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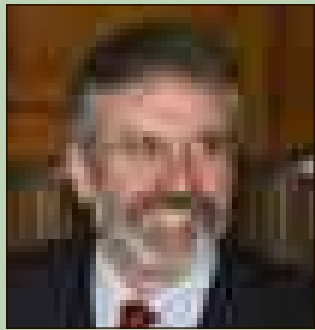
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# BERTIE: NOT WAVING:

# DROWNING



By Kieran Allen

The election results were a blow to anyone who wants to change Ireland to a more equitable and decent society.

Fianna Fail, has been returned to office for its third successive term in government and Fine Gael, which looked like it was in terminal decline, has recovered.

On the surface Ireland appears to have returned to the 'two and a half' party system that is built around two rival right wing parties and smaller left wing junior partners.

The scale of the blow should not, however, be exaggerated. The Progressive Democrats, who were main party identified with neo-liberalism, were hammered.

Despite the loss of Joe Higgins, whose Dublin West constituency is under-represented in the Dail, closer examination of the results reveal that the radical left received serious votes. In many instances, candidates of the radical left received more votes than the PDs who have been in government for ten years.

The election was won on the promise of new social gains for the popula-

tion, arising from a continued boom. Yet in the week after the elections results, the newspapers were deluged with delayed reports about the problems the Irish economy faces. Fianna Fail will now face the difficult task of matching their promises to a declining economy.

In the immediate future, at the same time as trying to obtain coalition partners, Bertie Ahern has to face the Mahon Tribunal, which is closing in on his murky financial dealings.

Their triumph is not as solid as it looks. This is not deny that Fianna Fail did surprisingly well in the election. How can their extraordinary hold over Irish voters be explained?

In the past, some argued that Fianna Fail drew on a rural Catholic culture to promote its brand of right-wing populism. But with 60 percent of the population now living in cities and with many villages transformed into commuter suburbs, this hardly makes sense.

There is a new explanation that Ireland has become a 'middle class nation with a contented majority: the 'breakfast roll man' syndrome. David McWilliams made the case for

a middle class nation in his book *The Pope's Children*, which argued that a great 'blurring' of the classes has occurred and that 67 percent population are in the 'middle class'.

A softer, left, variation of this theme has come from the Maynooth College sociologist, Mary Corcoran. After the election she argued that, 'consumerism has weakened political resolve. People are happy to critique the system but don't really want to change the system because ultimately it might upset their own apple cart.'

This type of argument, however, is both factually wrong and leads to highly pessimistic conclusions.

It can mean a moralistic dismissal of the 'consumerist' majority or a claim that with current electorate there is no alternative but to shift to the right.

It is true that in the decade since the Celtic Tiger began, the Irish workforce has changed. There are more white-collar workers but also more construction workers than before. White collar, however, does not equate with being a member of the contented middle class.

49.4 percent of groups classified as 'Managerial and Technical' by

the Central Statistics Office and 44.5 percent of those classified as Professional are members of trade unions. This happens to be much higher than the national average of 34.6 percent.

Nurses, teachers, civil servants are also likely to take strike action or oppose the new 'audit culture' which pervades their jobs in an attempt to measure 'outputs'.

They are also not paid enough to survive in the dearest economy in Europe. Many carry huge levels of debt - currently at a ratio of 136 percent of disposable income - and are terrified of why might happen to the Celtic Tiger in the future.

Anyone who thinks there is a 'contented' privileged majority, must have ignored the cries of anger over the health service; the silent desperation of parents of children with special needs when they confront the Irish state bureaucracy; or the shameful treatment of the elderly and their relatives.

Explaining FF hegemony in this way, therefore, functions as a convenient alibi for ignoring the appalling strategy of the mainstream Irish left.

**TURN TO PAGE THREE**

## THE THINGS THEY SAY

**'If you liked Save Our Seaford, wait until you see our Save St Michael's Hospital campaign.'**

Richard Boyd Barrett following his magnificent 5233 first preference votes in the Dun Laoghaire constituency.

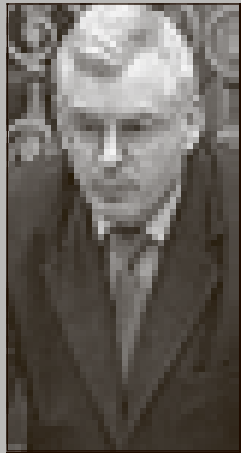
**'It was a Bertie Ahern election and he won it for us.'**

Mary O'Rourke on Fianna Fáil's success.

**'I never thought they [Fianna Fáil] were the Legion of Mary. I never thought they'd do me any favours. I thought my insurance policy was that they needed the second seat. So I didn't think they'd go out to completely undermine me and shaft me.'**

Mary Fitzpatrick FF candidate in Dublin Central on how the lovely Bertie did the dirty on her in favour of henchman Cyprian Brady.

**'The mass growth of population in Dublin West and Dublin North was not reflected in the extra seats we should have had. Dublin South East had 33,800 people come out to vote and elected four TDs and Dublin West had 33,900 and elected three TDs only. John Gormley was elected on 6,400 votes. I was eliminated on 7,400.'**



Joe Higgins

The Socialist Party's Joe Higgins on the gerrymandering of constituencies.

**'If Mr Conor Maguire believes his client is being treated unfairly, then he knows the appropriate venue to direct such grievances is the courts. Mr Ahern could seek relief through an injunction and he has not sought that.'**

Alan Mahon, the tribunal chairman in a furious response after Mr Ahern's counsel made an attack on the planning inquiry, claiming it was biased and undermined democracy.

**'There probably is a continued ongoing necessity to modernise the Labour party and to acknowledge that people's attitudes out there have changed and as Ivan Yates memorably put it, that the breakfast roll man didn't vote Labour and I think he's probably right.'**

Pat Rabbitte following his party's poor performance.

**'In my opinion, our electoral strategy was misconceived, wrong-headed and completely ignored the lessons of our history.'**

Labour TD Tommy Broughan on the Mullingar Accord.

**'I don't need anybody to keep me straight or clean me up. If we**

**are going to have any discussions, it will be on the basis of mutual respect.'**

Fianna Fáil Minister for Finance Brian Cowen.

**'Let's be clear. A deal with Fianna Fáil would be a deal with the devil. We would be spat out after five years, and decimated as a Party. But, would it be worth it? Can you change Fianna Fáil? No, if their only measure of success is cranes on the skyline. Bertie has got to move on from that benchmark.'**

Green Party's Ciaran Cuffe.

**'Well, I think it's a little rash to make decisions like that.'**

Fiona O'Malley criticizing Michael McDowell's rather petulant announcement of his resignation from public life. The rest of us are just glad.

**'In my view, it would be very difficult for the Progressive Democrats to function as a political party in the Dail with just two TDs. We will have to decide on the future of the party. It's no use stating otherwise.'**

Noel Greally, one of the remaining two PD TDs.

**'Are you available tonight? I need some TLC from you. Otherwise I don't want to talk to you.'**

Fianna Fáil candidate Martin Brady at the Dublin North East count centre talking to a young female journalist.

**'You do not want to give additional argument to new crazies who say, "let's go and bomb Iran".'**

Mohamed Elbaradei, the head of the UN's nuclear watchdog agency, warning against using military action to stop Iran's uranium enrichment program.

**'We consider it harmful and dangerous to turn Europe into a powder keg and to fill it with new kinds of weapons.'**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on U.S. plans to develop an anti-missile shield in Europe.

**'We have no intention of reaching any kind of settlement with Hamas or with Islamic Jihad. We will hit them and continue to hit them.'**

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

**'I would like to suggest that maybe we give Paul Wolfowitz a new job and send him over [to Iraq] as mayor since the neocons got us in over there.'**

Republican Walter Jones in the House of Representatives.

**'Most of us don't know what we're fighting for anymore. We're serving our country and friends, but the only reason we go out every day is for each other.'**

Sgt. Kevin O'Flaherty on discovering after a battle that at least two Iraqi Army soldiers that American forces had helped train and arm were among the enemy dead.

**'I limited my protests to George Bush and the Republican Party. However, when I started to hold the Democratic Party to the same standards that I held the Republican Party, support for my cause started to erode.'**

Anti-war campaigner Cindy Sheehan.

# Galway demands clean water

By Dette Mc Loughlin

A delegation of six campaigners assembled at Galway City Hall on Friday 18th May for an emergency meeting with council officials concerning the ongoing water crisis. The City Manager had offered to meet to discuss urgent issues of concern, but was unavailable that day. As there is an immediate need for free, clean water to be delivered to the people of Galway the campaigners discussed their demands with Director of Services, Mr. Hayes.

During the meeting it became alarmingly clear that council officials do not accept that the current water situation is a public health emergency.

According to Ciaran Hayes, the council's responsibility is being met. There is a water supply being delivered to Galway citizens, as water is still running from taps. The fact that the water is contaminated with a parasite that can cause a potentially fatal infection only requires issuing a 'boil notice', which, he maintains, has been communicated satisfactorily.

The 'boil' notice was declared March 2007. Two months later the council has still not delivered notices of water contamination, and infection prevention procedures to all affected domestic users.

Although one fifth of the population live on or below the poverty line, apparently it is not the council's concern that many citizens are experiencing severe financial hardship due to purchasing bottled water, paying bigger fuel bills to boil water, and medical bills, which may compromise them taking necessary precautions.

The explanation for not delivering free, clean water to people was that the council is not prepared to pay that expense! At no time was there any acceptance of family stress over risks to children swallowing water whilst bathing. The officials stated they sought advice from HSE/EPA 'health specialists', but who these professionals are was not disclosed.



Contaminated: Galway's water supply

The city council in conjunction with the HSE have now produced a glossy leaflet concerning the water supply contamination, which is apparently in the process of being delivered to all homes. Upon inspecting the leaflets available at City Hall important omissions became apparent:

■ The leaflet does not list the voluntary services delivering free, clean water to the aged, or people with disabilities, or how to avail of this. The officials were unable to disclose the information to the delegation.

■ The leaflet does not inform the public that water dispensed at certain retail outlets into customers' own containers must be boiled to guarantee safety. The council maintains it is not their responsibility.

■ The leaflet does not advise citizens experiencing hardship to

contact their Community Welfare Officer, although this was the only advice the Director of Services could give for those that can't afford the essential safety precautions.

■ The leaflet does not explain why the City Council has agreed contracts with certain private bottled water companies even though there are less expensive alternatives.

■ The leaflet does not say when the crisis will be over; no one knows how long it will take to lift the 'boil' notice.

The delegation from Galway For Free Safe Water, St. Brigit's Place Senior Citizens and Women in Media and Entertainment do not accept that the water crisis is being dealt with in an acceptable or competent manner.

There is no confidence in the professionals, no one is account-

able for the contamination, or taking responsibility for those that have been infected, or adversely affected. To express this anger a banner was unfurled and hung over the banister at City Hall, calling 'for Free, Safe Water' for Galway.

The officials took great exception to this and council official Mr. Cosidine unsuccessfully grappled with a female old age pensioner and a woman on crutches to pull the banner out of their hands. The gardai were called, but because of traffic congestion the paddy wagon did not arrive until the campaigners were leaving at 5pm, so as not to inconvenience staff.

The facts of unfairness and inequality in our society are startling. How our public health is being dealt with in this city highlights this pressing issue.

## INSIDE THE SYSTEM

George Bush has tabled his own plan for tackling climate change under which the US would convene meetings over the next year among the world's 15 greatest polluters. The US is blocking binding cuts in greenhouse gas emissions at this month's G8 summit and instead will peddle their own, looser goals for reducing emissions.

New census figures show cohabiting couples are the fastest growing family unit. The number of people living alone has also increased rapidly. In Dublin today less than one in five households consists of the traditional family unit.

1 June saw the pay of TDs top €100,000 for the first time. The Taoiseach's salary increased to €271,822; the Tanaiste's is now €233,503; a minister's wage €214,344 and a junior minister's wage €147,284.

Ireland has some of the most inadequate provision for Multiple Sclerosis sufferers in Europe. Ireland has 16 neurological units and two rehab centres—to cater for 10,000 MS sufferers. Sweden has 14,000 MS sufferers and 400

neurologists, while the Czech Republic has 335 neurologists for 13,000 sufferers. Romania, one of the poorest countries in the EU, has 72 special units for 10,000 patients.

As highlighted during the election campaign, the plight of cystic fibrosis sufferers is very serious. Average life expectancy for a person with cystic fibrosis in Ireland is 21. In Northern Ireland it's 33. It's up to the late 40s in the US. Despite having the highest incidence of the disease in the world, staffing levels for cystic fibrosis services in Ireland are more than 400 per cent below minimum accepted standards. Lack of segregation and isolation facilities are putting patients' lives at risk on a daily basis.

Less than 1-in-10 of the 28,000 claims for refunds of illegal nursing home charges have been paid by the HSE—nine months after the start of the scheme.

Underinvestment in Dublin's bus service means that 13 bus lanes are currently remaining unused due to a shortage of buses.

Tom Parlon, ex PD TD for Laois-Offaly,

admitted he was very upset that the cheering he heard from a pub in Birr on election night was the punters response to the news that his party leader had resigned.

The latest report from the Health Service Executive is another indictment of its own incompetence.



Unfit for purpose

Though responsible for the provision of all our health services it had to admit that at least seven A&E departments are unfit for their purpose: the Mater and Beaumont hospitals in Dublin; the Mercy Hospital in Cork; Wexford General Hospital; Cavan General Hospital; Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda and Letterkenny General Hospital.

A report from the Garda Forensic Collision Investigation Unit into all the factors

behind serious road accidents around the country has found that a range of road conditions, including the state of the surface, the driver's line of sight and the location or absence of road signs, play a significant role in the cause of some road accidents. Up until now driver error has generally been the only factor that has received government attention.

A new study by Hibernian Insurance suggests that if a working mother stopped doing housework, it would cost the family up to €900 per week to get someone to replace her. Women are currently spending up to 60 hours a week on domestic chores, over and above time spent in paid employment.

Petrol prices have risen by twelve percent since the start of the year. According to the AA the average cost of petrol for Irish motorists has increased by about €18 a month.

The thirty teachers at the Greendale Community School, which was shut by the Department of Education at the end of May, are facing an uncertain future. The school in Kilbarrack, which lists Paul Mercer

and Roddy Doyle among its former teaching staff, will be a huge loss to the area but the site will be a huge money-spinner for whatever developers get their hands on it. Current staff still do not know where they will be reemployed and many feel they are being forced into retirement.

The head of the Central Mental Hospital in Dundrum has called on the new government to reverse the decision to relocate the Central Mental Hospital to the grounds of the new prison at Thornton Hall. Michael McDowell, Tom Parlon and Tim O'Malley who all lost their seats were instrumental in this decision.

Descendants of the Choctaw native Americans who sent \$710 to Ireland for famine victims in 1847 took part in a famine walk in Mayo at the end of last month. Gary White Deer, a member of the Choctaw tribe explained 'As people at that time, we were both oppressed. It was an act of solidarity, of one poor, dispossessed people reaching out to help another. We want to remember what happened in the past and link it to famine issues in the world today.'



## Editorial

Nurses call off action:

## What now for the hospitals?

A huge amount of anger exists in the hospitals following the ending of the nurses' dispute. The INO and PNA called off their action after a slim majority voted to accept a proposal arising from the government mediation organisation, the National Implementation Body.

The NIB recommendations provide for the introduction of a 37.5-hour week from June 1st, 2008 and the establishment of a Commission, chaired by an eminent person, to recommend how and when the 35-hour week should be fully introduced for nurses and midwives.

On the pay side of the dispute, the recommendation was a return to benchmarking, a procedure that offers a lot less than the 10.9 percent increase that nurses were looking for.

One activist explained the anger of those who feel betrayed by the leadership of the INO. 'There is no timeframe, no date, no guarantees on the 35 hour week. Whatever comes out of the Commission will be dependent on the Labour Court for implementation.'

'But we were waiting 27 years for the Labour Court to implement a reduction in hours, so this settlement is a very dubious procedure for getting the 35 hour week.'

The fact that 46 percent of nurses said 'no' to the deal is impressive given that it was clear that the leadership of the dispute has completely capitulated. The union machine went out to sell it and there was no sense at all that even if nurses had voted 'no', they had the organisation that could take the dispute forward.

As a result, the feeling of anger among nurses is not just that the deal is not good enough, but also at the arrogance of a union leadership who pushed hard to get it through.

The atmosphere among union activists is worse than in 1999. That year nurses went on strike for nine days, with pickets, and held a national march. This time the dispute was headed off just as it was beginning to gather momentum, with a national ban on overtime about to begin.

In 1999 the action was stopped as a result of a unilateral announcement through the media, with a ballot only taking place a week later when the momentum had died. This time at least the action continued, but in a similar manner to '99, the national escalation was halted from above.

It is not clear, however, whether the HSE and the union leadership have managed to do more than postpone nurses' militancy. The conditions in the hospitals haven't changed, they are only going to get worse. The benchmarking body has to report back by the end of the year, probably around October or November. The Commission on hours has to report in June 2008.

If either of the reports are particularly unfavourable to nurses, a willingness to fight could be reignited. The main difficulty for those who would like to see this is that the leadership of the unions has been shown to be bankrupt. Unless nurses get a new leadership it will be hard to restart the campaign.

There is a petition going around calling for the leadership to resign, which might give individuals energy and hopefully those who want to fight might get involved with the branches and revamp them. The test of this will be seen in March when new elections to the INO Executive take place.



## Bertie: Not Waving, Drowning

Continued from Page One

## DANCING PARTNERS

Irish politics is not just unusual because of the dominance of Fianna Fail, it is also unique in denying the reality of left-right divisions. And the main responsibility lies with the mainstream left.

The big three left parties, Labour, Sinn Fein and the Greens, claim that it is a sign of political maturity that they are all willing to join the right in coalition after the election.

Moreover, the issue of which right-wing party they join up with is irrelevant. So the Green T.D., Ciaran Cuffe, got elected with the help of more than 2,000 right wing votes from Fine Gael supporters who think that they are keeping out the other right wing party and then after the elections his party starts discussion with Fianna Fail!

The costs of these absurdities to the left are enormous.

The Labour Party election campaign was technically efficient but there was one major problem: it campaigned to be a junior partner to a Fine Gael Taoiseach.

To cement their alliance, Labour and Fine Gael agreed at the outset to accept the parameters for the economy laid down by FF.

Neither party raised the dangers posed to the Celtic Tiger by the reliance on property speculation and instead left discussions on the economy to the FG's Richard Bruton. Labour's mild mannered proposals for closing off tax loop holes on the rich were not even aired. Instead both parties simply claimed that with the same sort for economic management as Fianna Fail, they could provide better public services.

The electorate did not believe them and Labour saw its vote crash from 20 percent in 1992, when they took an independent stance, to a mere 10 percent today.

The elections were a disaster for Sinn Fein because they were exposed, in the words of Fintan O Toole, as a 'protest party, that did not protest enough'. Their desire to enter a coalition with FF meant that they tailored their policies to meet their potential partners.

This brought about the extraordinary spectacle of Adams reversing his party policy of increasing corporation tax in the middle of the election.

By playing down the left-right division and replacing it with a speculation game on who might be coalition partners with whom, the mainstream left helped to solidify two right wing power blocks. And they – and many independents – got caught in the squeeze.

The reason was that politics was reduced to who was the best economic manager, with no discussion on even what type of economic policies might be pursued.

Fianna Fail traditionally benefits under two conditions: when they can promise economic gains and when they can appear more radical than the left.

This time around the prevalent mood of economic insecurity meant that the majority gave FF the benefit of the doubt. In the absence of a real argument from



Sargent; Rabbitte; Cowan; Ahern and Adams

the left, the choice was reduced to Enda Kenny and Bertie Ahern. And, despite his skills in re-building FG, Enda Kenny is Bertie's best asset.

## POST ELECTION: THE NEW MYTHOLOGY

There are few signs that the mainstream left has learnt any lessons from this election. Instead, key figures in all parties have indicated a willingness to deal with FF!

Inside the Labour Party, for example, Brendan Howlen has made sensible points about the weakness of the Mullingar strategy, only to suggest an alternative of getting into bed with FF!

One of urban myths that pervades the Irish left, is that FF is as malleable as putty and can tack left or right depending on who it is talking to. Green Party TDs, who were denouncing FF as more corrupt before the election, have switched tune and now suggest that if the PDs could push FF in a right direction, they, the Greens, can push them to the left.

Independents such as Finian McGrath and Tony Gregory use a variation of this approach to claim they can get a deal for the poor of their constituencies, just like Gregory did in the past with Haughey. They forget that the rest of the population, who suffered from Haughey's corrupt regime, paid for the Gregory deal for Dublin's inner city.

In any case, Fianna Fail does not change spots so easily. They may talk populist and have a developed particular skill at promoting a 'plain people' image. But just as Bertie Ahern is a chartered accountant with connections to property speculators and not a just 'plain speaking Dub', so too is the populism of FF skin deep.

Fianna Fail is the main party of the Irish rich and has always been. Historically, native capitalism grew around the opportunities FF

created for it. Any demand that the rich made for cutting taxes or state regulation on business has been met by FF.

No wonder Sir Antony O Reilly's INN group and Brian Cowan met before the last election to agree how the Sunday Independent would be used to promote FF.

## WE NEED A NEW LEFT

For the moment at least, the mainstream parties are locked into a framework that chains them to the twin structures of social partnership and left-right coalitions.

As long as it continues, there will be no left breakthrough, despite the dramatic changes that have occurred in the last decade.

A new left is needed to break the logjam and show how a different model of politics can be developed.

The performance of two People Before Profit candidates, Richard Boyd Barrett in Dun Laoghaire and Brid Smith Dublin South Central provide one sign of how this might occur as, contrary to the wider trends, both dramatically increased their vote over previous periods.

The People Before Profit Alliance was established as a model of a new left formation which united people who wanted to fight neo-liberalism with socialists who were convinced of the need to end capitalism.

It is a united front of a special sort, which arises from the common experience of struggles in social movements, often, at this point, at a local level.

The right wing and cynics on the left attack such formations as inevitable 'fronts' for parties like SWP. Such an approach, however, feeds off an older anti-communist culture, which spots a left wing manipulation in almost every serious struggle. It ignores how people from diverse backgrounds can actually – surprise, surprise – work together against the common enemy of neo-liberal capital-

ism

In Ballyfermot, a huge popular resistance has held together on the bin charges and has generalised out to other issues. By being able to work honestly in broad social movements and to argue within those movements for political representation, Brid Smith pulled together a big canvassing team that garnered an important vote in that part of the constituency.

She forged an alliance with the independent socialist Joan Collins and showed that the left can make a big impact there in the future.

The vote for Richard Boyd Barrett was an even more dramatic example of what a new left might look like in practice. Coming close to taking a seat, he showed that far from a contented majority living in Dun Laoghaire, there is in fact much discontent over issues like planning and public spaces.

Snide sectarian attacks on this vote as representing a 'liberal middle class' that is not based on 'working class communities and socialist politics' are totally wrong. Tallies indicate that the highest votes received were in manual working class areas, but considerable votes were also received in white-collar areas.

The left cannot repeat the strategy of the Workers Party in the eighties where it dismissed white-collar workers and broke any connection with wider social movements.

The campaign in Dun Laoghaire was able to rely on activists from the bin charges campaign, the Save Our Seaford and from a large anti-war meeting that was held just before the elections [see page 6 – 7].

This type of non-sectarian, open formation that comes out of movements of struggle is now the key for the Irish left. The task is to build People Before Profit in as broad and as rapid a way as possible.

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## Comment

### Sinn Fein, the 'National Interest' and the Business Agenda

By Eamonn McCann

If Sinn Fein wants to recover from its disappointing performance in the Southern election, it will have to talk less about social justice and more about boosting business.

That's the view of former Belfast councillor Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, writing in *Andersonstown News*.

Ó Muilleoir, publisher of the *A'town News* and its thriving stable of local Belfast weeklies, is an influential figure in Nationalist circles in Belfast, and particularly within Sinn Fein.

His words will carry weight in internal SF discussion of how the party can regain momentum.

'You have to hand it to Bertie,' reckons Ó Muilleoir. 'He gave a master-class in election campaigning and, hopefully, the SF students were taking notes.'

An economic policy which envisaged higher taxes on the rich in order to fund social spending 'need(s) a total makeover...needs to be less prescriptive about tax take and more ambitious in terms of boosting business.'

In this analysis, Sinn Fein should continue and accelerate the trajectory towards the Right already seen in its abandonment during the election of plans to raise corporation tax.

A number of commentators sympathetic to the party argue for a different analysis: that SF paid a price at the polls for abandoning Left-wing positions and signalling its willingness to go into government with Fianna Fail.

Their conclusion is that the party should return to the Left-wing territory it previously occupied and chart a way forward from there.



Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

The Ó Muilleoir line is very likely to win out. He's going with the flow of SF opinion over recent years, particularly at leadership level. Plus, the necessity of maintaining the four-party coalition in the North means ditching any radical proposals rank-and-file members might retain.

But what Ó Muilleoir's prescription really highlights is the fundamental nature of the party.

Sinn Fein has always been a nationalist, never a socialist party. At times it may have pursued socialist policies.

It has always had people within it who saw themselves as socialists and were active in radical grass-roots campaigns. But you never had to be a socialist to be in Sinn Fein. It has never been a condition of membership.

There was shock and even bewilderment among some Sinn Fein supporters earlier this year when former IRA prisoner and ex-member of the party and comhairle Gerry McGeough—who had resigned in order to run as an anti-PSNI candidate in Fermanagh-South Tyrone—turned out to hold strong views which were not only right-wing but right-wing-extremist.

How, many wondered, had he been able to remain in the movement for more than 20 years?

But there's nothing remarkable in a nationalist party having members who are far to the Right as well as some who position themselves on the left.

Nationalist parties everywhere can veer to the left when this seems in their interest, turn Right when they reckon that's where advantage lies.

They can simultaneously shout out for socialism in one context, stand shoulder-to-shoulder with enemies of socialism somewhere else.

In 1920, Sinn Fein was pledging revolutionary solidarity to Soviet Russia at the same time as lobbying the Woodrow Wilson administration in Washington for recognition as a reliable ally against 'Red' extremism in Europe. Whatever serves 'the national interest'.

In the same way today, members of the party's youth wing scream hostility to the Bush administration even as the leadership they revere hobnobs happily with Bush at the White House.

A party which puts the interests of 'Ireland' ahead of the interests of the working class will eventually, inevitably, make its peace with the prevailing world order.

It's the fundamental nature of the party, not the politics or the performance of the leadership, which pulls Sinn Fein inexorably to the Right.

## Iraq: Withdrawal is the only option



US troops in Iraq

By Gordon Hewitt

Stop the War activists in Manchester and beyond are preparing to ensure that Gordon Brown can't ignore the question of Iraq when he is officially declared leader at a Labour Party special conference on Sunday 24 June. The Stop the War Coalition has called a national demonstration at the conference.

Gordon Brown is hinting that things will be different under his leadership. A meeting with Bush's office recently, suggested that an announcement on troop withdrawal from Iraq may be imminent.

Blair admitting in his resignation speech that the war in Iraq had 'been fierce and unrelenting and costly' and had created 'blowback from global terrorism and those elements that support it,'

prepared some ground for, at the very least, a cosmetic reappraisal.

This was certainly a turnaround from Blair who has denied any link between Iraq and the events like the London bombings.

This opening is evident also in the deputy leadership debate where John Cruddas has stated publicly that the troops should be withdrawn.

Every effort must be made to keep the pressure on Brown.

The war is lost, Iraq is spiralling ever further into unrelenting carnage and the troops' presence is the catalyst for this. Withdrawal is the only option.

Nahella Ashraf, chair of Greater Manchester Stop the War Coalition, explained, 'we marched in our millions, but still Tony Blair did not listen.'

'Gordon Brown says that he

is different; he says that he is prepared to listen.

'We hope he does. To make sure he hears us we will be marching on 24 June to tell him loud and clear: bring the troops home.'

Rose Gentle from Military Families Against the War said, 'military mums came to protest at the Labour Party conference in Manchester last year to say we wanted the troops home.'

'Blair didn't listen and things have got much worse in Afghanistan and Iraq.'

'We are coming back to Manchester to see Brown on 24 June. He says he wants a conversation. Well, we want to talk to him.'

Activists are bringing home the anger millions feel against the war on Iraq to Gordon Brown and the Labour deputy leadership contenders by organising protests at hustings

meetings around the country.

'In Bristol around 40 people, mainly anti-war activists, lobbied the Labour Party hustings last Saturday,' said Jo Benefield.

'Inside there were around 250 Labour Party members and trade unionists from across the whole of the south west of England.'

'Jon Cruddas scored some points on the other deputy leadership candidates by asking why, if they agreed with left policies on these questions, they had not done anything about them while they were ministers.'

'Gordon Brown swept in during the afternoon and was forced to admit that Iraq had been "divisive".'

There is only one option and anti war activists must use every avenue to fight for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

## Stop war and the arms trade that feeds it

From page twelve

The Raytheon company, very unusually, takes an openly Zionist stance on Middle Eastern politics.

So, there was, at the least, a distinct possibility that the company had supplied the munitions for the slaughter of the innocents at Qana.

As reported in the last issue of *Socialist Worker*, there is now definitive proof that the Qana bomb was made by Raytheon.

Opposition to Raytheon's presence in Derry has been widespread. People there know what war does and many do not want to be implicated in the massacre of people in other parts of the world.

Since 1999, there has been a sustained campaign to get the City Council to withdraw its welcome for the manufacturers of Death. Foyle Ethical Investment holds a monthly vigil outside Raytheon every month.

The Derry Anti War Coalition had occupied Raytheon before. In 2003 at the start of the war in Iraq, occupiers were carried out by the police but were not arrested.

On 9 August 2006, the Derry Anti-War Coalition organised a protest at Raytheon agreeing that, if practicable, we would occupy the premises and 'decommission' its production.

Ten DAWC activists got into the offices; nine remained in occupation for eight hours until arrested by the police.

Initially charged with 'scheduled' offences of aggravated burglary and unlawful assembly, which would have meant a non-jury trial under 'terrorist' legislation, the charges have since been reduced to criminal damage and affray.

As we go to press, the Raytheon 9 are appearing in court for the preliminary enquiry at which the prosecution will lay out its case.

Eamonn McCann, has said: 'Our argument to the jury will be that if they convict us, they will be saying it is a crime to occupy an office and drop computers from a window, but not a crime to occupy a country and drop bombs that kill innocent people.'

'The Derry Anti War Coalition has been campaigning against war and the arms trade that feeds it since 1990.'

'We are confident of being able to argue convincingly to any representative Derry jury that they shouldn't criminalise us while war criminals like Bush and Blair walk free.'

Two Oxford peace activists charged with similar offences were acquitted in Bristol Crown Court at the end of May.

The trial of Philip Pritchard and Toby Olditch (The B52 Two) concluded with the jury returning a unanimous verdict of not guilty in under three hours.

It was the Two's second trial; the first,

in October 2006, ended in a hung jury, after 12 hours of deliberation spread over three days. The Two were facing up to 10 years in jail.

Support for the Raytheon 9 is growing. The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) passed an emergency resolution at its annual delegate meeting in Birmingham in April.

Following the decision on April 5 to prosecute for affray the "Raytheon Nine", including the NUJ member Eamonn McCann, ADM instructs the NEC to support the campaign for the charges to be dropped, particularly within the TUC and ICTU.'

The NUJ's Irish Executive Committee had previously passed a motion declaring: 'This Council reaffirms its opposition to wars of aggression generally and in particular the recent attacks on Lebanon by Israel and the US-led war in Iraq, both of which have resulted in

repeated and horrendous slaughter of innocent civilians.'

'This Council notes that some of the most fiendish weapons of human destruction deployed by the Israel Defence Force and the US Military are designed and manufactured by Raytheon, a company with a manufacturing facility in Derry.'

'IEC deplores the fact that this company is allowed to operate in Ireland.'

'IEC believes that those opposing these conflicts have just cause to target companies such as Raytheon in their protest activities and applauds the members of the Raytheon Nine for highlighting the presence and activities of the company in Derry.'

Anti-war campaigners are now hoping that the Raytheon 9 issue will be raised at the Irish Congress of Trades Unions conference in Bundoran in July.

# Demonstration over 40 years of Israeli occupation of Palestine

On 5 June 1967 the Israeli Air Force launched a pre-emptive attack on the Egyptian Air Force, initiating a short war that shattered the confidence of the neighbouring Arab nations and dispossessed hundreds of thousands of Palestinians of their homes.

The day after the air strikes, Israeli ground forces entered the Gaza Strip and El-Arish, relatively unprotected regions then under the control of Egypt.

After some resistance at Abu-Ageila, Egypt ordered a complete retreat of all units in the Sinai and Israeli forces were able to drive rapidly up to the Suez Canal.

Meanwhile, on 6 June, Israeli troops had also launched themselves at the Jordan-controlled West Bank.

Having achieved unexpected success against Egypt and Jordan, Israel's generals decided on 9 June to attack the Golan heights, then occupied by Syrian troops.

By 10 June the breakthrough was complete on every front and a ceasefire was signed that acknowledged the tripling of Israel's territory. In these newly occupied territories were approximately a million Arab residents.

Many villages, however, were destroyed, not just in battle but in order to chase away the inhabitants.

Thousands of Palestinians had fled during the fighting, hundreds of thousands more subsequently

fled in panic and fear.

Between 200,000 and 250,000 people abandoned the West Bank preferring to be refugees than risk staying under Israel's jurisdiction.

To mark the fortieth anniversary of Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank the Irish – Palestine Solidarity Campaign have called for a rally at the Central Bank, Dame Street, Dublin at 2pm 9 June.

The protest is to highlight Israel's defiance of UN resolutions and International Law in its subsequent determination to control the Arab population of these areas.

In particular organisers are protesting at ethnic cleansing; land theft; home demolition; collective punishment; prolonged detention without trial and state-sponsored assassinations.

For further information see [www.ipsc.ie](http://www.ipsc.ie).



## Will the politicians keep their word on Shannon Pledge?

**We the undersigned give a firm commitment that if elected, we will not participate in any government that allows Shannon airport or other Irish facilities to be used by the United States to conduct war in Iraq or in any other Imperialist war.**

**This is the Peace and Neutrality Alliance and Irish Anti-War Movement pledge, signed by several incoming TDs including Labour's Joe**

**Costello, Michael D Higgins and Tommy Broughan; Sinn Fein's four TDs, Caoimhghin Ó Caoláin, Arthur Morgan, Aengus Ó Snodaigh and Martin Ferris; but most importantly of all, given the current discussions about forming government, by independent TDs Tony Gregory and Finian McGrath.**

**The continued use of Shannon by the US military makes Ireland complicit with the US's occupation of Iraq.**

**Given that in America itself anti-war feeling is growing, Ireland is in a position to make the situation worse for Bush by withdrawing the use of Shannon to the US military.**

**Bertie Ahern, naturally, has ruled out any change to the Government position on Shannon. But he would not be so confident if those who signed the pledge and the Green Party, whose manifesto commits them to**

**ending the use of Shannon by the US military, stood firm.**

**Tragically, there is enormous wavering now the prospect of government appears before the Greens and the independents.**

**Finian McGrath stated the issue 'was not one of my Holy Grails', then saying that he would need change. The Greens have clearly not made it a sticking point in their negotiations.**

**Conservatives**

**praise 'moderation' and 'compromise' as sensible politics. But anyone who can go back on such an explicit commitment cannot be taken seriously as a voice for change.**

**Those who signed the pledge should stick to it, the international anti-war movement can defeat Bush's plans for Iraq and Ireland can play its part, above all by depriving the US military of Shannon.**

## Lebanese army bombs Palestinian refugee camp

By Peadar O'Grady

On 20 May Lebanese Army artillery started what one observer described as 'indiscriminate heavy artillery' bombardment of Nahr el-Bared refugee camp. More than 100 refugees have been killed and many more injured with little comment from the 'International Community'.

Nahr el-Bared is a refugee camp near the city of Tripoli in Northern Lebanon. It was set up in 1948 to take Palestinian refugees expelled from Israel in the ethnic cleansing by Israelis, which Palestinians call 'Al Nakba', the disaster.

100,000 refugees made the crossing into Lebanon out of a total of 750,000 Palestinian refugees at the time. Now, almost 60 years later, there are over 400,000 Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon and 5 million in total throughout the Middle East, still waiting to go home.

Franklin Lamb writing in Counterpunch magazine describes conditions for Palestinians in Lebanon: 'Its (Nahr el-Bared) residents, like all Palestinians in Lebanon are blatantly discriminated against and not even officially counted. They are denied citizenship and banned from working in the top 70 trades and professions (that includes McDonald's and KFC in downtown Beirut) and cannot own real estate.'

'Palestinians in Lebanon have essentially no social or civil rights and only limited access to government educational facilities. They have no access to public social services. Consequently most rely entirely on the UN as the sole provider for their families needs.'

Nahr el-Bared was home to 32,000 Palestinians before the bombardment began. Less than 6,000 now remain, mostly men, afraid to leave their homes for fear of being arrested or



**Elderly Palestinian fleeing Lebanese army onslaught of Nahr el-Bared refugee camp**

shot while fleeing. About 25,000 refugees have fled to the nearby Bedawi camp where despite incredible solidarity and kindness from fellow Palestinians, overcrowding and shortages of food and medicines are severe.

The Lebanese Army says fighting began after the pro-government Internal Security Force (ISF) attempted to arrest members of the Fatah al-Islam militia in nearby Tripoli following a bank robbery on May 20th. The ISF called in the Army. Following a subsequent shootout, Fatah al-Islam attacked Army positions near the Nahr

el-Bared refugee camp, then retreated into the camp and were surrounded by the Army.

Fatah al-Islam is a small Sunni fundamentalist splinter group who describe their ideology as being similar to bin-Laden's al Qaeda. This means they are in violent opposition to the US and Israel but also to Shia Muslims generally and the Shia led Hezbollah in particular.

While they are led by a Palestinian, the majority are not Palestinians and entered the Nahr el-Bared camp only 6 months ago having been kicked

out of the nearby Bedawi camp by the PLO groups there. This splinter group was formed at the time of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last summer and were armed and funded by US and pro-US Lebanese forces (including Rafik Hariri's Future Movement) to counter Hezbollah.

All this makes ridiculous the claims by Lebanese Prime Minister, Fouad Siniora, that Fatah al-Islam are backed by Syria (who strongly supports Hezbollah). More ridiculous still because many Lebanese claim Fatah al-Islam were armed and paid by the

Siniora government and that the recent violence happened when Siniora's cronies refused to pay them.

Seymour Hersh in the New Yorker magazine has described an increasing tendency by the US to support Sunni sectarian militias (including those linked with al Qaeda) across the middle east, in a desperate attempt to counter Iran's influence on Shia resistance groups like Hezbollah: an alliance the US calls the 'Shia crescent'. In the same way as the US support for Osama bin-Laden in Afghanistan eventually backfired, this would appear to be the case in Lebanon now.

Since the Israeli invasion, the Lebanese government has been in crisis. A coalition led by Hezbollah withdrew from the government and have organised massive demonstrations calling for new elections.

The US and their cronies in the failing Lebanese government are intent on shifting the blame for the current violence onto Syria and Iran. They call for sanctions against Iran's nuclear programme and claim Syria is stirring up unrest to prevent a UN tribunal investigating the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

Cover up for US and government support for Fatah al-Islam and the scapegoating of Palestinian refugees and the Syrian government are central to this crisis. While Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah supports the Lebanese Army in the fight against Fatah al-Islam he is also so far the only leader of a political faction in the country to speak out against the Lebanese Army storming of the Nahr el-Bared camp. Hezbollah is of course defamed by the US as a 'Terrorist Organization'.

Solidarity with the Palestinians and the anti-imperialist forces in Lebanon is part of the real fight against terrorism. In the fog of war we should not lose sight of who the real terrorists are.





The Clash at Rock Against Racism gig; Below Joe Strummer

## When the Clash pushed back the racists

By Dave Lardan

In December 2002, Joe Strummer's funeral procession was joined by a delegation of uniformed firefighters and a fire engine. It was a thank-you gesture for a benefit gig his current and highly rated band *The Mescaleros* had played for striking firefighters in Acton, West London, just a month before his unexpected and sudden death due to an undiagnosed congenital heart condition.

It was also a fitting symbol for a man who was the lead singer of *The Clash*, a band whose songs provided the soundtrack for many of the urban riots that kept fire engines busy the length and breadth of Britain throughout the early Thatcher era.

The Clash played a major part in ensuring that the rage of the street rebellion that animated punk and the riots had a largely left wing and multi-cultural character.

Punk was born in an atmosphere of enormous political polarisation in Britain. The wave of workers' struggles that had culminated in the overthrow of the Tory Heath government by a miners' strike in 1974 were in decline. Unemployment, particularly among urban youth was rising steeply, and a Labour government had disappointed millions by caving in under the pressure of the International Monetary Fund and introducing cuts across public services while raising taxes on working people.

The result was a shift to the right in political discourse and the rise of the fascist British National Party which won an active following of thousands of skinhead thugs and gained hundreds of thousands of votes in elections.

Certain figures in the punk movement, motivated by shock value and the aimless spirit of rebellion for its own sake sported Nazi insignia like the swastika. A small minority of punk bands, against the prevailing spirit of the movement, also embraced fascism and their gigs became gathering places for skinheads.

Many more in the punk movement, while abhorring skinheads and fascism, were unwilling to take the lead in opposing them. Step forward *Rock Against Racism* and *The Clash*.

RAR was an offshoot of the Anti Nazi League, a mass movement against the BNP



*Richard Boyd Barrett's performance in Dun Laoghaire was, after the sight of Michael McDowell losing his seat, one of the brightest aspects of the election. Richard obtained 5,233 first preferences, 8.9 percent of the vote and came extremely close to producing the shock of the election by taking a seat. He spoke to Socialist Worker about how the groundwork for this result had been laid.*



**What lies behind the impressive size of the vote for you?**

The key was the development of the People Before Profit alliance in Dun Laoghaire. This was a coming together of socialists with activists from a whole series of campaigns that we've been involved in over the previous three or four years.

**What kind of campaigns are you referring to?**

Firstly, there's been a five year long battle against the bin tax, which continues right up to now. There are still about 15,000 non-payers in Dun Laoghaire—Rathdown and the bin tax campaign has held meetings every year in each area to sustain the opposition. Another hugely important campaign was the Save Our Seafront movement. I'd originally set it up with John de Courcy Ireland and Councillor Vincent McDowell, both, sadly, no longer with us.

At a launch meeting of about 25 people we agreed that the public seafront was under major threat from developers and that we needed to build a major campaign to stop the privatisation of the seafront and ensure that it was protected and enhanced only as a public amenity. The campaign was relative-

ly modest at first. But when, on two separate occasions, private developers with the help of the council attempted to put high rise commercial buildings on the Dun Laoghaire baths site, the campaign really took off.

We won both battles through major public mobilisations involving hundreds and later thousands of local people. In the most recent struggle on this issue, over 5,000 people turned out and finally forced the council to abandon privatisation plans for Dun Laoghaire baths and commit to the restoration of a fully public swimming amenity.

Winning on an issue like this played a huge part in the big vote we received. There were other issues as well, we led a number of small but successful campaigns over housing issues, we played a leading role in a number of campaigns against unwanted 'over-development' of public and open spaces and generally we gained a reputation of being the people to come to if you have problems with the council or private developers.

**The campaigns you are known for are not just local, was the anti-war movement important also?**

Yes. In the run up to the war in Iraq in 2003, the Irish Anti-War Movement was very active in the Dun Laoghaire area. We built small committees in a

number of parts of the constituency, held regular public meetings and a lot of street activity.

Although the momentum of public activity fell off once the war began, there remains a great deal of opposition to what is happening in Iraq and many of those who feel strongly on the issue offered to help my campaign.

We referred to Iraq and our opposition to the use of Shannon Airport by the US military in all our election material and were probably the only people, certainly in my constituency to do so.

This wouldn't have been the central issue for most of the people who voted for me, the local issues probably featured higher in people's minds, but



Protest at County Hall; Below: Richard Boyd Barrett at Save Our Seafront demo and with anti bin tax campaigners

# Advance for new Left



whether it was the Iraq war, the bin tax, privatisation, or the seafront, was the priority given to profit over people and the environment.

Increasingly, over the years of campaigning, a considerable overlap began to develop quite naturally between the people involved in the different issues. It was just a case of bringing everyone together and trying to give political representation to this emerging movement, one that was broad enough for everyone to feel ownership over it.

Although it was socialists who proposed setting up People Before Profit in Dun Laoghaire there was huge enthusiasm from activists and supporters of all these campaigns to get involved. Very quickly, in fact, socialists became a minority in a bigger and broader organisation.

The election itself further added to this momentum with huge numbers of people not previously involved in politics coming forward to support People Before Profit with their time and energy. The process that we've seen in Dun Laoghaire is evident elsewhere in the country.

The last two or three years has seen a huge growth of grass roots social and environmental movements emerging across the country, which are not instigated or properly represented by the mainstream political parties.

The main left parties, La-

bour, Sinn Fein, the Greens, who previously would have appealed to this kind of audience have not been active on a campaigning level, possibly because they all have been keeping their options open for coalition deals with the two big parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, who are very committed to a big business agenda.

The space they have left behind is the basis for the future growth of the kind of movement represented by People Before Profit in Dun Laoghaire.

**Are you optimistic for the future of the left?**

Yes, I'm very optimistic. Some commentators have concluded from the election results that there has been a conservative swing back to the political center-right. In fact, the collapse of the PDs indicates a decisive rejection of the hard line neo-liberal and pro-privatisation policies pursued in this country over the last ten years.

It was clear in the run-up to the election that people wanted change however the alternatives offered to people failed to convince. Where little policy difference was on offer, the debate narrowed down in to a personality contest between Bertie Ahern and Enda Kenny.

Where, like in Dun Laoghaire, a radical alternative and major policy issues were fought over, people responded very positively. Had

Labour, Greens, Sinn Fein and left independents all presented a united block against the two major parties and especially the PDs, based on the kinds of issues I've talked about, they would have met with a huge response.

**What do you think is the way forward now?**

Firstly, we have to build up People Before Profit in the constituencies where we stood. The election campaigns have generated tremendous enthusiasm for the project and this has to be consolidated. Secondly, we have to continue to keep our focus on grass roots campaigns, after all, the point of standing in election or winning seats is not an end in itself, but to use representative positions to further the campaigns and issues that people are fighting on.

In the particular constituency of Dun Laoghaire this means, for example, beginning a major campaign on behalf of St Michael's Hospital. It is quite possible for People Before Profit to take two or three council seats here and a Dail seat at the next election.

Finally, there has been a huge amount of interest across the country in People Before Profit since the elections. We need to set out to develop the model that has worked so well here on a national basis and talk to other sections of the left about this.

## It's not cricket

By Johnny Joyce

An upsurge of interest in cricket in Ireland, following the success of the recent World Cup competition, has come at the same time that the death of Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer at the competition shone a light on to the sleazy underbelly of world cricket.

There is no evidence that there was a sinister motive behind his death, but much speculation has centred on rumours of match-fixing.

Sarfraz Nawaz is a former opening bowler for the Pakistan team and now a political activist opposed to the military rule of General Musharraf. He claims that Woolmer was murdered because he knew too much about ties between certain players and shadowy figures in the criminal world.

He points to the case of former South African captain, Hansie Cronje, who was found guilty of match-fixing. Cronje died in a suspicious plane-crash in 2000. Sarfraz alleges that Cronje was murdered because he also knew secrets that were a threat to many powerful people.

Whatever about the truth of these allegations, it is an open secret in the cricket world that match-fixing is endemic. The reason why is best explained by Cronje himself, who admitted that his motive was simple greed.

He bemoaned the fact that as an international captain he earned only a fraction of salaries commanded by top professionals in other sports. Criminals, who wish to use gambling as an ideal way of laundering illicit funds, court players willing to line their pockets.

Naturally, the criminals are not averse to tweaking the odds in their favour and boosting their profits into the bargain. The losers in this equation are genuine fans, who are often denied the spectacle of seeing the team they support engaged in a true contest.

Cricket is the most popular sport in India and Pakistan, many were shocked that neither of these teams qualified from the group stages of the recent World Cup competition. If you look at the way that sport is promoted in these countries, however, perhaps this was not so surprising.

Selection for prestigious teams is based more on class-status and political influence than ability. Players from poor backgrounds are routinely overlooked because they do not fit into the elite ethos that pervades the sport.

Some years ago a group of fifteen Pakistani workers came to work in our town, Bray, on a short-term contract with a local factory. One of their co-workers, who is a member of the local club, set up a match between us and the best eleven they could muster.

After a close game, which the Pakistani eleven eventually won, they told us, to our amazement, that not one of them had ever held a real cricket ball in their hands until that very day. They play on makeshift concrete pitches in the cities, with rudimentary equipment and tennis balls doctored with glue and tape so they replicate the bounce of a real cricket ball on real turf.

In societies where there is autocratic rule, poverty and massive inequality, it is impossible for culture and sport to truly flourish, despite the best efforts of players and fans.

In Australia, selection for teams is based on merit and there far less a cultural legacy of snobbery or elitism in the sport than elsewhere: it is no coincidence that they consistently field the best team in the world.

There can be no doubt that if the same conditions applied in India and Pakistan then both these countries would challenge Australia's dominance.

Not only do they have the biggest population, but also the greatest talent.

Perhaps the real scandal of the World Cup was the treatment of ordinary West Indian cricketers, who were effectively excluded from attending the matches. In their wisdom, the organisers

decided to crack down on the bright colour, laughter and music that traditionally accompanies Caribbean cricket games.

For a start, ticket prices were prohibitively high, musical instruments were banned as was cooking and smoking. There was something obscene about watching a sporting event on the television that is being watched by millions of other people, but where the actual games were being conducted in near empty stadia.

It would seem as if the cricket bosses were far more concerned about satisfying the whims of sponsors and advertisers than the needs of ordinary fans.

The proceedings were sanitised and packaged for television consumption because media organisations understand only too well the mass-appeal of sports and the profits that can be made by selling it as a commodity.

Rupert Murdoch's Sky poses a threat to the traditions of sport we love far greater than any amount of shadowy criminal figures

Johnny Joyce plays for North Wicklow Cricket Club <http://homepage.eircom.net/~northwicklowcc/Directory/Home.html>



# Protestors gather as richest nations meet at G8 summit

By Niall Smyth

## What is the G8?

The Group of Eight (G8), formerly G7 until Russia joined, is an international forum of the world's richest nations. It includes the governments of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Together, these countries represent about 65% of the world economy. The G8's activities include year-round conferences and policy research, closing with an annual summit meeting attended by the heads of government of the member states.

Each year, member states of the G8 take turns assuming the presidency of the group. The holder of the presidency sets the group's annual agenda and hosts the summit for that year. The presidency for 2007 belongs to Germany, which hosted the 33rd G8 summit 6–8 June.

## Why is the G8 such a focus for protest?

Since the annual summits are extremely high profile, they have become a major focus of massive street demonstrations by activists from across the globe. Of all the anti-globalisation movement protests, the largest and most radical was that of the 27th G8 Summit in Genoa, 2001. It was at this summit that over 300,000 people took part in street protests.

This was also the summit that saw some of the worst brutality from the police with the murder of 23-year-old political activist Carlo Giuliani of Genoa, who was shot dead by a Carabinieri officer, during clashes with police. As a result of this and in an attempt to avoid large-scale protests being organised at summits since have been hosted outside of major cities.

The G8, despite assertions by some that it is an agent for change, has been responsible for exacerbating poverty in Africa and developing countries due to debt crisis and unfair trading policy; contributing to global warming due to carbon dioxide emission; allowing the AIDS problem to continue due to strict medicine patent policies and other problems that are related to globalisation.

As with all protest movements, the anti-G8 movement contains various bodies of opinion, including those who believe that it can be reformed or pleaded with to take responsibility and combat these problems.

This was most evident in 2005 with Live 8, a series of concerts in July 2005 to coincide with the 31st G8 Summit. The project was intended to promote global awareness and to encourage G8 leaders to 'Make Poverty History'.

Live 8 organizers Bono and Bob Geldof proposed that G8 member nations adjust their national budgets to allow for 0.7% to go towards foreign aid, as outlined in Agenda 21 of the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit.

Over 300,000 people protested at the G8 summit at Gleneagles, Scotland. There was a great climate of optimism that the summit would achieve real improvements for the poor of the world, especially in Africa.

These expectations were raised partly by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. But they were also encouraged by Make Poverty History (MPH), the coalition of anti-poverty NGOs fronted by Bob Geldof and Bono.

Geldof speaking of anti-globalisation protesters claimed 'Oxfam reckon 12,000 people a day will be living by 2010 because of the G8. What's 12,000 multiplied by 365? That's not bad. I'll take that. I'll take one. I'll take one fucking person for all that year-and-a-half's work, and all these other fucking Trots, the anti-globalisation people, can have a wank. They are talking through their arses.'

Yet, the Gleneagles Summit had barely ended when the alliance which helped organise the Make Poverty History Campaign began to break up. Oxfam, the most powerful and normally the most conservative of the NGOs in



Anti capitalist demonstrators assemble

MPH, was roundly denounced by the same Geldof for complaining about how paltry the promises to emerge from the summit were.

Despite many commitments made at Gleneagles and Bob Geldof trust in warmongers like Bush and Blair to deliver, today, two years on from that Summit, leaders of the rich world have provided less than ten per cent of the extra aid they promised Africa. Yet again the G8 has shown itself to be unwilling to meet commitment after commitment.

## This year's G8

This year's summit took place in Heiligendamm in the Northern German state of Mecklenburg – Vorpommern on the Baltic Coast, 6–8 June, 2007. Protesters from across Germany and beyond gathered for a series of demonstrations against the G8 summit of world leaders.

At the time of writing a protest of over 30,000 people took place in Rostock ahead of the meetings. Around 125 people were arrested and over 50 people were badly injured as the German state drafted in over 13,000 extra police to back up the security operation in place, which was one of the largest operations of its kind since World War Two.

The policing operation at Rostock involves building a 12 kilometre long 'security wall' around the venue: a move that has not gone down well in the former East Germany, where popular revolts brought down the hated Berlin Wall in 1989.

The movement has been galvanised after a series of high profile police raids on protesters two weeks ago triggered a wave of spontaneous protests. There are reports coming out of Germany of police raiding activist's homes, intercepting their letters and using sniffer dogs to identify them in crowds: tactics associated with the Stasi, the former secret police of East Germany.

This kind of heavy policing is used regularly during the build-up to Summits to create a climate of fear in order to put off groups coming to protests. Such tactics were used in Gleneagles. In Dublin, in the run up to the EU meeting in 2004, stories concerning bogus bomb plots by anarchists were splashed across the media and homes of some activists were raided.

A broad coalition of trade unions,



anti-poverty campaigners, churches and NGOs has come together again this time to oppose the G8's agenda of neoliberalism and war.

Organisers have estimated that up to 100,000 protesters will converge on the city.

Germany's right wing chancellor Angela Merkel had sought to emulate Tony Blair's strategy two years ago by using the G8 summit to boost her credentials over issues such as climate change and tackling world poverty.

Merkel proposed a global agreement limiting any increase in world temperatures to no more than two degrees celsius. In practice, scientists believe this would require a reduction of 50pc in global carbon emissions below the 1990 level by 2050.

However, as with previous Summits, even the most paltry of demands are met with stiff resistance by the world's richest nations leaders. It looks as though the climate change deal has been scuppered. A speech by George Bush looks to have destroyed any chance of a deal being agreed at the Summit.

He said that America and the group of 15 countries forming the world's largest economies should meet to discuss the issue next year. This meeting will conveniently convene shortly before America's next presidential election and a few months before Mr Bush steps down.

In Germany itself, the protests will act as a focal point not just for global concerns but also for domestic difficul-

ties. A widespread sense of disillusion at Germany's 'grand coalition' government, which involves both the right wing Christian Democrats and the centre left Socialist Party (SPD) is fuelling the protests.

There is increasing public anger at Germany's role in the 'war on terror'. Under pressure from NATO, German Tornado fighter jets have been sent to the south of Afghanistan to provide 'technical assistance' for US bombing raids.

The government is already unpopular for ramming through neo-liberal economic 'reforms' such as raising the retirement age from 65 to 67 and slashing corporation tax by 10 percent.

Germany's economy is booming, with the largest growth rates since 1992 and record-breaking corporate profits. Yet real wages are dropping.

This has led to a huge crisis in the SPD. A recent poll suggested that 58 percent of SPD members think the party has betrayed its principles by joining the grand coalition. Around a third are thinking of leaving and nine percent are considering joining Die Linke, the new left wing party.

That's 50,000 potential new members for Die Linke, which will be formally launched as a unified party later this month.

But the biggest new development is the peace movement. There are huge national demonstrations planned in September against the decision to send German troops to Afghanistan. This decision reversed a longstanding SPD policy of bringing in neo-liberal economic measures, but maintaining a degree of popularity by keeping Germany out of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

There promises to be many interesting developments in Germany over the next fortnight as the Summit begins and activists from around the globe converge as a voice of opposition to War and Neo-liberalism.

## For further reading see:

Globalise Resistance:  
<http://www.resist.org.uk/>  
 Central German Protest Organisers:  
<http://www.heiligendamm2007.de/>  
 Blockade of G8:  
<http://www.block-g8.org/>  
 Trade Union Mobilisation:  
<http://www.g8-gewerkschafteraufufruf.de/index.php?lang=en>

## Mixing politics with science fiction

By Dave Gaughan

Some of my favourite Sci-Fi writers are socialists.

They have a certain way of looking at the world which helps them weave vivid imaginative future worlds that we can see the reflection of today's world in. Ian M Banks, China Mieville and Ken MacLeod are among this group of writers.

Ken MacLeod has a new novel out, *The Execution Channel*, which is about the present day Iraq war moving towards an inter-imperialist war.

The genre of *The Execution Channel* is hard to define but might best be described as a near future espionage thriller.

It has that feel of a spy thriller. The story is a dark one, which is perhaps given away by the tagline on the cover: 'The War on Terror is Over... Terror Won'.

The novel is set in a post flu-pandemic Britain where terror, political turmoil and repression are the order of the day. The war with Iran has happened and climate change has displaced millions of people.

American armies are marauding through the Middle East though America seems certain of losing its role of sole world super power. A technological advance may lead other powers to get the upper hand.

James Travis is a spy. He has a daughter in a peace camp outside Leucars military base and a son serving in Afghanistan.

The book kicks off when James' daughter witnesses a nuclear explosion at the camp.

The story is about the Travis family and a US conspiracy theorist blogger, Mark Dark, trying to make sense of the events. Intelligence agencies are sent into panic by the event and activists are watched and repressed by the state.

The drama is played out against the background of increasing international tension and social breakdown in the national sphere.

The novel is witty and terrifying. The dialog is great; almost recreating some of the most depressing activist meetings I've been at.

This is MacLeod's best attempt of mixing politics with science fiction, because this is a future that isn't difficult to imagine at all.

# This is England



A vulnerable young boy on a painful journey through isolation and loneliness

## To Hell With McDonald's Music

A fourth studio outing for the Donaghmede singer, 'To Hell or Barbados', carries on in the Damien Dempsey tradition. Dempsey draws on various musical genres from reggae, rock, folk and electronica to create something very new and exciting; all mixed in with both Dempsey's upfront political message.

Speaking in a recent interview, Dempsey reiterated the importance of politics in his music saying: 'I try to educate people. I find history fascinating, the crime of colonialism is something I feel should be addressed.'

In fact the album's title refers to the deportation of Irish people in the 1600s to Barbados as slaves. Dempsey wanted to 'commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolishment of slavery in the British Empire, and to highlight the fact that slavery still goes on, whether it's the sex trafficking or sweatshops.'

At his Vicar Street gig it was quite something to hear the entire audience singing that 'you'll never kill our will to be free' and 'we are all lying in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars.' There's a whiff of cordite and revolution at such gigs, spurred on by Dempsey's asides about Bush and Bertie.

Dempsey remains an exciting songwriter and political artist operating in a scene otherwise awash with bland (as he so rightly put it) 'McDonald's music'.

Long live Damo!

By Niall Smyth

*This Is England* is a new film written and directed by Shane Meadows. As with most of Meadows' films, much of the film is shot around the East Midlands. It is a drama centred on young skinheads in early-1980s and set against a backdrop of a country with huge poverty, Thatcherism and engaged in the Falkland's War.

*This Is England*, tells the story of an isolated 11-year-old boy growing up in a grim run down coastal town with his mother and who falls under the influence of an older neo-Nazi gang member after his father dies.

Young Shaun, played by Thomas Turgoose, following bullying at school, falls in with a bunch of likeable older skinheads, which includes one black member. The early part of the film is very light-hearted and tracks the group's

antics such as a very bizarre day's 'hunting' in a derelict housing estate.

As they take him under their wing, Shaun enjoys a new lease of life, a new-found freedom and social acceptance among his new friends.

There are many great scenes including 11-year-old Shaun's desperate attempt with his mother to find himself a pair of doc martins in his size to fit with his new haircut and his 'sterling' Ben Sherman shirt.

Shaun's joy is short-lived, however, and things take a much darker turn when National Front member Combo returns from jail and reasserts his leadership of the group. What follows is an often disturbing and intense view of the far right 1980s England. Racist attacks and National Front meetings take over and the gang splits as members take sides on the issue.

The film tackles two main issues. Firstly, the irony that although the skinhead subculture was based on elements of black culture, especially Jamaican ska and reggae music, a large part of the subculture became hijacked by right wing movements such as the National Front.

The second being the examination of the rise in racism and British nationalism brought on in a climate of high unemployment and Thatcher's war in the Falklands.

There are parallels to be drawn with modern England with the war in Iraq and of Islamophobia, fuelled by the 'war on terror.'

The film is quite hard hitting, with some extremely intense and violent scenes and serves as a stark warning about the rise of the far-right, which preys on the insecurities and fears of working class communities.

On another level, the film follows the vulnerable young boy on a painful journey through isolation and loneliness to confidence and determination. The film is a brilliant depiction of a specific time and place and the film is firmly rooted in the real and very raw experiences of working class life in England at that time.

It is shot a very grainy rough documentary style which adds to the film's intense atmosphere. The soundtrack is provided by groups such as Toots and the Maytals, The Specials and the Upsetters.

*This is England* has won Best Film at the British Independent Film Awards, and despite young Turgoose having never acted before, he has scooped the Most Promising Newcomer award.

The film is still showing in most mainstream cinemas. Catch it before its gone.

## The fantastic in Irish art

By Eoin Martin

The latest exhibition in the National Gallery, the *Fantastic in Irish Art*, is a wonderful and fascinating look at a side of art we rarely see but which deserves to be looked at in great depth.

The exhibition brings together a variety of works produced by Irish artists between 1870 and 1930 all of which share a fantastical character.

The exhibition comprises three rooms of beautifully illustrated prints and several paintings, a veritable treasure trove of colourful, vibrant and yet compelling art. The fantastic movement in Ireland

arose out of a late Victorian rejection of the mores of a restrained society as well as a revival of interests in the ancient history of Ireland.

The late nineteenth century saw the rediscovery, or rather re-invention, of traditional Irish folk tales and Celtic mythology.

The movement drew its inspiration from the literary movements of a mainly Irish group of writers including Oscar Wilde and W.B. Yeats.

The artistic developments shown here had their origins in the French Impressionists' rejection of the traditional modes of painting. The artists of the fantastic

movement, while they looked to Ireland's distant past for their inspiration, advanced the Irish art scene into the realms of modernity.

The fantastic movement in Irish art, however, represents so much more than an artistic movement.

Artists such as John Butler Yeats, William Orpen, Harry Clarke and Hilda Roberts explored some important themes that came to a crescendo at the end of the Victorian period.

These issues included the struggle for Irish freedom from Britain.

One of the most striking of the featured pieces in

the exhibition is a portrait by John Butler Yeats of the Irish political activist Maud Gonne Mc Bride, a beautiful yet strong portrait that became the inspiration for the allegorical character of Kathleen Ní Houlihan.

The exhibition also reveals their challenge to the biggest of the Victorian taboos: sexuality.

A particularly evocative print, 'The Goblin Market' by Hilda Roberts, represents the teenage artist's yearning for sexual liberation and fulfilment.

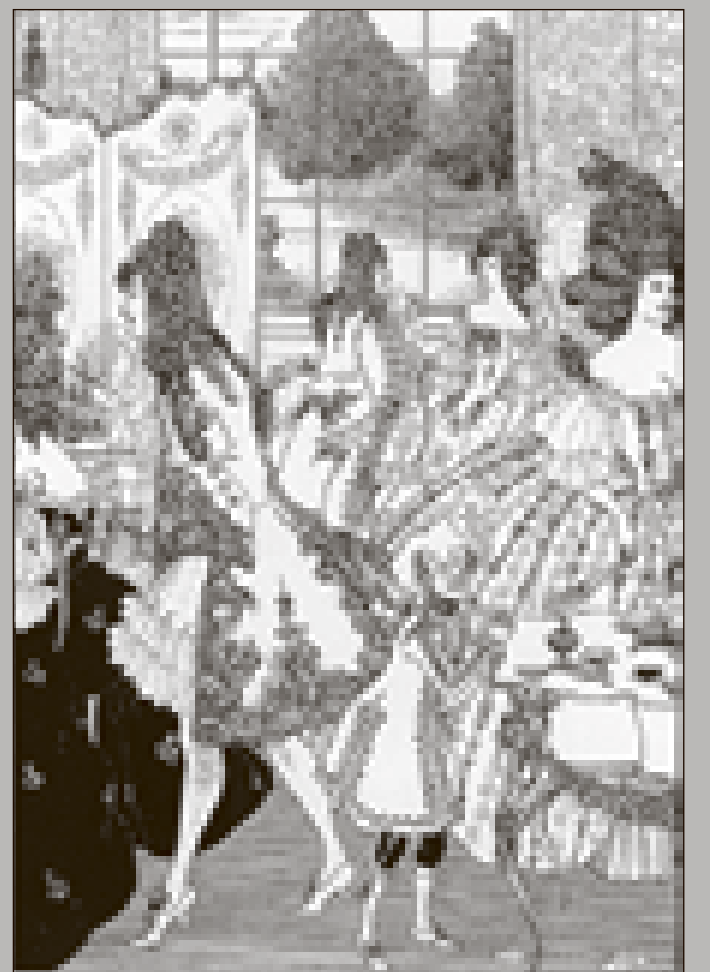
Perhaps the most beautiful yet the most frightening piece is 'Scarecrows and

Newtownards' a relatively modern piece (1950) by Daniel O'Neill which depicts the residual feelings of despair left lingering by the Great Famine and the barren nature of the West of Ireland in the 1950s.

This exhibition represents a truly amazing collection of politically and artistically evocative pieces.

The striking beauty and colour of the pieces make the exhibition worth a visit no matter how interested or not you are in art. Commendably it's free so pay it a visit.

The *Fantastic in Irish Art* will be in the Print Room of the National Gallery until 12 August, see [www.ngi.ie](http://www.ngi.ie) for more information.





## PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT DUN LAOGHAIRE

# Fight to save St Michael's hospital

Richard Boyd Barrett has launched a public campaign on the streets of Dun Laoghaire to save St Michael's hospital.

Petitions are circulating throughout the constituency calling on the HSE to intervene to prevent the hospital falling into the hands of the property developer Noel Smyth.

St Michael's hospital is under threat because a property developer has entered discussions with its owners on a possible take-over.

Noel Smyth, a key figure in the property company Alburn Ltd, has made a number of proposals to the St Vincent's Healthcare Group, which owns St Michael's.

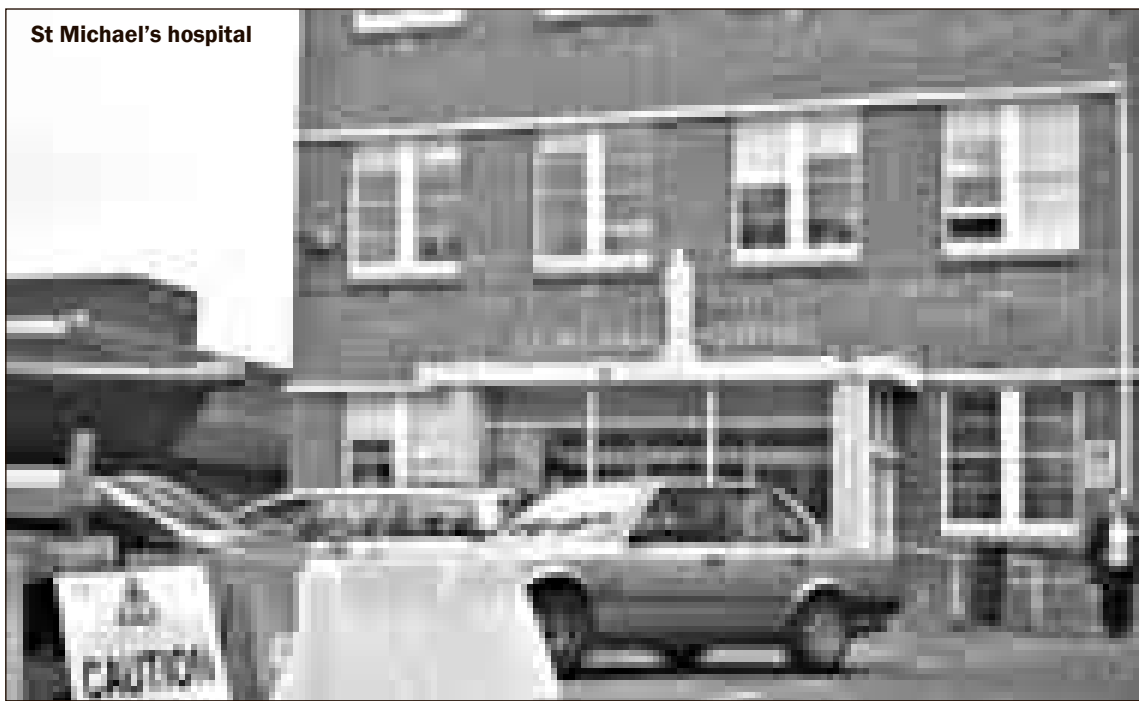
The St Vincent's Health Care group is, in turn, controlled by the Sisters of Mercy.

A subsidiary of Smyth's company has already acquired a large car park at the hospital and he has now entered discussions with the nuns to buy all, or part, of the remaining hospital.

If Noel Smyth acquires the hospital, it could, according to the Irish Times, mean the re-location of the hospital.

One possible site is the St Vincent's hospital site, which is also

St Michael's hospital



owned by the Vincent's Healthcare Group.

Recently an application for planning permission was submitted for

new hospital unit on that site.

According to the Irish Times, the most likely scenario then is that Mr Smyth 'would seek permis-

sion to build a high density mixed-use scheme on the land' at the St Michael's.

Apartments on this complex

would, it is estimated, cost between €600,000 and €800,000 – and even higher where they had a sea view.

Richard Boyd Barrett, believes that these developments are entirely unacceptable.

'We need some transparency on this and I call on the management of the hospital to issue a statement which makes it clear their precise intentions.

'I, however, am totally opposed to any moves which allow a property developer to take over a public hospital.

'The HSE should step in immediately and purchase the hospital so that it is saved for Dun Laoghaire.

'St Michael's hospital is right at the heart of Dun Laoghaire and is a public resource.

'Moving the hospital would therefore be like tearing the heart out of the town.

'Instead of any run-down in local health services we need improvements. The A&E facilities at the hospital should be restored and Loughlinstown hospital should be upgraded to have a regional status.'

Richard Boyd Barrett can be contacted on 087 6329511. See also pages 6 – 7.

## People Power victories on clamping and planning

People Power won two significant victories for democratic planning in Dun Laoghaire last month.

Sixty people staged a protest outside the Council meeting as they debated the twin issues of clamping and a local area plan.

Richard Boyd Barrett said, 'a huge protest movement has developed against clamping and the Council has now voted with us.

'The proposal to introduce clamping, which was pushed by the manager Owen Keegan, was about revenue generation rather than traffic management.

'The attempt by the local manager to invoke legal arguments to claim that councillors had little jurisdiction over this was disgraceful.

'Instead of a plan to re-generate Dun Laoghaire through the use of feeder buses, there were plans to extend charging to Sundays to further discourage people from coming to Dun Laoghaire.

'Many councillors had, at first, been willing to go along with this but thanks to groupings like Communities against Clamping, the move was stopped.

'Once again, it took "people power" to establish some common sense about the running of our town.'

'The other victory for people power was an agreement by the council to a local area plan for Dun Laoghaire. Local resident groups will now be able to have an input into the major planning priorities for their area.

'Up to now, the council has operated a pro-developer policy that has closed down open spaces and foisted ever more apartment complexes on the area. Once a local area plan has been drawn up, the authorities will be forced to show how developments are sustainable.

'They will not be able to allow apartment complexes to go ahead

without showing how public amenities are available to support them.

'The process of generating this local area plan will involve residents groups in making submissions on the planning targets for their areas.

'All of this indicates that the winds of change are blowing through the area. For too long the future direction of Dun Laoghaire has been shaped by developers. The decision tonight shows that a new force has arrived in the area: that of "people power".'

'Many communities throughout Dun Laoghaire are deeply dismayed by a planning policy that appears to put profit ahead of people.

'The residents of Patrician Villas, for example are asking whether Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Council is run by Treasury Holdings rather than the local people.

'They note how plans to build a fly-over on their green space appear to be driven by the desire of Treasury Holding to turn Stillorgan into a US style shopping mall and residential complex.

'Many are also worried about how a subsidiary of Alburn Investments is trying to take over St Michael's hospital: especially when a former manager of Dun Laoghaire Rathdown is now working for that same company.

'The present direction can be halted if residents groups make full use of the process of developing a Local Area Plan. Submissions need to be made on creating a policy which promotes sustainable development and planning targets that stress the quality of life.

'But ultimately, I have no doubt that these proposals will also have to be backed up by the type of "people power" that stopped the council destroying the Baths.'

## Protests disrupt Tony Blair's photocall on Stormont visit



By Conor McVarnock

Tuesday 8 May was supposed to be the day that Tony Blair waltzed into Stormont proclaiming everlasting peace and prosperity to the people of Northern Ireland.

This was to be his last act as Prime Minister before announcing his retirement.

Despite the best efforts of the press, the Belfast Anti War Movement was able to ensure that Iraq was not left out of the picture and that Blair's real legacy of the murder of 600,000 Iraqis was exposed.

Slipping past Stormont security posing as Water Charges protesters the group of

anti-war demonstrators staked out a spot at the barriers right in front of Stormont.

Because of the unexpected level of protest, Tony Blair was unable to get a photograph posing with McGuinness and Paisley on the steps of Stormont.

The stand erected for the press photographers had been put to good

use; occupied by loud and angry protesters.

Three anti-war campaigners were arrested in a violent over-reaction by the PSNI to a blocking of the road that Blair's cavalcade was travelling on.

There will be a fundraiser on 16 June in the Roddy McCorley Club to raise money for the court cases.

## Euro protests against postal sell-offs

The European Commission has taken the final step on the path towards the total privatisation of the postal services by proposing that the distribution of 'small' mail by postalworkers be opened to free competition on 1 January 2009.

A website has been

set up by a Belgian MEP, Alain Hutchinson called SOSPoste.eu where European citizens can sign a petition online.

This European directive, if adopted, would have disastrous consequences for us, the citizens: a great number of job losses, an increase in prices, the loss

of service to those who need it most in our communities—the elderly and frail—who would never be financially viable customers for private companies.

Postal Services throughout Europe are calling for safeguards to be put in place to protect our postal business.

A European wide protest was organised for 1-2pm on 6 June that saw demonstrations at all major European Post Offices.

In Dublin a large protest was held outside the GPO, called for by the CPSU Branch, with the closure of all An Post offices for that hour.



**EXXON MOBIL**

Following articles from Sunday Independent and Clare People it has become clear that Exxon Mobil are planning to bring ashore gas from the multi-billion Dunquin gas field off the coast of Kerry by pipeline.

Dunquin contains an estimated 25 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 4,130 million barrels of oil. This would be enough to cater for Ireland's energy needs for the next 60 years.

John O'Sullivan, Exploration Manager with Providence Resources, who have a stake in Dunquin and fields off the coast of Clare told the Sunday Independent that 'the gas will be brought ashore in a pipeline and the oil tankered away.'

When asked about this issue, another spokesperson from Providence Resources, told *The Clare People* that no decision had yet been made concerning processing the oil and gas, but that piping on-shore was one of the options available.

'There is still no update on how it will come ashore. It is far too early in the process to have any comment on that. We will be using the best possible technique both in terms of minimising the disruption to the environment and the local population.'

Bob Wilson of Clare Shell to Sea responded by insisting on 'clarity and open consultation from both Providence and the Government.'

'Let us not forget that both Liscannor and Doughmore Bay were identified by consultants of Enterprise Oil as possible places to bring the Corrib gas ashore before Rosport was finally selected: the deciding factor being the distance from the gas field to the refinery. The Dunquin and Spanish Point fields are therefore most likely to be brought into Clare or Kerry based on this critical distance.'

'Will these communities receive similar treatment to that imposed on the people of County Mayo, or will there be full and open consultation? Will the nation gain more than just taxes from the multi-nationals?'

'It makes one wonder just what support the government has already agreed to give Providence Resources. Has a piece of Coillte land already been earmarked as a site for a refinery? Have coastal communities and their environment already been earmarked as dispensable?'

**CAMPAIGN TO SAVE TARA**

# Threat grows as machinery moved

**'I would encourage readers of Socialist Worker to join the protest at Tara, the aim of the protest at present is to keep the construction workers out of the valley itself. There is a vigil camp at Tara which people can visit. Those wishing to come along should ring 086-1758557.'**

—Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin of the Campaign to Save Tara.

As a result of the restrictions placed on construction workers in the areas of Collierstown and Baronstown the huge machines are now moving to Tara itself.

There are construction machines moving to both sides of the N3 at the point where the proposed M3 would cross the existing road and where the huge interchange is planned at Blundelstown.

This interchange is seen by all opposed to this route as being the worst possible part of the planned M3.

There are huge cement pipes being delivered to the archaeological sites of Castletown, Tara where there were kilns and flints found. These pipes are designed to culvert the Gabhra River. But Colliertown and Baronstown are still in danger.

There are more workers in the valley than there have been at any other time.

All the machinery is lined up at Roestown and is probably intended for this area that is also very close to the restricted protection area of the hinge at Lis-mullin.

This part of the motorway route is beside Garlow Cross and it is known locally as Soldier's Hill. Apparently, the last stand taken by the rebels of 1798 was



**Barronstown: Machinery moved to Tara**

taken at the Gabhra Bridge and close by is the road known as Hangman's Mile where they were hung on each side of the road.

Debbie Reilly, one of the conservationists, said 'if the interchange is built in this area not only will Tara's landscape be destroyed but this more recent history will disappear under concrete. These local place names will have no location or context anymore.'

Members of the Campaign to Save Tara and the Solidarity Vigil discovered another underground structure between the

sites of Collierstown and Roes-town while scouting the Valley sites on Saturday 26 May.

This is obviously a man made subterranean site and was not picked up by the geophysical survey.

This discovery again shows the inadequacy of the preliminary investigations carried out on the route.

It is right in the middle of the route of the proposed motorway, at a 45 degree angle and what is visible is about 30 feet long.

This was revealed when the construction workers were using

heavy machinery for stripping topsoil in preparation for the hard core of the road. There is no evidence of archaeological activity in the area.

This discovery perhaps explains why construction workers were so heavy handed with the conservationists the previous week.

The confrontations that occurred on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday happened within 100 yards of this new possible site. Did the NRA and the contractors realise that there was something to hide here?

**HEALTH**

## Crisis deepens at Kerry General Hospital

By Kieran McNulty

The recent industrial action by the INO and PNA has highlighted the deepening crisis in the health service including Kerry General Hospital (KGH).

The nurse's protests received widespread public support in Kerry with members of Tralee SWP, including one in a wheel chair, joining the picket lines.

Staff continue to be under pressure at KGH, culminating last year with the resignation of Dr. Sean O'Rourke due to the increasing powerlessness he felt working in the hospital's A&E unit.

A replacement consultant has yet to be appointed, while a full time cardiologist and a second orthodontist are also needed.

KGH has only recently provided a limited breast-check facility, still has no diabetic consultant, renal treatment and many other basic services. This means patients have to travel to Cork to be treated.

Only continuous combined pressure from the nurse's unions and patients will force the new government to provide adequate investment into the public health service and reverse the disastrous policy of privatisation.

# Air show propaganda coup for US imperialism

By Galway Alliance Against War

The Salthill Air Show, this year arranged for Sunday 24th June, is rapidly becoming an arms exhibition and military showcase. Not only will the Euro-fighter Tornado warplane make its first public display outside of Britain, but the air show website informs potential exhibitors: we only seek displays that have relevance to the air show e.g. Military Related exhibitors.

The attendance of the USAF Thunderbirds is a major propaganda

coup for Bush and his Iraq war.

The pilots boast of their combat experience in Iraq and Afghanistan through the national media, but they do not elaborate on the number of kills they have notched up.

We get the soft sell about the pilots' Irish connections and, the 'feminine' touch, introducing us to Major Nicole 'Fifi' Malachowski who provided air support over Kosovo in 1998 during the Bosnian/Serb conflict, served four months deployment supporting 'Operation

Iraqi Freedom' and during election day in Iraq: in total over 200 combat hours.

Described as a 'helluva fight pilot' she makes history as the first female demonstration pilot on a U.S. military jet team. Malachowski, 31, says that it's because of such opportunity that the U.S. is the greatest country on earth.

When she was 5 years old she saw an F4 Phantom jet perform at an air show and announced, 'I'm going to be a fighter pilot some day.'

No hard questions

have been raised about collateral damage or more directly, how many Iraqi children Major Malchowski thinks she has killed. That would be impolite, especially as the air show organisers would like us all to believe it is good clean fun.

The Thunderbirds' mission statement makes it clear the display, however, is not about fun, it has a serious agenda: to support US Air Force recruiting and retention programmes.

Fifi is proof that this works. 'My whole life I had been talking about how

I wanted to be a fighter pilot. The Air Force is what attracted me to it. This is a capability-based organization and it's focused on executing missions.'

Additionally, there will be a special reception for these top guns hosted by a man who also played his part in the illegal invasion of Iraq, the US ambassador to Ireland.

Between August 03 and March 04 Ambassador Foley was part of the US administration running occupied Iraq.

In less than 72 hours the F16 fighter planes

that will fly over Galway Bay can, along with their pilots, be ready for combat. So on a Sunday in June these warplanes can titillate the punters and their kids on Salthill promenade and by Thursday they can be terrorising and killing parents and their kids in Iraq, or maybe Iran!

Support for the Salthill Air Show means support and succour for those who invaded and occupy Iraq in their lust for oil. Opposition to this warshow means standing up for Irish neutrality, and in solidarity with the Iraqi people.

**WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR**

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

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

**REVOLUTION**

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

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

**greater political and economic democracy.**

**AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR**

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

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

**END RACISM AND OPPRESSION**

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

**working class.**

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

**We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.**

**FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH**

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

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

**We want to see an Irish workers republic where all**

**workers gain.**

**Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!**

**FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**

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

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

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

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

## Join the Socialists

Fill in the form and send to  
**SWP PO Box 1648 Dublin 8**

Name.....

Address.....

Email.....

Phone.....





# *Socialist* **Worker**

## **STOP WAR AND THE ARMS TRADE THAT FEEDS IT!**

### **Raytheon Nine: Drop the Charges**



**By Goretti Horgan**

The world looked on in horror as the Israeli army pounded Lebanon last summer, killing more than a thousand civilians.

But even after the Israelis killed 28 people in Qana, mainly women and children, Western governments refused to support calls for an immediate ceasefire. It was the Israeli army that conducted these assaults: but it was the Western arms industry that supplied the bombs and rockets.

Anti-war activists across the world

were horrified when, in the middle of the bombardment, the New York Times announced that: 'The Bush administration is rushing a delivery of precision-guided bombs to Israel, which requested the expedited shipment last week after beginning its air campaign against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon.'

The weapons concerned were GBU-28s—guided bomb units—satellite and laser-guided 5,000 lb 'bunker-busters'. Most of these bombs are manufactured by Raytheon, designed to penetrate 100 feet underground or through 20 feet of concrete.

The NY Times report continued: 'Israel's need for precision munitions is driven in part by its strategy in Lebanon, which includes destroying hardened underground bunkers where Hezbollah leaders are said to have taken refuge, as well as missile sites and other targets that would be hard to hit without laser and satellite-guided bombs.'

It was one of these precision-guided 'bunker-busters' that smashed through the Qana apartment building killing those huddled in the basement for shelter from the death-storm.

Raytheon has a small software devel-

opment centre in the Ulster Science and Technology Park in Derry. The centre came to the city, ironically, as part of the 'peace process'. Software of the type developed at Derry guided the bomb.

Protests against the slaughter in Lebanon were organised across the globe. Anti-war activists in Derry had no proof that the Qana bomb was made by Raytheon. But we knew that it was the main manufacturer of 'bunker busters' and that it has a close commercial and ideological relationship with the Israeli Defence Forces.

**Turn to Page Four**