

# LOOK LEFT



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## AFTER SHANNON, IT WILL BE YOUR BUS & RAIL ROUTES!

Aer Lingus's decision to ditch Shannon could only have been a shock or an outrage to fools or hypocrites, the Workers' Party has declared.

"People must now accept that the privatisation of everything is the core goal of the Right and big business. It is the economic centrepiece of the Irish Government and of the other government in Brussels.

"Our core concerns are its effects on workers, their families, their communities and society. Jobs will go in the mid-west. In Northern Ireland progressives must realise that we face a crucial new struggle.

"Ian Paisley/Martin McGuinness, Bertie Ahern and Minister Noel Dempsey all seem to agree that Northern Ireland should remain what it has always been - a low wage economy with diminished workers' rights and entitlements".

The statement, issued jointly by the party's Munster region and Belfast region, said those now "in an air rage" over the Shannon decision were the loudest demanding privatisation.



**John Lowry, Workers' Party General Secretary: Northern Ireland should not be a low wage economy**

"Cast a cold eye on the declarations of love and loyalty from employers and their lobby groups to their workers and what one boss called the social fabric. These same people would close up here in the morning and open up in Latvia the next day if it meant more profit faster. It must become clearer to people that, in the world of capitalism and profit, nothing is ever enough".

The statement described calls from Father Harry Bohan (a community ac-

tivist in the mid-west), for a "market in social responsibility in capitalism" as totally naive. The point of turning a public company into a private one is to rid it of any responsibility to anyone or anything except cold cash".

The party said the Shannon pullout that came after privatisation had caught national attention because the big local businesses had jumped up and down enough to politicise the issue.

"Privatisation is not just about jets at Shannon. It involves national transport links - air, rail, and bus. There is now common accord between the Belfast Executive and the Dublin Government as to how to make the system work for their business friends."

"The privatisers are stalking through the health system, education (especially post-primary), and everything that moves in the way of social services or local services. Workers and the weaker citizens are the victims of this goldrush. If the only motive for doing anything is profit, it will kill any hope of social justice, of a better life for the many, North and South".

## Builders Buy a Minister Straight off the Plans

The building industry has bought a former Minister straight off the plans.

Former PD Minister in charge of public works Tom Parlon is to be paid a minimum of €250,000 a year by the national organisation for builders, the Construction Industry Federation.

If one of Parlon's civil servants tried the same trick there would be public outrage. Parlon is the key man. He was there

when the state's building plans were laid and has personal contact with the key politicians and civil servants.

The general issue of politicians going straight from power into huge



**Tom Parlon - Straight through the Revolving Door**

industries caused such an outrage in the USA - the heartland of capitalism - that laws were passed to ban the practice 10 years ago!

The Standards in Public Office Commission is said to be thinking of setting up an inquiry into the affair. But citizens should not hold their breath - the horse has already bolted to rich new pastures. And it pays if the horse knows the course.



# OLIVE OIL AND GREASY PALMS

For thousands of years olive oil has been a major ingredient in making good food into excellent food. The demand for olive oil, especially virgin olive oil, in recent years has been such that the market is now worth billions of euros. In the early 1990s it was discovered that all was not quite what it seemed in the world of olive oil.

Far from being virginal it has now been exposed as one of the greatest frauds ever perpetrated on trusting consumers who believed what it said on the bottle.

A long chronicle of exposures began in August 1991 when it was discovered that an ageing tanker had collected 22,000 tonnes of hazelnut oil from Turkey. Six weeks later the tanker docked in a southern Italian port and the cargo had become Greek olive oil with the help, it is believed, of corrupt officials. After being unloaded at a refinery owned by an Italian company, Riolio, it was mixed with genuine olive oil and sold on to the firm's customers as genuine olive oil.

The next few months saw a number of tankers deliver thousands of tonnes of Turkish hazelnut oil and Argentinian sunflower seed oil to the same Riolio refinery, again as Greek olive oil. The owner of the company, Domencio Ribatti, soon became a very wealthy man on these operations. His sudden wealth aroused the suspicions of Italian police and the EU fraud office.

Over the following years they uncovered a massive conspiracy which linked Swiss banks, Caribbean companies with connections into Spain and Rotterdam. All had been involved

in delivering hazelnut oil seed to Riolio refinery and on to many other companies.

The fraud trail led to some major companies involved in Italian olive oil, Bertolli, Nestle and Unilever, who had sold adulterated oil as genuine olive oil to customers and who in the course of these transactions collected €16 million. The EU Court of Audi-



tors in 2000 found that Italy was responsible for 87% of misappropriated EU subsidies to olive oil wholesalers in the previous 15 years, with only a fraction of the money recovered.

While some arrests have been made, including the owner of Riolio refinery, Dominico Ribatti, and his chief chemist, the fraud continued. The activities of the Ribatti group led police to an associate of Ribatti's, Leonardo Marseglia who was managing director of an olive/vegetable oil company implicated in a large number of illegal shipments of oil from Turkey and Tunisia to Italy and in the process evading EU tax.

Marseglia's company became one of the leading olive oil companies. Through its activities it became owners of one of the largest edible oil refineries in the world.

Though arrested Marseglia and his accomplices were never convicted. They are expected back in court later this year on fresh charges but again they are expected to be freed. He has too many high level contacts in the political and business world. Apart from involving multinationals such as Nestle and Unilever, many leading Italian companies, Bertolli, Ruben and Carpeli have been accused of passing olive or lamp oil as virgin olive oil.

An oil tasting panel in Florence concluded that extra virgin olive oil supposedly made by Carapeli, Bertoli and Ruben were in fact virgin or lampante. Carapeli went to court to challenge the allegations of its involvement in the scandal but the court threw out its case.

The scams continue as the profits are so huge. An Italian group with connections in Germany had adulterated olive oil valued at €6 million confiscated in 2005 by the Italian police. This particular gang were accused of colouring inferior soya oil and canola oil with industrial chlorophyll and adding beta carotene as flavouring and selling it off as virgin olive oil.

Italian government officials are demanding that all virgin olive oil be classified as to its country of origin. At present bottles of extra virgin olive oil just state "packed in Italy" or "product of the EU". The Irish Government must back the Italian Government's demands for precise labelling of virgin olive oil indicating country of origin.



# RULING MIGHT PUSH THE FAT-CATS ON SOCIAL HOUSING

A High Court ruling, delivered last month, might force developers to stop skirting the law on social housing.

Now it might be easier for more local councils to buy 20% of housing units at market rates in housing developments in their areas.

This is close to what the law, the Planning and Development Act 2000, had in mind when it was passed. But within two years builders and developers had ground down the law and are allowed to evade their duty by paying councils cash instead of houses.

Mr Justice Frank Clarke was deciding on a case involving 244 housing units built by Murphy Construction in Glanmire in Cork and 149 units put up by Glennkerren Homes in Dublin.

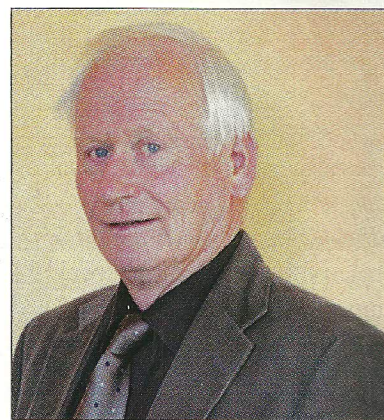
Both companies wanted to cut their legal obligations to 7% of the units. The Councils involved were Dun

Laogharie Rathdown and Cork County Council.

The judge also, and crucially, drew up a very detailed system on how the cheaper housing system should work. This will be used by property arbitrators to tell developers what their legal obligations are on supplying social and affordable housing.

But Mr Justice Clarke stressed that in cases other than the two before him other means might still be used by developers to meet their obligations on cheaper housing.

Michael Finnegan, Workers' Party spokesperson on Housing said the judge's work was a way forward. "However, the unwillingness of local authorities to have anything to do with housing people could knock back the plan as clearly as the developers' campaign had.



**Michael Finnegan of Lucan:**  
"will councils have the courage?"

"How many councillors are beholden to the building industry, or whose political parties are. How many councillors and their bosses – the all powerful County Managers, not the people – have the political courage to interfere with market forces?"

## *Workers' Party to Give Views on East Belfast Housing Project*

Workers' Party East Belfast representative Joe Bell has welcomed the news from the Housing Executive that it is to launch a public consultation process to develop a housing strategy for the Greater East Belfast area.

Joe Bell said: "There is a perception that because East Belfast contains rich areas and attracts some of the highest property prices in Northern Ireland that there are no housing problems in the constituency. There are.

"There is a huge demand for public sector housing which is not being met. East Belfast contains wards such as Ballymacarret, Island and the Mount which are areas of huge housing need and suffer social deprivation.

"I welcome this initiative by the Housing Executive as a first step in involving the local community and their

representatives in working with the Executive on a plan for housing in East Belfast. The local branch of the Workers' Party will take up the offer from the Executive to participate in this process and are putting together proposals which we will submit to them".



**Joe Bell: East Belfast needs public housing**

Of particular interest to the party is the Housing Executive's decision to include Integrated Housing as part of this process. "They deserve credit for putting this vital issue on the agenda. Northern Ireland remains a deeply divided and segregated society and East Belfast has suffered over the years as a result of this sectarian division.

"The Workers' Party have always stressed the need for greater integration in housing and education as critical to the building of a new Northern Ireland. I believe this is the first attempt at creating a mixed housing development in the Belfast area in many years and we in the Workers' Party will look at this proposal very seriously. I commend the Executive who have always been to the fore in progressive housing policy through the worst years of the troubles."

*Look Left*



# North's Devolution Saves Churches from Dog Tracks

The 8th May saw the restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly after five years of suspension. The demand for a locally elected devolved government in Northern Ireland has been central to the Workers' Party's political programme for over 30 years, long before it became the accepted norm.

Having said this, the party has always been critical of how the Assembly and Executive was constituted and run. In effect the Assembly has been created on sectarian lines, with members having to declare themselves as either Nationalist or Unionists, with votes a sectarian headcount. This has undermined the effectiveness of any opposition from within the Assembly.

But what impact has the new Assembly had on the lives of people in Northern Ireland? Well an indication of the impact the Assembly has had on people's real lives can be judged by the first issue of priority up on the hill at Stormont, and the issue was, would Paisley and McGuinness shake hands?

Well they haven't but the Assembly world has not ended. The First and Deputy First Ministers have developed a very cosy working relationship. Isn't it incredible how the mutual self-interest of power has brought together the two main sectarian parties responsible for much of the conflict over the years, into a coalition which they refused to accept when attempted by their more moderate nationalist and unionist competitors?

The first genuine political issue faced by the Assembly was that of water rates. Did the Executive announce the scrapping of water rates as proposed in all the main parties' election manifestos? No. The Executive postponed the introduction of water rates for one year and said it would



**Dr Paisley has moved to save Sunday School children from going to the dogs**

conduct a review, whilst talking about the need to "live within our means, the need to balance the books". The DUP and Sinn Fein would be "responsible" parties of government.

Another issue showing the small-minded and sectarian nature of the new government is the battle over the location of a proposed sports stadium. DUP Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, Edwin Poots has been supportive of a site at the Maze, in his own constituency, while other DUP MLAs have been supporting a counter bid for a Belfast site. But the issue has been resolved, for the DUP any way, by Ian Paisley. He opposes the Belfast site because it would affect five churches, including his own, and would not be "convenient" to have children arriving at Sunday School in proximity to a greyhound track.

This was followed by another major political decision taken by Deputy Speaker, Sinn Fein's Francie Molloy. He made the landmark ruling that MLAs could take off their jackets inside the Assembly Chamber! The importance of the ruling was obvious when nationalist MLAs removed their jackets and unionists MLAs defied the ruling by keeping their jackets on!

There is a long list of genuine and pressing political issues facing the Assembly such as the reform of the edu-

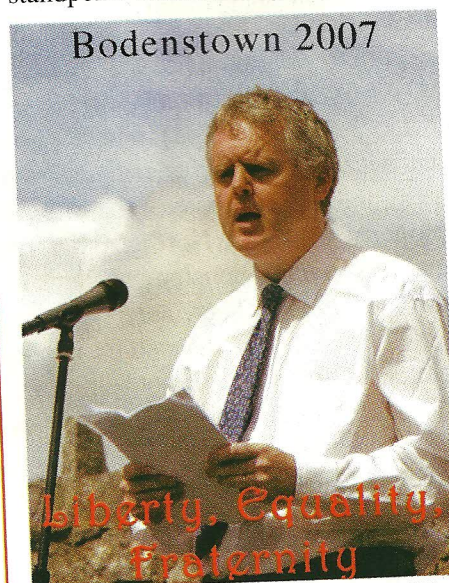
cation system, the crisis in agriculture, the creation of sustainable economic growth, the protection of the environment and the crisis in the Health Service, but 100 days has seen little real progress in any of these issues.

We will be keeping a watching brief on the activities of the new Ministers and campaigning hard to have the potential of devolution delivered to the people of Northern Ireland.

## Bodenstown Hears Call for Renewed Struggle

Addressing a large crowd in Bodenstown on Sunday July 1st comrade Justin O'Hagan pointed out that Wolfe Tone's ideal of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity were far from being achieved. He stated: "The gap between rich and poor has grown so much that the UN said recently Ireland had the highest level of inequality of all western countries except the US."

"As long as class differences continue to exist there will be a struggle of the ruled against the rulers and the Workers' Party will represent the class standpoint without compromise".



The booklet "Bodenstown 2007" is available from the Workers' Party



# LOOK LEFT

23 Hill Street Dublin 1, 6 Springfield Rd, Belfast BT12 7AG

## Ahern Is Not a King or a Pope

A Taoiseach is a politician, not a king or a pope.

Bertie Ahern may be once, twice, three times a taoiseach, but that still doesn't make him a king or a pope. He doesn't know that. He surrounds himself with pygmies to make himself tall. The pygmies are not going to tell him to come back to Earth.

His symptoms began soon after the intoxication of his third win. He went on the radio and declared himself "the father of Europe". A greater man might have drowned in embarrassment from the slobbered adulation of enriched friend and bogus foe alike, but a lesser man like the Taoiseach got drunk on it. It may have taken his mind off the tribunal he's been trying to baffle, throttle and smear for

s o m e  
t i m e  
now.

In his power-drunk condition he went to a gathering in Co. Donegal and did that crazy thing that is more puzzling for his listeners than damaging to his reputation - he departed from his supplied script.

In the middle of him praising his very own "economic miracle" he veered off and began to castigate "the cribbers and the moaners" for not agreeing with him. He added: "I don't know why they just don't commit suicide".

There was applause and a growl of approval.

From any other speaker prominent in Irish life this would have elicited at least an amazed silence among the crowd at the insensitivity of the remark.

Is there a person going about a street or country lane on the island of Ireland whose life has not been shaken by the

suicide of someone they love, knew or worked with, or went to school with? For tens of thousands of people these crass comments raised up tragic memories of their most troubling losses.

As the suicide crisis built over the last decade many fine campaigning groups and individuals have sprung up with ideas and determination. They have continued to lobby the same Taoiseach for realistic public funding to arrest the crisis and for a proper psychiatric system, especially and most urgently for the young. So where is this man's head at?

Experts say the true figure for those who kill themselves is almost 1,000 a year in the country, North and South. Most are boys and young men.

There is now another group whose deaths don't go under the suicide heading but can't be forgotten. They include the most respectable elderly; those who are already ground down in spirit after many years among the horrors of the public health service and those experienced enough to fear the deadly viruses rampant in it. No matter how dangerously sick they know themselves to be, they cannot face the horrors of trying to access help through A&E. They opt simply to die at home, hoping for a little dignity.

This is the health service thrown up by Ahern's economic miracle. Anyone who challenges it is a moaner and cribber who should literally jump in the lake.

His appreciative audience was the annual conference of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions.

## GREED POISONS THE WATER

Greed poisoned the water for up to 10,000 people in Cavan and Monaghan. The councils outsourced water services to the huge French multinational Veolia on a 20-year contract, despite the company not having its industry standard mark, the ISO.

Veolia soon went ahead and, driven by intense and possibly deadly greed, sourced a chemical crucial for drinking water from Cork-based "Environmental Solutions" firm Enva.

The chemical, aluminium chloride, costs up to €170 a ton, but Veolia bought an unapproved chemical, a by-product of the copper mining industry, for as little as €1 a ton from Enva. It used it in the Cavan and Monaghan water schemes and the result was poisonings, burnings of the mouth and tongue and serious skin problems for children who were washed in it.

The tainted product had very high levels of the cancer-causing chemical Phenol.

Environment Minister and leader of the pitifully clueless Greens, John Gormley, was forced on to RTE Radio to respond. He had obviously taken his "Say Nothing Pill" like the rest of the Greens. He muttered that the county councils were responsible for water treatment and his main concern was the fines Europe could impose over Irish water standards.

An Enva statement said it had "acted appropriately" at all times.

**EDITORIAL COMMENT**



# Privatisation Flies Home to Roost

By Cllr Davy Walsh

The decision of Aer Lingus to withdraw from Shannon Airport throws a very clear light on the nature of Irish capitalism, the fallacy that is government planning, and the true meaning of privatisation.

In the debate which preceded the privatisation of Aer Lingus, Ibec, the Shannon Development Authority, Minister Willie O'Dea, every Fianna Fail TD, and every Fine Gael TD were enthusiastic cheerleaders for the sell-off of the state airline. Their hymn sheet was monotonous. End the dead hand of state interference, inject fresh capital and fresh ideas, let the marketplace and commercial realities reign supreme.



Well that is exactly what is happening but the cheerleaders of privatisation are not cheering now. Instead they are like a busload of 4-year olds abandoned at the school gates to face the real world all crying for their mammy. And the loudest cry-babies are Minister O'Dea and Ibec.

The implications for regional development in the Mid-West arising from the Aer Lingus decision could be serious and long-term. The government, over many years, has produced national development plans, regional development plans, spatial strategy plans etc. all of which emphasised both the need for balanced regional economic growth and the commitment of the government to fostering regional centres of growth to provide a counterbalance to the unmanageable sprawl of the greater Dublin region.

In all plans for the mid-west the centrality of a vibrant Shannon Airport was highlighted. It is now clearer than ever that all the government plans were so much hot air. The government is not in a position to guarantee the continuation of Shannon airport. It can no longer instruct Aer Lingus to undertake tasks which are in the national interest because it willingly conceded its control over that company.

In the months leading to the privatisation of Aer Lingus, the Workers' Party, SIPTU, and other left groups who opposed the process warned that privatisation always leads to asset-stripping. We were dismissed as scaremongers when we highlighted the fact that over many years the citizens of this country, through our taxes, had invested billions in Aer Lingus



**Field Marshal Willie O'Dea:**  
Backed privatisation but he's crying now

and the assets built up by that investment would be lost to the Irish people.

The Heathrow slots are a very valuable asset bought by Irish taxpayers' money. Their role should be to develop tourism and business in this state. However their role now is to create profit for the banks, the international financiers, and the hedge funds who own the majority stake in Aer Lingus. In business-speak, the Shannon "hub" has been moved to Belfast. However, it could as easily have been moved to Belgrade. Indeed had Ryanair bought Aer Lingus the Heathrow slots would already have been sold to the highest bidder. A 40 year investment by the Irish people has vanished in one political stroke.

**Davy Walsh is a Workers' Party councillor on Waterford City Council.**

## Learn More About the Workers' Party

"As long as class differences continue to exist there will be a struggle of the ruled against the rulers and the Workers' Party will represent the class standpoint without compromise, no matter how long it may take".

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If you are interested in finding out more information about the Workers' Party, or are interested in helping us in our campaigns or in joining our party then please feel free to contact us by letter, phone or e-mail.



# Cork Ferry Crisis Will Cost Us Jobs

"Why is there continuing silence from local public representatives in Cork at the indefinite suspension and possible end of the Swansea-Cork Ferry service, while there is an outcry in the Mid-West over Aer Lingus's decision to pull the Shannon-Heathrow link?" asks Mick Crowley, a Workers' Party representative in Cork.

The link between the Cork ferry terminal at Ringaskiddy and Swansea (Wales) became an issue in January when the Swansea-Cork Ferries Co. announced that it would not be able to resume sailings after the winter break.

The company had sold their 33 year old ship, the Superferry, at the end of the 2006 season and they could not find a suitable ship to replace it!

tions from thousands of local people and businesses. In effect it was a semi-public company but it has always operated as a private company with no accountability to those without whose help it could never have emerged. Without any public consultation the company was sold to a Greek ferry operator, Strintzis Line, in 1992. The MD and other senior staff remained at the ferry company.

The Superferry was an ageing ship and a far cry from the more modern ships on the Rosslare to South Wales routes, but there was a strong local loyalty to the service and it was of major importance to the local economy, especially tourism. The ship had to be replaced but the decision to sell

west to Britain. The number of tourists visiting Cork and Kerry has dropped dramatically. Freight from Cork Port has been badly hit, with many jobs threatened. There is no sign from Swansea-Cork Ferries that they have found a replacement ship and we cannot be sure that they are even interested in resuming the service.

It is usually at this time of year that tourist businesses produce their brochures and schedules for the next year, but so far no word has come from the ferry company

Workers' Party spokesman Mick Crowley echoed the concerns of dock and freight haulage workers in Cork, as well as the many thousands employed in the tourist industry by



Swansea-Cork Ferries was set up in 1987, three years after B&I withdrew a service which had been running from Cork to Britain for many years. The new service was established jointly by Cork Corporation, Cork County Council and Kerry County Council, together with West Glamorgan County Council and Swansea City Council. A senior official of Cork Corporation, Thomas Hunter-McGowan, was seconded to the company and appointed managing director.

The new ferry company was set up with the help of public subscrip-

the ship before a suitable replacement was found is inexplicable. The company promised at the time that they would resume the service in 2008 and in the meantime local business interests got together and chartered a ship to at least run a freight service to Swansea. Unfortunately that ship proved to be unsuitable and the service was withdrawn after less than six weeks.

Now we are at the end of the 2007 tourist season. It has been a disaster, with the combination of a bad summer and no ferry linking the south-

saying that Cork needed to stand up for itself and take a leaf from the book of the people of the Mid-West. "Cork is the second largest city of the Republic and the gateway to the south west. It is also the country's second port and the loss of the Swansea-Cork Ferry is something which should be of major concern to everyone in this region. The silence of local TDs and business interests is deafening and the total lack of communication from the ferry company, which the people of this region helped establish, is a disgrace", said Mick Crowley.



# WHY THE HSE MEANS DELAY

The letters HSE (Health Service Executive) have come to symbolise delay and passing the parcel.

Dr Kevin Connolly, member of an expert group on vaccination, has called on the HSE and Mary Harney to make the decision quickly on introducing the new vaccine for girls that rules out cervical cancer in later life.

The vaccine is now widely used around the world. Girls in Northern Ireland will definitely get the life-saving vaccine quicker than their counterparts in the Republic.

The most important issue for all women, at this time, is that a national screening programme is introduced without delay - something the HSE refuses to do.

In another example of cruel inefficiency,

the HSE was told to investigate multiple allegations of child abuse at the Brothers of Charity facility in Kilterney, Clarinbridge in Co. Galway.

The then Western Health Board, which was absorbed by the HSE and subsequently changed for the worse, began an "urgent inquiry" in 1999.

It set itself a publication date of September 2006. They certainly gave themselves time - and for the alleged abused and alleged abusers a terrible seven-year wait.

But the HSE has not met its own deadline. The report may not now be ready until the end of this year. In the meantime families continue to suffer.



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive

## BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY FOR WATERFORD WORKERS' PARTY MAN

On a trip to the US this summer, Workers' Party comrade Brian Walsh, of Waterford's Cathal Goulding Branch, visited Washington DC and Capitol Hill where, by chance, he bumped into some members of Congress who want their military personal back home from Iraq.

He told the Congress members that the Workers' Party had campaigned strongly against the illegal wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and had strong criticism of the Bush Administration.

Comrade Walsh also visited San Francisco and called into the HQ of the Rainforest Action Network at 221 Pine Street, slap bang in the Financial District. RAN have strongly criticised many corporate companies including Ford,

Mitsubishi, Citibank, Wells Fargo and Bank of America for causing huge CO2 emissions that are destroying the very planet.

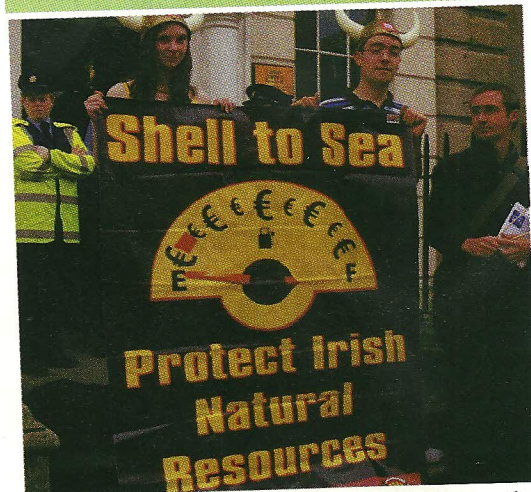
RAN were pleased to have met someone from the Workers' Party and from Ireland in particular. They asked about the Corrib gas field issue and the well-being of the Rossport 5. They praised the Rossport 5 and the many protesters for their stand against Shell.

Comrade Walsh made a donation to RAN of \$150 on behalf of the Workers' Party.

He is now preparing to start some chapters of the Rainforest Action Network in Ireland within the next few months.

If you would like to know about RAN you can visit their website: [www.rainforestactionnetwork.org](http://www.rainforestactionnetwork.org)

## Rossport Struggle Continues



At a time of a world oil and gas shortage the government is giving our reserves away. In a dodgy deal Shell, Statoil and Marathon own all the natural gas off the Mayo coast.

Local people and their supporters continue to oppose Shell's extremely dangerous experimental scheme to build an onshore refinery and connect it to the sea-bed by a pipeline.

Since October last year, a huge force of Gardaí have been in control of the Shell refinery site at Bellanaboy. During peaceful protests to the Shell scheme, there have been many instances of Garda violence and scores of people have been injured.



# A Workers' and Citizens' Mural

Belfast is a city of murals. Often portrayed as living history of the political and social upheavals which have beset the place, the truth is they more generally reflect the sectarian division of the city. Worse, they have at times sought to present base sectarian atrocities and terror as legitimate, even progressive politics.

So it was refreshing to hear that a mural painted between the Shankill and Falls Roads was to commemorate an often forgotten and ignored part of Belfast history - its great labour tradition. For brief, but significant periods of time it united Protestant

and Catholic workers in their common economic interests, such as during the Outdoor Relief Riots of the 1930s.

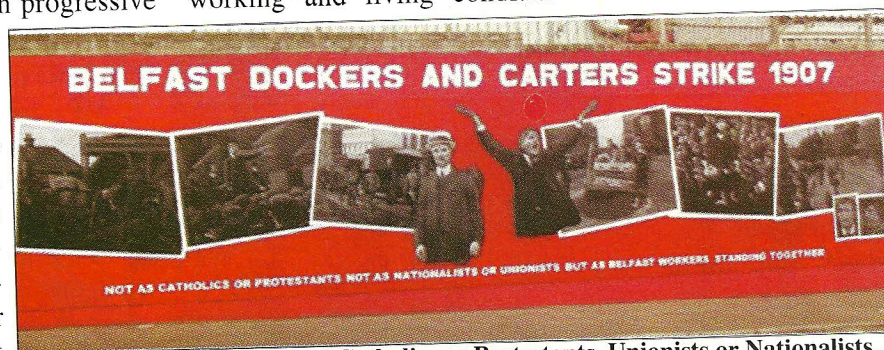
This year is the centenary of another landmark in Belfast's trade union and labour history, the Dock Strike of 1907. In the course of this year the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has organised a number of events to mark the occasion,

including theatre, seminars, publication of pamphlets and notably the unveiling of a stained class window in Belfast City Hall.

The year 1907 was one of industrial strife in Belfast as workers protested and took action against their harsh working and living conditions. Of

defence of their rights. The largest of the strikes that occurred that summer was that of the Belfast dockers. The strike succeeded in winning Protestant and Catholic dockers to a common cause and even won the active support of the Independent Orange Order, who have also taken part in this year's commemorations.

The Belfast police even went on strike. Between 500 and 800 RIC men held a meeting in Musgrave Street Police Station, which is still operational today. The mural to mark the impor-



The mural remembers "not Catholics or Protestants, Unionists or Nationalists, but workers and citizens", something we should do well to remember even today.

course the poverty, appalling housing conditions, low pay and harsh working conditions in the factories, mills, ship and dock yards which dominated the city knew no religious boundaries and affected Protestant and Catholic alike.

This was the city to which James Larkin came as a union organiser in 1907 and set about leading workers in

tance of these events was unveiled at Northumberland Street between the Falls and Shankill Roads close to the so-called peace line. A fine piece of work it is too, depicting Larkin in full stride and scenes of workers on the streets. Some were shot dead by the British Army who had been brought on to the streets to put the workers down.

## Cork Outcasts Have a Picnic



Publically-minded people meet Private property at Kinsale

It was another successful People's Picnic at the Old Head of Kinsale on Sunday, 26th August. A good crowd gathered at the gates of the Old Head Golf links, which were as usual barred by security and gardai. People had flasks of tea or bottled water to wash down their sandwiches.

Traditional walks on the Old Head were blocked by the Golf Club. But the Old Head was walked again after brave campaigners climbed the barbed wire emplacements. The point was made - ordinary people should get back their rights to enjoy the beauty of the Head just as much as golfers who can afford hefty fees.

Leaflets were given out to those who had travelled to support the protest and every reaction was positive. People were really annoyed that they couldn't get onto the headland, even though some of them had been directed down to the Old Head by the tourist office. Among the nationalities we met were Spanish, German, Polish, US, English, Brazilian, French and Italians.

Look Left



# BUSH'S MISSILE DEFENCE COMES TO YORKSHIRE

The recent coronation of Gordon Brown as British Prime Minister to replace the liar Blair was accompanied by promises from Brown that changes would be introduced as to how Britain would be governed. No more presidential style of government, everything would be above board. Parliament would be consulted on every national and international issue. No longer would Britain be a poodle but would act and think for itself.

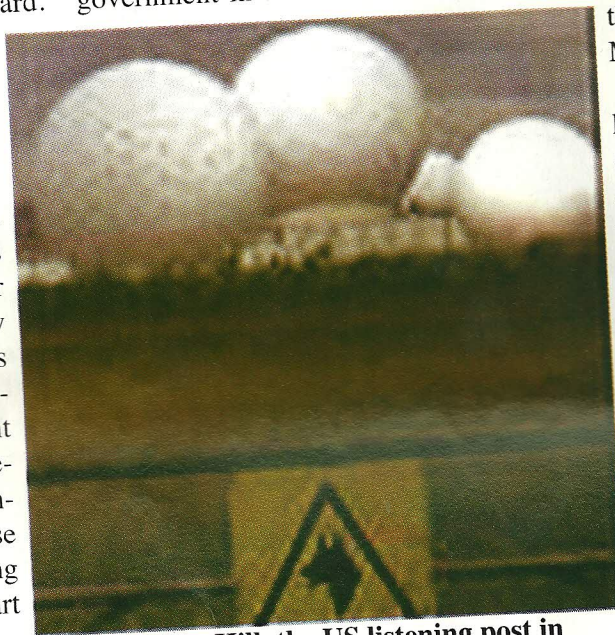
Just before the British House of Commons rose for its summer holidays a large number of announcements were made by Ministers. One in particular has further exposed the Brown government as being no different than Blair's. The Defence Secretary, another Browne, Des, announced he had approved the use of RAF Menwith Hill Monitoring Station in North Yorkshire as part of the United States Missile Defence (sic) System which is clearly offensive and as most serious commentators agree clearly is aimed at Russia.

It was Blair who sucked up to Bush to have the missile system installed in Menwith Hill which is the 13th Field Station in the US National Security Agency's order of importance. And it is now Brown who will put it into effect.

This base was established in

1960 and is recognised as the largest electronic monitoring station in the world. No communication of any nature passes from Ireland to any other place in the world without being monitored by Menwith Hill.

This decision puts the Brown government in the same situation as



**Menwith Hill, the US listening post in Yorkshire. It monitors all communication in and out of Ireland**

the Poles and Czechs, who have also signed up for this missile system. The British Labour Party under Blair and Brown played the leading role in deceiving its people on the illegal Iraq war, and on the kidnapping and rendition of prisoners at the behest of the USA, so the decision is no surprise.

Along with Poland, Romania,

Bulgaria and such other shining examples of democracy as Egypt, Morocco, and Syria, the British government, through its security services MI5/6, has been one of the most willing and servile agents in carrying out United States orders. A cross-party group of

MPs are demanding a debate in the House of Commons on the Menwith Hill decision.

The British decision brings home to us how dangerous and damaging it is for Ireland's policy of neutrality to have any connection with US foreign policy whether it be the use of Shannon Airport by US troops going to and coming from their illegal wars, the use of Irish airports to refuel CIA rendition flights or allowing these aircraft the use of Irish air space. It is long past time that there was a full and open debate in Dail Éireann to have all these issues discussed by the Dail and exposed to the light of day.

There is more than enough evidence available from the report by the Council of Europe's Swiss investigator Dick Marty and from many credible sources in the United States and in Britain to have this policy overturned. It would also be an opportunity for the Green Party to re-assure its members and supporters that it has not changed its policy on any of the above issues.

## Binned Computer Plan Cost €177mq

The Health Service Executive has binned a failed computer system meant to cost just under €9 million that eventually cost €177 million.

No one has been held to account for this colossal waste. Health Minister Mary Harney has not commented. The scandal got little media attention.

The money went mainly to a string of consultancy firms involved in failing to set up the system in the first place and then failing to save it as it went deeper into a black hole.

The system, called PPARS, was meant to hold employment data on HSE workers and organise their

salaries. It paid a hospital worker €1 million. There was an outcry. If the €1 million had been paid to a fatcat it would have been seen as routine.

The HSE last month decided to set up a new system. The executive, however, decided not to say what the new system would cost the taxpayer.



# Crumlin Citizens' Info is Facing Cuts

By Brendan Phelan

Citizens of Crumlin and the Dublin 12 area who have been accustomed to a thoroughly professional and confidential service from their local Citizens' Information Centre for over 20 years will be alarmed at the news that the centre is being denied some of its funding as and from the end of this year.

The board of management have received notice from the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs that the citizens of Dublin 12 are not poor enough to warrant the funding necessary to maintain the high standard of quality service that is now provided and required.

Crumlin CIC enjoys the status of being a "Key" centre which has processed and assisted with more than 90,000 queries in the past five years alone. This has been achieved mainly through the work ethic of the staff there and scrupulous leadership from Development Manager, Anne McCloskey, whose vision has been to constantly improve and expand the service, with outreaches in St Agnes' Parish Centre, St John Bosco Community Centre, and various other places within the community in recent times.



**John Lucas and Brendan Phelan**  
outside the Crumlin CIC where  
they both work.

Until recently, funding was provided mainly from FAS and the Citizens' Information Board (formerly Comhairle). It seems a bit bizarre that the fate of such an important service should be left to a Government Department whose Minister, Eamon O'Cuiv, seems more interested in dancing at the crossroads with comely maidens in Ballygobackwards. Needless to say, extracting the extra funding needed from the Citizens' In-

formation Board in Hume House will be akin to pulling one's own teeth with a pliers. This organisation, who have their own peculiar interpretation of "Benchmarking", to say the least, are currently in the process of foisting extra work on Information Officers with the proposed introduction of advocacy, a highly specialised and time-consuming role.

As an Information Officer myself, who attended a number of courses on appeals and employment rights provided by the Irish Congress of Trades Unions, I can agree with the view of the Congress Trainer, Liam Berney, who warned of the dangers of representing clients in the Labour Court. He described this as a "Minefield", where employers are generally represented by barristers and similar wasters, to enable them to avoid their responsibilities in so far as they can.

It is almost certain that because of the threat of withdrawing funding from Crumlin CIC, there will be job losses. This means fewer officers, more work, curtailment of outreaches and the inevitable loss of service to the community.

**The cry now must be "Save our CIC".**

## COMPETITION IS A MYTH IN IRELAND

Competition is a myth in Ireland and nowhere more so than the Irish food industry, according to the Government's own tame consumer watchdog.

The National Consumer agency has found only a 1.6% price difference for groceries in the dominant supermarket chains Tesco, Dunnes

and Superquinn. And 21 products cost exactly the same in all of these outlets.

Prices in Dublin were higher than in the rest of the country and the leading convenience shops like Eurospar, Spar and Centra are between 7% and 20% more expensive than the main supermarkets.

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*Look Left*



# THEY SHOOT TRADE UNIONISTS IN COLOMBIA

Workers around the world are united in a campaign being organised by trade unionists in Colombia and the United States against the violent policies and actions of United States multinationals. Coca-Cola, Chiquita, Exxon Mobil, Chevron Texaco, Del Monte, Citigroup, Bank of America and Drummond, a huge coal mining company, are involved. All of these corporations have exploited the workers of Colombia for decades and some have not hesitated in hiring right-wing militias to murder trade unionists and intimidate workers from joining trade unions.

The banana company Chiquita admitted it paid \$1.7 million to right wing gangs to "protect" its interests in Colombia.

In 2001 three leaders of the Sintramiéngetica Union were murdered by gunmen acting, it is believed, on the instructions of coal mine owners Drummond. At present the coal mine owners are in court in Birmingham, Alabama on war crimes charges. Evidence has been presented on their involvement in the killings. An almost forgotten 214-year-old law is being used by Human Rights organisations to expose the killers and their paymasters and bring them to justice.

The Bush regime in Washington has tried to block the trial, saying it would interfere with US foreign policy.

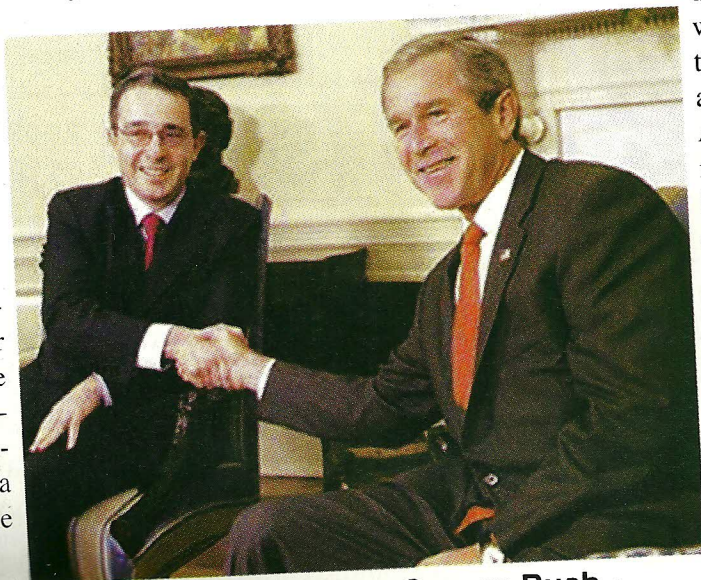
The Washington-based International Labour Rights Fund has been to the forefront in filing many lawsuits against the named companies, designed to force a change in the policies of the multinationals.

It is estimated that 90% of trade union leaders murdered throughout the world



**Bent bananas:**  
Chiquita gave \$1.7 million to right-wing Colombian gangs for "protection"

are killed in Colombia. Since 2001, at least 800 union organisers have been murdered. Maria McFarland Sanchez-Moreno, Human Rights Watch's specialist on Colombia, told a US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs committee last April: "Colombia is currently the murder capital of the world for trade unionists".



**President Uribe: George Bush is his biggest fan.**

The President of Colombia, Alvaro Uribe, visited Washington in May and got the full VIP treatment from his strongest supporter, George Bush. The US has given the government of Colombia \$5 billion over the past six years to supposedly combat drug cartels. This despite the fact that the Colombian government and its agencies are locked into alliances with right-wing militias who make huge amounts of money from drug dealing. Nine legislators close to President Uribe have been arrested for alleged links to these paramilitaries.

Uribe's former intelligence chief, who helped organise Uribe's 2002 presidential campaign, had close contacts with the drug barons. He has been accused of supplying the right-wing Death Squads with information on union officials and teachers.

Welcoming Uribe, Bush couldn't stop praising him: "It's been my honour to welcome a true democrat, a strong leader and a friend". Bush called Colombia: "a democracy that protects human rights and dignity".

Progressive organisations, trade unions, co-operatives and hundreds of local peasants' and workers' bodies are fighting the enemies of democracy and justice in Colombia. Apart from the right-wing murder gangs, they also face intimidation and death from so-called leftist organisations such as FARC which, from being a liberation movement, has become a threat to democracy and a huge supplier of drugs.

It is only by the mass mobilisation of the people of Colombia, and the help of the international Trade Union Movement, that the country will attain democracy and justice.



# Coalition Battling NI Water Charges Turns Up Pressure

By Tom Gillen.

The coalition is broad based, comprising of both organisations and individuals. Within its membership there is a wide range of political parties, including the Workers' Party, community groups and trade unions. The coalition has established a sub-group to represent its agreed position when necessary.

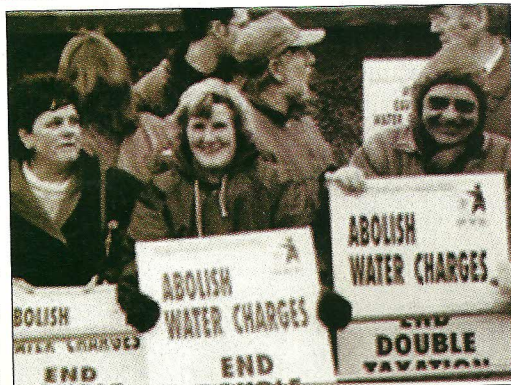
The following sub-groups presently exist;

- We Won't Pay Campaign
- NI Anti-Poverty Network
- Communities Against Water Tax
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions

The coalition also works closely with representatives of retired workers and pensioner groups.

The group is convinced that there should be no additional charges introduced for the use of a basic human resource – water. The citizens of Northern Ireland have paid for water and sewerage services for decades now through the domestic rating system.

The establishment of a Government Company (Go-Co) by Direct Rule Ministers was the first step towards privatisation and higher charges to the public.



The Coalition has adopted a straightforward position regarding water charges. It is:

- Opposed to separate water charges;
- Opposed to metering; and
- Opposed to self-financing and privatisation.

We will not pay twice.

We will support a non-payment campaign if necessary.

Recently the coalition gave evidence to the Transitional Assembly's Programme for Government Committee and to the Assembly Committee of the Department for Regional Development. This evidence shows that the public has already been paying for water. The additional charges proposed go far beyond what is necessary or just to pay for the measures necessary to upgrade our system to provide

a safe and healthy service.

The coalition met with the Regional Development Minister on 24th July and put forward a robust opposition to the proposals for additional charges, as well as the matters referred to above. We have also welcomed the establishment by the Minister of an Independent Water Review Team

The coalition is meeting with this team on 28th August '07.

It should also be of interest to the public that the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance, a major public sector union, has recently produced a detailed research report which destroys the argument for additional charges. Details of this research are available from the union.

The Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network also has produced information detailing the additional hardship which would be visited on the poor and elderly if these additional charges were to be introduced.

Anyone interested in further information should contact Tom Gillen at the Belfast office of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

**Tom Gillen is secretary to the Water Coalition in Northern Ireland**

## Europe Will Be Watching Us

The proposed EU Constitution, drawn up in 2004 by the "Convention on the Future of Europe" under the chairmanship of former French president and leader of the centre-right group, Union for French Democracy, Valéry Giscard D'Estaing, is dead. It was killed by the democratic votes of the people of France and Holland. Had the citizens of other countries been asked they would undoubtedly have added further nails to its coffin.

The EU political elite do not like to be thwarted by citizens. We are the

"little people" who must do as we are told. So, after two years the elite have produced the old, failed constitution in a bright new cover. It is now called the "Reform Treaty". As Dick Roche TD, Minister for Europe, has boasted: "The new treaty is 95% the same as the old one. Just the bells and whistles have been removed".

One key reason for removing the "bells and whistles" is to ensure that France, Holland or the UK will not have a referendum. It seems likely that the Republic of Ireland is the only

country to have one. There will be huge pressure on the voters in the Republic by the establishment "not to jeopardise the future of Europe".

The final details of the new treaty have not yet been ironed out. This will happen at an Intergovernmental Conference in Lisbon in mid-October. Based on the information now in the public domain the Workers' Party are preparing a critique of this treaty. When the final wording is published we will finalise and publish a pamphlet on this issue.



# God talks to us, says the US Right

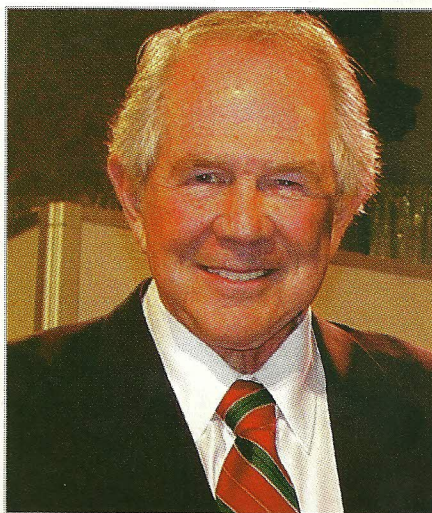
Hot news on the Godline of United States TV Christian fundamentalist, Pat Robertson. He has told his followers and the world that "God" told him a terrorist attack will result in mass killings in the United States in the 2nd half of 2007.

Speaking on his TV show, the 700 Club, Robertson said: "I'm not saying necessarily nuclear, the Lord didn't say nuclear. It will be mass killing possibly millions of people, major cities. The evil people will come after this country and there is a possibility, not a possibility, a definite certainty that chaos is going to rule".

Robertson who is well known for his extreme reactionary views on almost every issue told viewers "they should not be afraid because if you get blown up or something you go to heaven, that's the worst thing that will happen to you".

God, Robertson said, gave him the message during his annual retreat. In 2006 after receiving messages for the season he forecast there would be heavy storms and damage in US coastal areas. In fact the hurricane season that followed was the lightest since 1995. He claimed later that storms in New England, Denver, the Pacific Northwest and the Philippines confirmed his predictions.

Robertson is one of a large number of billionaire corporate "God"



**US God-botherer Pat Robertson: Chaos will reign**

conmen who have always preyed on the ignorance and fears of American fundamentalists. Many "moral teachers" have been exposed in recent years as liars and cheats and as ceaselessly sexually active. As one is exposed there are a dozen waiting to take their place.

A prominent and typical charlatan is one Paul Crouch and his wife Janice, founders of Trinity Broadcasting Network based in California. Crouch had to pay almost \$500,000 to a former male employee whom he had harassed for sex. Another one of the most notorious couples engaged in praise the Lord and pass the cheque was Jim and Tammy Bakker. Stressing his innocence and moral purity, Jim was found sleeping

with a former Playboy model. He tried to silence her with a quarter of a million dollars. Jim went to jail for fraud. Tammy, who died in July this year, divorced Jim and married a wealthy church builder who was also jailed for three years for fraud. Jim and Tammy liked their dogs. They had them housed in gold-plated kennels

Their TV station, "Praise the Lord" was taken over by another, indeed more ruthless operator, Jerry Falwell, who called the Bakkers "the greatest scab and cancer on the face of Christianity". Very forgiving! Falwell was found dead in his office after being missing for some hours earlier this year. He was founder of the so-called "Moral Majority" which acted as recruiting agent and propagandist for Bush/Cheney's Republican Party in its drive for war, profits and contempt for people's rights.

The business goes on. Jimmy Swaggart, Oral Roberts, Ted Haggard, Billy Graham all play the same tune - anti-gay, anti-women, anti-Jew, anti-liberal - anything which will appeal to the basest instincts of humanity. Their creed is peddled through a vast media network. But there is an awakening in the United States over the past years. The discrediting of the Bush/Cheney regime and their policies will, if proper leadership is given, lead to the American people re-asserting their rights and giving these gangsters the boot forever.

## XEROX 'OUTSOURCES' 900 LAY-OFFS

Up to 900 workers have been given the boot at Xerox in Blanchardstown, Dublin. Right up to the company's shocking announcement, it had issued promises and "reassurances" that there was no truth in the nasty lay-off rumours. The call centre for Xerox customers worldwide is to be sold to IBM ("Big Blue"), probably one of the most "influential" big businesses in office

supplies to US industry.

Big Blue is to "outsource" the jobs of the 900 workers outside Ireland. Some of the workers will go through redundancy or "natural wastage".

This means that they will be tormented out of their jobs by management and every trick will be tried by the management to rob them of their rights.



# EAT YOUR HEART OVER THE PRICE OF FOOD HERE

People in Ireland pay 25% over the odds for basic food compared to the rest of Europe. Food produced in Ireland and sent to the continent costs only half what it does here – despite transportation costs.

The figures from Eurostat in Brussels highlight a fact that cannot be contradicted – capitalism in this country is in a frenzy of greed and there are no rules.

The survey was carried out last year across 37 European countries. It found that in Ireland, bread costs 21% more; milk, cheese and eggs 26% more; meat is 29% dearer; on our island fish is 23% more costly and other food is 21% dearer.

In a country with deadly rates of heart disease, colon cancer, other cancers and diabetes, the most shocking figure is that vegetables and fruit cost 30% more than the rest of Europe. Non-alcoholic drinks are 35% over the odds.

Workers' Party Waterford City Councillor John Halligan said: "These cold figures are a shock. Profiteering on items that people cannot do without increases poverty and stunts lives. It shows that the instinct of greed at the heart of capitalism is getting more intense all the time and in every area in this society".

"Three years ago the Workers Party proposed that price control be applied to items essential to life. Where is the law that says that ordinary people must always be on the back foot – and in the case of the poorest, on their knees – in the face of profiteering? There is not a TD who will ever mention price control. It is rubbish to talk of 'rip-offs' when the rippers-offs are always the capitalists, big or small, and this is never stated."

One example of such a pitiful response came from the Labour Party's Consumer Affairs spokes-



**Cllr John Halligan: what is wrong with price controls?**

woman, Kathleen Lynch. Surprise, surprise, she said consumers were being "ripped off" and stupidly asked, "we need to know why Irish consumers are facing prices for foodstuffs

that are far higher than those in other European countries, where workers are earning comparable rates of pay?"

The answer Kathleen is capitalism, Irish capitalism. In an even stupider comment she called for action from the National Consumer Agency! This agency is a toothless tiger. It was set up by the last FF/PD government several years ago for appearances sake alone, along with about 450 other such agencies. It will never back the consumer against the rip-off merchants – be they international or national.

Workers' Party Health spokesman Tommy Crilly has called for the bringing back of Supplementary Dietary Allowance for people with special dietary needs, such as coeliacs, diabetics and those who must use colostomy bags. They were very quietly closed to all new applications (the media did not mention it) in a so-called "giveaway budget" three years ago.

## Greek Fires Disaster Appeal

Readers of 'Look Left' will be familiar with the huge fires which have killed large numbers of innocent people and devastated large areas of Greece in late August.

The Workers Party of Ireland has launched an appeal for funds to assist the tens of thousands of Greek people who have been seriously affected by this disaster. Many lives have been lost, thousands of homes and property destroyed and tens of thousands of hectares of land destroyed.

The allegations which are being made by the Greek Government and many others that these fires

were deliberately caused by land speculators / developers seeking to illegally take possession of valuable land makes it urgent that the progressive parties in Greece receive financial support.

Much help is needed to rebuild homes and restore land, and help the people fight these ruthless speculators.

Please send what you can now to: Greek Fires Disaster Fund, 23 Hill Street Dublin 1 or to IPN Ltd, Bank of Ireland, O'Connell St, D1 A/C No: 6736 8416 Bank Sort Code: 90 00 68



# PHONE MASTS AT PITCHES MEET THEIR MATCH

By Brendan Phelan

Residents in the Iveagh Gardens area in Dublin 12 have won a significant victory in the campaign to prevent mobile phone masts being erected in Guinness's Iveagh Grounds. The land is owned by Diageo and the Guinness Athletic Union who, with capitalist greed and cynicism, secretly allowed Vodafone to attach masts to the floodlighting around the football pitches where young people enjoy various sporting activities.

For once, Dublin City Council has rejected a planning application for retention of a mast in a sports ground, which only goes to prove that it isn't completely useless all of the time.



**Brendan Phelan: These companies will put telephone masts anywhere - if we let them.**

Ms. Sheila Dobbyn of the Iveagh Gardens Residents' Association, along with the residents of adjoining areas, has thrown down the gauntlet, expressing the determination of the entire community to see this campaign to the end.

With typical vagueness, the council rejected the application on the grounds that "the applicant has not made a reasonable effort to SHARE the installations with OTHER operators in this area".

This sounds ominous, to say the least, as Meteor and O2 will be making applications for retention of their mast in the sports arena. Local residents face a long and hard battle.

## *Bush's pals fall like leaves*

President Bush gets deeper and deeper into trouble. His ratings in the polls are at an all-time low, he has lost his majority in both houses of Congress, and key advisers and strategists keep leaving his team.

His political strategist and senior advisor, Karl Rove, often known under the nickname "Bush's Brain" left the White House on August 31st. Alberto Gonzales, his Attorney General and close ally, leaves in mid-September.

These two well known faces join a long line of senior officials heading for pastures new. Among those who have left are White House counselor Dan Bartlett, budget director Rob Portman, chief White House attorney Harriet Miers, political director Sara Taylor, deputy national security advisers J.D. Crouch and Meghan O'Sullivan.

Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was forced out immediately after the election as the war in Iraq dragged on. Lewis "Scooter" Libby had to leave because of criminal behaviour. (Bush recently commuted his jail sentence). Even Paul Wolfowitz, a political and military "strategist" and a major architect of President Bush's disastrous Iraq policy, who became president of the World Bank, was forced to resign for nepotism and bullying.

Does this mean the world is becoming a safer place? Maybe, but it is always wise to remember: "beware the sting of a dying wasp".

## *The Workers Party Trip to Cuba May Day 2009*

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