By Richard Boyd Barrett

With the murderous Israeli assaults on Gaza and Lebanon over the last number of weeks, the veil has finally slipped from US foreign policy in the Middle East and that of its closest ally in the region.

Israel has slaughtered over 1,000 mostly innocent civilians and forced well over half a million to flee their homes in terror.

Israel's assault on Gaza and Lebanon has nothing whatsoever to do with the capture of three of their soldiers.

Israel's decision to collectively punish the entire Palestinian population for electing Hamas was encouraged by the US, UK and EU who refused to recognise the Palestinian government and removed all aid from them knowing this would inflict desperate suffering of the already impoverished and suffering Palestinians.

In the attempt to blame Hizbollah for the current conflict in, what is forgotten is that Hizbollah only came into existence in response to the murderous invasion and occupation of Lebanon from 1982 until 2000. It is also not mentioned that Israel holds Lebanese prisoners that Hizbollah have asked to be released and had warned they would capture Israeli soldiers for the purpose of prisoner exchange if Israel refused.

Israel has exchanged prisoners with both Hizbollah and the Palestinians in the past. So the claim that the hostage taking or Hizbollah's incursion into Israel justified this devastating attack on civilians and civilian infrastructure just does not stand up.

In reality, just like Weapons of Mass destruction in Iraq, the hostages issue is a pretext for a war that Israel and its backers in the Bush and Blair administrations had planned for some time before.

Direct US support for the atrocities being committed by Israel is confirmed by the US rushing an emergency shipment of bombs to Israel to help bolster up the assault.

>>Turn to page three
Top: Alaska’s Glacier Bay National Park in 1941 shows the glacier 2,000 feet thick, Above: By 2004 the glacier is down to 280 feet thick. It is one of the fastest melting glacier in the world

"In this present conflict, it is Hizbollah and its allies who are the aggressors and the terrorist actions of Hizbollah and those countries which sponsor its activities are to be unreservedly condemned.”

Irish Catholic Bishops Commission for Justice and Social Affairs statement on Israel and Lebanon July 06

“There is a huge gap between the declared aims of this war and the actual military operations. What is the connection between the declared aims of this war and the destruction of Beirut? How are the declared aims of this war served by the demolition of a baby-food plant? We are convinced that this war mainly serves the interests of American policy in the Middle East...We refuse to allow our name to be used in bringing disaster to another civilian population.”

Statement from the Residents of the Galilee and the Valley’s Arabs and Jews, against the war

"Are we children of a lesser God? Is an Israeli war worth more than a drop of Lebanese blood?

FOK SINORA, Lebanese Prime Minister, at death and destruction rise within his country’s borders

“The Arab leaders are traitors who work for the Americans and the Israelis...[Hizbullah leader] Hassan Nasrallah represents Arab and Islamic dignity.”

An Egyptian mechanic expressing the disillusionment of many in the Arab world with the stance of their governments on Israeli attacks

"A multinational force sent to the Lebanon will be seen much as the US and Britain in Iraq. They will be fought as a new detachment of crusaders.”

PATRICK COCKBURN, Middle East correspondent for the Independent

“We are delighted that the conscience of the community—12 people selected off the streets of Dublin—have spoken unanimously.”

CARAN O’REILLY, of Pitstop Ploughshares

“Lopez Obrador, hold on, the people are rising up.”

The 100,000 protesters who joined Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on the streets of Mexico to challenge the outcome of the recent Mexican elections

“Hope over fear. Liberty over oppression...Let there be no doubt—today Iraq is a democracy.”

NOURI AL-MALIKI, Iraqi Prime Minister, addressing U.S. Congress, outlines his country’s political and social progress since 2003

"Is he living in Iraq?"

DEBBIE WASSERMANN-SCHULTZ, Democratic Representative, Florida, on al-Maliki’s depiction of Iraq and his failure to recognize the country’s escalating violence and resistance

“We decided to buy property in Crawford to use until George’s resignation or impeachment, which we all hope is soon for the sake of the world.”

CINDY SHEEHAN anti-war activist on purchasing property in Crawford, Texas beside the Bush ranch

“US president George W. Bush claims that he has a connection with God every day, but, in fact, he has a connection with the devil because no other country has put humanity in danger like the United States”

HUGO CHAVEZ

“Dublin has fewer neurologists and psychiatrists than 28 years ago despite a huge increase in population.

A study of the asylum process over the last six years has revealed that 60% of asylum seekers who appeal the initial rejection of their application are subsequently granted refugee status. This is mainly because the process is unfair and geared to fail people rather than hear their case in a fair and understandable way.

In the last five years, Ireland received just 2% of the two million or so asylum applications in Europe.

Tony Blair was in Pebble Beach, California at the height of the Iraq war, at a conference organised by his good friend Rupert Murdoch.

According to the local press the conference’s content wasn’t shared with the outside world but it is known they talked about the future of the world generally and geopolitics in particular.

The Fianna Fail hospitality truck was parked outside the hotel and they were driven to the conference by Murdochs driver.

According to the Polish embassy up to 600 Polish people are homeless in Dublin.

The full environmental cost of the Israeli assault on Lebanon won’t be clear for some months but already the bombing of power stations has led to at least 3,000 tons of heavy fuel oil leaking into the sea. Another 15,000 tons are expected to seep into the Mediterranean over the coming days.

While 43,000 people are currently on local authority waiting lists, just 5% of houses completed in the first three months of this year were for local authority tenants.

We should be on the streets of Dublin today, not it was demanding publicly funded alternative energy and a world organised according to the needs of the planet and environment not the profits of the private sector.

They are often not prepared to make the investment because of the lack of sufficient profit.

An international day of action against Climate change takes place in November.

The Government has so far indicated that the cost of the Israeli assault on Lebanon won’t be clear for some months but already the bombing of power stations has led to at least 3,000 tons of heavy fuel oil leaking into the sea. Another 15,000 tons are expected to seep into the Mediterranean over the coming days.

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A recent police inquiry into the assault of Xu Naixia—an activist for the rights of people displaced by the Three Gorges Dam project (up to one million, most of whom received no compensation)—concluded he must have broken his own neck! Fu was attacked when he got in a police station following an interrogation after local police chiefs became incensed by an interview he gave to German TV. Human Rights groups have expressed concern

Recently released minutes from Armour Pharmaceuticals meetings reveal that the company knew they were supplying infected blood products to Irish haemophiliacs in the 1980s. 91 out of the 100 Irish haemophiliacs who contracted HIV have died, 220 others were infected with Hepatitis C.

Unbelievably the Irish government has so far indicated that it will not take any action against Armour.

At 11am he was found dead at the Fianna Fail hospitality tent at the Galway races.

“Taxpayers to pay for gov’t inaction on climate change”

By Rory Hearne

The EPA estimates that Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions from 2008-2012 will rise to the dangerous levels as stipulated by the Kyoto Protocol.

The seven million tons of excess pollution a year will have to be bought by the government and purchasing emissions permits will cost at about €105 million a year, or €2 million a week.

The Government has decided to challenge the crisis by purchasing these credits for emission internationally, Irish Friends of the Earth director Oisin Coghlan has called the Government’s climate pollution plan ‘the ultimate stealth tax.’

Even the Irish Times said the government’s climate strategy “is off the rails.”

Explaining how government inaction will cost the consumer and the taxpayer, Coghlan said “this is the ultimate stealth tax.”

The Government has replaced the polluter-pays principle with the public-pays principle.

On the one hand industry will get their pollution permits for free but raise consumer prices to reflect their value.

On the other hand the government will use taxpayers’ money to buy permits for the rest of our Kyoto overshoot. It’s a double-whammy for the average household.

“Friends of the Earth is calling on the government to replace the current stealth tax with clear carbon pricing across the whole economy.

“There’s still time to make industry pay its fair share for pollution permits.”

The problem lies in the fact that businesses and funds are set to include environmental costs into their operation costs.

They pay for the CO2 they are producing that is destroying the Ozone Layer and causing global warming.

Furthermore, the government and local authorities’ pursuit of growth has meant environmental concerns have been ditched in favour of profits for the private sector in planning, transport and energy production.

For example, road transport created nearly 12 tonnes of CO2 emissions in 2004 and emissions from road transport rose by 144 per cent between 1990 and 2004.

As the Irish times noted: “It has also been aggravated by urban sprawl and long-distance commuting - a trend encouraged by the Government’s laissez-faire planning policies.”

The big builders and developers are driving the agenda not the needs of the environment and the future of the planet.

And now we, the taxpayers are being bailing big business out as the government forces us to pay for carbon credits.

We could meet our Kyoto targets if proper public transport infrastructure was in place, energy efficiency was put in place in all sectors, and the ESB developed alternative energies: wind, wave and solar.

However the ESB is restricted from developing such energies by EU rules and government privatisation plans, leaving the development of renewables up to the private sector.

They are often not prepared to make the investment because of the lack of sufficient profit.

An international day of action against Climate change takes place in November.

We should be on the streets of Dublin today demanding publicly funded alternative energy and a world organised according to the needs of the planet and environment not the profits of the private sector.
Against the US-Israeli War on Lebanon

By Richard Boyd Barrett

Condoze Ricas' chilling statement at the outset of the attack on Lebanon that the violence being unleashed represented the birth pangs of a new Middle East, is the most dramatic confirmation that Israel's declared policy of regime change in the region.

Rice, Bush and Blair have all refused to call for a cease-fire with accompanying references for the need to deal with the threat of 'extremism' from Iran and Syria before a 'sustainable' peace can be established.

This is a nacked admission that a US plan for 'regime change' across the region lies behind the Israeli attack on Lebanon and all Blairs' rhetoric about challenging the 'arc of extremism in the Middle East'.

Israel, with full US backing and knowledge, has attacked Gaza and Lebanon deliberately to try and provoke a wider conflict with Iran and Syria.

The US neo-cons plan for the Middle East is to set the region on fire, regardless of the human cost, in the hope that when the fires go out they will have smashed their opponents and reasserted their dominance.

Their next step is to back a western force being sent into Lebanon to implement UN resolution 1559 to disarm Hizbollah. But any Western intervention force will only be seen as a tool for the US-Israeli governments.

With Israel refusing to implement countless UN resolutions that call for withdrawal from the Palestinian territories, such a one side UN action would rightly be rejected and resisted by Hizbollah and the Palestinians.

The US and Israel then hope to present Hizbollah and Iran to the world as being the forces that refuse to accept international law.

Simultaneously, the US has now pushed through a UN resolution calling on Israel to cease uranium enrichment by August 31st or face unspecified sanctions. Just like in Iraq, the UN can then claim the right to attack Iran if they refuse to abide by the resolution.

The signs suggest the US, and their allies plan a military assault on Iran some time in the Autumn.

However, in the face of this brutal bluff, there is hope. In both Iran and now Lebanon, Israel, the US and the US hoped overwhelming military superiority would devastate their opponents but this has not happened. They face massive and growing resistance. In both cases they attempted to encourage sectarian divisions to weaken the resistance but have, in fact, fostered an unprecedented level of unity between Sunnis, Shia, Christian, Druze, Nationalist and leftist forces.

Despite all the talk of civil war in Iraq the real conflict is not between Sunni and Shia. Rather it is between the 83% of all Iraqis that want the occupation forces out, on the one hand, and the occupiers and their small band of supporters, on the other.

In Lebanon the divide between Christian and Muslim who opposed that invited and occupy the country in 1982 has given way to an unprecedented national unity in the face of Israeli aggression. The latest poll shows over 80% support for Hizbollah, though less than half of Lebanese population are Shia. Hizbollah are clearly seen as a legitimate national liberation movement by most Lebanese.

Here in the west, the savagery of the Israeli assault and the obvious complicity of Bush and Blair has re-ignited the mass anti-war movement seen in the run-up to the Iraq war. Blair's government is being torn apart and US public opinion is fast turning against Bush's war in Iraq.

As tens and hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets in Baghdad, Beirut, London and thousands here in Dublin in protest at Israeli actions, the urgent need to to continue and escalate the demonstrations. Given the US plan to manipulate the UN into sanctioning a war, a key part of our task is to resist calls for a western force or Irish troops to be sent into Lebanon to disarming Hizbollah.

Rather, we must argue that the people of Iraq, Palestine and Lebanon have the right to resist colonial aggression and occupation. Our job in the anti-war movement in the west is to build solidarity with the resistance and build on the growing sense of unity between the peoples of the Middle East and the West against the maniacs in Bush Blair and Israeli administrations.

Finally, here in Ireland, we must point once again to the ongoing complicity of the Irish government in facilitating tens of thousands of US troops at Shannon and strike a blow against the war machine by focusing an end to that complicity.

Richard Boyd Barrett is Chair of the Irish Anti War Movement, the writer in a personal capacity.

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Statement on the Lebanon war

The SWP and various international socialist groups have issued a statement on how the left should respond to the crisis in Lebanon—Monday 23 July 2006

1. Israel’s war in Lebanon is the latest stage in the imperialist offensive mounted by the United States and its allies since 11 September 2001. The conquest of Iraq was intended to unleash a process of “regime change” that would remove the obstacles to US domination of the Middle East. Instead, thanks to the resistance in Iraq, the Pentagon finds itself bogged down in a guerrilla war that it cannot win.

2. The Bush administration has therefore set itself the goal of removing the Islamic Republican regime in Iran, whose influence it believes weakens the pro-Israeli forces of Saddam Hussein. This would reverse the flow to US interests in the Middle East struck by the Iranian Revolution of 1979-8. Israel’s offensive against Hizbollah therefore offers the US an opportunity to dismantle a powerful anti-imperialist force with a broad social base.

3. We oppose Israel’s war against Lebanon, out of solidarity with the Lebanese people but also because we are against war itself. Some on the left combine a similar position with condemnation of Hizbollah for having attacked and captured Israeli soldiers. We strongly disagree with this stance.

4. As socialists and internationalists we see our main goal as promoting solidarity with the people of our own countries to this war. Around the world here have already been huge protests in support of the national liberation movement against the Israeli assault and US occupation. Up to 3,000 people demonstrated in Dublin on Wednesday 29 July against the assault on Lebanon. Photo: Paula Geraghty

5. International Socialist Organisation (Australia)

Socialist Party (Austria)

Socialist Democracy (Belgium)

Workers Democracy (Cyprus)

Internationale Socialiste (Denmark)

Linksruck (Germany)

Sozialistische Revolutionäre (Greece)

Socialist Workers Party (Ireland)

Internationale Solidarität (Netherlands)

Socialist Worker (New Zealand)

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Prezidentská Demokracie (Poland)

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Which side are SF on over Lebanon?

The US/Israeli assaults on Lebanon and Gaza have posed the question: “Which side are you on?”

On the side of the US and its Israeli surrogate, or the side of the resistance?

Socialist Worker makes no bones about it. We are on the side of the Hizbollah and Hamas.

This doesn’t mean we share the ideas of Hezbollah or Hamas — any more than support for the Provisional IRA in MI5-aided Ulster, apartheid South Africa implied uncritical acceptance of ANC perspectives. The same thinking characterised our opposition to the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, Zanzu in Zimbabwe, Frelimo in Mozambique, etc.

Looking further back, the revolutionary Left supported the forces of Haile Selassie against the invasion of Ethiopia by Mussolini in the 1930s. Stalinists and social democrats refused to come down decisively: Haile Selassie was a feudal dictator and religious fanatic, they said. On this basis, they came down out of the argument.

Revolutionary socialists argued that support for those fighting fascistic invasion was a duty, however fundamental the criticism of the leadership’s politics. What’s more, it was only by standing with the resistance that socialists could argue, in the countries, for the overthrow of the capitalist economic base.

It was on the same basis that socialist groups in many parts of the world supported the Provisional IRA’s campaign in Ulster in the 1970s and 1980s.

Now, the Provos, with the armed struggle over and the subsequent kidnapping of an Irish civilian, triggered what the Irish Times called, simply, Mapeley Ltd.

The SF position was expressed in a statement by Gerry Adams distributed internationally by the SF press office. In the statement, on balance, Adams opposes the US/Israeli position. But “however fundamental the criticism of the US/Israel line is long overdue. It cannot happen part of this.”

As a result, the Irish Times called it the “ambivalent Adams line.” But none will publicly distance themselves from “anti-imperialists.” Many may genuinely feel Israel.

“Since the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hizbullah the trigger for the attack on Lebanon: “Since the election of Hamas, the withdrawal of financial support to the Palestinian government, and the violence, including the deaths of scores of Palestinian civilians in Israeli attacks in Gaza and elsewhere and the subsequent kidnapping of an Israeli soldier, has seen the region lurch from crisis to crisis.”

Adams appears to accept the US/Israeli line that it was the capture of two Israeli soldiers which triggered the attack on Lebanon: “Since the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers by Hizbullah the situation has escalated dreadfully.”

The headline in the Irish Times, he says, should be pushing for a solution.” Based on the rights of the people of Palestine and the people of Israel to live in mutual respect and peaceful co-existence. The cutting off of aid or the refusal to recognise democratically elected governments, or the kidnapings of Israeli soldiers, should not be any part of this.”

The statement concludes: “The Irish experience tells us that political problems require political solutions and not a return to the Middle East. A settlement there is long overdue. It cannot happen without the active involvement of the international community.

Nowhere in the statement does Adams say that Sinn Fein is on the same side as Hizbollah and Hamas — or on the opposite side to the US and Israel.

The statement could have been issued by Pat Rabbitte, who would have said it wouldn’t be seen as “anti-imperialists.” Many may genuinely feel solidarity with the fighters in Gaza and Lebanon. But none will publicly distance themselves from the ambivalent Adams line.

They can’t answer the question straight: which side are they on?

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**ANTI WAR ACTION IN DERRY**

The Belfast Anti War Movement together with the Irish Anti War Movement Committee mobilised urgently against Israeli occupation of Gaza and Lebanon. Within a week of the Israeli states offensive, lively stalls with anti-war leaflets and calling for a ceasefire fed into a 100 strong picket of the BBC building in Belfast. Followed by an impromptu mass meeting.

This was followed by a 250 strong march calling for a ceasefire, walking in July and in a picket of EU offices after the melted response of the antiwar march in Qaia.

More protests are planned by BAWM, PSWC, Trocaire and others.

Photo: Ciara Ó Broin

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**PSNI racism**

Despite a huge advertising campaign against racist hate crime and the setting up of minority liaison units in each district in the north, anti-racism activists say that the PSNI handling of racist attacks is still “as appallingly bad as ever.”

In the latest attack, naming Abu-Ghazaleh were hospitalised after one was bitten by dogs and the other needed 18 stitches after being punched in the face. The PSNI arrived on the scene only after the attacker had been identified by people who had witnessed the attack.

The Anti Racism Network followed up the attack and learned that the attackers were let go on the spot despite the fact that both of the victims had taken the French line of none of the very same witnesses were asked to give statements to the PSNI.

Only after ARN activists kicked up a fuss did police arrange to have the PSNI take up the case of the victims.

After being contacted by a local Sunday newspaper for a response the activists were appealing for witnesses to come forward. These would be the same witnesses who had been at the scene of the attack a week earlier when PSNI officers had told them to “go home”.

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**Tax havens in loop for NIO sell off**

By Eamonn McCann

“Nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes,” declared Benjamin Franklin.

Housekeeping. If you are a property company based in a tax haven, you can operate on the principle that taxes are for saps who know no better.

If this is your attitude and modus operandi, the Northern Ireland Office won’t hold it against you. Peter Hain won’t take time off from denouncing any body who dodge the doe as a “scrounger” to condemn you for failing in your civic duty. Far more likely, the NIO will invite you to bid to take over tax-payers’ property across Northern Ireland, to enrich yourself further.

The company concerned is Mapeley. It has emerged, as a one of four concerns listed by Hain’s officials to submit bids for the Workings of the 2010 programme. Under the programme, it’s proposed that 50 public service buildings will be handed over to private interests and then leased back to the public at rates which guarantee the new owners a profit acceptably.

Technical, administrative and support staff operating in the buildings will be included in the deal, with obligations for wages for their job security, wages and conditions of employment.

The Mapeley story is, by any standards, astonishing. Founded in 1985, the company planned to extend and speed up privatisation. Among those involved were the billion- currency speculator George Soros and giant US investment fund Fortress.

Mapeley opened offices in London and Milton Keynes but was taken over by Ballymore Group for purposes in Bermuda. (The operation has since been relocated to Guernsey, another tax haven.)

The company’s colourful style first came under public scrutiny in the spring when the then Paul Foot, a series of articles in Private Eye detailing an extraordinary deal whereby, in early 2001, the Inland Revenue and Customs had sold off more than $50 million to Mapeley with an agreement to pay the company $2 billion over 20 years to rent the buildings back.

For months, no one in politics or the mainstream media showed interest. Some may have found it difficult to believe that what Foot was alleging was true: could the tax authorities really have handed over public properties the length and breadth of Britain to an outfit specialising in avoiding tax? Indeed, in the 2001 tax return, Northern Ireland Office and the Treasury Select Committee were asked to refuse to help Mapeley.

The then-separate Inland Revenue and Customs had each believed they were dealing with different compa- nies—but neither of these was the company they were in fact dealing with. The Revenue thought it was transferring its buildings in a UK incorporated company, Mapeley STEPS Contractor Ltd. Customs believed they were dealing with a UK firm called, simply, Mapeley Ltd. In fact, they were both dealing with Mapeley STEPS Ltd of Bermuda.

It appears that for 18 months, until September 2002, both Revenue and Customs continued to believe that they were operating with the same entity within the UK.

Sir Nicholas Montagu, KCB, chair of the Treasury and Accountant General, told the conference that Mapeley had been “such mistakes...for which we have apologised and set the record straight.” (Sir Montagu has recently been voted European Business Speaker of the Year, I suspect it was that the ex-treasury committee that we had been “pure mistakes...for which we have apologised and set the record straight.”)

At the beginning of this year, Mapeley issued a prospectus in which it listed its assets. It had a book value to the Revenue and Customs properties in 2001 for £220 million. It now listed them at as £546.5 million—an increase of 150 percent. Over the same period, Mapeley properties rose in value by a mere 20 percent.

Returning to the fray, Bellahouse suggested that Mapeley had been a “bottle deal for tax purposes. They thought they were the latest in a string of executive suicides — the best in show.”

The then-separate Inland Revenue and Customs had each believed they were dealing with different compa- nies—but neither of these was the company they were in fact dealing with. The Revenue thought it was transferring its buildings in a UK incorporated company, Mapeley STEPS Contractor Ltd. Customs believed they were dealing with a UK firm called, simply, Mapeley Ltd. In fact, they were both dealing with Mapeley STEPS Ltd of Bermuda.

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include a claim that the National Audit Office had said that the contract “rep- resented poor value for money.”

The NAO did use this phrase, it should be noted, when it came to the value of the buildings. It described them as “annual average charge of £717 million” to be paid to Mapeley in rent.

But this, too, runs out to be wide of the mark. In 2004, £280.4 million of public money was paid over to Mapeley. In the nine months to September 2005, it received £213.7 million.

I bought the buildings for a song. Now, having rented them back to the people who sold them for a song, it is charging and receiving rent at a much higher rate than was originally quoted.

Is this a sweet deal for the Middle East?

Is this a sweet deal for the Middle East?

To protest against the car- rying on of the Middle East.

“Darling of Israeli goods. All the main supermark- et chains, like Sainsburys and Asda, were leafleted and asked to refuse to help fund the slaughter in their stores.

It appears that for 18 months, until September 2002, both Revenue and Customs continued to believe that they were operating with the same entity within the UK.

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International

Outrage at US-Israeli war drive

Some 100,000 protesters took to the streets of London on Saturday to demand an end to Israel’s assault on Lebanon and Gaza - and to express their fury at Tony Blair’s virtual call for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire.

The emergency demonstration, called by the Stop the War Coalition at a week’s notice, attracted a broad range of people. Many had decided to come along at the last moment, after the march was featured on the front page of the Independent newspaper.

Protesters booted as they filed past the US embassy in Grosvenor Square. They left 1,000 pairs of children’s shoes outside Downing Street to symbolise the children of Israel who have been killed in Lebanon and Gaza.

The demonstration’s anger was not just directed at Israel, but also at the US and British governments for their complicity in the carnage now engulfing the Middle East.

The march showed a significant widening of the movement, even in the time since the previous London protest two weeks ago. This was true both in the size and diversity of the march and in the speakers in the rally in Parliament Square.

Six members of parliament spoke, including Respect MP George Galloway. The leaders of three major trade unions also addressed the rally.

Many speakers argued that Israel’s onslaught had to be understood as part of the wider “war on terror” and George Bush’s plans for a “new Middle East”.

“First it was Afghanistan and Iraq, now it’s Lebanon. This is another imperial war,” said Soumya Ghaiwani from the British Muslim Initiative. “This is not just an Israeli war, and Bush and Blair are not just giving Israel a green light. They are partners in war crimes.”

Blair’s complicity was also highlighted by Mark Serwotka, general secretary of the PCS union. “Why did our foreign secretary tell the media that she did not know that US planes taking bombs to Israel were refuelling at Prestwick airport?” he asked.

“When faced with protests, they had to stop these flights - this shows that if we protest we can make a difference.”

Left wing Labour MP John McDonnell, who is standing for the leadership of the party, lambasted the prime minister for “travelling to the US to perform for Rupert Murdoch” while ignoring demands for him to condemn Israel’s hostilities.

While the march encompassed all those opposed to Israel’s aggression, those speakers who declared their solidarity with the resistance in Lebanon and Palestine received huge cheers.

“They sought to divide the Middle East - but in fact they have united Muslim and Christian, Sunni and Shia, Islamist and secular,” said Daoud Abdullah from the Muslim Council of Britain.

“This war has given birth to millions of resistance fighters across the region.”

John Rees from the Stop the War Coalition stressed the urgency of the situation now facing the Middle East. “If we don’t stop this war, there will be a general war across the region that will make what is happening now pale into insignificance,” he said.

“Only the peace movement can destroy the power behind these wars. That’s why we must demonstrate in Manchester on 23 September outside the Labour Party conference - and demand an end to this government steeped in blood.”

Thousands of protesters took over Talat Harb Square in central Cairo, Egypt, last week to demonstrate against Israel’s assault on Lebanon and the failure of the Arab regimes to oppose it.

Picture: Nasser Nouri

100,000 march in London demonstration

Part of the London demonstration. Photo: Ray Smith

STOP THE WAR
National Demonstration Dublin Saturday September 23rd
1.00pm Garden of Remembrance Parnell Square
US TROOPS OUT OF SHANNON STOP THE TORTURE FLIGHTS
END THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ NO ATTACKS ON IRAN
Called by Irish Anti War Movement, PANA, NGO Peace Alliance
Turn to page 11 for important anti war meetings and protests over the summer

Lebanese exile Dr Abdul Sayed, spoke to Socialist Worker

“My family, everywhere in the Lebanon, are refugees from their villages.” Dr Abdul Sayed told Socialist Worker.

“They are lucky because they didn’t have anyone injured. And then again they went without their clothes. We had nothing behind. It is horrendous.

“I had a call from a friend in Southern Lebanon. They want now to buy water...

“They stopped now calling for medicine. They stopped calling for butter. They stopped calling for wood. Water - that is when the human need has reached to its lowest level.

“If you see Lebanese TV you see the atrocities and the massacres. You see the body pieces collected. What you see in the media here is nothing compared to what we see on our Lebanese satellite.

“Then you have tragedy for the refugees. 750,000 in the parks. There is no place to go, just the park, without even tents.”

Popular Resistance

Dr Sayed stressed that Hizbollah is not an Islamist army but one fighting against Israeli imperialism within its own borders.

“Hizbollah is for all Lebanese. They are the resistance force for the occupation.”

“I am not defending Hizbollah but that’s the true picture.”

Out of the prisoners that Hizbollah are campaigning hard for a prison release is Nassim Naar, a Lebanese man of Jewish heritage. Nasir was visiting his relative in Israel and was captured in the village.

“They never accepted him in prisoners exchanges because his mother is Jewish. And automatically, as a son of a Jew, he is an Israeli traitor.

“To them he is a traitor and there is no exchange. They [the prisoners] have a symbolic value. Even though he is Jewish, Hizbollah will fight for him against the occupation.”

“Different faiths, different races, different cultures can co-exist and live in harmony and that is what we were in every Lebanese village.”

“Thousands of refugees, almost all Shia Muslims from southern Lebanon are sheltering in churches and the church allows them to do Muslim prayer.”

I attended the christening of a Lebanese boy. His godfather is a Muslim.

“That’s Lebanon. That’s the Lebanon that we want you to defend, to raise your voice for.

“It is the one that shows the acceptance of all faiths and cultures.

“Lebanon is our country. We love it. Please help us to keep the integrity of our country.”

Workers are taking part in the London anti-war demonstration that was called by the Stop the War Coalition. The protesters took over Talat Harb Square in central Cairo, Egypt, last week to demonstrate against Israel’s assault on Lebanon and the failure of the Arab regimes to oppose it.

Picture: Nasser Nouri

Outrage at US-Israeli war drive

Outrage at US-Israeli war drive

Lebanese exile Dr Abdul Sayed, spoke to Socialist Worker

“My family, everywhere in the Lebanon, are refugees from their villages.” Dr Abdul Sayed told Socialist Worker.

“They are lucky because they didn’t have anyone injured. And then again they went without their clothes. We had nothing behind. It is horrendous.

“I had a call from a friend in Southern Lebanon. They want now to buy water...

“They stopped now calling for medicine. They stopped calling for butter. They stopped calling for wood. Water - that is when the human need has reached to its lowest level.

“If you see Lebanese TV you see the atrocities and the massacres. You see the body pieces collected. What you see in the media here is nothing compared to what we see on our Lebanese satellite.

“Then you have tragedy for the refugees. 750,000 in the parks. There is no place to go, just the park, without even tents.”

Popular Resistance

Dr Sayed stressed that Hizbollah is not an Islamist army but one fighting against Israeli imperialism within its own borders.

“Hizbollah is for all Lebanese. They are the resistance force for the occupation.”

“I am not defending Hizbollah but that’s the true picture.”

Out of the prisoners that Hizbollah are campaigning hard for a prison release is Nassim Naar, a Lebanese man of Jewish heritage. Nasir was visiting his relative in Israel and was captured in the village.

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“Lebanon is our country. We love it. Please help us to keep the integrity of our country.”
By Órith Ní Dhuibhir

Despite the carnage and butchery in Lebanon the international community has again chosen to ignore Israeli war crimes and to instead blame Hizbollah and Hamas.

In the hope that Syria and Iran will be dragged into the ‘war on terror’, the US government continues to resist calls for an immediate ceasefire.

Arab leaders have shamefully caricatured the Lebanese resistance as ‘irresponsible adventurism’ and the EU leaders can do no more than propose international intervention. This will not bring peace to the region.

Humanitarian intervention

World leaders who are starving Palestinians for exercising their democratic rights will only intervene in Lebanon to serve imperialists interests.

Indeed, the protests at the UN’s Beirut office following the Qana massacre demonstrated that any force arriving in Lebanon will not be seen as neutral by the Lebanese or the rest of the Arab world.

The Lebanese remember only too well that the international force sent in 1982 to oversee the PLO’s withdrawal disappeared while local Christian militias, under the watchful eye of Israel, massacred Palestinian refugees in Sabra and Chatila.

An international force sanctioned by the US and Israel will have as its mandate not the protection of the Lebanese but the forcible removal of Hizbollah from the Lebanese/Israeli border and the suppression of Arab liberation movements in the region.

Roots of the conflict

The current conflict cannot be resolved unless its underlying causes are addressed.

The July 12th raid on an Israeli army border post was a relatively unremarkable event. In the six years since Israel withdrew, there have been frequent border incidents between Hizbollah and the Israeli army as Israel continues to occupy the 25km Shaba Farms area of Southern Lebanon.

The speed and violence of the response to the incursion indicates that Israel has been waiting for international conditions to develop so that it could implement Ben Gurion’s vision of a Greater Israel, stretching from the Jordan river to the river Litani.

In so doing, Israel intends to crush Hizbollah and ensure that future Lebanese governments are friendly to Israeli interests.

Acting alone Israel could not achieve these aims. However, its war coincides with the Bush administration’s aim to crush resistance movements and non-compliant regimes in the Middle East, such as Iran and Syria. Israel’s onslaught has the potential to develop into a much greater regional war.

Therefore, it is vital that the anti-war movement urgently reenergises itself and opposes Israeli involvement in any international occupation force.

This does not mean that we ignore the many ideological differences between revolutionary socialists and the Shia Hizbollah or Sunni Hamas.

However, we support both organisations in their courageous stand against imperialism and argue against those on the left who would equate the violence of the oppressor with the resistance of the oppressed.

We support Hamas and Hizbollah in their courageous stand against imperialism and argue against those on the left who equate the violence of the oppressor with the resistance of the oppressed.

The inspiring Palestinian resistance cannot defeat the combined forces of Israel and the US alone. Traditionally, socialists look to the working class to overthrow corrupt and undemocratic regimes.

But unlike black South Africans, Palestinian workers lack that capacity as Israel has removed them from the Israeli economy and destroyed the economy of the PA.

Some on the left argue that Palestinian and Israeli workers must unite in their struggle for democratic states of Israel and Palestine. There have been anti-war protests in Israel in response to the invasion of Lebanon.

But the 80% support rate amongst Israelis for the atrocities committed in Gaza and Lebanon highlights where Israeli workers’ sympathies lie on this issue.

Justice can only be delivered if the racist state of Israel is dismantled and replaced with a democratic, secular state.

In that struggle, the natural ally of the Palestinians is the wider Arab working class which shares an interest in overthrowing corrupt Arab regimes and taking control of the region’s resources.

Solidarity

But this does not mean that it is sufficient for socialists to await the awakening of the Arab masses. We must campaign for the urgent suspension of the Association Agreement and for a boycott of Israeli goods.

We demand the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador. We must demand that CRH ceases its investment in the Apartheid Wall and illegal settlements. We must ensure that our unions, colleges and cultural associations sever links with Israel.

We must actively campaign against Islamophobia. And we must bring about an end to the political cover that the government lends to the ever-expanding war on the Muslim and Arab world.

STOP ISRAELI STATE TERRORISM

No international occupation of Lebanon

National demonstration in Dundalk, constituency of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern TD

Organised by the Ireland-Palestine Solidarity Campaign www.ipsc.ie and Irish Anti War Movement www.irishantiwar.org

Assemble 2pm Saturday 12 August at the Maid of Erin Statue (beside the Courthouse), The Square, Dundalk

Buses running from Dublin contact 087 419 3667 to book places.

Bus costs €10.
E PEACE E EAST?

STOP THE WAR
National Demonstration Dublin Saturday September 23rd 1.00pm Garden of Remembrance Parnell Square
- US TROOPS OUT OF SHANNON - STOP THE TORTURE FLIGHTS
- END THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ - NO ATTACKS ON IRAN
Called by Irish Anti War Movement, PANA, NGO Peace Alliance

A Lebanese man holds the body of a child killed by air strikes in Baalbek.

Hostages held by Israel

by Christine Murray

Over the past ten years thousands of Palestinian prisoners have been taken from their houses and are currently being detained by both military and civilian forces.

Israeli forces call these “security prisoners” and say that most of the people currently in their custody are guilty of terrorist activities while Palestinians believe that the majority of the captives are innocent. Roughly a quarter of prisoners are being held without charge. 645 are being held under “administrative detention”, and have no idea of what suspicions are being held against them.

The conditions in the prisons are atrocious and medical care for the seriously ill is sparse or non-existent. Many necessary operations have only been carried out after mass protests by other prisoners. There have even been cases of prisoners being deprived of their medication as a form of punishment. Female prisoners who were pregnant when arrested are made to give birth while handcuffed to the bed, with no thought for the pain and humiliation this must cause.

B’Tselem, an Israeli human rights organisation has released figures stating that 9,153 Palestinian prisoners are currently being held by both civilian and military authorities.

Not all prisoners being held in these institutions are adults. An estimated 265 minors are currently being kept in sub standard conditions.

Their age does not mean they are treated leniently, in fact the situation is quite the opposite. Child prisoners are subjected to interrogation, and most disturbingly, they are also subjected to interrogation under torture. While this treatment is obviously wrong on many levels, it is also in direct violation of Article 37 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that “No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment”.

As Israel is a member of UNICEF, they are guilty of breaking a legally binding agreement. The children are allowed little contact with their family, with some being completely forbidden to have family visits.

These conditions are obviously detrimental to both the physical and mental well being of the children involved. Sall Adden Ayyad, a seventeen year old from Bethlehem, was beaten so badly during interrogation that he broke a bone in his head.

He did not receive medical treatment for this.

And Israel were allegedly so upset about two of their prisoners (the two soldiers taken captive by Hezbollah) that they have wrecked carnage, destruction and mass murder on the people of Lebanon!

Israel – the roots of a racist state

The Second World War gave Zionism irresistible momentum. The horror of the holocaust led most Jewish families to despair that there was any other way of protecting themselves.

At the same time, US interest in the Middle East for its oil supplies gave the Zionists a new and even more powerful backer.

The state of Israel was proclaimed on 14 May 1948 with the patronage of the US, and with hundreds of thousands of Arabs driven by violence from its borders.

Just over a month earlier a terrible massacre of all the inhabitants of the village of Deir Yassin had shown to all the lengths that the Zionists would go to in order to establish their state.

Ever since, Israel has served its master, and in return obtained phenomenal resources. Billions of dollars a year, often half the total US military aid worldwide, have gone to Israel. And the country has been good value for the invested sums, as respective US administrations are well aware.

In 1980 Ronald Reagan explained that Israel has a ‘combat experienced military, a force in the Middle East that is actually of benefit to the US. If there was no Israel with that force, we’d have to supply that with our own.’

In words that uncannily reflect the current situation, an Israeli newspaper back in 1951 explained what the role of the country was to be.

’If for any reasons the Western powers should sometimes prefer to close their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or several neighbouring states whose discourtesy to the West went beyond the bounds of the permissible.’

Every time an Arab nation has elected a government potentially hostile to the US, Israel has unleashed its military might to collectively punish the population. That is exactly what is happening now, in response to the growth and success of Hamas and Hezbollah.
World Trade Organisation Doha Round collapses

By Rory Hearne

Last year the Make Poverty History Campaign brought hundreds of thousands on to the streets against the G8 demanding debt cancellation, increased aid and fair trade. One of the principal organisations that, over the last decade, has promoted unfair trade is the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The WTO pushed ‘neoliberalism’ that, until recently, seemed widespread. As far as WTO leaders were concerned, government subsidies to agriculture and public services should be abolished and the economies of every state opened up to private companies and competition.

There are two fundamental problems with this perspective. The first is the reality of the world’s economy. The second is the reality of the world’s poor. One is that some services, such as health care, cannot be subsidised by the taxpayer to ensure that good health does not become the ‘privilege of the rich’.

The WTO has threatened sanctions against those countries, especially Argentina, who are currently supplying cheap AIDS drugs to those countries most in need of them. The WTO also threatened the US with the US bill of $4 billion.

The second deeply biased aspect of the WTO’s policy is that it does not recognise that the world economy is massively uneven. Largely as a result of imperialism, plunder, the slave trade and wars, the majority of the world’s population live in underdeveloped countries.

To insist that the pauperisation of a developing nation compete directly with the agricultural products of an intensively industrialised western nation is to ask that they be forced so that some of the greatest multinationals in the world can increase their sales.

The “aganda of the WTO is one that would continue and deepen economic unevenness, rather than assist the developing world to catch up. The ‘development’ strategy is to open their markets to foreign owned textile factories, to break into the markets of developing countries while they retain their own protections and subsidies. The result has been decimation for farmers and workers in developing countries as cheap subsidised western products destroyed their subsistence agriculture.

Those forced off the land have then been left with no alternative but to work in foreign owned textile sweatshops, set up with no workers’ protections, as WTO rules all such legislation as illegal: an unfair ‘barrier to private profit’.

In late July the WTO’s so-called development Doha Round collapsed. While the US the EU and some large NGOs (accepting the argument that the claims from the WTO are better than nothing) were disappointed, the Global Alliance on Global South, got it right when he said: “The collapse of the Doha Round is good for the poor.

The idea that the Doha Round was a “development round” could not have been farther from the truth. While trade can be a medium for development, from the very start, the aim of the developed countries was to push for greater market openings from the developing countries while making minimal concessions on their part. Invoking development was simply a cynical ploy to make the process less unequal.

The problem is not with subsidies. In an alternative system based on need public subsidies would be integral to supporting small-scale industrial and agricultural co-operatives like what is happening in Venezuela. But the EU’s agricultural subsidies benefit mainly large-scale farmers.

A different subsidy scheme benefiting small farmers would be much more equitable and cheaper. The only farmers in developing countries to benefit from abolishing all subsidies and open markets would be the large plantations.

The collapse of the WTO is an important victory for the anti-capitalist movement that began with the Zapatistas in southern Mexico who declared open war against free trade, the WTO and the North American Free Trade Agreement. But its not just trade that causes poverty, it’s the priority of a global system based on war and empire that spends trillions of dollars dropping bombs on innocent civilians while millions starve.

The need to link the anti-war and anti-WTO movements in a global struggle against empire has never been clearer.

As Joseph Purugganan of the Philippine-based ‘Stop the New WTO Coalition’ put it: “It is time to think of a world beyond Doha, a world beyond the WTO, and start building and strengthening people’s alternatives.

We want an alternative system of global trade that protects livelihoods, promotes food sovereignty, secure jobs, and facilitates access to basic human needs such as water, education, healthcare and affordable medicines.

This alternative system is anchored on cooperation and not competition, where people’s welfare matter more than profits.

EU Imposes its Free Trade Agenda on Africa

While the WTO collapses, neoliberal institutions like the EU continue to impose unfair trade agreements like the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Since 2000 the European Union (EU) and 17 developing countries of the Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific Group (ACP) have been negotiating EPAs.

Under the guise of a ‘development partnership’ the EU is demanding ACP countries agree to policies that they have successfully resisted in the WTO. Through the EPAs the EU is aggressively seeking an increased market access for their own goods and services in markets of some of the world’s most vulnerable developing states. EPA clearly show how the EU is seeking not to limit or restrain neoliberal globalisation, but to extend and deepen it.

As a result of heavy dependence on aid, ACP governments have little choice but to give in to the EU’s demand that they open up their markets to European goods and services.

The result will be deeper unemployment, loss of livelihoods, food insecurity as already vulnerable local food production is undermined, and social and political stability on the continent will face significant losses in public revenue from the elimination of import duties and will continue to suffer the problem of capital flight associated with liberalisation.

Another free trade agreement that the EU is involved in is the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement which grants Israel (along with several other non-European Mediterranean states) preferential trading terms with the EU. This should clearly be suspended with the ongoing massacres Israel is unleashing against Lebanon and the Palestinians.

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Other institutions, like the EU, are hammering through the WTO agenda of free trade in Europe with the recent Services Directive, in developing countries through their Economic Partnership Agreements. Jefery Sachs in his book The End of Poverty argues that if developing countries get a foot on the economic ladder they will be able to compete with the rich countries, see economic growth, and this will end poverty.

But there will never be a level playing field under the present system of global trade. The trade system emerged unjustly through colonialism and today’s system continues that inequality.

That’s why we need an alternative trade system based not on free trade capitalism but on solidarity and need.

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Courage rewarded: Pittsburg Ploughshares Not Guilty

A second stunning victory against the odds was that of Scottish Socialist MSP Tommy Sheridan against the News of the World on 4 August. A Glasgow jury, directed by Lord Sheridan, awarded Sheridan maximum damages for libel against the tabloid. The victory is more remarkable for the fact that Sheridan's case was brought against the News of the World, his opponent in this case being a reporting that he was a revolutionary militant in Iraq. As one of them put it, 'I didn't go to Sheridan to commit a crime; I went to Sheridan to stop a crime.'

The victory of the Stop Ploughshares was a victory for the majority of the Irish people: for those who opposed the war in Iraq and who continue to oppose the use of Shannon Airport by the US military. As the defendants put it in their press release:

'The jury in this case was a microcosm of the community chosen randomly from Irish society. The conscience of the community has spoken. The government has no popular mandate for the war, which it is seeking to build in Shannon - the key to building a shrine that included photos of injured Iraqi civilians and a US Navy warplane to ground it for months, before O'Reilly had entered Shannon Airport in the early hours of 25 July, five anti-war activists of Irish descent were arrested. The fact that Sheridan sacked his own legal team, to throw nothing but muck against me, my wife and my family.

The religious and social conflicts that existed at the time, and the way in which the authorities responded to them, are a reflection of the society and the political and religious leaders of the time. The campaign to save the United Irishmen and their leaders was a key part of the battle against the British occupation of Ireland. The jury at the trial was an important step in the fight against the occupation of Ireland.

One of the most ethnically eclectric bunch of musicians you're ever likely to see (featuring a Ukrainian, a Romany Gypsy, an Israeli, and a Indonesian-Scottish dancer to name but three – a veritable United Nations of musical malcontents), Gogol Bordello's cultural diversity translates into a heady, hedonistic mix of turbocharged folk, punk, hip-hop, dub and wild cabaret. Fronted by charismatic rabble-rouser Eugene Hütz, Gogol Bordello have been taking New York's Lower East Side by storm for some time now, and are the vanguard of the city's burgeoning folk-punk scene. Gypsy Punks is the band's third full-length release, and may just launch them kicking and screaming into the mainstream. Produced by Steve Albini, Gypsy Punks rectifies the main failing of the band's previous albums, managing to capture some of the raw, glorious madness of the band's fiery live shows.

Standout tracks include current single Not A Crime, the boomy, last order version of Start Wearing Purple, 60 Revolutions (replete with insane 80s thrash riffs) and the sublime Immigrant Punks, which is surely destined to become the band's signature tune. Lyrically the album is a kind of fractured, oddball poetry and footloose outsider wisdom, all delivered in either Hütz's native Ukrainian or his magnificently accented and broken English.

DJ Phil Jupitus recently described the band as 'The Clash having a fight with The Pogues in Eastern Europe' and, to give them credit, it much more than that – a hedonistic and socially and politically radical culture clash. Gogol Bordello are an immigrant call-to-arms. The revolution has never been so much fun – join the gypsy punk party.
Ballyfermot organises against non-collection

By Selina Whiteley

On 1st August over 350 people turned out to the meeting entitled ‘Resist the tax’ that was held in Ballyfermot, Dublin West.

The meeting was organized in response to the non-collection of rubbish charges in Ballyfermot by the City Council.

“While the council has put tags on the bins of non-payers threatening to withdraw the service if people do not redress arrears of 900 to 950 euro. In an area like Ballyfermot, many find these double taxes difficult to afford.

The implementation of threats not to collect bins with unpaid tax ‘is the biggest challenge we have ever faced. It’s an everyday reality for our citizens, for people going to prison,’ Ballyfermot Alliance, chairman, John Hartnett, said.

“We refuse services were brought in all over Britain and Ireland in the late 1800s in response to outbreaks of cholera,” she said.

Today, many fear that many parts of Dublin, capital of the world’s second richest country, may become as unsanitary as Dublin.

We have to implement that what they’re doing is an essential service. They’re ripping it apart. They’re refusing it to ordinary people, they’re creating a health hazard in our com-

munities in East Wall, Ringsend and Crumlin. She stressed that this was in line with the law. She also advocated re-use and recycle policies.

“The changes mean we will be work-
ing on different council areas, previously,” she added for that Bertie Ahern imple-
mented the policy and was driving round in a car worth 121,000 euro of tax-
payers’ money.

“I’ve paid tax all my life. We will have to be fair. Why should it be 900 euro to me, and 900 euro to Boveen’s Band 90 mil-
lions,” said Jimmy, an activist within the cam-
bail in Ballyfermot.

A resolution to or-

An overflow of passen-
gers on routes. now they are being drafted into the standard services while up to a four drivers at a time is in the canteen with no buses to drive.”

Buses on the city routes are frequently broken down and are out of service for days on end, meaning the scheduled service does not run.

In addition, the compa-

ny has withdrawn wheel-
chair accessible buses from some city routes inconveni-
encing disabled passen-
gers.

Drivers feel the service is being deliberately undermined, and made inefficient in order to prepare the way for

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James Connolly: Revolutionary Socialist

Why is the Irish Health Service in Crisis?

Dr Peadar O’Grady

Many publications and books are available without subscription within the tradition of the SPIR and its sister organisations. Below there is a possible twelve-month survey of some of the key questions, a series of short polemical articles and articles which cover the main outlines of the pol-
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Lenin’s State and Revolution is one of the great works never written before. It tackles the prevailing ideas that the state stands above society and represents the commodity.

It does to the argument for revolution in the fact that even a parliamentary democracy is a form of concentrated class rule. When the elections are over, there is quite sim-

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As voting on the new social partnership agreement comes to a close the inade-
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Lenin’s State and Revolution is one of the great works never written before. It tackles the prevailing ideas that the state stands above society and represents the commodity.

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INFLATION:

WATERFORD BUS DRIVERS FIGHT CREEPING PRIVATISATION

As voting on the new social partnership agreement comes to a close the inade-
quity of a 10% pay rise for Irish workers becomes more and more obvious. Spitting energy costs will rise the combined gas and electricity bills for the aver-

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INFLATION:
Anti War Movement steps up a gear

GALWAY

By Deette McLaughlin

Violent, protests and demonstra tions against the illegal Israeli attacks on the streets of Galway against the Irish? s political and economic policies, and how he became a harrowing accounts of active duty he said it would be military.

(WG) support, organised a Galway Alliance Against War for the forthcoming public company Meteor organised the expressed a feeling of helpless many people were raised as many people GAZA / LEBANON”. Israeli State’s offensives in Anti War Movement steps up a gear

Cork

120 people packed the Michael Davitt/NUPE Hall for a Meeting with ex-Abu Ghraib internment officer, Bush, of the US, is a member of the Bush administration.

The meeting, on the 20th anniversary of the Galway Arts Festival, heard about the difficulties people crammed into the public places of the subcontinent.

Castedor of Iraqi Veterans Against the War called the people for the first time in their history, and how they became the Peace and Solidarity Campaign.

Having travelled through the airport himself whilst on active duty it said would be a huge boost to the U.S. anti-war movement Ireland, with the anti-war movement in Dublin and/

We must continue in hold joint US/Irish protests on the streets and use the opportunity to broaden the movement to those who are angered and motivated by the war.

ABU GHRAIB TOUR

Hundreds of people crammed into public meetings across the country to hear. Castledor former Abu Ghraib interrogator speak in a national tour organised by the Irish Anti War Movement.

Over a hundred people attended each of the meetings in Dublin, Cork and Galway. Some meetings were also held in Sligo, Derry, Belfast, Athlone, Dundalk and Waterford.

Joshua spoke of how the extraordinary efforts of the anti-war movement in the towns and cities visited as people signed up to join the Irish Anti War Movement and its affiliated groups.

Another demonstration was held at the Fianna Fail conference in Mullingar. There was a united, militant mood and it was agreed that the pressure must not wane.

Another demonstration was held at the Fianna Fail race week dinner dance in Galway, when Bertie Ahern and several ministers attended the constituency event at a local hotel.

The protest was used to highlight the Irish government’s complicity in war crimes, collaborating with the U.S./Israel war machine by allowing them to use Ireland.

Once again the response from passers-by stepping by the massed free multicultural picnic, we can win improvements in the conditions for everyone.”

We hope, in the pages of New Left journal, to capture some of the anger and resistance against corporate capitalism—across the globe and in Ireland.

We want to help expose what neoliberal Ireland is doing to our services, our education, our workplaces, our health and quality of life, to our cities and towns, and how their descriptions are enthusiastically represented by the mainstream political parties.

Japan seeks to develop a radical alternative view to neoliberal economics and pravitation—something that the traditional left is too weakly lacking—and challenges right-wing consensus in Ireland. Such an alternative will not necessarily pick a side if all voices for social change are heard so we will be including representatives of different campaigns and movements.

In this way, we hope that New Left journal may become a genuine forum of the anti-war movement, anti-racism and the battles against the neoliberal agenda in Ireland.

New Left journal is available at €3 plus postage from Bookmarx, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8

IRISH ANTI WAR MOVEMENT

www.iranishwar.org

GALWAY

By Deette McLaughlin

Around 100 people attended the People Before Profit Alliance’s free multicultural picnic, July 22nd, in St Kevin’s Park.

The picnic brought together migrants from many countries and local Irish in a fun afternoon of samba music, interesting speakers, games for children, and great food donated from local shops and one very generous Indian restaurant.

The picnic was organized to welcome migrants to Ireland and promote the idea that united, Irish and migrants have a better chance of winning better services and conditions at work. Migrants from Afghanistan, India and Nigeria spoke at the picnic and encountered some of the myths being spread around about asylum seekers and immigrants, particularly during the recent hunger strike by Afghan asylum seekers.

Rory Hearne, of the People Before Profit Alliance, one of the organizers of the event said: “We organised this picnic to bring together migrants and Irish in a relaxed atmosphere of fun and friendship.

Some politicians, the media and others are claiming that migrants are to blame for people losing jobs, housing, access to health. The facts suggest otherwise. It is ruthless employer who are firing workers and replacing them with cheaper labour.

The health crisis is a result of cutbacks in the 1980s. The government’s promise to provide 3,000 extra beds has not been delivered.

The housing crisis is a result of the failure of the government to fulfill its promise to provide 40,000 affordable homes.

Asylum seekers only get €13 a week. They are facing war and torture.

It is important to counter the demands being made by some people that it is time now, given the census statistics, to reduce the number of immigrants coming here. We welcome migrants to Ireland.

We are a unified people: there is a rich tradition in this country of providing housing, jobs and a decent quality of life for everyone here, local Irish and the ‘new’ Irish (migrants and asylum seekers). But these rungers run the country at the moment don’t want a country for the people.

They just want it to be a paradise for big business to make profits.

If migrants and Irish can unite in, for example, the trade unions and campaigns for better local services (like the Irish Ferries and Gams dispute) we can win improvements in the conditions for everyone.”

Contact 086 1535352 for details.

What the Socialist Workers Party stands for

Capitalism is wrecking the planet and a world in which people are endangered by dangerous extremes of climate, is quite obviously a man-made threat to the environment.

Nothing can be done by reducing the use of fossil fuels or better regulation of big business. What is required is a new economic system, based on the production of use-values for the benefit of all.

The state can only be constructed when the working class is in control of society in plan its production and distribution of goods and services, and not for profit.

Revolution

The present economic system cannot be patched up or reformed. The contradiction between the interests of capital and those of society must be resolved.

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

Imperialism is a constant feature of capitalism today as the industrialised armies and navies of the great powers seek to dominate the earth.

Bush’s “War on Terrorism” is a crude device to attack any opposition to the policies of the US. This war is about imperialism, military, strategic or economic domination.

End racism and oppression

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

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

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

For workers unity in the anti-war movement

We stand for workers unity across Ireland, against the anti-war policies and Blair’s pro-war alliance.

Like great socialist James Connolly, our programme has brought about a new sense of unity.

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 will try to create discussion around anti-war and anti-racist issues and will work to develop a strong socialist basis.

It will work for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

Join the Socialist Workers Party

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

Name:

Address:

Email:

Telephone:

Text of the letter: (Note: all text, including the heading, will be published)

Socialist Worker 21
The fight is still on to send SHELL TO SEA

By Maura Harrington of the Davitt League and Shell to Sea Campaign, Co.Mayo

Shell’s latest proposal to re-route the gas pipeline in Rossport is a joke.

This proposal is not a result of the mediation and report of Peter Cassells. Shell have made this latest proposal because Justice Lafoy instructed both Shell and the State to produce legal documentation in the Courts relating to leases, plans of development, etc.

Judge Lafoy was ruling on a counter-case taken by two Rossport residents injunctioned by the company.

The case has been under-reported but is very significant. Shell is running for cover by suggesting re-routing the pipeline.

Last year, two days after the Rossport 5 were imprisoned at the request of Shell, the Dáil shut up shop for the summer.

With the honourable exception of Joe Higgins, Michael D. and a handful of Independents, most notably Jerry Cowley, our so-called elected representatives took off on their long holidays hoping the spirit of five decent men would be broken before the summer was over.

Two days after the trials in suits came back, following a summer which saw the growth of the Shell to Sea campaign and a growing awareness of the ultimate rip-off of our natural resources, Shell and their government partners folded under popular pressure and scrubbed desperately for a way to defuse what had become an international story.

They devised a two-pronged strategy: an Independent Safety Review (ISR), and ‘mediation’. As usual, where Shell dictates and ministerial minions hop to it, the whole thing was second-rate.

The IRS terms of reference were overly restrictive. Advantica the company which conducted the IRS, acted properly within their narrow terms of reference.

But it is noteworthy that they offered only recommendations that did not, of themselves, carry a professional indemnity liability.

The Cassells Report is a different kettle of (stinking) fish. As most trade unionists know – to their cost – Cassells is a government man.

In the case of our natural resources the government is dictated to by the oil companies. Da bhar sin (therefore), Cassells was never in any danger of ‘going native’ as spun by Shell prior to publication of his report.

My opinion of this report is that, by it, Cassells has shown himself to be a fool and a knave.

Firstly, he’s a fool in that he has failed to grasp the fundamental elements of a mediation process viz a viz negotiation, arbitration or just plain horse trading.

Cassells’ facilitation of the Shell/Dempsey spin that the Rossport 5 refused face-to-face ‘dialogue’ shows, at best, an ignorance of what mediation is about.

Prior to and following the Good Friday Agreement nobody was buying for Adams and Paisley to be thrown into a room together for ‘dialogue’.

Secondly, there is no indication in the report that it was conducted in a proper scientific manner. In order to state a finding, it is necessary to have quantitative data to back it up.

In that context, I believe Cassells has proven himself a knave. This is based on his own words (Section3, p.10) reproduced in full below.

From my discussions with local people it is clear a majority of people in Rossport, the wider Erris area and Co. Mayo are in favour of the project but still have genuine concerns.

‘Concerns are expressed about the safety of their families, their project. They expressed a wide range of views and concerns to me about the project but at the end of the day the safety of their families, their neighbours and the local environment was their absolute priority.

Local people fall generally into three categories:

those who were in favour of the project from day one and have not changed their minds,

those who are in favour of the project but still have genuine concerns,

those who are opposed to any development in the area.

During my consultations concerns were expressed about intimidation of people in the local area. I asked that these complaints be brought to the Garda Siochana as the only group who could investigate them.

Cassells’ ‘discussions’ with local people did not include all the people of Rossport; did not include all business people in Kilcommon parish (which he misspells twice); or Shell to Sea as a representative group (which he incorrectly acknowledges under local consultation).

His categorisation of local people is reprehensible. He designates the Rossport 5 and Shell to Sea by portraying us as being opposed to any development in the area. Cassells is displaying a failed Twentieth Century mindset and deserves to be strung up from the nearest lamppost – metaphorically of course!

Members of Shell to Sea and Rossport 5 who have gone door-to-door in Erris with information leaflets within the past month have the empirical evidence to give the lie to Cassells’s claim that there is a clear majority in favour of this proposed excrescence.

In short, Cassells’ report is unscientific in its execution, badly written (14 proof errors at least), factually incorrect in many areas and disingenuous in its attempt to re-brand the Shell production process as a regular Bord Gáis one.

If Cassells, or Shell, think that by re-routing the pipeline they would resolve this dispute or that by dropping the injunction they will heal wounds, they need their heads examined.

At the first meeting between Cassells and the Rossport 5, Willie Corduff refused to shake hands saying he would be the first to do so if he found Cassells to be an honest man. There’s been no handshake!

Of course, the fight goes on …