ambition is to go on to the WIT and get a degree, but I'm really afraid I won't be able. The €63.50 a week would have been a help, but now I've nothing.

"I don't want to be out of work, but the Department won't help us to do anything else".

The students intend to organise further protests and public meetings on the cutbacks to force the government to back down.



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.

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 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**

## Marxist Forums

Big ideas discussed in informal settings



### Ballymun:

The Politics of James Connolly, 7.30pm Thurs Oct 23, Axis Centre Ballymun

### Belfast West:

Malcom X and the Fight for Black Liberation, Thurs Oct 16 Conway Mill, Falls Road

### Dublin South Central:

Murder: The Bloody History of Coca Cola in Colombia Thursday Oct 16 8pm O'Donovans, Townsend St

### Rathmines:

Schwarzenegger: Are US workers pris-

oners of the American Dream? 8pm Wed October 15 Grace's Pub, Upstairs

### Tralee:

Student Fees and the Neo Liberal Agenda, Thursday 16th October 8.00pm, Cumman losaf

### Waterford:

How Capitalism Under Developed Africa, Speaker: Michael O'Halloran, 8.00pm Thurs Oct 16 Olde Rogue. Michael St Chomsky, Ideology and the Media, Speaker: Declan Cheasty, 8.00pm Thurs Oct 30 Olde Rogue. Michael St

For details of other Marxist Forums contact (01) 872 2682

## SWP ACTIVISTS ARE ORGANISED IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

# ANTI IMPERIALISM

**a guide for the movement**

Contributors include:  
**TONY BENN**  
**LINDSEY GERMAN**  
**GEORGE GALLOWAY**  
**LOUISE CHRISTIAN**  
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 Email [swp@clubi.ie](mailto:swp@clubi.ie) Web: [www.swp.ie](http://www.swp.ie)



# Bin Tax protests grow

**MORE than 3,000 people attended a protest organised by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions against the Bin Tax and the jailings of activists.**

In addition to Joe Higgins and Clare Daly, ten others were jailed at the beginning of October and several others faced jail in court cases due to be heard in the next few days.

Jack O'Connor of SIPTU faced angry heckling from the crowd as he called on protestors to "respect the law".

Demonstrators were angry at the lack of a call for industrial action from the top of the trade union movement in the face of jailings.

Among the protestors were contingents from local anti-bin tax groups which have been organising in the localities over the past few weeks.

## DUNDRUM-BALLINTEER

Nicky from the Ballinteer and Dundrum campaign told *Socialist Worker*, "The campaign in our area has been organising people to come out in the estates three mornings a week at 8.00am to meet the bin workers.

"They have been very supportive and we are keen to continue to lobby their support."

Nicky thinks the campaign is bringing new people into activity:

"The stealth taxes imposed by the government have made a joke of the wage increases people have received.

"There is a lot of anger and this is galvanising the people who are fed up with the government's attacks.

"We hold regular meetings and more people are getting involved.

"Next week we plan to step up the action and take a lot of locals to the bin depot in Sandyford Industrial Estate"

Nicky is retired but was an active trade unionist all his working life, first in the Workers Union of Ireland, and then in SIPTU after the merger.



■ Contingents from local groups on the Dublin Council of Trade Unions protest

PHOTOS: PAULA GERAGHTY

He is critical of the trade union leaders: "The trade union leaders are hiding behind Partnership.

"They should be out in front organising serious industrial action. It is time they were more in touch with the rank and file."

## SHANKILL

Across the council area in Shankill the campaign is in full swing.

Phillis said, "I can tell you that 95 percent of people in Shankill are not paying. I am prepared to go to jail."

On the jailings Dave from Shankill said, "The reaction here is one of outrage.

"Bertie Ahern said he he didn't know of

Michael Collins' tax situation.

"Next day he discovered there's a problem. "It's one law for the rich and another for the rest of us."

Fellow activist Christopher commented, "They say there is a waiver scheme for those on low income.

"But there are many old people we know about who have been refused a waiver because they have a small pension from their job – one or two euros over the limit!

"We'll be out in force over the next few weeks putting uncollected rubbish in the trucks.

"We're organising to stop the 5 bin trucks for this area.

"As far as we are concerned, the bin tax

will be broken and the service will not be privatised!"

## RINGSSEND

Joan from the Ringsend campaign pointed out, "After demonstrations in the area, the bin men say they will collect everybody's bins if the overseer is not with them or if there are protestors as they do the rounds.

"The campaign is strengthening. "Every Tuesday and Friday local people are out in the area alongside the bin men."

Margaret, also from Ringsend added, "I think the trade union leaders could do more, particularly in IMPACT.

"We should have a

national strike after they jailed the protestors"

She has strong words against the politicians, "We've been fighting the building of an incinerator in the area too.

"The politicians came down saying they supported us – looking for our vote.

"We've not seen them since and they are not there on the bins protests. I for one won't be voting for them!"

## COOLOCK-RAHENY

The Kilmore area of Coolock on Dublin's Northside

has got organised too.

As Sandra told *Socialist Worker*, "Ritchie Brown organised a meeting in Coolock recently where people volunteered to to leaflet their areas.

"About a dozen activists are the core.

"We now have a meeting organised for later in the month in Kilmore West.

"After the jailings there should be mayhem – they have been sent to prison for standing up for our rights this could be any of us. I am prepared to go to jail if necessary over this issue."

In Donaghmede and Raheny activists are getting moving. Ronnie from Raheny told *Socialist Worker*, "Following community meetings a number of

us are going door to door building up the campaign as well as petitioning.

Catherine from Donaghmede added "With leafletting of the shopping centre, the campaign is growing in strength."

Activists are planning to mount a blockade at their local bin depot in solidarity with the jailed bin tax protestors.

## BALLYMUN

The campaign in Ballymun has organised a number of successful public meetings over the past few weeks and established a network of supporters in the area.

Local campaigners have visited the local bin depot on Collins Avenue on a number of occasions to leaflet the workers and gather their support.

One activist told *Socialist Worker* "At the moment all bins are being collected and we have excellent relations with the bin men who keep us notified of developments.

Our next step is a solidarity blockade at Collins Ave next week and a big meeting in Ballymun to enlarge the campaign."

## BALLYFERMOT

In Ballyfermot the campaign has been particularly strong with the working class community united against the bin tax.

Two thousand people have joined the campaign in the area.

Over the past couple of months the local campaign has organised big meetings and local protests.

Bernie told *Socialist Worker*, "Our last meeting at the Ballyfermot Club drew 500 people.

"Now we have networks of campaigners phoning one another.

"Each day every week people are coming out on protests, people taking a day off work to attend."

At a recent campaign meeting attended by 300 people, politicians like Aengus O Snodaigh Sinn Fein TD were mandated to join the blockades if there is not collection in the area.



# Socialist Worker

inside:

Mike Davis writes on Californian election: Was it just about Schwarzenegger?

—TURN TO PAGE FIVE

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## SIX MONTHS OF OCCUPATION TIME FOR THE U.S. TO GO HOME

**SIX MONTHS** after US marines roared triumphantly into Baghdad, the world's largest military power is facing major political defeat.

Far from welcoming their occupiers with garlands, the Iraqi people are mounting huge levels of resistance, thwarting Bush's plans for invasion elsewhere.

In Baghdad, demonstrations against unemployment, arbitrary arrests, civilian shootings and power shortages take place nearly every day.

While in towns like Baiji, local people have expelled US appointed police chiefs and their lackeys.

Iraq today is ruled as a colonial raj. Few of its rulers speak Arabic or have any understanding of Iraqi culture and politics.

Over \$1 billion is spent each week on the occupation but basic services have yet to be restored to pre-war levels.

20% of Iraqis now suffer chronic poverty. Infant mortality has nearly doubled since the war.

An independent survey last month showed 103 child deaths per 1,000 live births compared with 57 deaths per 1,000 in 2002.

All power is vested in the Paul Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority which recently authorised the privatisation of all Iraqi services and industries, with the single exception of the oil sector.

The CPA is setting income taxes at no more than 15%, even for Iraq's richest, while import duties will be only 5%. These measures will ensure U.S. and European manufacturers unfettered access to Iraqi consumers.

### Where are the WMDs?

"IRAQ possesses and produces chemical and biological weapons and is seeking nuclear weapons"

- George Bush

Bush has just announced another \$600 million to fund more months of futile searching for WMD.

Despite spending three months scouring Iraq, the 1,200-strong Iraq Survey Group has yet to find any trace of weapons of mass destruction.

In fact, all that they found was a small vial of Botulinum B which had sat untouched in the freezer of an Iraqi scientist since 1993.

Ordinary Iraqis have had no input into these decisions. Local councils set up by the CPA as a PR stunt have no power and many have already been disbanded.



Iraqi Kurd, Majid Muhammed Yousef, was one of a number of people elected to one of Iraq's new local councils. A mere nine days after election, they were told by US

forces that the council had been disbanded.

"Perhaps we made too many suggestions. Perhaps they didn't like our suggestions, or perhaps this is

democracy, American-style".

Bush is faced with increasing international opposition. Only last week, the 57-nation Organisation of the Islamic Conference called for the eviction of US troops and the rapid restoration of Iraqi sovereignty.

Opposition to the occupation has meant that European leaders are still hesitant about sending troops to Iraq. Closer to home both Bush is feeling the heat with a 49% approval rating, the lowest of his presidency.

Although wholeheartedly supporting Israel's recent attack on Syria, Bush has had to put his plans for full spectrum dominance temporarily on hold.

It is vital that the Western anti-war movement continues to build solidarity with the Iraqi people by opposing our war-mongering leaders.

### Can the United Nations make the situation better?

Some who opposed the war now argue that if the troops pull out Iraq would turn into a bloodbath.

However, their departure would allow the Iraqis to prepare for elections and to form a government that they wanted.

While the troops stay, that path is effectively closed off to them.

Bringing in UN troops to bolster the occupation will only give the war the legitimacy it lacks and will give Bush the space he craves to bring war to other parts of the Middle East.

The only role for international organisations in Iraq should be as part of the aid agencies helping to improve life there.

But all foreign military powers should just get out.

### CORPORATE TAKE-OVER

"We will make sure that Iraq's natural resources are used for the benefit of their owners, the Iraqi people" - Bush

Before a recent International Monetary Fund meeting, the Coalition Provisional Authority announced that Iraq is fully open to foreign direct investment.

The 192 wholly-owned public sector companies and several partially-owned companies will face closure or privatisation in the months to come.

Already over 60% of Iraqis are unemployed.

Privatisation of state-run industries and services will mean thousands more will lose their jobs.

Multinationals, now free to plunder Iraq, are under no requirement to employ Iraqis or invest profits in Iraq.

They will be at liberty to cherry pick the best of Iraq's public assets, the media, mobile phones, airports and ports.

Opening the door to foreign investors at this stage is tantamount to reducing Iraq in the future to another banana republic