

Socialist Worker

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GROWING RESISTANCE CONFRONTS U.S. TROOPS AND THE STOOGE IRAQI INTERIM 'GOVERNMENT'



THE puppet "Interim Government" installed in Iraq on June 28 by the outgoing US administrator Paul Bremer has not stemmed the growing resistance to the US occupation.

Our picture shows the wreckage of a US humvee destroyed by resistance rockets in early July.

The fake "handover" has not softened the brutality of the imperialist occupation.

US soldiers enjoy immunity from Iraqi law.

This immunity was extended too private contractors.

and the interim constitution drawn up under Bremer's supervision specifies that his decrees cannot be rescinded now he is gone.

Nearly 30,000 people demonstrated across Ireland when Bush came to Dromoland Castle in late June.

We need to deepen and extend the anti war movement

In particular we need to rack up the pressure on Ahern and the Irish government over the use of Shannon airport by US troops.

■ Turn to pages six and seven for full reports and analysis.

THIS FAKE HANDOVER

After the elections - Where now for the left?

THE COUNCILS are stepping up their campaign to scare people into paying the bin charges.

Reports have come in to *Socialist Worker* telling of new letters demanding payment within 72 hours. These have appeared all across Dublin.

"The Councils are continuing their campaign to intimidate non-payers by using a debt collection company and threats of court action," according to Brid Smith, the anti bin tax campaign secretary in Ballyfermot, "They had purposely eased up prior to the elections and now are piling on the pressure again. We have to stay strong and resist these threats. Our power is in standing together. They can't drag us all through the courts."

A number of anti bin tax campaigners were elected to councils and candidates got great votes when they stood in opposition to this double tax. There were many Labour and Sinn Fein candidates, including the new Lord Mayor of Dublin Michael Conaghan, who clearly stood in opposition to the bin tax. Now they have to deliver on their promises. They can do some things right now to

stop the bin tax.

We call on all those who opposed the tax while campaigning to:

- Oppose the bullying by councils of non payers
- Refuse to allow the implementation of non collection
- Form an alliance with other parties who are anti bin tax.
- Vote against bin charges in the council estimates in November.

Dublin City Council now has a majority of left wing councillors. They have a clear mandate to bring change in Dublin and to put pay to the bin tax. Councillors from Sinn Fein, from the Labour Party and Independents need to seize this opportunity to implement the wishes of the people of Dublin. They were elected as anti bin charge candidates. It would be a betrayal of their supporters if they breathe life into the failed right wing parties by doing deals and making alliances with the right.



"Hopefully we can work together to fight for working class people"

JOAN COLLINS was elected councillor of Crumlin and Kimmage as an independent Socialist and anti bin tax campaigner. She spoke to *Socialist Worker*:

"I think the Election results showed a real anger by working class people.

They see it as an opportunity to "Payback" for this Government's lies and broken promises. My vote was a part of that but also it was a clear message of opposition to the BIN TAX. In Ballyfermot, 83 percent of the votes cast went to candidates who opposed the bin tax.

It showed the anger on this issue, that the Campaign is not over but is in fact still a very strong issue in the communities. The vote for the Anti Bin tax Candidates was very strong right

across Dublin, especially when you consider the swing to Labour and Sinn Fein.

The vote for Labour and Sinn Fein was also an Anti Bin Tax vote. Labour, Sinn Fein and the Independents have a clear majority on Dublin City Council (28 out of 52 seats). I will be demanding that this majority is used against the Bin Tax. This election is an opportunity for all those on the left. Hopefully we can take this opportunity and work together to fight for working class people."



Mick Plunkett (Dun Laoghaire)

Mick McKenna (Dun Laoghaire)

Paddy Dodson (Ballyfermot)

what you think

“ We haven't had a poll tax in Ireland, but this could be shaping up for one ”

“ 1600 votes were given to Richard Boyd Barrett in the council elections. That's people showing discontent. It's a solid ground to build on against the bin charges ”

“ Well I don't agree with the bin tax, I haven't paid the taxes and loads around me haven't. People were elected in my area who promised that they were against the charges. If they said that they should be going out and telling people don't pay ”

“ All the meetings I've been at have warned that the government has a bigger agenda than bin tax. They want water charges and privatisation. Now the calls for the reintroduction of water rates are growing. Everything that the campaigners said has been true. That's why we need to keep up the fight. We beat the water tax before. We'll do it again if we have to ”

“ It's important that we keep up the non-payment campaign and put the pressure on the councils. We need to make them remember the slogan - axe the double tax or watch your vote collapse ”

WATER WARS - The government strikes back?

AT THE end of June the Institute of Engineers in Ireland (IEI) called for water charges to be brought back. They believe Ireland needs to conserve water.

In May the Environmental Protection Agency made a similar call. It is clear that there will be trouble around the corner. In Bray campaigners exposed the presence of meters in council houses a number of years ago, warning of the threat of the reintroduction of water charges. All new houses are now equipped with water meters.

The government is planning to slap another double tax on working class people. They may try and dress it up as an environmentally friendly 'polluter pays' policy, but are ordinary people responsible for problems with water conservation?

Most water wastage in Ireland is caused by leaks. Ireland loses 50 percent of its water through

leaks in pipes; the rest of the EU loses 10percent. Half the water is lost before it ever gets to us! The government haven't managed to repair leaks and maintain pipes at all, which raises lots of questions about how they spend our taxes. After all, we hand over income tax in every pay cheque to Charlie McCreavey. Maybe it's time to ask if we are getting value for money.

The idea that the water we use is free is ridiculous. Yes, across Europe people pay for the water they use, often using metering systems. But we also already pay - through income tax.

Hygiene

Any new water charges will hurt the poor. Financial pressures lead to people cutting back on water use - toilets can't be flushed all the time, washing is postponed etc. This forces hygiene and health problems on people who can least afford it.

Environmental concerns on water use can and

should be addressed through information campaigns for the public. The willingness of people to recycle and compost shows that people care about their environment and will do their best to protect it. It's a pity IEI and others didn't take up water pollution issues more vigorously over the years and expose the crucial role that big business and farming has played in making our water supply less safe.

The government has tried to introduce water charges before. Last time out they were beaten by the great campaigns in Dublin, Waterford and elsewhere. People took to the streets, prevented disconnections and demonstrated outside court houses. The FF and Labour government abolished them on January 1st 1997. If the Fianna Fail PD government try to re-introduce charges we know how to beat it! *The Bray branch of the SWP has launched a petition against the reintroduction of the water charges. They will be collecting signatures every Saturday on the streets of Bray - contact Mark Pearson on 0863416398*

Marie Ryan (Dundrum)

Paul Smyth (Blanchardstown)



"Bin taxes are a way of life"
Bertie Ahern

"My party yields to no one in its commitment to social justice and fair taxation"
Mary Harney
Tanaiste (PDs)

"A dynamic liberal economy like ours demands flexibility and inequality ... inequality provides incentives"
Michael McDowell
Minister for Justice

"If there's inequality of wealth...it gives the incentive to gain more wealth"
Willie O'Dea
Fianna Fail

editorial

NO MORE SUSTAINING FIANNA FAIL Vote No to the Pay Deal

UNION leaders are spending the summer campaigning for a yes vote to the mid-term pay deal which covers the last eighteen months of Sustaining Progress.

Rank and file trade union members need to be building opposition to the deal.

We are told that we have 5.5% over 18 months. In fact, the increases will only start in June next year and the largest percentage is delayed until June the following year.

Meanwhile inflation is gaining pace again – it was officially 3.5% last year – and the ESRI has revised upwards its figure of 3% this year to 4% over the year, and that does not take into account what effect increased interest rates and rocketing oil prices will have.

The issue of low pay has been yet again side-stepped. The unions initially looked for a flat rate of €20 increase which would have gone some way towards allowing the low-paid to catch up.

The half a percent more on offer to the low paid is an insult - a tiny percentage of nothing is still nothing. The overall percentage increases always keep the low paid down the scale. As Brendan Archibold of MANDATE said "Phased increases of 1.5% and 2.5% are fairly insignificant for someone earning €300 to €400 a week". Mandate and the Irish Nurses Organisation have both called for rejection of the deal.

Hike

With the 14% hike in ESB charges, TV licence and motor tax increases, and stealth charges like the Bin Tax and the prospect of water charges, it's working class people who are set to be the losers again if the deal goes through.

When Sustaining Progress was signed 18 months ago, many were influenced by the argument that the Irish economy was under threat from wages drift and that we should accept tiny increases of 3%, 2% and 2%. But foreign investment is still flocking here, because profits and the relative low cost of Irish labour tax make it worth while for the corporations.

In 2004, real unit labour costs in Ireland are well below any other EU country and are a quarter of those in France and a fifth of those in Portugal!

With growth rates of 4.6% for this year and 5.2% next it's time working class people got their share.

The very same week that this new deal came out, we learn that the public finances were in surplus by 130 million (compared to a deficit of €344

THOUSANDS PROTEST AGAINST GEORGE BUSH



■ Part of the protests against George Bush's visit to Ireland in June: See full report pages 6 and 7

million this time last year). It is forecast that the Exchequer will be €1.5 billion ahead of target at the end of the year. Instead of promoting this lousy deal why don't the union leaders insist that McCreevy's December cuts were reversed? Or the 10% cut in Third Level Education? Or the hospital cuts that saw A&E Dept at Ennis and Loughlinstown shut down?

While bosses pay just 12.5% corporation tax rate the average worker pays 42%. The low tax rates on big business is responsible for the run down in public services in Ireland. Government spending is far lower than other EU countries.

It has fallen considerably since 1990 and is half what Spain spends and one sixth of what Sweden spends!

The deal also promotes the privati-

sation agenda.

It demands that the commercial semi-state sector adapts to "the most appropriate form of ownership for its particular needs". "No ideological assumption" should be made about what corporate structure of strategy that should be - shorthand for saying rule out public ownership.

Hike

Quoting EU directive, the deal talks of Public Procurement – or "the basis by which goods and services are

provided on behalf of public authorities"- and the creation of a Liaison Group to monitor developments in this area.

In other words franchise arrangements such as LUAS and Oxygen are given the green light.

The week after the deal is signed, Aer Lingus management buy out and the possible loss of 1300 jobs breaks news.

No doubt this is what the new deal means by its uncritical mention of "the market sector of specific state assets".



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.

NO TO RIGHT-WING ECONOMICS

IN THE local elections, many working class people gave Fianna Fail a hammering. One of the pillars of Fianna Fail was its managing of the partnership process.

This deal shows how partnership comes at a price for workers and how it has become the vehicle for low wages and greater privatisation.

Skills shortages in some sectors and a tight labour market mean that trade unions are ideally placed at the moment to set the agenda. Pay rises that meet rising costs, a halt to privatisation and increased public expenditure could be won and give the unions a lead in prioritising workers' interests.

Years of "Social Partnership" have meant that while workers have their pay held back profits soar. A no vote could be a start to getting the real issues heard and to reviving fighting trade unionism.

Join the Socialists!

To join the Socialist Workers Party or for more information:

Fill in the form and **Send to:**

ROI: SWP PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Phone (01) 872 2682

NI: SWP PO Box 143, Mallusk Road, Mallusk, Phone 0774 2531617

Email membership@swp.ie **Web:** www.swp.ie

Name.....

Address.....

Phone.....

Email.....

Eamonn McCann

Imperialism and the anti war protests

THE demonstrations against the Bush visit at the tail-end of last month were vibrant in spirit and of a heartening size.

But there were aspects of them for anti-war activists to ponder as well.

The reason they were heartening is that many had feared they might be significantly smaller. This in turn reflected a degree of confusion and uncertainty in the anti-war camp.

The unspoken question was, whatever happened to February 15th? To the 100,000-plus in Dublin and as many elsewhere who had marched last year?

Not to mention the thousands of students and others who had taken to the streets in often spontaneous demonstrations, chanting, picketing and blocking traffic?

How come the movement seemed to begin to decline just a few weeks later, when Bush and Blair went ahead with the war anyway?

One reason is simply that the war did go ahead. Many concluded that we'd failed.

What was the point of campaigning against a war which was already under way? The best we could do was to seethe silently and hope for a good outcome.

(The other side of the same coin was seen in the petulant reaction of elitists whose admiration for their own daring has always outshone any faith in mass action.)

Once Baghdad had fallen, the argument arose that, irrespective of our anti-war views, we couldn't now just demand the withdrawal of US and British forces.

Their abrupt departure would mean chaos and civil war. In the interests of the Iraqis themselves, we had to accept that they'd remain—for the time being anyway, and with the involvement of the UN, and speedy progress towards democracy, and no more torture...

Many in the movement began looking towards the November US elections in hopes of a Kerry victory. The fact that Kerry has made it clear his Iraq policy won't differ in any essential from Bush's cut no ice.

The loss of confidence in mass action generated support for a strategy of backing anybody-but-Bush.

Analysis

Looking to the UN and Kerry meant ditching any analysis that went deeper than railing against the evil of the incumbents.

Which helps explain why even the horror pictures from Abu Ghraib didn't trigger a mass return to the streets.

If the moral turpitude of individual leaders or the national arrogance of particular countries was at the root of the problem, what was needed was not mass demonstrations but different leaders and/or a transnational institution in charge.

Well, the UN now has endorsed the occupation. At Drumoland Castle, Bertie Ahern argued that this removed the central argument against the occupation and against the use of Shannon as a military staging-post.

And he was right—in relation to those whose main argument against the war had been that it lacked a UN mandate.

Thus, a "realistic" strategy designed not to alienate any potential pocket of anti-war sentiment resulted in the demobilisation of the mass movement.

Behind this apparent contradiction lies the fact that the invasion didn't result from a particular administration making a specific decision and then dragging other governments along.

It was driven by imperialism, exactly as were the invasions of Africa in the 19th century or of Vietnam in the 20th.

If we take that as our starting point, we may be able better to understand the war of resistance now beginning to unfold in Iraq, and how to build a mass movement in solidarity with it.

Parades controversy reveals DUP hypocrisy

THIS YEAR'S controversy about Orange marches has revealed a lot about the hypocrisy of the DUP which refuses to talk to Sinn Fein but is happy to talk to Ulster Volunteer Force, Ulster Defence Association and the Red Hand Commando.

The DUP, as well as the Official Unionists, are part of the "loyalist Parades Forum" that led the Parades Commission to reverse its decision about the Whiterock Orange march which took place on the last Saturday in June.

The Commission had originally re-routed the march but pressure from the DUP and, it is widely suspected, 10 Downing Street, led to the march being allowed to walk the Springfield Road in Belfast, despite objections from nationalist residents.

Agenda

The DUP had made it clear that the Whiterock march was going to be top of its agenda for talks with Blair at Downing Street – although they were supposed to be talking about getting the Assembly up and running again.

As we go to press, it looks like Drumcree will be relatively



■ The Orange Order can no longer get huge numbers to back its protests

peaceful.

The TV is saying that "the heart seems to have gone out of the protest".

The reality is that the Orange Order can no longer get the mass of ordinary working class Protestants to back its protests.

People aren't fools.

They can see that while the concentration is on marching and decommissioning, the

issues that affect vast majority of working people, Protestant and Catholic, are being ignored.

Festivals

More and more Protestant working class areas are having community festivals around the Twelfth, running summer schemes for youngsters etc. in order not only to tone down the

sectarianism but also to focus on the real needs of those communities, rather than the agenda of the "fur coat brigade".

The Orange Order is unlikely to be able to organise again the kind of blockades that were seen in the mid-1990s around Drumcree, and which brought the North to a standstill.

And they know it.

Save the Derry rail link

THE campaign to save and upgrade the Belfast to Derry rail link continues to gather support and is now being compared to the 1960s campaign to save the University.

As train lines are being reopened – and built from scratch – all over Europe, it seems perverse that the link between the two biggest cities in the North is threatened with closure.

Trade unions say about a hundred jobs would be directly lost if the railway was to be allowed to run down further and eventually close.

But there is a bigger issue for an area of high unemployment like Derry.

Many workers live in Derry but travel to Belfast on a daily basis for work.

Unemployed

There is little choice as about one in four adults in Derry are unemployed.

There are no jobs available, as was seen when Debenhams' department store opened. It advertised for staff and drew 6,000 applicants for some 200 jobs. So, many people from Derry have no choice but to travel to Belfast for work.

For example, a recent study of IT firms in Belfast found that one in

ten of their graduate employees live in the Derry City Council area. But it's not only graduates who work in Belfast.

Many clerical and admin workers and low paid civil servants whose jobs are in the Greater Belfast area live in the North West. In fact, government statistics show that almost 5,000 journeys are made daily between Belfast and Derry.

At present, hundreds of Derry people take the bus to Belfast between 6 and 7am each morning. Hundreds more leave by car. At this hour of the morning, the journey takes two to two and a half hours due to traffic on the outskirts of Belfast. The journey

home in the evening is a little faster, thanks to the Toome by-pass. No one uses the train which, due to the old trains and unwelded track, takes longer than car or bus.

Commute

However, using bus or car to commute to Belfast still takes more than four to five hours a day. A high speed rail link would cut this to two and a half hours.

This would give an hour more at each end of the day to spend with family or friends.

One of the facts that has emerged in the course of "Into the West"'s campaign is about the double standards in relation to the

Belfast-Ballymena line, which it is already agreed should be retained and upgraded. It turns out passenger journeys have dropped even more on the Belfast to Ballymena part of the line than those from Ballymena to Derry.

Yet it is dropping passenger figures that are being used to justify downgrading and eventual closure of the line to Derry.

This can only lead campaigners to the conclusion that, like the University decision back in the 1960s, sectarian discrimination is behind the arguments against the upgrading of the Ballymena to Derry part of the rail network.

Preparing a bosses' Europe

By Mark Walshe

THE new EU Constitution was agreed last week in Brussels to near-universal establishment approval.

The *Irish Times* described it as 'historic and unprecedented' and praised the Government for a job well done:

"The Taoiseach, Mr Ahern, his Ministers and officials must be congratulated for the intense and focused work which has brought it to a conclusion." (*Irish Times* editorial, 19 July 2004)

The Constitution will be put to referendum in some EU countries, including Ireland, over the next two years. The new Constitution incorporates all of the existing Treaties, but according to Democracy and Public Services in Europe (DAPSE), it goes much further than that:

"The Constitution not only sets out how the EU should be run but it also determines what economic and social policies should be followed in the Member States."

"As it stands, the new Constitution signals the abandonment of the 'social' or 'Welfare State' model of the EU – in which state provision of high quality public services, protection against unemployment, citizens and workers rights, environmental protection, etc. were the priority. A framework for the further advance of neo-liberal globalisation, which clearly points to this abandonment, is embedded in the new Constitution."

"Key to this framework are the changes which will allow the European Commission to negotiate trade agreements involving the commercialisation of public services at the World Trade Organisation through the mechanism of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)."

Public services are still provided by the state in some countries, but there is increasing pressure from the European Commission via the Common Commercial Policy, the new Constitution, and the GATS agreements, to bring this to an end — meaning privatisation.

Claims

As Fintan O'Toole explains in his book *After the Ball*:

"The basic claims of the neo-liberal economists... are that even in these areas of public provision [water, electricity, public transport etc.] the private sector would be more efficient; private companies would be better able to finance the large investments needed; and privatisation would create competition, bringing down prices and improving the service to the consumer." (Ch. 7, *Selling Off the Family Silver*)

He goes on to show, through a number of case studies, the reality: privatisation has been a disaster in many countries, notably New Zealand and Britain.

But the neo-liberals do not care about the evidence: 'The greater efficiency of the private sector is an article of faith, and true believers don't really need to look at the evidence.' So in Ireland, Seamus Brennan continues to push ahead with the privatisation of Aer Rianta, Dublin Bus, and Aer Lingus.

The privatisation of public services is just one of the many damaging provisions in the new EU Constitution. When the Government launches its campaign to attempt to persuade us to ratify it, we will be campaigning strongly against it.

Who runs the EU?

Formally the European Parliament and the European Commission. These bodies do have certain powers.

But the EU is infected with powerful bosses' organisations such as the European Roundtable of Industrialists.

Business lobby groups and think-tanks cluster around the EU buildings in Brussels. A short walk would bring you to the European Services Forum (a privatisers' group), the UNICE European industrialists' and employers' confederations, Dow Europe and Dupont (US chemicals giants), Forum Europe (a corporate-funded think-tank), New Defence Agenda (an arms sellers think-tank), the British CBI, GlaxoSmithKline (pharmaceuticals), the International Council for Capital Formation (an anti-environmental think-tank) and many others.



■ Bush, Ahern and outgoing EU President Romano Prodi

What does the new constitution say?

THE constitution agreed in June aims at letting the free market rip across a continent. It does have various nods towards a "social dimension". But these are not hard laws.

The draft constitution has capitalist ideology at its heart.

"Member states and the Union shall act in accordance with the principle of an open market economy with free competition," it says.

Article I-3-2 proposes "a single market where compe-

tion is free and undistorted"; article I-3-4 guarantees free trade; article I-4-1 calls for free circulation of commodities, services and capital. Article I-29-3 gives the European Central Bank absolute control over monetary policy.

Threat

Public services like health and education are under increased threat because the constitution insists on "free" competition and the dismantling of regulations.

Under pressure from big firms the EU has launched a series of initiatives to

"reform" pensions across the continent.

Greater power for unelected EU officials mean they will have more scope to do deals with bodies like the World Trade Organisation.

At points the constitution puts forward a weaker and nicer-worded version of the Structural Adjustment Programmes which are forced on the Third World by the IMF and World Bank.

In addition there is a big step forward towards greater EU militarism. Article I-15 states that "Member states shall support the common foreign and security policy actively and unreservedly."

There are also moves towards a European army. This all points towards more EU military interventions like the ones in Macedonia and Congo.

Some on the Irish left believe, like Proinsias de Rossa, that the EU is a motor of social progress.

But most of the European left and trade unions have marched against the proposed Charter of Fundamental Rights because its provisions are so in hock with big business.

Finally this is a constitution for a Fortress Europe, open to business and closed to refugees. It would mean greater barriers to people fleeing persecution and poverty.

Right winger gets top EU job

ON JUNE 29, European leaders formally nominated Portugal's Prime Minister, José Manuel Barroso, as the next president of the European Commission.

He will succeed Romano Prodi on November 1, when he will begin a five-year term. Barroso has been a little-known figure on the European stage, but anti-war activists in particular will remember his high-profile support for the invasion of Iraq.

On 16 March last year, just days before the invasion, Barroso hosted a summit at the Lajes Air Base in the Azores, a group of islands in the Atlantic Ocean far from the reach of protesters. Along with then Spanish prime minister, Jose Maria Aznar, Barroso helped George W. Bush and Tony Blair present a façade of transatlantic unity as Bush issued a final ultimatum, demanding that the UN Security Council act within 24 hours on a resolution authorising the use of force against Iraq and that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein agree to 'full and immediate disarmament' or face war.

After the nomination, Tony Blair described Barroso as an excellent candidate. 'He shares a strong belief in economic reform and he is a believer in the alliance with the United States...'

Economic 'reform', of course, refers to the neoliberal agenda and the kind of 'reforms' in the areas of health and pension entitlements that are deeply unpopular across the EU.



■ José Manuel Barroso

Isn't the EU a block to the power of the US?

STRENGTHENING the powers of the EU is sometimes posed as an alternative to US imperialism. It is never a solution to build up another imperialist army to confront an existing imperialist force.

Businessmen and generals are already well down the road to setting up joint US-EU cooperation to exploit the world more powerfully together. The recent EU-US summit at Dromoland Castle set out an agenda for a "barrier-free transatlantic marketplace".

As the excellent Corporate Europe Observatory says, "Little-known but influential business bodies like the Transatlantic Policy Network and the Transatlantic Business Dialogue, campaigning behind the scenes, are having an impact."

"The Transatlantic Policy Network (TPN)-a lobby group involving EU and US parliamentarians and major corporations from both sides-will use 2004 to gather political support for its plan 'on the highest political level'."

The 35 member corporations of the TPN include giants like DaimlerChrysler, BP, Nestle, UPS, IBM, and Boeing. For details go to www.corporateeurope.org

U.S. TROOPS OUT OF SHANNON ... U.S. TROOPS OUT OF SHANNON



Mass protests greet Bush

“GOOD Riddance”. That was the headline in the Sunday Mirror after the mass protests which greeted George Bush’s visit to Ireland on June 25/26.

The *Star*’s headline read, ‘No Cead Mille Failte for Bush’.

Despite a concerted effort by Dublin City Council to remove posters advertising the Friday evening Dublin demonstration, the banning of radio ads for the Christy Moore concert and a virtual press blackout, more than 20,000 people came out on the Dublin demo against Bush on the Friday evening.

A further 2,000 went down to Dromoland Castle in Clare where Bush was held up.

On the Friday there were good turn-outs also on regional protests: 600 in **Waterford**; 300 in **Tralee**; 400 in **Sligo**, 1000 in **Shannon** and a staggering 3,000 in **Galway**. In all more than 25,000 people came out to express their disgust at Bush.

Contingents travelled to the protests from **Tipperary, Athlone, Mullingar, Donegal, Laois, Roscommon** and **Sligo**.

The protests were reported in the US press and on Fox television. And as Robert Fisk reported, they made the front page of a Lebanese paper.

In the lead up to the protests, anti war groups around the country had been active building support for the demonstrations.

Tralee was engulfed with anti Bush sentiment last month. Fifty people attended an anti war meeting and built a protest against the Bush visit. On Saturdays leafleters took to the streets of Tralee to spread the word about the demonstration.

According to local anti war activist, Kieran McNulty, “We reached out to new people who may never have been involved in protesting before. That was really important. It gathered its own momentum then and every new person who got involved was able to encourage a couple more to come along.

“There was also a lot of co-operation between different political parties

and groups. The Labour Party, Socialist Workers Party, Sinn Fein, SIPTU, the Greens, the trades council and others all worked together in the anti war group to help publicise and build the protests and to make them a success.”

300 marched through the town on Friday June 28. The following morning almost 50 people made the trip to Shannon to join the demonstrations.

Success

From this success, the Tralee anti war group will continue to voice and organise the opposition of many people in the region to the occupation of Iraq.

Nigel Baldock spoke at the Tralee demonstration on behalf of the SWP. He told the crowd, “Paul Bremer’s hand picked puppet Iraqi governing council will receive 12 cents out of every dollar for Iraq’s oil. American oil companies will take 88 cents. It’s the steal of the century!”

Waterford: Up to 600 marched on

Friday in Waterford City centre against Bush. Brendan Howlin of the Labour Party was one of the speakers at the demonstration.

Over 50 travelled by bus and car to Shannon to have their protest seen by the Irish state.

Ballymun Against War was well represented on the protests.

A number of banners were dropped from tower blocks in the flats complex. Mary Wall told *Socialist Worker*, “We got a immense response from locals at these events and brought good contingents to the Dublin march and on the bus to Dromoland Castle.”

Swords Anti war activists in Swords organised banner drops from a bridge in the area.

■ **The ATGWU recently came out in support of the Anti War Movement. Activists in other unions need to get the backing of their local and national organisations for the fight against the war**

IAWM says ‘Keep up the fight!’

RICHARD Boyd Barrett, chair of the Irish Anti War Movement, told *Socialist Worker*, “They tried to censor us, ban our posters and scare people away from the protests.

“In spite of this almost 30,000 people across the country joined demonstrations to say ‘No to Bush and our government’s collaboration in his war’.

“We have sent a clear message of solidarity to the anti war movement in the United States and punctured the lie that Bush was trying to propagate that Irish people supported war in Iraq.

“Now we must build the mass movement against war in this country to break our government’s collaboration with the occupation of Iraq or break the government if they fail to change policy.

“If the government thinks Shannon is a dead issue, they are dead wrong. The anti war movement is going to crank up the pressure on Aherne over Shannon.”

★ **AROUND 120 anti war activists from across the country attended the People Assembly organised by the Irish Anti War Movement a week after the protests to discuss the way forward.**

Some of the activities organised over the next include a national petitioning campaign, a tour of meetings and a Peace Festival in Shannon as well as continuing to build the movement on the ground in the local areas, schools, colleges and workplaces. For details contact the Irish Anti War Movement on 087-6329511 or log on to www.irishantiwar.org.

Irish and US government attack RTE interview

“BUSH declares war on RTE” was one newspaper headline after the Prime Time interview with George Bush.

The interview was conducted by RTE reporter Carol Coleman and was noteworthy as the President became annoyed when the Irish reporter refused to allow Bush get away with pre-prepared answers.

The Bush Administration was “furious” about the interview. Amazingly the Irish government have come out in support of Bush’s complaints.

A government spokesperson told a Sunday paper last week that it had “been conveyed to the US that the Irish government would be sympathetic to [the president’s] view.”

While an RTE insider said the station did receive some complaints regarding Coleman’s style of interviewing, “they were far outweighed by the positive calls”.

Coleman interrupted the President eight times during the 15 minute interview.

A clearly flustered Bush became visibly angry with the Irish reporter.

The nature of the



■ **Bush at Dromoland**

interview also gives some insight into the type of ‘kid gloves’ interviews the President is used to. Coleman had to give a set of questions to the President’s staff before the interview.

It is understood that Bush’s staff rejected a number of her questions, including one on the new Michael Moore film.

Scripted

Bush is used to easy questions and answer sessions from the American media. Coleman was supposed to ask set questions, listen politely to Bush’s scripted answers and then she could have a quick follow up.

When she interrupted with more questions he was rattled.

While the style of

the interview was commented on, what was actually said showed a lot about the thinking in the white house.

When questioned by Coleman on the death toll in Iraq, Bush tersely replied “You keep emphasising the death.”

When quizzed on the use of Shannon by American military, Bush said “I will thank my friend Bertie for the help that he has given us”. Coleman put it to Bush that a majority of the Irish people did not welcome his visit because “they are angry about Iraq, they are angry about Abu Ghraib.” Bush explained that “they must not understand.”

When Coleman asked Bush why he thought so many people around the world do not understand what he is about, he answered simply, “I don’t know.”

Words of wisdom from the leader of the free world.

Much of the criticism of Coleman’s interview has come from right wing columnists in the Irish media who support Bush and are jealous that Coleman got a shot at the biggest interview on the planet.

END THE OCCUPATION US TROOPS OUT OF SHANNON

THE FAKE HANDOVER

■ Paul Bremer (right) Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi (centre) and judge Midhat Mahmoud (left) smile while holding a legal document during the 'handover' of sovereignty ceremony June 28, 2004 in Baghdad.



By COLM O RIAIN

"THE Iraqi people have their country back" and "let freedom reign" were two sound bites that came out of the mouth of a relieved George Bush at the "transfer of power" to the Iraqi government on June 28th.

This transfer was brought forward by two days, because after 100 people were killed in attacks on police stations in five Iraqi cities in one 24 hour period, U.S. officials had seen their control of Iraq collapsing and decided to jump ship early.

When Paul Bremer, the US "overseer" of Iraq signed the transfer of ownership form and jumped on an air force plane – he was no doubt relieved he was getting out with his life.

Improvement

Many people think that the transfer of power to the Iraqis will bring an improvement, that at least now Iraqi people have a say in what will happen to their country. Not quite.

■ The US has over 150,000 troops in Iraq, and of course will continue to prop up the 'government' that they have put in place.

■ Before Bremer high-tailed it he left a rake of new laws giving a seven person commission the right to ban opposition parties –

"Executing him [Saddam] won't give back what Iraqis lost over the years. What we need now is electricity,"— 52-year-old merchant Riad Mohammed.

"I am not happy. This government has no right to judge Saddam because we did not elect them. He deserves to be tried, but by a legal government." — Mr Sa'ad Abdallah, a cleaner.

"[The US] cannot legally transfer sovereignty on June 30 for one simple reason: it does not possess it. Sovereignty is vested in the Iraqi people, and always has been: before Saddam Hussein, after him, under the martial law of the American proconsul Paul Bremer today"—Karma Nablusi (The Guardian)

guaranteeing support for the US-friendly Iraqi government. These laws can not be changed by the new government without US consent.

■ The oil companies that were

granted big contracts by the Bush government will have free reign over the oil fields with their plum contracts.

■ Corporation tax rates are fixed at 15 percent – so the bil-

lions made will face low tax.

The US companies that Bremer gave reconstruction contracts to – companies like Dick Cheney's old company Halliburton – have been given a license to print money.

Supporters of the new Iraqi government argue that at least Allawi and his government are better than Hussein. One US diplomat described Allawi to the *Los Angeles Times*, "He's a thug, but he's our thug."

This sums him up perfectly. It's a very similar attitude to one the US took to Saddam Hussein in the 1980s when he was an ally of the US.

He also shares Hussein's attitude to any opposition – Allawi commented after the handover that he would "deal with it and crush it."

According to *The Economist* magazine, "In recent months he has also been busy creating a new version of the secret police... Mr. Allawi's rivals have accused him of recruiting former torturers for a new apparatus of oppression." The slogan "let freedom reign" is a cynical con.

The Missing Billions

BILLIONS of dollars have disappeared from the coffers from Iraqi oil sales.

In the time between the occupation's start and the 'handover of power' \$20 billion in oil revenues has gone missing.

The trail of the missing dollars leads to the Coalition Provisional Authority – which was appointed by the US. After the 'handover of power' the CPA has been dissolved and the trail has gone cold.

Some of the billions were given to the US companies who were given contracts to rebuild Iraq – which companies are on the gravy train and how much they got is confidential.

There is little hope of finding the billions and any new Iraqi government will have to honour the rest of the contracts, paying out billions more out to US companies.

Elections are to take place January 2005, but all the contracts to US companies, the billions of dollars profit will still be made and the US troops will remain.

Voting will not be allowed change this.

It will remain an occupation – with an Iraqi face at its head rather than an American one.

Is Kerry the 'lesser evil'?

By KEVIN WINGFIELD

THE US Presidential election takes place in November. There is widespread and growing opposition to the Bush gang.

A majority of Americans now tell pollsters they believe the invasion of Iraq was a mistake.

Many anti war activists see the election as an opportunity to get rid of Bush.

A popular slogan is "Anyone But Bush!", which has been translated into support for Democratic Party challenger John Kerry.

The US Green Party, which ran Ralph Nader as its candidate in 2000, refused at its Convention at the end of June to endorse Nader this time.

They chose instead David Cobb to run, but only in safe Democrat or Republican states, effectively clearing the way for Kerry.

Pat LaMarche, the Green Party vice-presidential candidate, has announced that she might not even vote for herself in the November elections.

Despite the anger at Bush, Kerry's campaign has not caught fire and it is still possible he will lose to Bush.

The reason is not hard to find: Kerry, like the Democrats generally, hardly differs from Bush on the war, social policy or civil rights.

Kerry backed both Bush's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Kerry attacks the Bush administration for failing to provide enough U.S. troops to fulfill the U.S.'s "solemn obligation to complete the mission."

Terrorists

Pulling troops out of Iraq would, he says, "leave behind a failed state and a new haven for terrorists."

He is now calling for 25,000 new troops to be sent to Iraq, to remain for at least the next four years.

When Bush introduced the Patriot Act which has been responsible for the rounding up, detention and deportation of an unknown number of Muslims, Kerry backed it in the Senate.

Kerry also voted for the two Clinton-era predecessors to the Patriot Act, the 1994 Crime Bill and the 1996 Counter Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act which made it easier to execute those on death row.

He is closely aligned with the right-wing neo-liberal Democratic Leadership Council. In line with the free market policies of this body and despite cultivating the support of some of the big union leaders, Kerry voted for the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) and supported the WTO.



■ John Kerry

Kerry, and his top advisor Rand Beers (a veteran of the Clinton and Bush National Security Council), crafted Plan Colombia, the brutal and toxic war on Andean peasants, waged for the benefit of oil companies under the phoney rubric of drug eradication.

And, as one US commentator noted, "His scrawny energy plan, devoid of any real emphasis on conservation or solar power, calls for more off-shore oil leasing, widespread natural gas drilling, transcontinental pipelines and strip-mining for coal. His deficit-fixated economic policy, scripted by Wall Street bond tycoon Robert Rubin, is even more austere than Clinton's."

Kerry boasts of his support for Clinton's bill to dismantle welfare for poor mothers and their children.

In his pro-business and pro-war stance, Kerry is no different to Clinton or previous Democratic Party presidents.

The Vietnam War, for example, was effectively started and escalated under Democrat presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

Tragically many anti Vietnam War activists fell in behind the Democrats at that time with the slogan "Half the Way with LBJ!"

All those who oppose the war and occupation of Iraq will be heartened if Bush is thrown out in November, but we should have no illusion that Kerry will represent any real alternative to the rule of big business.

The idea that the Democrats are a "lesser evil" is one of the reasons no large scale political alternative on the Left has emerged in the US.

The Green Party's decision to repudiate the clearly anti war Ralph Nader, and to avoid contests in swing states only obstructs the emergence of that alternative.

Press panic over rise of Sinn Fein

By DAVID LYNCH

THE capitalist media, and the Tony O'Reilly owned Independent Press titles in particular, have got themselves all worked up about the Sinn Fein success at the recent local elections.

At the *Sunday Independent* a number of columnists have been let off the leash to attack the party as a "danger to democracy".

Last Sunday's paper screamed from the front page 'Sinn Fein rise threatens US investment'.

Minister Willie O'Dea is quoted in the article darkly saying that business people had approached him to "relay to me growing concern at the fragmentation of the Irish political system, giving rise to the emergence of the hard left in the form of Marxist-terrorist Sinn Fein.

"This is a worrying development and deadly dangerous to democracy."

A fortnight ago the *Evening Herald* began their editorial in only slightly less over the top language.

"There is a cancer at the heart of Sinn Fein as a political party. Behind all the smoothly presented waffle, which cloaked much of its recent election campaign, remains a lie which simply will not go away."

That was the doom laden pronouncement from O'Reilly's leading evening title the day after Sinn Fein's results in the election.

The *Herald's* hatchet job on the party and its Dublin European candidate was to be expected but was obviously ignored by tens of thousands of its readership as Sinn Fein hoovered up working class votes across the Dublin area.

These relentless attacks from the O'Reilly press represent a co-ordinated attack on the Sinn Fein and the working class anger that their high vote in the recent local elections represents.

Working class people voted for Sinn Fein in large numbers to register their anger with the corruption, the cut backs, the privatisation, and the general way the Celtic Tiger boom has passed large swathes of urban Dublin right by.

Motto

Sinn Fein pushed its motto of 'An Ireland of Equals' and spoke much of economic inequality in Ireland and this went down well with many people angry with the present FF/PD government.

However while the capitalist media and the right wing parties worry aloud that the rise of Sinn Fein could actually "shake the foundations of the body politic in Ireland", the reality is different.

While Sinn Fein used radical language in their recent election campaign their overall political trajectory is towards accommodation with the establishment and ultimately coalition government with Fianna Fail.

Speaking on RTE Radio as the results came through on Saturday, Sinn Fein's Pat Doherty refused to rule out a coalition with Fianna Fail after the next election.

Gerry Adams has made recent comments on making compromises on opposition to the bin tax when he said, "Sinn Féin councillors in Sligo, rather than seeing the service go entirely over to privatisation, and seeing the aged, or people on low incomes, suffering, then went for a more pragmatic approach.

"The same thing has happened in Monaghan. Our position is against it."

But in terms of the actual practicalities of working out these matters, as part of local government, the party made compromises on it," at a recent Dublin of Chamber of Commerce meeting.

The Sinn Fein President also said that the party could also be "more pragmatic" on Public Private Partnership.

"Well, we are against them," he said. "Having said that, Martin McGuinness, as education minister, faced with the reality that he would either have no schools or an involvement in a qualified way with private finance, went for it. So I suppose you could argue that that is the emergence of pragmatic politics."

While defending the party from right wing attack in the press and welcoming the Sinn Fein vote as an expression of raw class anger against this right wing government, socialists have to continue to build a real alternative to the present economic system.

Third European Social Forum London 14-17th October

Debate and organise anti capitalism



■ Flashback: ESF in Florence in November 2002

by RORY HEARNE and DAVE LORDAN

FOLLOWING from the first two successful European Social Forums in Florence (2002) and Paris (2003) the next ESF will take place in London on October 14-17.

The Social Forum is being organised by a coalition of a host of activist organisations and by the national British trade union UNISON and the Greater London Assembly. It is an event that every political activist should mark off in their diary.

The European Social Forum grew out of the World Social Forum (WSF) meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001.

Over 60,000 attended the ESF meetings in Florence and Paris while over one million marched against war at the Florence ESF.

The decision to organise the global day of protest against the War on Iraq on Feb 15th 2003 was taken at the ESF in Florence.

It was the assembly of the social movements at that ESF that created the historic protests on Feb 15th.

As in the Paris and Florence Social Forums thousands of people will pack into meetings and workshops at London and listen to international speakers such as Naomi Klein and Vandana Shiva.

There will also be huge debates and discussions as tens of thousands enthusiastically bring their own ideas and suggestions as to how we can make another world possible.

This year's organising committee has promised to make even more time for floor discussion which will allow for more voices of the movement to be heard.

There is something at the forum for everyone with an interest in progressive politics.

Proposed seminars this year include *Is there a future for the movement against globalisation and war?* *Life after capitalism,*

Human rights all over the world, Racism, Asylum and Education, Science for the people, The hijab: a woman's right to choose, Philosophy after anti capitalism- interpreting the world and Living without oil.

Side by side with ESF a cultural forum takes place with a multitude of events including live music, performance art, exhibitions, film showings and theatre.

Debates

The Florence Social Forum was dominated by debates on the anti war movement.

In Paris the argument had moved on to the character of the social movements as a whole. Should we become an educational movement, seeking merely to con-

vince the rulers of the world of the moral justice of our case, or should we overthrow the system altogether.

And if we were to set out to overthrow the system how would we do it and what kind of world do we want instead?

With the growth and consolidation of the left in Europe and the continuing brutality of globalisation and the American 'War on Terror', these debates will only have deepened.

Lastly, the forums are a place where new alliances can be made and old ones strengthened. The social movements today are facing very important challenges and struggles from the occupations of Iraq and Palestine to the privatisation of public services.

The European Social Forum in London presents a vital opportunity for the social movements to come together and decide upon the ways forward to tackle the global agenda of profit and war.

Here in Ireland we face the privatisation of our transport and electricity, the introduction of waste and water charges and the continuing use of Shannon by the US war machine.

These problems are not unique to Ireland. Across the world communities, workers, immigrants, the excluded and oppressed are facing the same attacks from our governments.

At the ESF we will have the chance to learn and link up with those from across the globe who are fighting the same battles as us.

WHY GO TO THE ESF?

AS IN Porto Alegre, Florence and Paris, the ESF in London will be an open international event in which the entire range of social movements and organisations of civil society in Europe can debate ways of making "another world possible" and alternatives to the "process of globalisation commanded by the large multinational corporations and by the governments and international institutions at the service of those corporations' interests".

The ESF in London is a unique opportunity for social movements, trade unions, NGOs, refugees, peace and anti-imperialist groups, anti-racist movements, environmental movements, networks of the excluded and community campaigns from Europe and the world to come together and discuss

themes linked to major European and global issues: privatisation and the neo-liberal offensive; globalisation and war; Europe's role in the global South; opposing racism and xenophobia; the role of the United States; the arms trade and collective security; the struggle for equality for all; the defence and development of public

services; responsible approaches to the environment; access to culture, etc.

At the 100s of seminars and workshops at the ESF all groups, organisations and individuals will have many opportunities to discuss with groups from other countries involved in similar struggles and campaigns.

Different tactics, experiences and perspectives can be shared. This will bring new ways of sustaining, strengthening and being successful in campaigns and struggles back home.

With the globalisation of neo-liberalism led by US/UK imperialism and enforced by almost every government in the world, it is increasingly obvious that the only way in which our movements are going to win will be by adopting global strategies. The ESF gives the space and means to create and build a global struggle.

The Feb 15th demo showed that the only superpower that can defeat the US is the superpower of the social movements.

The ESF is a central mechanism to build our alternative superpower.

What can you do

In your local community, work place, school, college get a meeting together of people who might be interested in discussing how to stop war, end the cut-backs, stop privatisation, make another world possible and encourage them to go the ESF.

You can propose and organise a seminar or workshop at the ESF (check out website for info).

Get in touch with us if you are interested in going to the ESF

■ log on to:
<http://www.wsfindia.org/charter.php>,
www.esf2004.org

Book

Was Clinton a gentler President?

By DAVID LYNCH



"THAT is the difference between me and the people that were after me. I actually cared about what happened to those small people, and I wanted to be President to help those people. And that's what the fight was about."

So said Bill Clinton in a recent interview. What fight was he talking about? A brave attack on poverty and a push to lower the military budget and to spend more on social services?

Nah.

The 'fight' was with prosecutor Kenneth Starr and the hearings into what became known as the 'Lewinsky affair'. Clinton has composed a narrative in his newly published 'My Life' memoirs that essentially argues that on taking office the reactionary right in America launched an unprecedented attack to remove him.

Clinton paints himself as a plucky liberal leader with his back against the wall.

The fact that Clinton partially blames his seemingly chronic inability to remain faithful to his wife on a well funded right wing campaign should not interest socialists, however almost everything else about the Clinton Presidency should.

Because what Clinton *actually* did in office exposes the lie that the Democrats are in any substantial way different to the Republicans.

Clinton knows that his new book will cause a political stir, and his memoirs are no doubt meant to help boost the candidacy of John Kerry.

Kerry is quite like Clinton. A supposed liberal, he is in fact in favour of keeping the troops in Iraq and is a big supporter of Israel.

Invaded

Some argue that a Clinton presidency would not have invaded Iraq, but Clinton himself shows this to be rubbish. His only problem with the war in Iraq is only with the timing.

"So, I didn't have any profound difference with the policy until it was decided to invade Iraq before the UN Weapons Inspection process was finished. But we (if Al Gore had won the election) might have had to invade anyway. But keep in mind, I had no problem with that.... I never liked Saddam Hussein, we bombed him several times."

On the Middle East, Clinton writes a virtual love letter to the late Israeli leader Rabin and full squarely blames Palestinian leader Arafat for the "failure of peace talks in 2000".

"I think Arafat made a historical error, and I think he's acknowledged it....no government can make a better deal (than the Americans) for the Palestinians who have been oppressed and abused and ignored by everybody, including a lot of their Arab brothers."

But Clinton's claim that the United States could have been 'honest brokers' is ridiculous—all Democrat Presidents have been full square supporters of the Israeli government.

The present Democrat candidate for the Presidency John Kerry is no different. A June 25 press release from Kerry's Middle East spokesperson declared "unequivocal support" for Sharon's policies.

Those in the Irish media who portray Clinton as some sort of secular saint whose Presidency represented a period of touchy feely tranquillity across the planet should look at the cold facts. The bombing of Serbia, Baghdad, Sudan and the continuation of the trade embargo on Iraq that led to the deaths of tens of thousands of Iraqis all happened on Clinton's watch.

Those who look at Bush and despair and then reminiscence about the 'Clinton days' as a time of hope and progress, should think again.

Cinema

Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* packs cinemas across the US

Regime change begins at home

By SÍOFRA NÍ CHONGHAILE

FAHRENHEIT 9/11, winner of the *Palme D'Or* and latest film from Michael Moore opened to record box office receipts across the States.

The film is a stinging attack on the Bush presidency's failure to protect American citizens and its response to the 9/11 attacks.

Until the morning of 11 September 2001, Bush was the most unpopular president in US history. However, the events of that day changed everything.

What Bush didn't reveal was that he had been forewarned of the likelihood of an Al-Qaeda air attack on US territory and that for years he and his father had enjoyed a special relationship built on oil with both the Bin Laden family and the Saudi ruling princes.

While the entire United States was grounded following the attacks, 24 members of the Bin Laden family along with a hundred other Saudis were rounded up by US special agents and flown out of the country without any questioning.

Bush administration callously used the nation's anger and confusion to launch preparations for war on Iraq.

Firstly the matter of a pipeline in Afghanistan had to be sorted, after all Unocal, Enron and Halliburton didn't provide

copious amounts of funding to the Bush's election campaign for nothing.

Following the killing of thousands in Afghanistan, Moore explains how the White House used the media to deceive Americans into believing that Saddam had developed weapons of mass destruction and had strong links to Al-Qaeda.

Moore tracks down a "conservative Democrat" mother in his hometown of Flint, Michigan whose son is subsequently killed in Iraq and films her as she realises his death was in vain. Lila is a potent symbol of the thousand other mothers of working class men and women who have lost their children due to the Bush administration's greed for oil and power while the sons and daughters of Republican and Democrat senators remain in safety at home.

Despite its careful editing, sharp dialogue and powerful imagery, the film disappoints on some levels.

Firstly, although Moore quite rightly points out that the Democrats at no point cried halt to the drive to war, he stops short of asking why this is.

The special relationship with the Saudis pre-dates Bush the Elder and actually began with Democrat president Franklin D Roosevelt who realised the strategic importance to the US of Saudi oil.

Another Democrat, Jimmy Carter, aided the



■ Michael Moore: Refreshing alternative to Hollywood tripe

forerunners of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. President Clinton presided over the UN sanctions responsible for the deaths of some 1.2 million Iraqis.

Imperialism

Moore tends to under-emphasise the nature of imperialism attributing the Bush regime's motives to business and profit.

Moore describes the war in Iraq as a continuation of the Bush family's ties to Saudi investment in oil and arms manufacturers.

Unfortunately, the film fails to address the wider geo-political forces behind the "war on terror".

Neither the *Project for a New American Century* nor the economic threat posed to the US by the EU, China and Russia is discussed.

Furthermore, while Moore exposes at great length the relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia, he completely neglects to mention the equally strategic alliance with Israel.

Much of the anger vented at the US stems from its continued sponsorship of Israeli terror.

It is likely that Moore made the film that he thought Americans would

go to see and not the film that ideally needs to be made. In the same vein he calls for a vote for a candidate that he thinks Americans might just handle, rather than call for the "regime change" that Americans really need.

Moore ends this film by speaking of another war, the timeless war of the rich and powerful against the ordinary people of the planet. In a world where Commies and Arabs equal evil, and cops equal good, Moore remains a refreshing alternative to mainstream Hollywood tripe.

CDs

Rufus Wainwright's 'Want One' reissued



■ Rufus Wainwright

By KAREN MCCORMACK

For those who missed it first time around, Rufus Wainwright's critically acclaimed album "Want One" has been re-released with 2 bonus tracks and an enhanced section.

This album which sees him trying to understand a complicated world is his most accessible to date.

Heralded as one of the best songwriters of his age, among his fans are Michael Stipe and KD Lang.

The album opens with the uplifting "Oh What a World" which is a

reminder that life is still beautiful.

In "I Don't Know What It Is" he makes a reference to the war:

"I'm sick of looking around at friendly faces, all declaring war on far off places. Is there anyone else who is through with complaining about what's been done unto us."

But overall the album is deeply personal. Themes of love and loss are portrayed in "Natasha" and "Vicious World".

In the heart-breaking "Dinner At 8" with his mother Kate McGarrigle playing banjo, he recalls his father Loudon Wainwright

leaving when he was just a boy.

Having the musical influence of both his mother and father it is no wonder that he has come to be one of the best young songwriters today.

From the jazzy "Harvester of Hearts" to the orchestral arrangement of "Go Or Go Ahead" his song writing shines through.

But the success of his album is more likely due to his unique vocal style, which has traits of Jackson Browne and Thom Yorke.

For lovers of all music, I'd highly recommend you check this album

out.

Roderigo y Gabriella, Live in Dublin and Manchester

I first heard this Mexican-born guitar duo in 1999 busking on Grafton St.

They have come a long way since then. Indeed they have been adopted into the Irish music scene here and have brought their own flavour with them.

Both of these gifted musicians play nylon stringed guitars.

Their sound is a fusion of jazz, flamenco, Latin, rock and much more, making them diffi-

cult to categorise. Who says you can't rock with a nylon stringed guitar? Roderigo y Gabriella certainly do on their first live album.

They originally played together in a heavy metal band in the early nineties, their cover of Metallica's "One" recorded live in the intimate setting of Christ's Church Cathedral, a tribute to this.

After playing a string of festivals in the UK, they will be performing on July 30th in Temple Bar's Meeting House Square as part of the Latin Quarter Festival.

Definitely one not to be missed.

fact file LUAS



THE LUAS green line came into operation in Dublin on June 30th. Thousands of people took advantage of free fares to test it. While a tram system is badly needed there are many problems with Luas.

► The cost of the Luas project has massively over-run. It jumped from €300 million back in the planning stage in 1997 to almost €800 million on completion. Bad news for the tax payer but great news for the construction company has their costs covered!

► Luas was built under a public private partnership with a French firm called Connex. The government has a very clear agenda at the moment to privatise public transport. The decision to build Luas under a PPP is a serious undermining of a state run transport system.

► Connex is charging the government €20 million to run the system over the next five years. If passenger numbers don't meet expectations taxpayers will again foot the bill.

► Connex, the largest private transport operator in Europe with a turnover of €3.7 billion has lost contracts in Britain where it is accused of financial mismanagement and poor service.

► The Luas fare at €3.80 return for the full journey is more expensive than the bus fare for the same route. Instead of encouraging people to leave their cars behind the decision to charge €4 per day for parking at Luas stations will make it too expensive to use.

► The Green Line runs from Stephens Green to Sandyford Industrial estate. Sandyford at the moment is one of the worst traffic blackspots in Dublin. It's doubtful if Luas will be of much benefit to the 10,000 people who work there. Many live in the new satellite towns of west Dublin. The Luas route is of no benefit to them.

► The failure to bring the Luas through Ballinteer is another example of bad planning. Huge housing estates and apartments are being built on all available green space here. Traffic congestion is guaranteed. Yet despite the expanding population Luas will not stop there.

► The Green Luas line will not connect with the Red Line (Tallaght to city centre) which is due to open at the end of the summer. This lack of coordination is planning gone mad.

► Dublin Bus, Bus Eireann and Iarnród Eireann face privatisation in the long term. Dublin Bus currently faces the possibility that 25 percent of its routes will be put out to franchise. As we know from the British experience, this all leads to an inferior quality service, lower maintenance standards and higher fares.

► Ireland's public transport system receives one of the lowest state subsidies in the EU. Now the government is planning to seriously curtail state provision of these services.

news from the struggle

the fight against cutbacks and privatisation

send reports to **Socialist Worker**

Phone 8722682 email socialistworker@swp.ie

Dun Laoghaire: for sale to the highest bidder?

RESIDENTS IN Dun Laoghaire are fighting against the sell off of their area to private developers.

The council's new Development Plan allows builders to buy up huge areas of land to build high rise flats. The problem started when Dun Laoghaire Golf club sold its land to Cosgrave builders. The builders planned to build 700 houses and an industrial centre on the golf course. Combined Residents to Save Open Spaces (CRSOS) was set up by local residents to fight the developments. 30 residents associations have joined the group.

Angry

The people of Dun Laoghaire

are angry at their lack of control over what is happening to their town and their surroundings. Replacing an open green area like a golf course with a huge housing estate is a nightmare for the local environment.

The new County development plan is to blame for the destruction of Dun Laoghaire's environment. CRSOS campaigned against the county development plan pressurising the local councillors to reject the plan twice. On the third time of asking Martin Cullen, the Minister for the Environment, told councillors they had to accept it as the area

needed more houses.

The Majority of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael on the Council voted in favour of the new Development plan. Councillors from Fianna Fail who had opposed the plan before mysteriously stayed away to ensure it finally passed.

Gone

Jean Feighery, chair of CRSOS is clear on what the new Development Plan means – "all original restrictions maintaining conservation areas are gone.

"The County Manager can override any needs for height and scale restrictions [that make sure new buildings aren't larger than their surroundings] if he decides

it restricts development." This is a blank cheque for builders and will destroy the area.

Richard Boyd Barrett, who stood for the SWP in the council elections in June, commented. "All these new developments like the 9 storey apartment block planned for George's Place would not be allowed without the new Development plan. Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and the county manager are running roughshod over residents' rights to help big business make profits"

CRSOS is hoping that a legal appeal against the County Development Plan can save the character of Dun Laoghaire.

Special Needs Assistants

HUNDREDS OF Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) working in primary and secondary schools attended an information meeting organised by IMPACT last month in Dublin.

SNAs work with children with disabilities and have endured very poor working conditions over the last number of years.

One SNA told Socialist Worker "People at the meeting were very angry. When we were asked how many people in the room were unsure if they had a job next year, over half the hands went up. The job insecurity is the worst part. We're not sure

what the Minister for Education is going to do with SNAs when he reorganises the way special education resources are allocated to schools.

Insecurity

We've lived with the fear of job losses and insecurity for too long. In the 2002/2003 school year they started cutting back on SNAs. We need to have our positions made permanent and secure. We've also had to wait until now for a pension scheme which is disgraceful. The numbers who showed up reflect the number of people who are committed to their jobs and who will fight to keep them and to improve the conditions we've had to endure".

Community cutbacks

Shutdown will hit Clondalkin hard

CLONDALKIN VOLUNTEER CENTRE closed its doors on Friday July 2nd. Funding for the centre was cut in half by the Clondalkin Partnership, which in turn is funded by a government body called Area Development Management (ADM).

This comes after Lucan 2000 lost its Volunteer Service in June. A skeleton service will be held together in Clondalkin until October when it will be fully cut.

The centre made a big difference to Clondalkin, with 110 volunteers working there. Up to 55 organisations in the Clondalkin area used the service. People from minority ethnic communities who were unable to work due to the lack of work permits worked as volunteers there. Closing the centre then steals enthusiastic volunteers from the community and takes away chances to work

from minorities.

Harold Slok, the former manager of the centre is not hopeful, "To be honest we tried every single route to save the Centre, we just didn't have the tools to put pressure on the ADM. Everywhere there are problems in the centres, They are starting a new one in Bray with a part time manager... in Kildare a new centre will be run by volunteers."

Devastated

Niamh Carton, a Community Development Worker in Clondalkin is angry; "I am devastated by the closure! We are trying to encourage people to take pride in their area and to get involved. The closure of this centre will have a serious impact on the services provided in the area."

Local socialists are looking to organise a campaign to defend community supports like the Clondalkin Community Centre. Anyone willing to help should contact Gino Kenny at 085 7211574 or the Socialist Workers Party at 8722682.

Tralee UDC

FOLLOWING THE local elections a left majority now dominates Tralee UDC. Labour holds three seats and Sinn Fein holds two alongside two left wing independents.

Unfortunately Labour has chosen to enter a pact with Fianna Fail on the mayor's job. A Fianna Fail candidate will be mayor this year with a Labour representative taking next year.

Hopefully this is not a sign of things to come. Sinn Fein and Labour have a clear mandate from the people of

Tralee to change the way things are run in the town. The cash strapped council has been too willing in the past to spend taxpayer's money on bailing out failed or failing business projects- like the building of the replica Famine ship the Jeannie Johnson and the Rose of Tralee Festival. Commercial rates on big enterprises in the town are also far too low considering the profits they are making.

The left now needs to unite to bring the bin service back 100 percent under public ownership and to demand proper funding from central government.

Waterford Road Campaign

ONE OF THE most significant archeological finds in Europe for the last twenty years could be buried under concrete by the Department for the Environment.

The Woodstown viking site just outside Waterford City was described as potentially one of the most important finds in Europe.

The site was found when preparing for the new motorway but construction is still

due to go ahead. The Minister for the Environment, Martin Cullen, who is a TD for Waterford, is willing to sacrifice an important find for short-term transport needs. Cullen has said he will make a decision on the site in November, but local Fine Gael and Labour politicians are calling on him to "remember how important the road is to Waterford".

Anyone who wants to fight to save the site should call Roy at 086 3274015.

news from the struggle – news from the struggle – news from the struggle–

ESB the shape of things to come?

send reports to **Socialist Worker**
phone 8722682 email socialistworker@swp.ie

A price hike too far...

CATHERINE KENNEDY, from Bray was shocked recently when her new ESB bill dropped through her door.

It seemed higher than usual, a trend that she had noticed over the last few months. So she took out her old bills and compared the prices.

"I was very taken aback. In my February 2003 bill the unit cost of electricity was 9.52 cents, the next month it had risen to 10.75c and in my current bill it's 11.07c. VAT jumped from 12.5 percent in February 2003 to 13.5 percent twelve months

later."

"I then noticed the public service obligation levy. This only started to appear on bills last January twelve months. The ESB claims it was always paid but never itemised on the bill. It has also increased from €1.92 to €3.02 in the space of twelve months.

"I couldn't get over this. You pay these bills because you have to but when you take the time to look at it you notice just how much you're being ripped off.

"I'm sure if you looked at any other bills you'd see exactly the same thing."

When the case of Catherine's ESB bill was

put to Fianna Fail TD Michael Mulcahy on a radio show he blamed lack of competition for these rising bills. In fact the opposite is happening. It is precisely because the electricity market is going to be deregulated that these price increases have been allowed.

The higher the cost of electricity the higher the profit for companies. The government hopes high prices will have private operators queuing up for a slice of the Irish market.

The government tells us that competition is good for us. The example of California described on this page shows us that it is a complete disaster for



The California Deregulation disaster

IT IS estimated that the deregulation of the power market in California in 1996 has cost tax payers \$71 billion.

It is clear now that the energy crisis of 2000-2001 was manufactured by private companies to maximise their profits. Consumer organisations in California state that the electricity companies created artificial shortages so they could raise the price of electricity in some

cases by up to 3000 percent

The multi-million dollar bail outs of some companies who got their fingers burnt, added to price hikes, meant that deregulation was a nightmare for the people of California.

We need to learn the lessons and resist deregulation now.

For more detailed information check out www.consumerwatchdog.org/utilities

As *Socialist Worker* goes to press it looks like ESBOA workers will call off their strike action in favour of more talks with management. With deregulation on the cards its likely that strike action will be their only way to defend their jobs and conditions.

NIPSA strike action

Rank and file action needed

THE INDUSTRIAL action campaign involving up to 20,000 civil servants is an increasingly crucial one for the working class.

Those taking part in the industrial action have seen the government using every weapon at its disposal. In the past six months, workers have been suspended without pay for refusing to do the work of those on strike.

The rules surrounding working family tax credits have been changed so anyone involved in industrial action for more than ten days loses money which is supposed to keep their children out of poverty!

The Government has blamed striking civil servants for the mess created by their introduction of the means-tested pension credits. It's not their miserliness towards pensions that's to blame, it's the work-to-rule that's causing pensioner poverty!

Undermining

The eight-week old strike of workers in the MOT centres has probably had more impact than any other of the NIPSA actions. It has resulted in the Federation for Small Businesses calling on the government to privatise MOT tests in the North. Almost immediately, New Labour introduced new legislation which means that you don't need an MOT certificate for your car to use it on the road in the North – thereby undermining the effect of the strike.

The campaign for a decent pay rise was always important for all low-paid workers. It is now becoming an essential battle in the class

war – New Labour wants to smash this public sector union. If the strategy of the NIPSA leadership doesn't change, they might just do that.

Their tactics involve taking small groups of workers out on strike rather than bringing out the whole civil service. Unfortunately, management have been able to devise ways of undermining their action. Throughout the dispute, they have paid scabs to carry out the duties of those on strike, for example in the Pension Centre in Derry.

NIPSA has not mobilised mass pickets to stop the scabs, and so management have been able to ride out the piecemeal strikes. If the entire civil service had been called out, they would not have been able to cope.

Leadership

What we need is a rank-and-file revolt to tell the NIPSA leadership it's time for a civil service-wide strike. That will mean that management can't ride it out, undermine it, pass new legislation or employ scabs, because the scale of action will be overwhelming.

Every time NIPSA members have been asked to take action they have delivered. On Friday 25th June, after over six months of industrial action, thousands of civil servants marched through Belfast city centre. Those workers are ready to go on all-out strike. Each day it becomes clearer that only all-out strike can force New Labour Minister Pearson to back down and give low paid civil servants the kind of wage rise that higher paid ones have enjoyed.

MANDATE Conference

Delegates vote to reject the Pay Deal

Delegates at the MANDATE special conference on Sustaining Progress pay offer 2005-2006 overwhelmingly rejected recommending acceptance to the membership.

'The trade union representatives were angry that workers on as little as €9 per hour will be offered an increase of only 5.5%, while those on under €9 per hour will get an increase of just 6%. And in some cases, the bulk of the increase will not be awarded until November 2006.'

At the beginning of Sustaining Progress talks MANDATE set €20 per week as a minimum increase and yet this figure will not be achieved even for members on minimum wage rates!

This pay offer does nothing to address the issue of low pay and according to the General Secretary, John Douglas, it was never meant to! The union bureaucrats argued long and hard that conference should accept the offer, saying that only a change in gov-

ernments could affect the issue of low pay and insultingly accused the delegates of voting the FF/PD government into power.

The issue of inflation was minimised. Delegates were asked to trust in the government re-adjourning talks if inflation were to rise significantly, but there was no mention of a clause in the offer to copper fasten this.

SWP delegates led the arguments against the deal and as discussions continued the anger of the delegates intensified. The full time officials were told in no uncertain terms that the members demand a fighting trade union that looks after the interests of all its members regarding pay and non-pay issues.

Delegates voted by 98% that MANDATE do not recommend the offer to the membership and that the union officials get back to the table and demand a decent offer.

Waterford remembers

A monument in memory of the 11 Waterford men who fought for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War will be unveiled in Waterford City in July. Two veterans of the XV International Brigade, Mick O'Riordan and Jack Jones will make the unveiling.

Many of the Irish fighters in the International Brigade faced prejudice and disdain from 'official' Ireland and the Catholic Church on their return from fighting fascism, and many suffered long term effects from injuries sustained in the war. The unveiling of the monument, which was paid for from fund raising - particularly from trade unions, takes place on Friday 9th July at 7.00pm on the Mall, Waterford City.

Socialist Worker

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FIGHT THE PRIVATISATION AGENDA

C.I.E. WORKERS VOTE TO STRIKE

OVER 90 percent of bus drivers represented by the National Bus and Rail Workers Union (NBRU) voted for a series of strike actions over the next three months.

Anger amongst drivers is at boiling point as Seamus Brennan continues to offer licenses to private operators to run a large number of routes across Dublin city and the rest of the country.

Last year workers held a no fares day against the privatisation of the transport system.

Brennan's cabinet colleague Mary Harney wants to see CIE broken up and Dublin Bus routes sold off to private companies.

She has gone so far as to suggest that if this doesn't happen she will consider leaving the government.

The right wing Fianna Fail and the PDs are shaping up for a fight.

Minister Brennan made plain his intention for confrontation after the results of the NBRU vote.

He said "reform" of CIE was needed and that this vote showed precisely why—a group of people like this shouldn't be allowed to

hold the transport system to "ransom".

The government really want to smash the power of the unions.

The new operators that Brennan and Harney want to enter the field will be non-union employers.

Pay and conditions of workers will be much lower than that of existing Bus Eireann and Dublin Bus workers.

Brennan has avoided the use of

the word privatisation.

He is not seeking full scale privatisation straight off.

The issuing of licences to private operators is a step on the road.

Job Security

Licences issued to private operators around the country, for example, are clearly designed to undermine the position of Bus Eireann.

In many instances route licences put private operators head to head with Bus Eireann routes.

The workforce of CIE has shown once again that it is up for a real fight against Brennan's privatisation agenda.

The unions must now give a fighting lead—there must be no backing down until Brennan has withdrawn his plans.

'It's make or break time!'

A BUS worker told Socialist Worker:

"We have been here before.

"In fact we've been at this point too often before. Dublin bus workers have been willing to strike over this issue for months as a succession of ballots has shown.

"Union leaders have participated in talks with government that many of us are just not happy about.

"We do not concede

the principle of competition.

"We do not agree there should be a government appointed regulator to decide on the franchising out of routes.

Job Security

"We do not believe or trust guarantees over our pay and job security or those of new colleagues"

"Non union firms are now operating on routes

that in some cases are very close to existing Dublin Bus routes.

"The number of new licenses that Brennan has issued has risen dramatically. It is now vital that the union leaders act on this mandate.

"Bus Workers Action Group, a rank and file group of SIPTU and NBRU members, will be calling meetings to ensure that the action does go ahead this time.

"We voted on five

occasions for strike action but each time it has been called off by union leaders to enter talks.

"Minister Brennan seems to be giving union officials the run around.

"It's only strike action by the unions in CIE that can prevent Brennan's plans to decimate Dublin Bus.

Harney and Brennan are putting the boot in. It's make or break time".

Aer Lingus bosses bid for sell-off bonanza

AER LINGUS chief executive Willie Walsh, along with chief financial officer Brian Dunne and chief operations officer Seamus Kearney are jumping aboard the privatisation gravy train.

They approached Transport Minister Seamus Brennan at the beginning of July with a scheme for a "management buy-out".

Management buy-outs in other industries have allowed directors to pocket millions in share options and then sell to the highest bidder.

After shedding 2,000 jobs and a pay freeze, Aer Lingus operating profits have soared to €83 million.

Willie Walsh's move received encouragement from Mary Harney.

The Government has been considering what form of privatisation to implement in the case of Aer Lingus.

They have been considering a discussion paper outlining various options including a flotation, or a partial or full sale to private investors.

Any form of privatisation will necessarily lead to further attacks on workers jobs, conditions and pay. It is time the unions made a clear stand to resist any sell-off of the national carrier.