

# Socialist Worker

(01) 8722682 <http://www.swp.ie> [info@swp.ie](mailto:info@swp.ie)

PAPER OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY €1.00 / £0.70p

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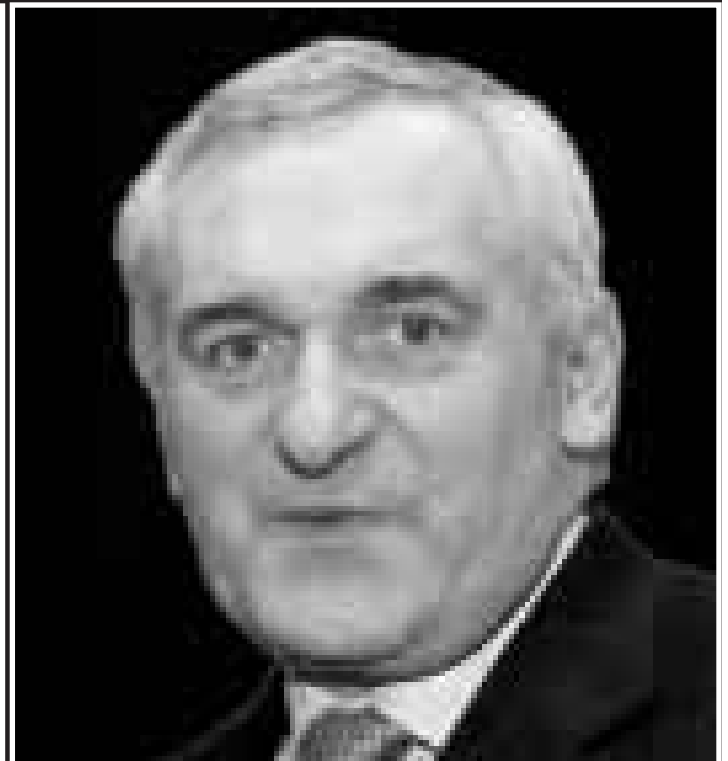
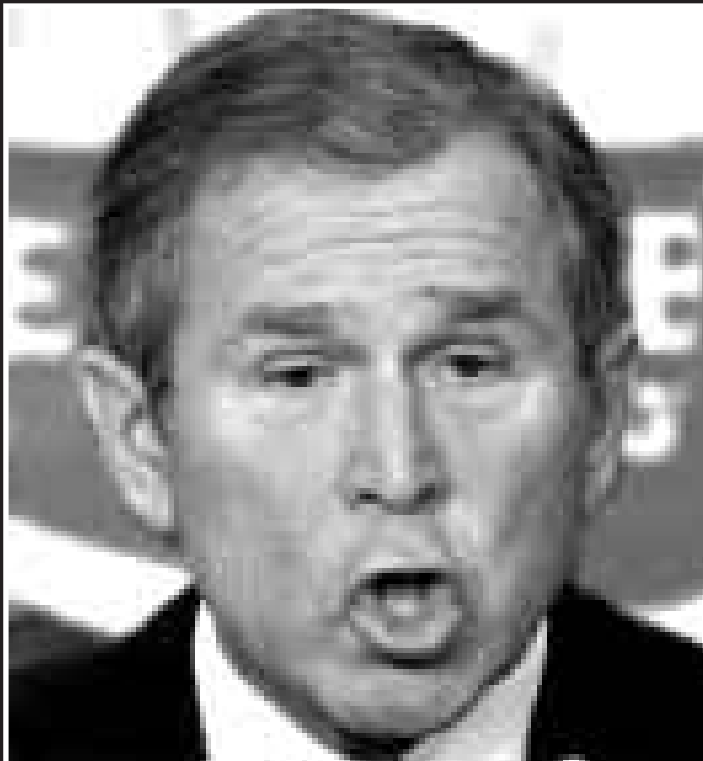
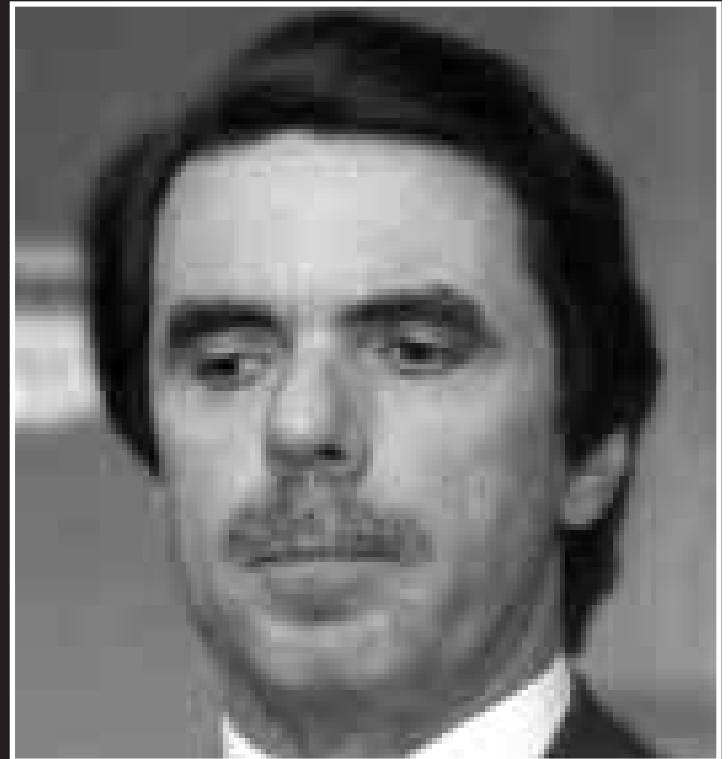
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## THEY ALL LIED TO SUPPORT WAR

**Aznar pays the price for  
supporting the war on Iraq**

# ONE GONE, MORE TO GO



# BUSH IS NOT WELCOME HERE

# Begg admits to Eircom blunder

ICTU head David Begg, the man who put the boot into the Anti-Bin Charges protestors, has admitted something that socialists argued at the time and since, the privatisation of Eircom was a disaster.

Despite supporting the privatisation of Eircom at the time the trade union bureaucrat has finally admitted that he was wrong to support the selling of the states telecom-unications industry.

It was "a major mistake and contrary to the public interest" he said last week despite being one of the main negotiators of the employees stake in the company.

"Most people think in terms of the loss suffered by investors, but actually the worst part of it was to end up turning a public monopoly into a private monopoly."

This is something that all socialists knew at the time. However while the small time investors in Eircom were screwed, some of the trade union bureaucrats (no less) have creamed off the profits of the sale.

Con Scanlon the head of the Communications Workers Union (CWU) and deputy chairman of Eircom will receive a whopping €1.2m pension and bonus package as part of the company's return to the stock market. He will also get 600,000 free shares as deputy chair of the company while also still getting his €100,000 salary as the head of the CWU.

It is getting hard to see the difference between the fat-cats at the top of the unions and the bosses themselves!

## Site death toll continues

A new study by the HSA has shown that safety regulations introduced nearly a decade ago have had no impact on the type of accidents occurring on building sites.

One of the researchers for the study said that nearly half of all the fatal accidents occurred at sites where a project supervisor for design had not been appointed, as required by law.

## Anti-Gay Social Welfare Bill

THE FF/PD government are attempting to bring in social welfare legislation that will discriminate against gay people by overturning gay partners' rights to free travel.

The last minute amendment to the bill will take away the rights of gay people that had been gained as a result of a legal decision a couple of years ago.

That decision ruled that the partners of same sex relationships were entitled to a free travel pass on the same basis as a spouse or partner in a male-female relationship.

However the Minister for Social and Family Affairs Mary Coughlan now wants to overturn that decision through this new legislation.

## Spanish Right 'sought coup'

DAYS after the election in Spain a rumour spread across the country and abroad alleging that the right wing PP party had planned to ask King Juan Carlos to declare a state of emergency on Saturday night and to order a postponement of the elections.

Whatever the truth of this, against the background of the pain of the Madrid bombing victims and their families the conservative government of the Popular Party launched a massive campaign to manipulate the popular feeling.

A few hours after the attacks, the minister of the interior, Acebes, assured people that ETA had been behind the bombings. For the conservative government, it had to be ETA.

People were furious at the government's lies, and angry that ordinary people in Spain were paying for the government's support for the war. In the capital, Madrid, thousands were on the streets all night. The government was too scared to suppress them.

## Health polices a sick joke

AT the FF Ard Fheis we saw the Taoiseach walk away from the specific commitment he and the Minister for Health gave on May 6th 2002 that hospital waiting lists would be cleared within two years.

That promise no longer applies.

27,000 patients are still waiting often agonising months for hospital treatment.

Promises such as the commitment to provide an extra 200,000 medical cards did not even merit a mention at the Ard Fheis and were clearly a cause of no concern to the delegates present.

# Gilmartin: 'Ahern knew of €50,000 payment to Flynn'

THE noose grew tighter around the neck of the Taoiseach Bertie Ahern as property developer Tom Gilmartin continued to give evidence at the Mahon Tribunal.

Gilmartin said that Ahern was told about the €50,000 he gave to Flynn in 1989.

Ahern has always denied that he knew about the payment.

But that was only half of it. Flynn is said to



■ Ahern



■ Flynn



■ Gilmartin

have contacted Gilmartin in 1998 and told him "that it would cost Mr Flynn the best part of a million pounds if I didn't

say the right thing," said Gilmartin at the tribunal.

"First of all he asked me to say that he returned the money and I

said that wouldn't say that.

"Then he asked me to say that it was for his own political cause."

Gilmartin also says that he received a number of phoned threats in recent years warning him not to come to the tribunal to give evidence.

## Crooks

He told the tribunal that he only gave former Minister Flynn the €50,000 to "sort out the crooks who were trying to cash in on my investment."

The reference to the "crooks" brought cheers from the public gallery in Dublin Castle.

# Bush goons demand immunity

BUSH'S secret service goons are already laying down the law before the Butcher of Baghdad visits here in late June.

According to the *Sunday Tribune* the US secret service is set to issue a series of amazing demands to the Irish authorities before the Bush visit.

These demands include the granting of immunity to armed special agents and snipers as part of an intensive security arrangement.

The American security goons want to include diplomatic immunity for US agents in the case of an "accidental" shooting of a protestor.

They also want to use US air force planes and Black Hawk Helicopters.

They are also asking for permission to ship in battlefield weaponry to use against "rioters" if the secret service assess the President's life is at risk!

The US are likely to seek to use a "sterile



■ Bush's security men can shoot Irish protestors

zone" policy as they did in the recent Bush visit to London.

That means that thousands of Irish people will

be unable to move around their own cities because millions of euros is being spent on the protection of one man.

Most polls show the majority of us do not want this man here!! All the more reason to build for the protests on June 22/23.

## Bush's 'Favourite Irish American'

IN one of the pathetic rituals that take place in the weeks before St. Patrick's Day, George "The Butcher" Bush was asked to select four "great" Irish Americans to mark Irish Heritage Week.

One of the four was Davy Crockett, who according to Bush "helped settle the west".

This nice turn of language attempts to hide Crockett's bloody record in the suppression of the Native American population.

Obviously Bush has some admiration for a man with blood on his hands.

Well it does take one to know one.

# How the BBC 'sexed up' Iraq survey

"AN OPINION poll carried out in Iraq will make good reading for US president George Bush and British prime minister Tony Blair." So claimed the BBC on Tuesday morning.

The Hutton report has obviously bent the BBC's judgement. The kindest thing you can say is that the BBC has "sexed up" the results of the poll that it commissioned.

It was carried out by British-based private company Oxford Research International.

Its elite clients include the World Bank and multinationals such as Coca-Cola, Kodak, Philips and Unilever.

The poll findings are based on interviews with tiny numbers in Iraq—209 people in the whole province of Basra and 732 in the whole region around Baghdad. In reply to one question 48.2

percent of people say the invasion of Iraq last year was probably right.

But 51.8 percent say it was wrong or refuse to give an answer.

Around two thirds of those asked, 66.3 percent, say they have no confidence in the occupation forces.

## No Confidence

A majority, 52.6 percent, also have no confidence in the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council.

Even more worrying for the occupying forces is that Saddam Hussein is still 16 times more popular among Iraqis than Ahmed Chalabi, the man that the US hand-picked to be the key figure in the Governing Council. Chalabi is only supported by 0.2 percent of those polled!

The BBC says the poll

shows that Iraqis want to "regain security".

It quotes "security expert" Dr Alan of Britain's Royal United Services Institute saying the poll shows, "Iraqis are now looking for a strong leader who can save the day."

In fact only a minority (27.5 percent) want a "strong leader" while the overwhelming majority of Iraqis (85.9 percent) want an Iraqi-run democracy.

The poll does suggest people believe that "regaining security" is a key issue.

The BBC report implied this means the occupying forces should stay to establish such security.

In fact only 5.3 percent of those polled think the "coalition forces" should "take care of regaining public security".

Just 4.3 percent think that the Iraqi Governing Council should be in charge of this

## Socialist Worker

Paper of the Socialist Workers Party  
Published fortnightly  
For circulation or editorial contact:  
Socialist Worker,  
PO Box 1648 Dublin 8  
Tel: (01) 872 2682 Fax: (01) 872 3838  
Email: socialistworker@swp.ie  
Web: www.swp.ie

DRINK COKE AND DIE!



COCA Cola in Britain recently launched a "pure" bottled water called Dasani.

But there were red faces when it was revealed that it was not spring water at all but water out of a tap.

Last week Coca Cola was forced to withdraw Dasani after it was found to contain more than permitted level of cancer-forming bromate.

editorial



# AFTER MADRID'S CARNAGE

# Why the world is not a safer place

## SOCIALISTS deplore the recent bombings of crowded commuter trains in Madrid two weeks ago.

The 200 people killed and many more injured had no part in the invasion or occupation of Spain which Aznar's government supported. Indeed 90 percent of the population opposed the war.

Facing a general election, the right wing governing Popular Party (PP) immediately tried to milk the atrocity for electoral advantage by accusing the Basque separatist organisation ETA of the attack, despite the fact that it already had evidence that linked the attack to groups connected to Al Qaeda.

The PP had built its whole electoral campaign on fear:

Their tough stance against demands for greater autonomy from Basque, Catalonia and Galician nationalists was wrapped up in the language of "no surrender to terrorists". They hoped that blaming the attack on ETA would win them votes.

But huge numbers of people were not taken in. Thousand of people came on to the streets in spontaneous demonstrations accusing the government, chanting "Your War-Our Blood!".

When 48 hours later the votes were counted the Spanish Socialist Party, PSOE, equivalent to the Labour Party, emerged the winners.

Figures in the Bush administration immediately accused the Spanish people of "appeasement" in the face of terrorism. Bush demanded that the new PSOE Prime Minister Zapateri renege on his election promise to withdraw Spain's 1,300 troops from Iraq.

The truth is that many Spaniards clearly understand that this outrage was the bitter fruit of the Western "crusade" against the Muslim and Arab world typified by the Iraq war and occupation.

### Lies

The lies we were all told about the reasons for the Iraq invasion have all been exposed: There are no weapons of mass destruction; Saddam Hussein was certainly a vicious tyrant, but there were no links between his regime and Al Qaeda. And the US led forces occupying the country have plainly failed to bring anything remotely approximating to genuine democracy to that country.

The final lie is that this was part of a "war against terrorism" making the world a safer place. The Madrid atrocity shows that not only is terrorism not defeated, the world is a much more dangerous place.

In the last year over 15,000 Iraqis have been killed, many more injured as a direct result of the invasion. Yet these deaths are neither counted nor reported. There has been no three minute silence for these victims. Their snuffed out lives were no less valuable than the innocents in Madrid, but they literally do not count.

In Palestine, the deaths of Palestinians at the hands of Israel armed and subsidised by the US seldom rates a mention on the news and warrants no condemna-

tion from Bush, Blair, Aznar or Ahern.

Water is stolen, land grabbed, and thousands of Palestinians herded into diminishing strips of land under Israeli gun towers, surrounded by a new Berlin Wall.

Tyrannical regimes from Saudia Arabia to Egypt (like Saddam's before he fell from grace) are propped up with Western arms and military back-up while their people live in poverty, so long as their rulers do Washington's bidding.

### Invasion

The invasion and occupation of Iraq is just the latest example. No wonder millions across the Muslim world rage at the US and its allies. A few years ago, hardly anybody would have been taken in by fanatics like Osama Bin Laden.

But with the seemingly unstoppable war machine of the West smashing everything in its path, desperate young men and women can be found to join up to commit desperate acts that attempt to fling a small quantity of the violence the West throws at the East back at their oppressors.

These terrorist acts against innocent civilians cannot be excused, but can be readily understood among the hopeless of the Arab world.

The anti war movement has mobilised millions around the world against our rulers. By making the voice of this movement stronger and louder, we can show



■ Carnage in Madrid

millions in the East that we are not all complicit with the warmongers. Masses of Spanish people protested in the anti war demonstrations, rejected the lies of their

rulers and flung Bush's accomplices in the PP out at the election. This was not appeasement but was a day of reckoning.

We should settle for nothing

less here in Ireland. We need to build the biggest Anti Bush protest in June. And we need to build the movement to challenge the accomplices of Bush here at home.

## MAKE SURE AHERN GETS THE MESSAGE...

# Bush is not welcome here!

**"DEMOCRATIC governments have jobs to do. We have our positions to support and our interests to protect and we will continue to do that."**

That is what FF Minister for Foreign Affairs Brian Cowen said last week in Canada, when asked about the US military's continued use of Shannon Airport.

Ahern and Cowen have stood squarely behind the Bush war on Iraq and Afghanistan and now prepare to welcome the world's biggest terrorist to these shores.

The sheer scale of capitulation to the US war machine only becomes clear in off the record quotes from Irish diplomats.

Indeed, one senior Irish diplomat is quoted in the *Irish Times* last week as saying privately that withdrawing permission to use Shannon Airport would be "tantamount to declaring war on the US".

However Ireland alone of the neutral states assisted the

American war effort. Austria, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden: none of them assisted in any way.

But the FF/PP government are too interested in keeping in with the Bush regime and big business in the United States to listen to the tens of thousands of Irish people who do not want Bush to visit Ireland here in June.

### Occupation

Allowing the US military to use Shannon as part of their occupation of Iraq, is no "small part" of the US war effort. According to conservative figures released by the *Irish Times* last week, last year the Government permitted 3,691 military aircraft to overfly Ireland. This represents a 50 per cent increase on the 2002 figure of 2,460. The Government permitted 612 civilian aircraft containing munitions to land at Shannon Airport in 2003. The vast majority of munitions are

understood to be the personal arms of US troops. Clearance was given to a further 270 civilian aircraft carrying munitions to over-fly Irish airspace.

Amazingly a total of 125,855 US troops passed through Shannon Airport last year.

Despite the calls of Ahern for Irish people to remain in their homes during the visit of Bush the Irish Antiwar Movement are planning massive protest during his visit to show that Irish people do not welcome the US President.

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!

To join the Socialist Workers Party or for more information: Fill in the form and Send to: ROI: SWP PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Phone (01) 872 2682 NI: SWP PO Box 143, Mallusk Road, Mallusk, Phone 0774 2531617 Email membership@swp.ie Web: www.swp.ie

Name.....  
 Address.....  
 Phone.....  
 Email.....  
 Union/College (If applicable).....



comment

## Eamonn McCann

# Bush's man accuses Sinn Féin of telling lies

**THERE** are some who will snigger at the discomfiture of Sinn Féin at being called liars by one of the lying liars who lie for George Bush. But this would be wrong.

Bush's "special envoy" on the North, Mitchell Reiss, has denounced a full-page ad on policing placed in the *New York Times* by Sinn Féin as, "at best enormously misleading and at worst untruthful." The ad—it reportedly cost £25,000—contained "massive untruths," Reiss told BBC Northern Ireland. He added that the party should "reconsider its position" and join the Policing Board.

Reiss also accused Sinn Féin of "double standards" for refusing to meet with PSNI chief Hugh Orde while criticising the DUP for refusing to meet with Sinn Féin.

The party appeared taken aback by the tone as much as the content of Reiss's interview. For a decade now, US Government spokespersons have been, in their own terms, neutral in their pronouncements on the North. During long stretches of the Clinton years, indeed, White House comments were widely regarded as tilted towards the Republican position. Since the Florida/Supreme Court coup which handed the presidency to Bush, the SF line has been that nothing had changed, that relations with the new regime were hunky-dory. Gerry Adams is on record as believing that Bush "hasn't put a foot wrong" on Ireland.

But from the SF point of view, he has certainly, through his envoy, put his foot in it now.

The notion of a Bush crony lambasting anybody for untruthfulness is inherently hilarious. From Bush's own lying about his military service record, to the systematic perjury over the entanglement of members of his government in the Enron fiasco, to the mountain of lies used to justify the attack on Iraq, this is an administration so twisted that corkscrews uncurl in its presence. As the New York writer Jimmy Breslin remarked, "If Bush's lips are moving, he's either reading or lying." Or, in the event that he's studying Government statements, both.

### Lecturing

One reason Sinn Féin might find observers less than sympathetic is that the party has chosen to make none of these points. Nobody has sent a message back to Reiss mentioning the inappropriateness of a pot slagging off a kettle for blackness. Gerry Adams hasn't pointed to the glaring contradiction of a world-class war-monger lecturing anybody on the need for "exclusively peaceful means of winning political goals."

As for "double standards"—here again, surely, the White House is a sitting duck for a retaliatory strike. Even as they urge everyone in the North to follow a legal, constitutional path, the Bush gang are openly scornful of the International Court and the UN.

In a sense, then, the Shinners are the authors of their own PR misfortune. If you spend years sucking up to a cabal of villains and whimpering with pleasure any time they tickle your tummy, you're not well placed to denounce their villainous behaviour when, eventually, they turn on you.

And yet, it's reasonable to cut Sinn Féin some slack in this matter. Because—just as those that SF dubs "dissidents" aren't doing anything which SF didn't thoroughly approve of just a couple of years ago—so SF isn't doing anything in its relationship with the Bush regime which previous Republican generations didn't get up to in their day. Check Dorothy McArdle's highly sympathetic "The Irish Republic," for example, and note that in 1919, the First Dail was sending emissaries to Washington to assure the Wilson administration that Irish Republicanism was on-side with the US and totally opposed to Bolshevism—while simultaneously sending messages of revolutionary solidarity to Moscow.

It may suit some to depict SF leaders, particularly Gerry Adams, as "selling out" the anti-imperialist struggle and therefore deserving of whatever knocks he might take from the likes of Reiss. But the underlying politics aren't of Adams's making. They are the bedrock politics—which is to say, Nationalism—on which modern Irish Republicanism has been built.

# SEA takes on fight for a Social Europe



■ Socialist Environmental Alliance on the move

**A MEETING** of over 70 activists voted overwhelmingly to endorse Eamonn McCann as the Left candidate for the Northern Ireland constituency in June's European elections.

The meeting also decided to set up a number of Socialist Environmental Alliance (SEA) branches in Belfast to undertake the kind of bottom-up campaigning that has worked well for the SEA in Derry.

While the meeting included members of the Socialist Workers Party, Communist Party and Socialist Party, the overwhelming majority - more than two-thirds of those present - were not members of any political party.

It was a meeting full of ideas for the kind of issues that could not be left to the mainstream parties.

Eamonn McCann had started the meeting, which was chaired by Eileen Webster, by outlining some of the campaigns that had led to the SEA

being founded in Derry.

In the discussion from the floor, Martin from Whitehead suggested that something like the "Into the West Rail Campaign" which the SEA was instrumental in founding is needed in his area also.

The Larne to Whitehead rail link is being run down in a manner similar to the line between Ballymena and Derry and a lively, militant campaign is needed to save it.

### Closure

Antoinette told the meeting that she wants to work to save the many libraries and post offices that are under threat of closure across the North. In the same week as Post Office Northern Ireland announced that 21 local post offices are to close, it was revealed that up to a third of libraries are at risk.

Funding for libraries for the com-

ing year has been frozen, which amounts to a cut in real terms of over 3% given the rate of inflation.

As a result, the North East Education and Library Board (NEELB) has said it may close nine of its thirty seven libraries. Meanwhile, Belfast ELB says it will cut its book-buying budget by three quarters and cannot rule out closures.

The Consumer Council has already said that plans to close down 21 post office branches across the North will "rip the heart out of urban and rural communities".

In south Belfast, five offices are under threat - at Balmoral, Cromac Street, Ormeau Road, Stranmillis Road and Willowfield. If the plan goes through, Knock post office and Knocknagoney would close in east Belfast and the Greencastle branch in north Belfast.

In Newtownabbey, Woodford post office is marked for closure, as is the

## JOINING UP THE DOTS...

**THERE** ARE lots of opportunities to link up day-to-day concerns of working people in the North to major issues being fought out on a European level.

■ The proposed introduction of water charges is causing great concern to many on low incomes who will not be able to pay an extra £10 a week for their water. An EU Directive is being used to justify the charges.

■ Every refugee knows that the rise in racist attacks is connected to the "Fortress Europe" project, whereby the EU wants to close its borders to all fleeing injustice.

■ The crackdown across Europe associated with the "War on Terror" has seen a greater attack on civil rights than even the notorious Diplock Courts and Prevention of Terrorism Act.

■ As the reality of what the Private Finance Initiative and PPPs means to our schools and hospitals starts to emerge, people are beginning to realise these are entangled with European directives on freeing market forces.

branch in Ballybeen.

In Derry, Lisnagelvin and Collon could lose their branches. Laurelhill post office in Coleraine and Ann Street post office in Enniskillen could shut also if the post office gets its way.

It was agreed that the SEA should start to make its presence felt as soon as possible in these areas as defence of public services would have to be at the heart of the campaign for a Social Europe.

# Who has been tampering with evidence?



■ PSNI: 'Do not open'

**THE FAMILY** of alleged Real IRA man, remand prisoner Seamus Doherty, was raided by the PSNI, two days after a UTV "Insight" programme highlighted evidence that forensic evidence in the case may have been tampered with by police and that pressure was put on forensic scientists to change their evidence.

Doherty's co-accused Brogan and Carroll were arrested in September 2002 outside Newry, about a mile and a half from an abandoned bomb.

Another man, Kevin Byrne, was arrested on suspicion of being the driver of the bomb vehicle.

Doherty was arrested in Derry in June last year and charged with possession of explosives.

At the Divisional Court in Belfast on February 4th, Doherty's solicitor, Paddy McDermott, won leave to apply to have the charge struck out.

The case against Doherty's co-accused began to fall

apart last October when Aiden Carlin, a solicitor's clerk representing Brogan and Carroll, examining potential evidence at the North's Forensic Science Laboratory (FSNI) at Carrickfergus, discovered an envelope marked "do not open" in the case file.

### Meeting

Opening it, he found a typed letter signed by senior forensic scientist Dr. Gerry Murray describing a meeting with PSNI Detective Chief Inspector Derek Williamson during which Williamson "requested that I prepare a modified statement, omitting a number of sections from the original statement."

"He provided me with a copy of my original statement with the relevant sections highlighted."

The effect of the omissions would have been to weaken the case against Byrne, who, in the event, was released without charge and has since disappeared from his Co. Down home. Real

IRA sources say that Byrne was a PSNI informer inside the organisation.

Carlin also discovered a memo suggesting that army personnel had "open[ed] bags in the exhibits room of Newry Police Station and rubb[ed] a gloved hand over the surfaces of the contents, in this case items of clothing."

The clothing belonged to Brogan and Carroll.

The suggestion is that the security forces were trying to contaminate or manipulate the forensic evidence so as to make a case against Brogan and Carroll, while undermining the case against Byrne.

The case against Doherty is based on DNA traces allegedly found on the bomb.

Doherty had been arrested in Derry on an unrelated matter six weeks prior to the discovery of the bomb and swabs taken for forensic examination.

He denies ever having handled a bomb and claims that the DNA found on the bomb was planted.

## AFTER THE MADRID BOMBINGS

# Repression won't stop more attacks



■ Two pictures of captives held shackled in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba

by HELEN SHOOTER

THE ONLY response from the British Home Secretary David Blunkett to the bombings in Madrid was to call for more of the repressive measures which failed to prevent the tragedy.

Western governments have been locking up hundreds of men for two years, all justified by the claim that a bit of repression is a price worth paying in the "war against terror".

Far from ending terrorism, we now face, according to Tony Blair, a greater threat. And the horror of the US prison camp in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba has added to the rage across the Middle East and elsewhere in the world that can lead a minority to respond with terrorist violence.

The five British prisoners released from Guantanamo last week have revealed the full barbarity of the camp. Blunkett says he is happy for four other British men to remain there along with hundreds of other detainees. Three of the British prisoners

released last week spoke to *The Observer* about how what started out as a trip to Pakistan for a wedding in September 2001 ended in imprisonment.

Shafiq Rasul, Ruhel Ahmed and Asif Iqbal, all from Tipton in the West Midlands, were interrogated 200 times during their two-year ordeal in Guantanamo Bay. They faced the CIA, the FBI, the Defence Intelligence Agency, and the British secret services, MI5 and MI6.

The US finally admitted it has no grounds whatsoever for linking them to Al Qaida.

## Torture

That is despite trying to torture a confession out of the three.

US authorities claimed the men were pictured on a video with Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan.

Shafiq, Ruhel and Asif protested they were in Britain at the time. Yet the torture was so severe they ended up confessing to being in a nonexistent video. That was despite MI5 agents

eventually providing documentary evidence to prove the men had been in Britain.

Shafiq said, "I'd got to the point where I just couldn't take it any more. I'd been sitting there for three months in isolation so I said yes, it's me. Go ahead and put me on trial."

When the three were first arrested in Afghanistan US soldiers held guns to their heads while questioning them. The three were held alongside other prisoners of the US-installed regime in Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance. Many reported beatings and abuse, and suffered from lack of food.

Shafiq, Ruhel and Asif were near to death. The Northern Alliance herded hundreds into containers without air holes. Asif told of how only one in five got out alive. When they were taken to the US-run Guantanamo Bay they were held in cages and not allowed any contact with a lawyer.

They were questioned for 12 hours or more without a break, month after month.

They were regularly strapped into body-belt restraints that bit into their flesh, and forced to kneel with their heads pressed against the floor. Those images were transmitted across the world. The abuse continued away from the cameras. The prisoners were pinned to the floor and beaten.

## Restraints

The US claims Guantanamo Bay allows them to get information about "terrorist networks". But all the brutality does is drive some prisoners to give false information in the hope that they will get better treatment. Shafiq described how during interrogation he was told, "This guy says you've done this, this guy says you've done that."

"What they meant was that other detainees desperate to get out were making allegations, making stuff up that they thought would help get them out of the camp." The FBI even tried to get the three to sign a confession that they had links with terrorism in

## George Galloway harassed at airport by British police

ANTI-WAR MP Mr George Galloway was stopped and questioned under the Terrorism Act by police at Heathrow Airport as he prepared to board a flight to Belfast last week.

Galloway was making his way to Ireland before his extremely successful series of public meetings all across the country.

Mr Galloway described the incident as "disgraceful", and said he planned to raise it with

the British Home Secretary, Mr David Blunkett.

The Respect MP, who was last year expelled from the British Labour Party, was booked on an evening flight to Belfast, where he was addressing an anti-war meeting.

"I was stopped in Heathrow Airport by Special Branch, and asked for ID. I presented my passport, which showed I had visited Iraq and other countries.

"The officer remarked that I had visited some dodgy places. He asked if I would be making inflammatory speeches in Belfast, and what exactly I would be saying. I said that wasn't his business.

"His superior warned me I could be detained for obstructing an officer carrying out his duties under the Terrorism Act.

"I said it would be very unwise to do that."

## Still no justice for Rachel



■ Rachel Corrie

TWELVE months have passed since Rachel Corrie, a 23-year-old American peace activist from Olympia, Washington, was killed by an Israel army bulldozer while non-violently trying to prevent the demolition of a Palestinian house in the city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip.

During this time, the Israeli government has strenuously sought to obscure the circumstances of Rachel's death and prevent an independent investigation. It has even refused to release its June 2003 military police investigation final report to the United States, only allowing an American embassy official to read and take notes from selected parts.

The search for the truth continues.



■ George Galloway

# Who is afraid of Sinn Fein?

by **KIERAN ALLEN**

**McDowell has been let loose. He says he cannot stand the 'vomit making hypocrisy of Sinn Fein' and has condemned an attack on a republican dissident. Then in his typically cute fashion, Bertie Ahern drops a line that Gerry Adams was in the IRA.**

The establishment politicians are worried. The opinion polls have revealed that Sinn Fein is scoring 12 percent of the vote and in Dublin is ahead of Fine Gael. For the past number of years, the ruling elite have concentrated their efforts on 'sucking in' Sinn Fein into conventional parliamentary politics. Now they are worried they may have been too successful.

The growth of Sinn Fein electoral support is reflection of deep changes that are underway in the South. The historical pattern whereby two right wing parties, Finna Fail and Fine Gael, commanded over 80 percent of the vote is breaking up.

Sometimes the scale of the change is hard to see. The legacy of the past often haunts activists and they tell themselves that nothing changes. The assumption is that the old tricksters FF will always buy their way back into office.

## Anger

In fact, Ireland is like a polar ice cap where there a bubbling of anger underneath a layer of glacial ice.

A recent opinion poll showed that the combined right wing parties are now receiving just over 50 percent of the vote.

The years of corruption scandals have produced a deep cynicism that has yet to find an outlet. Every single major union passed resolutions calling for protest action to demand the jailing of corrupt politicians. Yet the union leaders did nothing – so as not to jeopardise social partnership.

But the anger has not gone away but is now looking for a political home. Labour should be the main beneficiary but their cowardice and thinly disguised eagerness to get back into government with Fine Gael repels many.

This is the space which has allowed Sinn Fein to grow. Their support comes predominantly from workers who want a more robust, reformist alternative to the establishment.

One indication of this was an important vote at the recent Sinn Fein Ard Fheis.

The conference voted to ban Sinn Fein leaders from attending the World Economic Forum—the main gathering point for the corporate leaders of the world—and instead to send a delegation to the anti-globalisation World Social Forum.

But these left sentiment will be frustrated.

The best way to see this is to compare Sinn Fein with the early rise of Fianna Fail between 1926 and 1932.

Fianna Fail grew in this period by tacking left. Party spokesmen were far more radical in their rhetoric than present day Sinn Fein.

They called for the abolition of the standing army as a legacy of imperialism.

## Uproot

They promised that they would uproot the banks because they were blood suckers who drained money out of the Irish economy. They denounced the Labour Party for being 'pale pink'.

But ultimately Fianna Fail became the main vehicle through which the more independent, industrial wing of the Irish capitalist class captured the state.

Republicanism always faces both ways. It cannot be the vehicle for genuine working class advance because it never asserts that class is the main divide in society.

For the present Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness are willing to let the left rhetoric flourish in the South.

But their strategy for solving the 'national question' is to get into government, North and South and wait until the Catholic population outbreed the Protestant population. It is as crude as that.

This is a million miles away from the original bourgeois notion of Wolfe Tone that the unity of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter had to be forged in struggle against the established orders.

One early sign of what's in store is the bizarre relationship of Sinn Fein to Coca Cola. Not only has the party received a substantial donation, but its leading union activists have been opposing a student boycott of Coke on the spurious pretence of 'defending Irish jobs'.

Socialists need to relate to the left sentiment that underlies the growth of Sinn Fein – but we have to put them under pressure when it comes to their real record on working class struggle.

# SUPPRESSED PENTAGON REPORT PREDICTS... Climate disaster in 20 years

**A** recent report, suppressed by the White House and US Defence Chiefs, suggests that the climate change is changing much faster than previously thought.

Over the next two decades it predicts a possible global catastrophe costing millions of lives in wars and natural disasters.

The leaked report, prepared by Pentagon scientists, warns that major European cities will be sunk beneath rising seas as these islands are plunged into a 'Siberian' climate by 2020.

Nuclear conflict, mega-droughts, famine and widespread rioting will erupt across the world, the report claims.

Dwindling food, water and energy supplies could lead to wars, possibly nuclear, as countries vie to secure supplies.

The report was suppressed by the Bush administration, which has long denied that climate change is a serious issue.

Bush pulled the US out of the Kyoto agreement which aimed at moderating greenhouse emissions.

Far from being radicals the reports authors, Peter Schwartz, CIA consultant and former head of planning at Royal Dutch /Shell Group, and Doug Randall of the California-based Global Business Network, are fully part of the US military-industrial complex.

The report warns that as early as next year widespread flooding by a rise in sea levels will create major upheaval for millions.

**KEVIN WINGFIELD** looks at the facts behind global warming and capitalism's destruction of our planet



**D**RAMATIC changes in the environment are predicted to be the result of years of polluting the atmosphere which creates global warming.

A certain level of global warming is natural and essential to human life.

The sun's rays warm the earth and radiate heat back out to space. Gases in the atmosphere trap the heat and reflect it back to earth—the greenhouse effect—without which the earth wouldn't be warm enough to sustain life.

But the extremes of global warming that are now developing happen when there is such a concentration of 'greenhouse gases' that too much heat is trapped.

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is one greenhouse gas which has this impact. It can hang around in the atmosphere for a century or more.

Another is methane, some of which is produced in the guts of cattle. Other sources include commercial gas and oil fields and vegetation rotting in the absence of oxygen. One place this happens is also man made—in the depths of reservoirs.

At the moment, if there are no curbs, the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere could end up being more than double pre-industrial levels by the end of the 21st century.

Previous studies show that levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere have broadly corresponded to global temperatures for the last 400,000 years.

The Pentagon report suggest earlier

## Just coincidence?

■ The hottest year in the hottest decade of the last millennium was 1998.

■ The ten warmest years since 1860 have all been since 1980.

■ The sea level has risen between 10 and 25 cm because of thermal expansion of the oceans.

studies may have seriously underestimated the pace of change.

Norwegian polar researchers are predicting that the Arctic Ocean's ice cover could completely disappear by the middle of this century. This is already visible.

The Ward Hunt Ice Shelf, the

Arctic's largest, and a feature for 3,000 years, has completely cracked and broken off from Ellesmere Island in Canada.

This melting in turn is set to magnify the effect of global warming.

Ice is a very efficient reflector of heat. Water and land, however, absorb more heat and so as they replace ice the warming effect could be amplified.

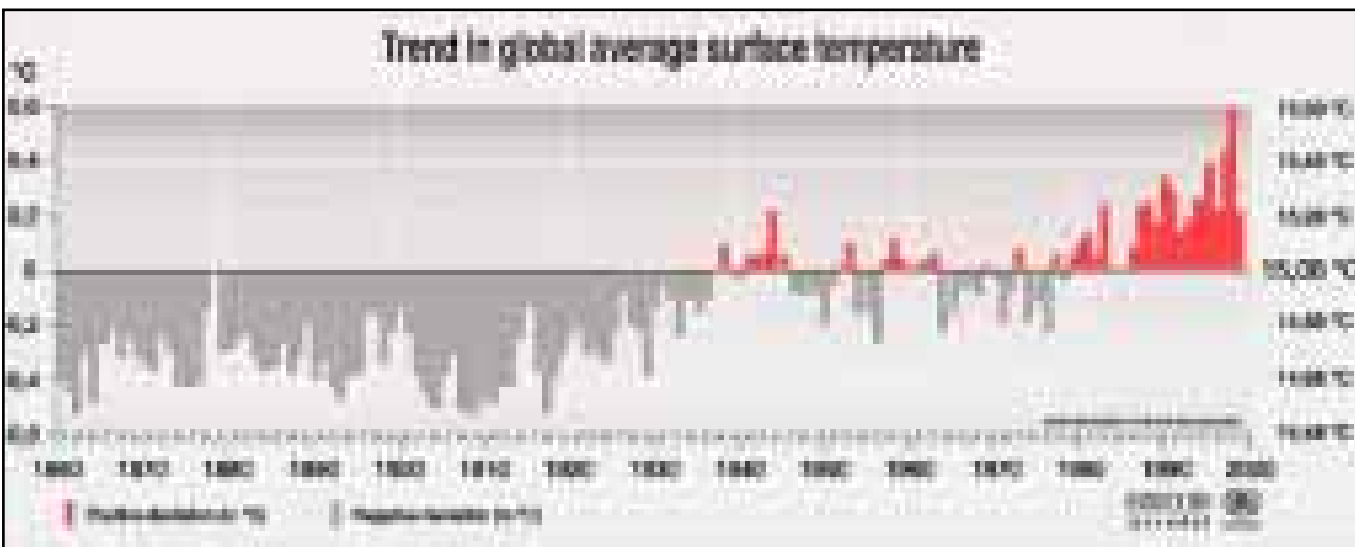
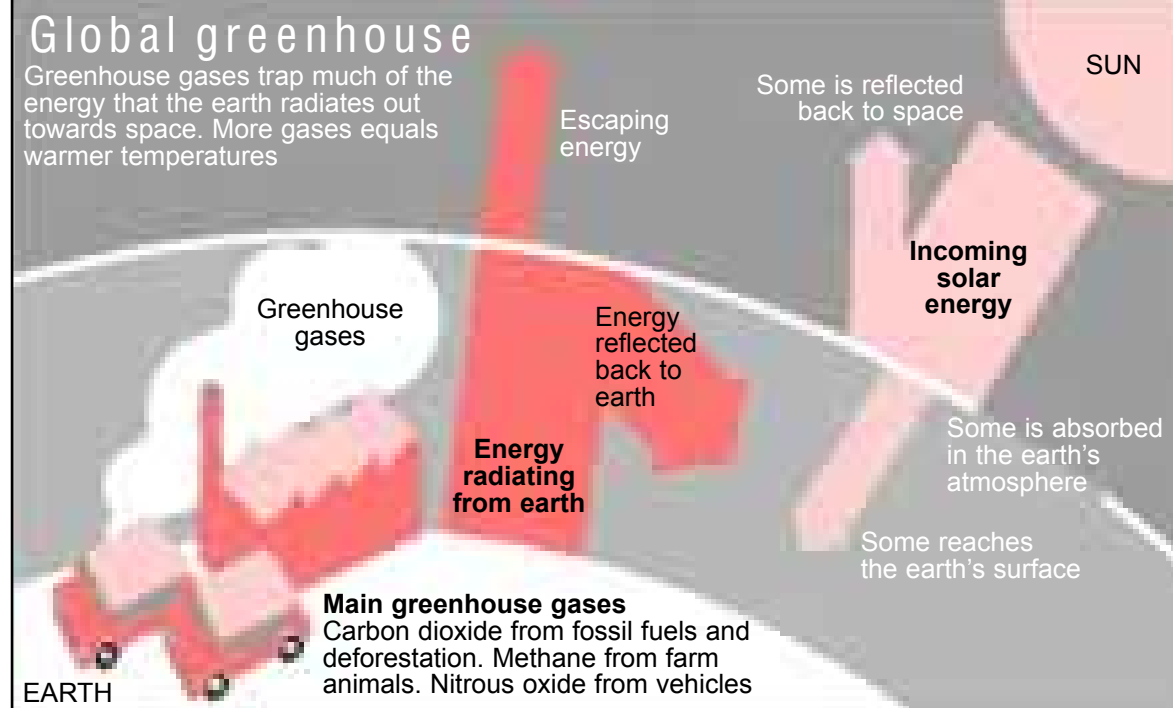
Something like this actually happened 12,000 years ago—it was called the Younger Dryas Event. Incredibly this shift of global climate regimes took less than a decade to occur. Abrupt climate change is one of the fundamental scientific discoveries of our lifetime.

The Kyoto Protocol, acclaimed in the press as being groundbreaking and signed by 150 nations in December 1997, remains a dead letter.

The US is the largest polluter producing a quarter of the world's carbon dioxide emissions.

George W Bush has said, 'I'm not going to let the United States carry the burden for cleaning up the world's air, like the Kyoto treaty would have done.' The US government argues that having to control pollution would put it at an 'economic disadvantage' to those countries without such controls.

Yet despite the fact that it is the governments of the richest nations which are complaining loudest about cutting emissions, it is the poorest, still developing nations which are set to suffer the most from the impact of pollution and global warming.



## Western city poor at risk of heat waves

**L**AST August a heat wave swept Europe causing thousands of deaths to the old and poor. Official estimates of the dead are 11,400 in France, more than 4,000 in Italy, 1,400 in the Netherlands, 1,300 in Portugal, and some 900 in Britain.

Across the EU up

to 20,000 people died. Despite the right wing blaming a natural event and the "collapse of family values", the reasons the death toll was so high lie in poverty, unaffordable housing and under-funded public services.

This followed the July 1997 heat wave in

Chicago. As temperatures climbed above 40°C hospitals closed their doors to the critically ill and paramedics were unable to respond to the deluge of emergency calls.

**Staffing**

More than 700 died in that city as the poor

sweated for lack of working air-conditioners, "cool shelters" in public buildings, adequate summer staffing of hospitals and door-to-door searches for ill elderly.

French scientists now believe that high ozone levels, caused by gridlock traffic exhaust interacting

with high temperatures, were a key factor in as many as 3,000 French deaths. A shift to properly funded public transport could drastically reduce this.

Greenpeace has renewed calls for temporary or permanent traffic moratoriums in major urban centres.

## Poorest countries hit hardest

**A** study from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of East Anglia shows that some countries will warm up twice as fast as others this century.

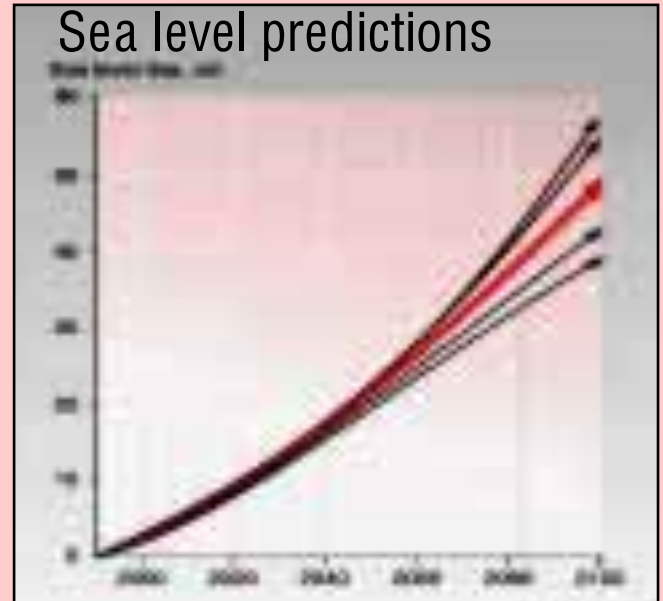
Some of those most likely to suffer the highest increase in temperatures are those already struggling to cope with drought and famine, like parts of West Africa.

The greatest warming is predicted to take place in Russia and Canada whose arctic regions temperatures are set to rise by more than 6°C by the end of this century.

But it is countries which can least afford to deal with the consequences that are going to suffer the most from the effects of global warming.

The four most vulnerable to are Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. The nations most threatened by global warming produce the smallest amounts of greenhouse gases with only \$100 of its GDP per inhabitant to cope with every degree of warming.

Anwarul Chowdhury, Bangladesh's ambassador to the United Nations, pointed



out that 'one third of the world's most densely populated country would be flooded even with a small rise in the sea level'.

If global warming continues even just at the present rate, both Jamaica's international airports will be under water by 2020.

In Ireland and the rest of

Northwest Europe winter temperatures are kept from low extremes by the gulf stream, which in turn is part of the ocean conveyor belt bringing warm water past our shores from the South.

Melting of the polar ice threatens to disrupt the gulf stream leading to severe arctic winters.

## WE THINK

**C**learly CO<sub>2</sub> emissions need to be drastically cut and replaced with cleaner technologies. Instead governments and corporations want to avoid this by "passing the parcel".

Rather than face profit hitting radical cuts, big business is lobbying hard for minimalist measures like carbon-trading and relatively small scale reforestation.

Carbon credit trading as envisaged by the grossly inadequate Kyoto agreement, involves countries below their CO<sub>2</sub> quota selling the "credit" to a big CO<sub>2</sub> country, effectively allowing the biggest polluters to continue polluting.

They have sought to "Greenwash" their image by linking up with some of the environmental pressure groups to soften their agenda.

Environmental NGO WWF-USA is partnered by oil giants Chevron and Mobil along with Citigroup and Phillip Morris.

Conservation International has teamed up with Shell, bio-tech giant Aventis and UTC/Sikorsky (makers of the Blackhawk military helicopter).

It is possible for power stations to block carbon dioxide emissions. More subsidised public transport would mean less cars on the road.

Greater investment in alternative energy production through wind, wave and solar power would mean that these would have the potential to be real alternatives to burning fossil fuel.

Rather than fund such pollution-free alternatives, some governments actually want nuclear energy and large hydroelectric dams to be classified as 'alternative' or clean energies!

As for the oil companies, BP has made much of its new green image, yet it spent more on its new corporate logo recently than it did on renewable energy in 1998.

The US-based Global Climate Coalition, which is funded by the big oil companies, has spent \$1 million every year since 1994 downplaying the threat of global warming.

Unless forced, big business will continue to demand the right to make money unfettered by controls regardless of the consequences.

As a matter of urgency the power of big business must be broken by a mass movement from below before capitalism destroys the planet.

## What the SWP stands for Right of oppressed to organise in their own defence

by **COLIN BARKER**

**AT THE heart of capitalism is an ongoing class struggle between capital and labour. That is the ABC of Marxism. But the alphabet has more than three letters.**

Class domination in capitalism is interwoven with many other sorts of human oppression. These provide a basis for divisions among the exploited.

Disadvantaged groups have been held down on the grounds of being "different", and they in turn have fought back.

Religious differences have all been played on to create disunity.

Racist oppression, similarly, has disfigured the whole history of capitalist "civilisation".

So has the oppression of women, of gays and lesbians. Likewise with language differences, and with the oppression of migrant peoples.

Faced with oppression, the socialist starting point is always solidarity with the oppressed. In Lenin's famous term, socialists have always to be "tribunes of the people", confronting all forms of injustice.

Nor is this something separate from the class struggle.

For the workers' movement to rise to claim leadership of the whole of society, it has to learn to stand always with the oppressed peasant, the persecuted Jew or Muslim, against sexism and homophobia, against racism.

## Inequality

No working class that tolerates inequality in any form can make itself free.

The oppressed have the right to resist their own oppression. In Britain in 2001, in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham, rampaging Nazi thugs provoked local Asian people into active defence of their communities.

The British police weighed in, to confront not the fascists but those who were most resolute in organising and fighting back.

Labelled as "rioters", numbers of young Asians were given long prison sentences. Rightly, socialists defended the "rioters".

The police do not side with the struggles of oppressed groups.

As the Stephen Lawrence case revealed, even when investigating an overtly racist murder, "institutionalised racism" prevailed over simple justice.

Organised resistance is the means by which oppressed groups can challenge their situation. Collective activity enables them to transform themselves.

In the 1950s surveys of American women reported that they hated themselves, and preferred the company of men.

One brilliant achievement of the women's movement was a new pride in being a woman. That in turn helped transform and re-energise

the working class movement.

The women's movement took inspiration from the civil rights movement, which produced one of the great revolutionary slogans of the 1960s: "Black is beautiful."

## Marches

The bus boycotts and sit-ins, the marches and the "long hot summers" of urban insurrection gave real meaning to that idea.

All these struggles have strengthened the workers' movement today.

The Palestinians have become the most prominent symbols of struggle against oppression. Without the Intifada, they would have remained an unknown, silently oppressed people.

Their suffering would have been no less, but they would have been without hope or pride, and without allies across the world.

The Intifada illustrates a further point. Sometimes the Palestinians are criticised for "violence", but Israeli state violence against them is immensely greater.

Nor is that violence restricted to the open killings that are an everyday occurrence across the West Bank and Gaza.

There is violence too in enforced poverty and the destruction of economic life.

High levels of child mortality are just as murderous as helicopter gunships. Often those who begin resistance against oppression do so in conditions of isolation.

It is precisely their refusal to accept continuing degradation that generates the possibility of solidarity.

The meek do not inherit the earth.

Is socialists' role only to cheer on every struggle against oppression?

Some ways of dealing with oppression are self defeating. One early response to racist oppression was called "Uncle Tom".

Involved trying to prove to the racist power structure that blacks were worthy of its benevolence, seeking liberation on the oppressors' terms.

A sense of weakness lay behind such ideas.

At what might seem the opposite extreme, terrorism is a self defeating tactic.

Rather than rely on mass activity, it relies on the dedication of a heroic few. It too commonly arises from a sense of hopelessness.

At worst, in targeting ordinary working class people it can strengthen the very forces of reaction it opposes.

Socialists do not always agree with the methods of struggle adopted by the oppressed.

There is no difference in principle here with the debates we have in unions about how best to fight the bosses.

In both cases we start with solidarity, and participate in debates about strategy and tactics.

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THE anger workers feel towards this FF/PD government is growing. Having instigated cut-backs in health and education the governing parties are fearing a back-lash in the upcoming local and European elections.

However while the government's cards may be up, they have attempted to play one of the most appalling stunts of them all. They have played the Race Card.

**AOIFE BRESLIN** looks at the Minister for Injustice Michael McDowell's plans to hold a referendum designed to attack the rights of immigrants in Ireland.



# Unite against McDowell's racist referendum

## STOP THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTACKS ON IRISH CHILDREN

**RECENT** polls have shown that **Fianna Fáil's** popularity is at an all-time historic low. With European and local elections around the corner, our political masters have decided to compensate for their copious failures by using the most disgusting trick in the book – playing the race card.

In a cynical effort to deflect popular anger away from the Fianna Fáil/PD government and on to immigrants, Justice Minister, Michael McDowell, has recently announced a referendum on citizenship which will coincide, conveniently for some, with the forthcoming elections.

If the referendum is passed, citizenship will not be based on the fact that a child is born in Ireland, but instead on matters of blood and descent.

Irish children born to parents of another nationality would no longer be entitled to automatic citizenship unlike the estimated 40 million plus offspring of Irish emigrants for whose citizenship rights overseas our politicians have so-long campaigned.

Already this odious Minister has presided over a litany of attacks on immigrants.

Most recently, parents of Irish-born children have been deported, their children, at government insistence, accompanying them into exile.

This followed a retrospective Supreme Court judge-

**Article 2(1):** "States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status";

**Article 8(1):** "States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognised by law without unlawful interference".

—UN Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989

ment in January 2003 which removed the right to residency of parents of Irish-born children.

Hundreds of parents have now been issued with deportation threats from the Department of Injustice while their right to free legal aid has been removed.

Only recently, the right to avail of social welfare benefits to citizens of the accession EU states was also cut.

### Scapegoat

Now McDowell is using the term "citizenship tourism" to scapegoat immigrants for the government's failure to adequately fund the health service.

Not so long ago, we heard much from this government of the rights of the child.

Indeed, Article 41 of the Constitution refers to the importance of family unity.



Flashback: Protest after racist murder in Dublin two years ago

Now, it seems that the rights of some Irish children take precedence over others purely on the basis of the child's skin colour, while family unity, unless you happen to be white, means only unity in forced exile.

In the run-up to the refer-

endum, the fate of some 11,000 Irish children and their parents has yet to be determined.

### Safeguard

The Children's Rights Alliance – a coalition of 74 Irish NGOs concerned with

the rights and needs of children in Ireland – is among one of many organisations to oppose the deportations.

They point out that the government has formulated no clear procedures to safeguard the constitutional rights of Irish children born to non-nationals who have been deported.

For instance, an Irish girl child exiled to Nigeria will grow up in a society where 70% of the population survive on less than \$1 per day, in a country where only 1% of government expenditure goes on health (16% in Ireland).

She will grow up to give birth where the maternal mortality ratio is 160 times that of Ireland and her life expectancy some 25 years shorter.

Adult literacy for her will be halved and she will face a 25% chance of female genital manipulation. Before she is

## Migrants are not a burden!

Governments across Europe both left and right, along with the media, have promoted the idea that there is a limit to the number of immigrants that we can accept before our services and our culture comes under threat.

We should not be fooled by these arguments..

In Britain, for example, rather than being a burden immigrants make a net contribution to the economy.

All immigrants have the ability to work and create wealth. At a time when all across the EU governments are worried about an aging population and the pensions time bomb immigrants can be a huge asset- they are young and prepared to work and pay taxes

Immigration controls are only used against the poor.

The rich have always been able to travel the world and to buy the right to live where they want. It is a class issue but also one of race.

When politicians talk about controlling immigration they aren't talking about white Americans, Australians or Scandinavians.

Black people are always the main targets of immigration controls.

When immigration laws are tightened, racism is easier to stoke up and the experience across the world has shown that racist attacks increase.

Immigrants whether black or white are neither a burden nor a threat and should not be barred.

14 years old she will be almost 1,500 times more likely to contact HIV/AIDS than if she remained in Ireland. Clearly, in such circumstances her Constitutional rights are meaningless.

This deeply unpopular government has been beaten on more than one referendum already.

If anti-racists organisations, children's rights groups, trade unions, churches, socialists and anyone who believes in justice, equality and the rights of the child unite together in a broad-based campaign against this racist referendum we can beat them again.

## Facts and Figures

The continued denial of the right to asylum seekers and the policy of direct provision, whereby applicants are allocated to a centre and denied any financial independence, mirror policies across the EU that treat all asylum seekers as guilty until proven innocent!

Of the 5,997 applicants interviewed in 2002 (the most recent statistical breakdown available), just 893 were granted refugee status.

On appeal another 1097 had the original rejection overturned.

This is a very low recognition rate and has been a cause for huge concern amongst legal experts working in the field of asylum law and human rights organisations.

## television

# 'If' things don't change for the better

by DAVID LYNCH

**MAKING** large scale predictions about what major social, political and cultural changes will happen in the future is a task undertaken by only the most foolish. Crystal ball gazing should remain part of the entertainment provided at a circus or a fun-fair rather than a tool employed by social scientists.

Indeed it has long been accepted by critics that literary creations set in the future, (whether that be in the warmth of happiness as in a utopia or the darkest hell as in dystopia) tell us little or nothing about the future as such.

Indeed as far back as Thomas Moore's *Utopia* people have realised that Moore's book offers little or no glimpse into any perfect future reality, rather it tells us a lot about the period that Moore himself was writing in.

The fears and worries coupled with the hopes and dreams of early sixteenth century Britain are propelled into the future and leave their mark on Moore's fictional utopia.

In the socialist tradition there has always been a strong criticism of any utopian models. Indeed one of Karl Marx's earliest polemics was against the French utopian socialist who were contemporaries of the German revolutionary.

The utopian socialists created detailed blue-prints for a future "socialist" society but they had no plan as to how to achieve it. Marx felt that they had a contempt for slow but methodical organization and a denial of a theory of historical development through class struggle.

Marx felt that it wasn't up to socialists to create a detailed map of what the future under socialism should look like ("I will not write recipes for the cook shops of the future").

If a socialist society was to be truly a workers' democracy then it was up to workers to decide how to run the society. Most of the greatest developments made in the workers' movement have come from the workers' themselves not from the pens of socialist philosophers.

The creation of Soviets in Russia and workers councils in a number of European cities in the early twentieth is just one example.

However a new BBC 2 programme called 'If' has taken a big risk and has built a series of hour-long drama-documentary films which aim to analyse the biggest issues which will face us in the years ahead by exploring future scenarios.

Despite all the pitfalls involved in such an undertaking 'If' has proved to be an excellent show.

The first episode looked at energy policy in Britain with a growing reliance on electricity provided by a small number of privatised forms.

## Alternative

Add to this is a almost total neglect of alternative forms of electrical power, such as wind, Britain in the year 2014 could be facing long term black-outs and major electrical supply problems.

Using both a drama set during one of these fictional black-outs and interviews with experts, 'If' showed how a major and prolonged black-out caused by a reliance on privately owned electrical companies could lead to chaos.

The second episode was even better. This time looking at the growing inequality between rich and poor in Britain. Set in 2014, the gap between rich and poor is wider than at any time since World War II, and it's getting wider. As resentment grows on both sides of the poverty divide class resentment and social strife increases.

"It's becoming a very polarised society, almost an apartheid of rich and poor," says Will Hutton, economist during the programme.

The directors of 'If' by basing their programme on actual trends, (for example, the top tenth of the UK population now receives a greater share of total net income than the entire bottom half and there are now 1000 gated communities in England alone) and not setting it too far into the distant future have avoided the many pitfalls involved in social prediction.

The series so far has shown how a capitalist Britain under a New Labour government is facing into a future of increasing problems and decreasing solutions.

The need for a real radical alternative to the capitalist model of production and distribution is made all the clearer in the series.

With future episodes dealing with the ageing population, the obesity epidemic and the role of women, 'If' is a must see.

■ **'If' is shown every Wednesday night at 9pm on BBC2.**

## comedy

# Comedian who poked fun at the Christian and Corporate Right

by SHAY RYAN

**BILL** Hicks the great American comedian died just over a decade ago and this new book ('Love All The People') gathers together some of his on-stage routines, interviews and lyrics.

Hicks while being extremely funny was also highly political at a time (1980s-early 90s) when it was both unfashionable and unprofitable.

Noam Chomsky was very influential in his politics and this shows in his general libertarian outlook.

But Hicks was operating at a time when the anti-capitalist movement was still a distant dream.

Despite this he made some of the hardest hitting criticisms of the right wing Christian fundamentalist regimes of Reagan and Bush senior in the USA (United States of Advertising as Hicks called it).

His sketches on the first gulf war - "a war is when two armies are fighting, look at the casualties, 150,000 Iraqis dead, USA 79"-highlight the bloody slaughter that Bush senior unleashed on Iraq in 1991.

## Hypocrisy

He spoke out against the hypocrisy of the so called war on drugs "Don't you think banning substances like marijuana that grows naturally all over the planet is.... unnatural!"

He had a particular loathing for the banal pop stars that spoke out against drugs while endorsing Coke and Pepsi "you're off the artistic roll call once you suck up to the corporate elite"



■ **Bill Hicks: ten years after his death more popular than ever**

His last TV appearance in the US on the Dave Letterman show was cut from the show because of his attacks on pro-lifers "if you're so pro-life don't block medical clinics, block

cemeteries, let's see how far you'll take this position.

"She can't come in- She's 93, she was hit by a bus-

"There's options!" Because of this his seg-

ment was never aired and funnily enough the Letterman show the following week had a pro-life advertisement slot! Bill Hicks is more popular now than ever.

This book is a good introduction but his albums are widely available and are highly recommended.

■ **Love All The People** by Bill Hicks

## book

# Peace signs of our times

by JUDY COX

**JAMES MANN** has produced a wonderful book of original anti-war posters from around the world.

The book is co-written with Nicolas Lampert and has an introduction by veteran US campaigner Howard Zinn.

It makes a powerful case for politically committed art.

James spoke to JUDY COX from the British *Socialist Worker* about his celebration of the anti-war movement.

## Feeling

"I am from the US, but I have lived in Europe for five years now. Ever since Bush got elected, I had a bad feeling.

After 11 September 2001 I realised things were



■ **March 20 San Francisco**

going to change for the worse. I have always been outspoken about my political views.

Art has always been political. In the past artists were commissioned to glorify wars by leaders.

So artists have always been involved in politics in

one way or another. In the whole history of humanity there has never been a creative output like that of the anti-war movement.

"I wanted to document that. I was in Barcelona on 15 February last year. The demonstration was massive. I wasn't really pre-

pared for it. There were 1.5 million people on the streets.

The population is only 2 million, so the other 500,000 must have been working.

"There were so many home-made images and placards. I decided I wanted to make a professional col-

lection of signs.

I asked demonstrators, and e-mailed friends and peace organisations asking for images.

## Planning

The idea just grew from there. I was planning a magazine, then I realised it would make a cool book.

"I wanted to show designs that were made for anti-war protests rather than being specially created for my book.

The responses I have had have been overwhelmingly positive.

I wanted to remember that there was active resistance, that people did not just sit back while the war was waged."

■ **Peace Signs (£19.99)** is available from Bookmarks [www.bookmarks.uk.com](http://www.bookmarks.uk.com)



# Thousands protest at Bush, Blair and Ahern

OVER 5,000 people marched in Dublin last Saturday against the war in Iraq and the continued occupation of that country. Despite the pouring rain the size of the crowd showed that the anti-war movement had not gone away.

The most lively contingent on the march with drums and flags contained Socialist Workers supporters, Irish Anti War Movement groups. Contingents

arrived from outside Dublin, including Cork, Waterford and Galway.

Chair of the Irish Anti War Movement Richard Boyd Barrett told the crowd that the government "are scared of these protests."

"We want as many people as possible to come out on the streets when Bush visits here in June," he said.

"We have to show our own government that we continue to oppose the use of Shannon by the American

military and we do not want to welcome Bush here."

Among the other speakers was Patricia McKenna from the Green Party who said that Bush was a "war criminal and should be treated as such".

After the march the feeling amongst most protestors was that the preparation for the Bush visit begins now. The Irish Anti War Movement plan to organise busses to travel to whatever part of Ireland that Bush visits in late June.

Thousands of anti-war protesters took to city streets across the world on the anniversary of the Iraq war to demand the withdrawal of



■ March 20 Dublin

US-led troops.

An estimated one million people marched through Rome, in probably the biggest single protest.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators streamed

through central London, many carrying "Wanted" posters bearing the faces of US president, George Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, his main war ally.

## Ballymun protest over right to fly peace flags



AN anti war picket outside Ballymun Civic Centre was organised by Ballymun Against the War on March 11 at 8.00am.

This followed the removal of a peace banner from a flat in a tower block in the estate.

Ballymun Against War activist Chris Chennaux, hung the banner from his balcony a year ago in protest at the US/UK invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Kevin Wingfield of Ballymun Against War said,

"It is ironic that the council can get a giant crane to remove a small banner from a tenant's balcony, but seem unable to respond to urgent repairs and maintenance of flats in Ballymun.

"This is part of a clamp down by the government and local councils against the anti war message in the

run up to the visit of George Bush to Ireland in June.

"Bertie Ahern has said he hopes there will be no protests and new laws have been passed banning posters on lamp posts and other public places.

"We protest at this undemocratic stifling of opposition. The anti war movement in Ballymun and throughout the country will be protesting at the visit of warmonger George Bush to this country.

"We intend to defy this ban and the banner will be put back up in Connolly Tower. I am putting out peace flags in my balcony in Balcurris Road and call on other anti war residents to do the same.

"If the council decide to remove these they will have to deal with a lot of angry people."

## Another Europe is Possible anti racist carnival

THE 'Another Europe is Possible' coalition is planning a major Carnival in Dublin on May Day

The theme for the May Day carnival will be centred on anti-racism given that the referendum on citizenship looks like it will be on the same day as the elections.

We are saying that its not just a day of welcome for the

people of new EU but a day of welcome for people from all over the world especially asylum seekers.

It is also important to highlight that this is workers day and defending public services and opposing war in Iraq and Palestine is key.

Activists will be meeting next on Saturday 3rd at 4pm in the Teachers Club, Parnell

Square in Dublin to plan for May Day and to discuss the upcoming ESF in London

We have thousands of leaflets to be distributed and posters to put up that advertise the May Day event

■ We need volunteers to help—contact 086-1523542

■ Fundraiser for AEIP- raf-fle tickets available- contact mark at 087-7974622

## European Social Forum in London

The European Social Forum (ESF) was launched from the World Social Forum meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Its first two massive gatherings were in Florence (2002) and Paris (2003). This year the ESF being held in London this October 14th-16th.

Already a very impressive number of trade unions, social movements and NGOs are supporting the London ESF. For example, it has the support of the Greater London Authority administration, the Mayor Ken Livingstone, RMT Transport Union, and the London Region Unison trade union gave a £50,000 donation. So it looks like it

will be an inspirational event.

As in Porto Alegre, Florence and Paris the ESF in London will be an open international event in which social movements, trade unions, NGOs, refugees, peace and anti-imperialist groups, anti-racist movements, environmental movements, networks of the excluded, community campaigns and individuals from Europe and the World can come together to debate and discuss.

The registration fee for the ESF will be 30€ (20€ for unwaged). The fee is high because the London ESF will receive hardly any state funding. This is in contrast

with Florence and Paris where the local authorities made the venues available free. Therefore the movement needs to start now to in every area to get networks together to make sure everyone can get to the ESF. The core site of the ESF will be at Alexandra Palace—which holds 25,000 plus extra with the park beside it,

At the recent assembly in London there were activists from the Dublin Bin Tax Campaign, SIPTU, Community workers, Another Europe is Possible and the Irish Anti-War Movement.

■ RORY HEARNE, Another Europe is Possible

## Bin Tax campaigners in court victory

RINGSSEND anti bin tax campaigners won a significant victory in the High Court last week.

The local campaign successfully challenged a Dublin City Council official who was a witness at the hearing.

The council's case collapsed when the witness's evidence was rebutted by a local resident.

As a result 8 other cases for non-payment were dismissed.

Shay Ryan, Ringsend local organiser for the campaign said, "While we are pleased with what happened, we cannot rely on technicalities like this to be sure to win the campaign."



■ Shay Ryan

"The key tactics is to keep up mass non-payment, build the campaign in the areas, piling up the pressure on the government and council in the run-up to the elections in June."

## Dates for your diary

**Meeting**  
For all transport workers who want to  
**Stop the destruction of our semi states**  
Wednesday March 24 8pm  
ATGWU Hall Middle Abbey St (Opp Arnotts)  
**Speakers: Union reps from Dublin Bus, Irish Rail and Aer Rianta**

**Dun Laoghaire: Fundraiser—Pub Quiz**  
For RICHARD BOYD BARRETT & CHRISTY MOORE  
—Local Election Campaign.  
Friday March 26 at 8pm in Smyth's Pub, Georges St, Dun Laoghaire.  
€20 per table. €5 per person.  
Lots of Prizes.

**Rathmines Against War**  
Meets every Thursday at 9pm in Madisons Pub Rathmines  
**Dun Laoghaire Against War,**  
Meets every Wednesday, 8pm Farrells pub Dun Laoghaire Shopping Centre. All welcome. 012304621 for details  
**Ballymun Against War**  
Meets every Thursday at 7pm in the Axis Centre. All welcome. Phone 086-3074060 for details

## MARXIST FORUMS

(Political discussions hosted by the SWP)

Blanchardstown: Racism and Immigration Laws, Wednesday 24th Laurel Lodge Community centre 8.30 p.m.

Bray: Advertising the Body—Why Sexism sells, Speaker: Melisa Halpin, Thursday March 11 8pm, Lenehan's Pub, Main St, Bray; Killer Coke, Wednesday March 24, 8pm, Lenehan's Pub, Main St, Bray

Dublin South East/Ringsend: Globalisation and Women's Liberation Today, Thursday 11th March, 8pm, Donovan's Pub (upstairs) Townsend St

Dundrum: Che Guevara, Monday, April 5, 8pm Dundrum Family Recreation Centre

Waterford: Waterford, Radical Cinema - Film And Social Change, Speaker: Roy Hassey, Plus showing of 'The Battleship Potemkin', Thursday March 25, 8.00pm Olde Rogue, Michael Street

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## NIPSA

# Civil servants say: Escalate the action now!

**THOUSANDS of civil servants in Northern Ireland are still embroiled in a major battle for a decent pay rise.**

From 15th to 19th March, 300 Social Security Agency staff in Asylum Road and Lisnagelvin, Derry took 'selective' strike action as part of NIPSA's 'escalation' of the dispute.

Recent negotiations have produced no new offer. In fact management are attempting to force acceptance of a deal for 2004 as part of a settlement which includes the core issue of the dispute - no pay rise for 2003. In the week 22nd - 26th March, workers in three MOT centers (Newry, Armagh and Lisburn) are striking action, as are administrative staff in the Department of Employment and Learning and the Department of the Environment.

The following week will see 60 workers in the Child Support Agency also taking strike action for 5 days.

NIPSA members are clearly up for the fight and management are under huge pressure. The recent rally in support of 6 workers suspended from the Newtonabbey Jobs and Benefits Office for taking part in the official work to rule showed the anger of civil servants with management.

However many NIPSA members are also frustrated

with how NIPSA's Civil Service Group Executive is running the strike.

One activist in the CSA told *Socialist Worker*, "the selective strike action is a good way of keeping up the pressure but it won't win us a decent pay rise.

A real escalation would mean that instead of 60 CSA staff staying out for a week we would have 1400 - now that would make management want to get the cheque-book out. If we had the other 20,000 civil servants on picket lines at the same time then management would be crying all the way to Whitehall."

So far the dispute has forced management to open up negotiations, but only on the basis of there being some 'wriggle room'.

They have found some money left over from the imposed deal implemented in November. This gave members a step up the scale without the scale being improved to show the rise in the cost of living.

## Bonuses

"Management are talking pennies, but they got up to 9% and £6000 in bonuses on top of their fat cat salaries. What's good enough for them is good enough for us," Paul, who works in the SSA, told *Socialist Worker*.

Many workers realise the

'start stop' tactic of a one-day strike every couple of months and selective strikes won't put enough pressure on management and are searching for a different strategy.

This was shown recently when activists in Branch 8 and the Uncivil Servant rank-and-file group collected several thousand signatures on a petition calling for all-out action.

The same debate is taking place in Britain. Civil servants in the PCS union are faced with an almost identical dispute and a similar strategy from their union leadership. Even though they started with a 2-day strike in February, the supposedly left-wing executive has left it until mid April before calling another.

Both PCS and NIPSA need a strategy of all out civil service wide action in co-operation with each other in order to take on the government and for their members to break out of the poverty trap.

Activists in both unions will need to build networks between different workplaces and look towards a rank-and-file approach in order to build pressure on the union leadership and ultimately force them into a 'real' escalation. There can be no reliance on electing 'better' union leaders. The real strength is a strong organised base in the workplace.

## Irish Education Forum

OVER 50 people attended the launch meeting of the Irish Education Forum in UCD on the 19th March.

The Forum was organised to offer an alternative view of education to that being discussed by the EU education ministers at the OECD meeting in Dublin. The first plenary discussed the fight against the privatisation and marketisation of education. Marnie Holborow, Pres of the SIPTU Education branch, explained how this means a return to fees. Pablo, a lecturer from Chile, explained how privatisation in Chile has meant education funding being cut to 0.6% of GDP resulting in 80% of all research happening in just two universities. Most of that research is funded by multinationals.

The Forum then held a sit-



down protest outside the OECD meeting in Dublin Castle and organised a mock auction of Irish universities (see pic).

The forum will re-convene at the USI congress and again at the SIPTU sponsored Education Forum on the 24th May in Liberty Hall, Dublin.

## Waterford Radiotherapy Protest

OVER 2,000 people took part in the fourth protest organised by the Waterford Council of Trade Unions in support of the campaign to win a radiotherapy unit for the south-east.

The protest, which took place on Daffodil Day, was the biggest yet, following a series of marches and work stoppages organised by the WCTU.

In October last year the government belatedly released the report of the Special Review Group on cancer care which recommended that the south-east should not get the life-saving cancer treatment, and that existing radiotherapy facilities in Dublin, Cork, and Galway should be extended as compensation.

This reports conclusions were based on outdated population figures from the 1996 census which estimated that the

south-east would not reach a population of 400,000 until 2015, when in fact the region has already reached that figure.

The report was deeply flawed throughout; using surveys which patients from Dublin and Cork dominated.

The group was also loaded with cancer specialists from the three areas which had existing radiotherapy units.

The only south-east representative on the review group, Dr. Gordon Watson has dismissed the report as politically motivated and has supported the trades council in their campaign.

The real reason behind Fianna Fail/PD refusal to build a radiotherapy unit in the south-east was revealed by Minister for the Environment Martin Cullen in local radio the day after the report was released,

when he announced plans of two consortiums to construct private radiotherapy facilities in the region.

However, those who can't afford private healthcare will still have to face the gruelling six hour round journey to Dublin for the treatment which takes less than five minutes.

The failure to provide adequate access to radiotherapy in Ireland means that only 35% of cancer patients receive the treatment, even though 60% require it.

With every two month delay in treatment there is an 8% decline in survival rates.

The WCTU are planning a series of events to maintain the campaign in the run-up to the election.

For more information on the radiotherapy campaign contact Dick Roche on 087-7523464.

## WE THINK

# Anger at CIE sell-out

**"THE calling off of the 24 hour strike was a sell-out. Jack O'Connor and the other national officers are a disgrace."**

This was how one SIPTU bus driver responded to O'Connor's ordering of the cancellation of Thursday's

action.

A driver who is a member of the NBRU told *Socialist Worker*, "The NBRU statement that talks were making progress is very sinister. This only encouraged O'Connor to call off the SIPTU stoppage.

"If that had gone ahead, NBRU drivers would have

been out too. Many of us think a deal is being done behind our backs."

Sean told *Socialist Worker*, "Everybody is sick over the decision to call off the action. If a union leadership can overrule its own strike committee, you have to ask whose union is it?"

The government and

transport minister Seamus Brennan is determined to force through the break up of CIE and to bring in private operators to undercut the union wages and conditions of CIE workers.

We need the same determination from our trade unions to fight this agenda of privatisation, not only in CIE, but also in Aer Rianta, An Post and ESB - all of which are being set up for selling off.

The union top brass are more committed to partnership and their professional life-styles and salaries than to leading a fight against this rotten government and the employers.

That is why we need strong rank and file organisation.

The Busworkers Action Group in CIE has been crucial in keeping the workforce informed, arguing and agitating against the privatisation agenda. It has been able to initiate limited action in the past when the union leaders feared to tread.

It is vital that organisations like the Busworkers Action Group are strengthened and built where they do not yet exist.

It is not a question of a breakaway union - the NBRU was formed in the 1960s by members dissatisfied with the ITGWU (now SIPTU). But the role of its leaders has been no better than that of SIPTU.

What is needed is strong organisation of members of all unions which can push the union leaders to take a lead and take unofficial action when the union leaders sell-out.

## Aer Rianta

WORKERS reacted with anger and frustration when SIPTU General President Jack O'Connor called off planned strike without consulting the Aviation Branch committee, sabotaging talks that were actually ongoing.

The Aviation Branch had announced plans for a six hour stoppage over Minister Brennan's plans to break up the company. This had been balloted for and sanctioned by Liberty Hall.

The workers were seeking guarantees on jobs, wages and conditions and the future of Shannon airport as well as the provision of financial information well ahead of any published legislation.

An Aviation Branch source told *Socialist Worker*, "The first the we heard of this was on the radio. Jack O'Connor and Brendan

Hayes ordered the strike to be called off and lawyers announced it at the High Court hearing of the case brought by Ryanair against the SIPTU.

"They had made no contact with us or the strike committee. People are very angry - they feel sold out.

"I think this has done a lot of damage to the trade union movement. At the first challenge SIPTU folded. It sends a signal that in any strike situation someone will go to the courts to have the strike stopped.

"SIPTU should have taken on Ryanair."

*Socialist Worker*, has learnt that talks had been progressing at the Great Southern Hotel between the SIPTU Aviation Branch and Phil Flynn who had been brought in by Aer Rianta management and who was in

contact with the government.

An informal deal was on the table which the SIPTU negotiators thought contained enough concessions on guarantees and the timescale of legislation to recommend suspending the action.

Informal contacts with the government had also indicated that Aer Rianta management and the government would agree to the concessions.

However the action of O'Connor in pulling the action meant the proposals were not put. Ahern's letter contained none of the concessions the Aviation Branch negotiators believed they had achieved.

Aer Rianta workers were set to hold a mass meeting on Tuesday lunchtime as *Socialist Worker* went to press.

The sabotage of action in both CIE and Aer Rianta shows that workers need to fight to control of their unions through rank and file organisation based on workplace reps and activists, which can really speak for the feeling of ordinary members and can call action independently of the officials who sell them out.

## An Post

# Bosses bully as workers suspended

AN POST managers suspended over 300 workers at its Mails Centre in Clonalkin as *Socialist Worker* went to press.

Management had tried to force through changes in work practices without agreement from the union, the CWU.

As one suspended worker told *Socialist Worker*, "We have bent over backwards to co-operate with company. But I think we've been too generous. We allowed a pilot programme to run Monday to Friday sorting mail for sub-post offices.

"But the company pulled out of talks and insisted the programme run on the night and weekend, without any agreement with the union or workforce."

Another worker pointed out, "We were due 3 percent from November and another 2 percent since February, but An Post has refused to pay, saying it has a financial crisis."

"Our union (CWU) consultants examined the accounts and found that the mess was due to management incompetence. When the management make these mistakes it's the workers that are blamed."

Workers had balloted six to one for strike action over the failure to pay rises

due under an agreement.

However on Friday 19 March, union leaders had deferred this action to give management an opportunity to negotiate a settlement. Managers insisted on work changes over the weekend with agreement and suspended the workers who refused to work the changes.

On Monday morning drivers too were suspended when they refused to load mail prepared by managers replacing suspended workers.

An Post boss Owen Morgan is clearly trying to force through by bullying cost cutting measures.

One worker explained, "The shifts are terrible. I finished my early shift - 7am to 2.30pm on Sunday, but have to be back at work at midnight for the that shift."

"We feel very frustrated. The company should stop rialroading through changes and return to consultation and negotiation." The CWU leadership will need respond by implementing the overwhelming mandate for strike action.

Unofficial action has been taking place in Tuam and Drogheda.

## Meeting

**For all transport workers who want to Stop the destruction of our semi states**

**Wednesday March 24 8pm  
ATGWU Hall Middle Abbey St (Opp Arnotts)**

**Speakers: Union reps from Dublin Bus, Irish Rail and Aer Rianta**

## Into The West:

INTO The West was formed at a meeting a fortnight ago in Derry called by the SEA.

This initiative was taken as a result of expressions of concern about the future by rail workers that an imminent spending review will make no provision for sustaining the line from Belfast north of Ballymena—which is not included in what Translink has designated its "core network."

All other local organisations, political or otherwise, willing to fight to protect the line were invited to the meeting. The result was a gratifyingly representative gathering and the formation of a genuinely broad-based campaigning group.

Into The West is determined to put the issue of the rail link very firmly onto the agenda. The fear at present is that Translink plans to let the trains run into the buffers even as passengers

are herded onto buses.

Once the bus and rail operations are re-split, the way will then be open to flog off the buses and the bus routes to private interests, debt free and at knock-down prices. In the absence of a rail-link, Derry-Belfast, Coleraine-Belfast etc. bus-routes will probably be highly profitable.

But the future of services to rural areas, or within cities - the Creggan or Nelson Drive services in Derry city, for example - will be far more problematical.

In this, as in so much else—the outrageous plan to evict people from their homes to make way for the runway which Ryanair has demanded at City of Derry comes to mind—the interests of big business are given priority over the needs of people.

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**NIPSA MEMBERS SAY  
'ESCALATE ACTION NOW!'**

PAGE 11

## Union leaders sabotage fight against privatisation in CIE and Aer Rianta

# TREACHERY!

ON Wednesday night 17 March SIPTU national officials, including Jack O'Connor, ordered the calling off of the following day's 24 hour strike action at CIE.

This followed a vaguely worded letter from the Taoiseach.

Jack O'Connor SIPTU General President, Joe O'Flynn General Secretary and Brendan Hayes Vice President overruled the Strike Committee under rule 169 of the union.

The Strike Committee of SIPTU immediately denounced O'Connor's actions as "treachery".

Ahern had written, "I note your concern on the need for measures to ensure that standards of employment are protected and that 'a race to the bottom' is avoided.

"I confirm that we will engage with the trade unions on measures to address these concerns."

But CIE workers were quick to point out that Ahern's words committed him to nothing.

The Strike Committee of SIPTU rightly saw nothing in Ahern's letter and were clear that the strike ought to go ahead.

A few days before the NBRU leadership had commented that "talks are making progress".

This helped prepare the ground for the SIPTU sell-out.

"In our view there is an unholy alliance of government, and the leadership of SIPTU and NBRU", Bill McCamley, of the SIPTU



■ Flashback: CIE workers take action earlier in the year

strike committee told *Socialist Worker*.

Jack O'Connor had only a day earlier called off the action at Aer Rianta over the break up of that company. This prompted fury among members of the Aviation Branch of SIPTU.

CIE and Aer Rianta workers understand that their futures are at stake in Brennan's plan for break-up of the companies and use of non-union private companies to run bus routes.

Privatisation and so-called "competition" have undermined job security, wages and conditions for workers wherever it has been implemented.

### Opposition

CIE workers have expressed absolute opposition to these plans and demanded the union negotiators withdraw from talks unless the break up and contracting out of routes was taken off the table.

This corrupt and lying government is involved in a systematic attack on workers' rights in this country.

The break-up of CIE and introduction of "competition" and privatisation into the public service has a very clear political objective:

To reduce the scope of public services to working class people and to weaken trade unionism in Ireland.

It's about time we made our union leaders take off their gloves and stop cosy-

ing up to the FF/PD gangsters.

CIE and Aer Rianta workers need to demand special general meetings to overturn their leaders' surrender. It is time to democratise our unions to make sure they fight with their members not against them.

Now, more than ever we need to strengthen the fighting rank and file organisation in the trade union movement.

■ Now turn to page 11

## The Strike Committee statement in full

● The combined SIPTU strike committee met today to discuss the Taoiseach's letter to SIPTU President Jack O'Connor.

After lengthy debate the Committee's view was that the letter was not a meaningful intervention. Regrettably the SIPTU General Officers took a different view from the Reps.

Consequently they directed that the one day strike be called off under Rule 169.

This rule gives the leadership of SIPTU full authority to call off any strike.

The Strike Committee reiterated that the proposals emanating from the Department talks were not meaningful.

Indeed the Committee believes that the leadership of SIPTU and NBRU are misleading CIA staff in relation to the merit of these proposals.

In our view there is an unholy alliance of government, and the leadership of SIPTU and NBRU.

Furthermore, the Committee is particularly concerned about the (Bus Kilometre) proposals; the abandonment of sub contracting option and the apparent retreat from the Transport Forum Consensus document.

The Committee believes that the type of regulatory body envisaged will not only undermine the wages and conditions of CIE staff, but will mitigate against a socially orientated public transport system.

We believe these moves are

nothing short of treachery.