

Left

Tribune

"proud to be left,
proud to be labour"



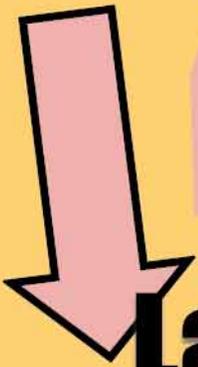
the magazine of Labour Youth in Ireland

vol 2 issue 4 / winter 2006

NEVER MIND THE BLUESHIRTS

HERE'S THE

SOCIALISM



Labour Youth's Priorities for Govt:

US Military out of Shannon
Abolish All College Fees
Free GP Care for All

***Why a vote for Labour
is a vote for labour values***

more inside...

inside:

**shell 2 sea:
the campaign grows**

how a rural Mayo community has been besieged, and how it is fighting back



**'07 General Election Focus:
Dublin & Ireland North-West
plus:**

LY conference report: New Executive Elected
**International left news: Ending the Cuban
Blockade & Stopping Violence Against Women**
John McDonnell: Reclaiming British Labour
Making Gains for Labour in Rural Ireland
...and much more...



Volume II, Issue 4 December 2006

Left Tribune is the magazine of Labour Youth in Ireland. We operate on the basis of a sustainable and democratic socialist ethos.

As such, *Left Tribune* is printed on paper which is 50% recycled and 50% from sustainable forests. If you are finished reading, we would ask that you pass this issue on to someone else - or recycle it.

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We welcome articles and comments from all readers to lycommunications@labour.ie

The opinions expressed in *Left Tribune* are those of its contributors and are not necessarily the policies or views of Labour Youth or the Labour Party.

Editorial Staff

Editor: Dermot Looney (LY Communications Officer)

Deputy Editor: Jane Horgan-Jones

News Editor: Conor Tannam

Design & Layout: Andrew Payne

Contributors: Paul Dillon, Carl Fox, Eoghan Fox, Rebecca Moynihan, Patrick Nulty, Paul Mulville

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New National Youth Executive Elected

Conor Tannam

The annual Youth Conference of the Labour Party held on November 3rd and 4th elected a new National Youth Executive (NYE) for the year 2006/2007. The Executive are unpaid officers of Labour Youth with responsibility for specific areas of the organisation, and are accountable to the membership through the Labour Youth Council.

23-year old Patrick Nulty from Dublin West (pictured top right) was elected unopposed to the position of Labour Youth Chair. Patrick is working on a PHD in University College Dublin on "Early School Leaving and Inequality" and has been an active party member since 2003.

His role encompasses leadership and coordination of Labour Youth on a national level, as well as acting as the spokesperson in the media and Labour Youth's representative on the National Executive Council of the overall Labour Party.

Meanwhile, in an election race reminiscent of many past battles between the colleges, Enda Duffy from the UCD Branch was successful in his campaign for Recruitment Officer, defeating Gary Honer of Trinity College 38-11 in the vote at Conference. Enda's campaign aims to recruit more members in more colleges and make Labour Youth more visible in the public eye by setting up stalls at shopping centres and in city centres.

The other Officers are:

- Vic Duggan from Dublin, now working in Luxembourg (International Officer); Labour Youth's representative to ECOSY - the European Young Socialists and the International Union of Socialist Youth;

- Neil Ward, originally from Dundalk, Co Louth, but now active in Dublin North Central, re-elected as Vice-Chair / Campaigns Officer; active in coordinating LY campaigns and acting as Chair in the absence of Patrick;

- Eoin Moore from Dolphin's Barn in Dublin South Central (National Secretary); responsibilities include budgeting and finances, fund raising and taking minutes at meetings;

- Dermot Looney from Greenhills in Dublin South-West (Communications Officer);



Editor of *Left Tribune* as well as having overall responsibility for the website and message boards:

- Andrew Payne from Terenure in Dublin (Education and Development Officer); coordinating the Tom Johnson Summer School, training events and policy development;

- David Morris from Kilkenny (Equality Officer); a new position on the Executive, David's role concentrates on ensuring equal rights for groups traditionally marginalised by politics such as migrant workers, asylum-seekers, those who are disabled, women and those in the LGBT community.

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Here's the Socialism:

Youth Conference votes for 10 Point Plan for Govt

Jane Horgan Jones

University College Dublin was host to the 2006 Labour Youth conference this November, which saw activists from around the country travel to attend the two-day event. In addition to the election of a new executive and working groups focused on

"Youth Conference unanimously affirmed its support for non-violent direct action as a legitimate tactic in campaigns"

particular campaigns, almost 50 motions submitted by individual branches were hotly debated on the conference floor. Those that were passed will now form the basis of Labour Youth's activity in the coming year, and aim to build on the successes achieved over the past 12 months.

The mandates established at Conference set the tone for another active, campaigning year in the organisation. Featured among the national issues discussed were the bin tax, child poverty, same sex marriage, Shell to Sea, and the pro-choice campaign, while international affairs included motions on Cuba, Belarus, and the upcoming leadership election in the British Labour Party. Crucially, Youth Conference also unanimously affirmed its support for non-violent direct action as a legitimate tactic in these campaigns and others that the organisation has been involved in over the past year.

Policy development was also key to the tasks set for the organisation in the coming 12 months, with Conference mandating the incoming Education and Development Officer to oversee the drawing up of comprehensive policy documents on drugs, youth support structures, rural development strategy and educational grants among others.

With the general election looming however, party issues and electoral strategy proved a particularly topical issue among delegates. Internal party democracy was a common theme, with much debate centring on how best to ensure that Labour Youth policy is transferred to the policies of the main party, and that our priorities are included in the Labour Party manifesto for the upcoming general election. The "Seize the Power" initiative was encapsulated in the motion proposed by last year's National Youth Executive, which outlined ten key areas for the incoming



officers and activists around the country to campaign on for inclusion in both the manifesto and in any possible programme for government. These priorities were drawn from all aspects of Labour Youth policy, and included U.S. military landing in Shannon, the abolition of all college fees, and the introduction of legislation guaranteeing the right of workers to union recognition in the workplace.

"Labour Youth will be campaigning to ensure that the Labour Party in government will mean a return to the basic values upon which the party is founded"

Over the coming months in the run-up to the election, Labour Youth will be campaigning to ensure that the Labour Party in government will mean a return to the basic values upon which the party is founded, and that these values are represented in a manifesto for government which sets out a real left-wing alternative to the right wing parties, both those in government and those in opposition.

The current pre-election pact with Fine Gael also came under fire from delegates during the course of the Conference. The large-scale opposition that exists in LY for the arrangement was shown clearly with the resounding approval received by Dublin South West Labour Youth's motion on election literature. The motion called explicitly for members not to participate in the distribution of material that called for a transfer to the Fine Gael party, and clearly reaffirmed Labour Youth's preferred independent electoral strategy as outlined in last year's policy document "Towards an Alternative Politics". The policy also encourages all activists to campaign solely for the Labour Party in the

general election and to encourage transfers against the government while canvassing.

All the campaigns and initiatives mandated by delegates at Youth Conference will now get under way as soon as possible, with early dates set for working groups in which every Labour Youth member is encouraged to participate. Through its active involvement in both national and international campaigns, Labour Youth looks set to build on its reputation as the most active youth wing party in Ireland over the coming year.

Seize the Power

Conference called on Labour in Government to:

1. Remove the US Military from Shannon
2. Stop Privatisation of our Public Services
3. Introduce Free GP Care for all
4. Introduce same sex marriage and adoption rights regardless of sexual orientation
5. Legislate for the X Case and hold referendum for safe, free & legal abortion in Ireland
6. Introduce legislation to give workers the right to union recognition
7. Abolish all full and part time college fees
8. Remove religious ownership and control from educational institutions
9. End public funding for private schools
10. Increase social housing and repeal Part 2 of the Planning & Development Act 2002

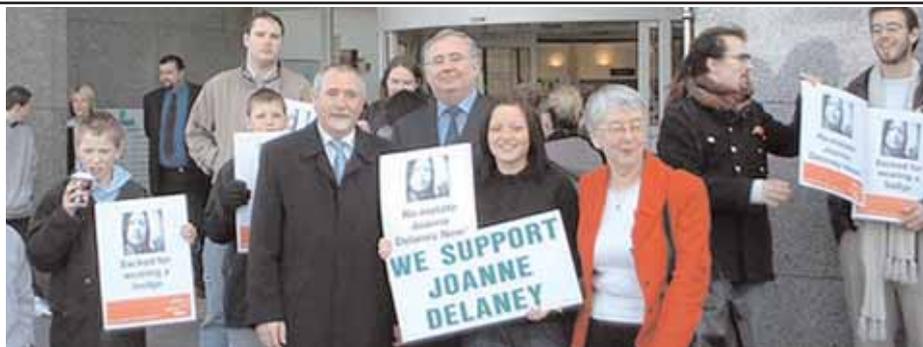
2006: A Campaigning Year

Conor Tannam & Dermot Looney

FEBRUARY

Labour Youth protest against the sacking of Dunnes employee

Labour Youth held protests in Dublin City, Cork and here in Crumlin against the unfair dismissal of Joanne Delaney from the large supermarket chain. She was sacked for wearing a union badge, but re-instated after massive public pressure. Joanne received an award from LY in November for her commitment to trade union rights.



JUNE

Inaugural Connolly Festival

In light of the 90th anniversary of the death of Labour founder James Connolly Labour Youth held a weekend of debate and discussion in the Teacher's Club. Topics included Same Sex Marriage, Pro Choice Activism, Boycott Killer Coke, US Military Out of Shannon and Shell to Sea. Pictured are Tracey Ryan (left) of the Rosspoint Solidarity Camp and a Killer Coke working group (right).



ALL YEAR

Anti-War Activity Continues

Labour Youth activists across Ireland have continued to protest against the ongoing invasion of Iraq by the so-called coalition of the willing in a year where over a quarter of a million US troops used Ireland as a stopover for the slaughter of thousands. There were also protests against Israeli aggression in Lebanon and Palestine. This demonstration was in Dublin City Centre in September.

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

Labour Youth play their part as Shell to Sea Campaign is upped

As Shell moved in for work in the Bellanaboy refinery site in October, local people called for solidarity. Labour Youth activists responded by attending and organising pickets of Shell stations, travelling to Erris (where many members were attacked by violent Gardaí) and organising this picket of Fianna Fail's head office in November.

SEPTEMBER

Rosspoint 5 Given Kemmy Award

LY presented the Jim Kemmy Award to Vincent McGrath on behalf of the Rosspoint 5 at the Tom Johnson summer school in Kilkenny. The school also focussed on new ways of organising workers, rioting and the ballot box and industrial relations. Pictured are Peadar Kirby (DCU), Neil Ward (LY Vice Chair) and Maggie Roynane (Global Womens Strike) during a session on the rise of the left in Latin America.



NOVEMBER

Coke Boycott hits Croke

Labour Youth have continued their leading role in the Boycott Coke campaign by helping to organise a leafleting session at the Coke-sponsored "International Rules" series at Croke Park this November. LY activists were also involved in a banner drop inside the ground.

Around the Branches

Trinity College / David Thornley Branch (<http://trinitylabour.bebo.com>)

Another significant increase in our membership has set Trinity Labour up for a successful and influential year. The Shell to Sea campaign is taking root in the college, owing largely to our support of the regular protests mounted by the established UCD group, and the leading role we played in the recent Labour Youth demonstration mounted outside the offices of Fianna Fail.

There has been promising engagement with like-minded societies over the defence of our

hard-won boycott of Coke products. It appears that once more we shall have to put our case to the students, but, after two victories for workers' solidarity, we will do so with confidence. Continuing the international theme, we operated a stand on Global White Band Day so as to renew support for the Make Poverty History initiative.

However, the rest of the academic year promises even more. A handprint petition to the South African government will form the

centrepiece of our action plan for World Aids Day.

An open round-table discussion on the future of Seanad Éireann with candidates from the college will no doubt generate important debate on the issue, and we can add to these with our yearly Dáil tour, the Living Wage Campaign with Cllr. Eric Byrne, and Same-Sex Marriage. The year has only just begun!

Carl Fox (Vice-Chair)

Galway Mayo IT/ Caitlin Maude Branch (<http://www.gmitlabour.tk>)

The main campaign of the year so far has been our activities in the Shell to Sea campaign. We have taken part in the picket of the Westside Shell petrol station every Friday since the beginning of October. The good turn out in recent weeks has had a tremendous effect on the amount of people using the station, with customers refusing to cross the picket line.

We also attended the National Day of Protest on November 10th called by the local people of Bellanaboy. That morning we

succeeded in blocking the convoy of jeeps and trucks for around a half an hour until we were violently removed from the road by Gardaí armed with truncheons.

On the 7th of October we had a high turnout for the first in our series of film screenings this year in GMIT, entitled "Visit Palestine", a documentary telling the story of Irishwoman Caoimhe Butterly who lived and worked with the besieged Palestinian people.

GMIT Labour are also working with com-

rades in the NUI Galway / Noël Browne Branch of Labour Youth for the re-election of Labour Party President Michael D Higgins in the Galway West constituency.

Finally, GMIT were the recipients of an award at Labour Youth Conference for Best Branch Campaign of the year for our "Give us Shelter" campaign. Special credit to Fintan Hastings and Cian Egan for their work in achieving a bus shelter for GMIT students at the main campus in Galway.

Eoghan Fox (Chair)

UCD / Pat Upton-Michael O'Riordan Branch (<http://ucdlabour.bebo.com>)

The UCD branch has been active since the outset of term. Freshers' Week was a source of great excitement and the quality of new recruits to the branch has impressed those of us who've been around for years!

In the light of the recent death of a committed socialist the branch has incorporated the name Michael O'Riordan into our official name. His dedication to the plight of workers and fighting injustice remains an inspiration.

UCD Labour has been at the forefront of the UCD Shell To Sea campaign, the most active campaign in any college in Ireland. Protests have been staged at a Shell garage in Donnybrook that has had considerable support among the student body.

A talk on Cuba was held hosted by Gary Murphy of the Cuban Solidarity Campaign to highlight the injustice of trade embargos on that country. A new drive to get a statue to the Spanish Civil War veteran Charlie

Donnelly erected is currently under way.

It is hoped that the branch will galvanise its members in the run up to the general election and that new members will gain invaluable inexperience on the doorsteps of the electorate in an attempt to maximise the Labour vote.

Conor Tannam (Committee Member)

To include your own branch or constituency news in future issues of Left Tribune, just email lycommunications@labour.ie



Members of the University College Cork / Jim Kemmy Branch with Party Leader Pat Rabbitte TD & Cork South-Central election candidate Cllr Ciaran Lynch at a recent meeting. The branch recently organised a successful petition opposing nuclear power.



Members of Dublin South-West Labour Youth on a 4,000-strong march organised by Labour to save the National Children's Hospital in Tallaght. The Govt wants to cynically move services 2 hours away to the Mater - in the Taoiseach's own constituency!

Focus: Shell to Sea and

The Background

The controversy surrounding the Corrib gas field in Mayo is one that has caught the attention of many people, of all political persuasions and none, over the past six years. However, the complexities of the issues at hand are often so vast that discovering the facts proves difficult, especially when faced with the mass of spin and propaganda coming from both the government and the corporations involved. Amidst the protests, enquiries, claims and counter-claims has emerged a campaign that is now a pivotal focus for the left in Ireland today.

THE GREAT GAS GIVEAWAY

The struggle to ensure that Irish citizens receive some benefit from the exploitation of Irish natural resources is a key focus of the Shell to Sea campaign. Due to new fiscal and licensing conditions for the oil and gas industries, introduced in 1987 during the tenure of Ray Burke as Minister for Energy, the Irish taxpayer will receive no royalties from the Corrib gas find.

In addition, 100% of development costs can be written off against tax. What this means, in practice, is that due to the involvement of Statoil as a junior partner, the citizens of Norway will accrue more financial benefits from Irish gas than the Irish citizens themselves.

Contrary to claims made by both Shell and the government, the gas garnered from Corrib might not even be utilised by Irish citizens, and falls far short of meeting our energy needs. Under E.U. law, Shell are obliged to sell the gas at or above market price to the highest bidder, negating any argument that the lack of royalties from the gas field will be offset by the benefits in energy availability that it may bring.

Despite the current controversy, Minister Dempsey has recently issued more exploration licenses to oil and gas companies (including Shell), underlining clearly that this government is intent on auctioning off the people's resources to the giant multinationals of the industry.

SAFETY

The starting point for the nationwide Shell to Sea campaign was the concerns of local residents about the safety of the proposed pipeline and plans to build it through their lands, and these issues remain at the heart of the campaign today.

In an independent report by the Centre for Public Inquiry, details were given of a pipeline rupture in Carlsbad, New Mexico in August 2000. The pipeline at Carlsbad exploded as the result of aggressive internal corrosion, which the CPI warned could pose a similar danger to residents in North West Mayo. Twelve people, camping approximately 206 metres from the ruptured pipe were killed as a result of the blast and exposure to thermal radiation.

The proposed Corrib pipeline runs within 70 metres of dwellings in Rossport. Minister Dempsey, however, has repeatedly stated that he feels a distance of 3 metres to be "safe". This is despite the fact that the pipeline in Mayo has the potential to operate at a higher pressure level than the New Mexican example, and that Shell have to date failed to make any undertakings that this level of pressure will not be reached during its operations.

Similarly, the location of the on-shore processing plant at Bellanaboy, the focus of recent protests, gives the local community cause for grave concern. However, both the Cassells report and the Advantica report (commissioned by the government) were

restricted in their terms of reference from looking at the location of the refinery site. The only independent inquiry that examined this aspect of the dispute concluded that statements by Shell and the government had "understated the risks of the onshore proposal" in light of concerns about the possibility of a pipeline rupture.

SHELL'S TRACK RECORD

The Corrib gas controversy has been characterised by repeated assurances from Shell officials that the pipeline is "failsafe" and that the local residents should have no cause for worry. But given Shell's safety and reliability record worldwide, it is far from surprising that this has not convinced the residents of Rossport.

The multinational company has been substantially fined over the years, and was recently ordered to pay €110 million by the E.U. due to "persistent and ongoing infringements in this market, despite repeated warnings and failure to co-operate with the inquiry on this matter".

In addition, the Nigerian Congress have ordered Shell to pay compensation for the destruction wreaked by the company in the exploitation of the Niger Delta, and the BBC in England recently reported that the company had "ignored warnings" that their Brent Bravo platform was unsafe prior to the deaths on that platform of two Scottish workers.

It is clear that Shell's record is far from desirable, without even having to mention environmental disasters such as the oil spill in the Philippines for which they were responsible. It is fair to assume that if the residents living close to that development had inquired as to their safety, they would have received assurances disturbingly similar to those the Rossport residents are receiving today.

The Shell to Sea campaign is undoubtedly one which deals with many complex and important issues, some of which are detailed above. However, perhaps what is most clear from this campaign is the extent to which our government has become intertwined with the vested interests of big business, and how the might of both establishments have conspired to crush any campaign to expose these unhappy truths.

Clearly, those who proclaim to be on the left must continue their support for the campaign, not only for the people of Rossport, but for all the people of Ireland.



The Rossport 5, jailed for 95 days by Shell and their friends in Government; (from left) Vincent McGrath, Willie Corduff, Micheál O Seighin & Philip McGrath. Not pictured: Brendan Philbin

the fight for justice

by Jane Horgan-Jones

A Community Under Siege

In Ireland, we like to think that we live in a democratic society. We also like to think that our politicians and our police force are accountable, that the government looks after the best interests of the people, and that the right to peaceful protest is upheld.

These maxims, while easy on the ear and often heard falling shrilly from the lips of the current government, no longer ring true for the people of Erris in north-west Mayo.

The recent scenes in the media of protestors at the Bellanaboy refinery site being literally beaten off the road by members of An Garda Síochána have unequivocally shown that Rosspport is a community under siege from three formidable forces: the government, the media, and multinational corporations drunk on their own power and greed.

What is particularly disturbing, however, is that all three seem to be interminably linked, aiding and abetting each other at every turn, and all in the name of oppressing a courageous and inspiring small community that has protested, undaunted, against these forces for the past six years.



COMMUNITY ACTION

Contrary to the impression one might receive from some accounts, pickets of the refinery site have been going on for considerably longer than the mainstream media has chosen to spend reporting them. The local community has maintained a constant presence at the gates of the refinery for the past 16 months, and have consistently employed peaceful direct action to prevent Shell from forcing a dangerous and experimental pipeline through their lands.



However, while the tactics have not changed, the response of the state and of the Gardaí has escalated to an extent that has shocked both the community of Rosspport and the Irish people at large.

GARDA COMPLICITY

Numbers of Gardaí in Erris have skyrocketed in recent months, with close to 200 members of the force now permanently stationed in Erris at an exponentially increasing cost to the taxpayer. However, despite the substantial Gardaí presence and shrieking, unfounded allegations of illegality and violence in the media, not a single person protesting at the refinery site in Bellenaboy has been charged with any crime.

The State has instead chosen to turn a blind eye to a situation where rather than being arrested, charged and given the chance to defend themselves against such spurious allegations in a court of law, protestors are systematically physically assaulted in order to deter them from challenging Shell and the government's authority. Comparisons to Nigeria, where the government executed nine objectors at the behest of Shell, are neither hysterical nor unsuitable.

"Shell's Cops", as they have become known, regularly engage in activities designed to break both the campaign and the spirit of local people. Protestors have been informed that no further complaints will be taken at Bellmullet Garda Station concerning police violence, and public roads are regularly closed to all those not employed by Shell.

Peaceful marches are banned without reason or prior warning, indicating a worrying attack on our civil liberties. Consistent filming of protestors, even when just sitting beside the road, further assists the Gardaí in maintaining an ominous sense of intimidation and harassment.

MASS MEDIA MISINFORMATION

The war waged by the government and Shell

on the community of Erris has also been fought in other areas, not least in by a complicit majority in the mainstream media. Reports citing anonymous sources and making grand but baseless claims about the campaign being hijacked by Sinn Féin have become characteristic of many newspaper reports, even when these publications unashamedly carry full-page colour advertisements for Shell at the same time.

Suggestive phrases such as "It has emerged that..." are regularly used in order to give weight to allegations that in reality have no basis other than the writer's own rather clear agenda. Even RTÉ think it prudent to broadcast footage of Gardaí beating locals off the road while glibly refusing to pass any comment on those scenes, preferring instead to report on "violent" protests in a manner that implies fault on both sides.

The factors weighed against the Shell to Sea campaign are astounding: a government with a huge vested interest in ensuring that the deal with Shell is not re-examined, a multinational corporation that has attempted and succeeded in waging war against communities all over the world, and a media that generally refuses to report the truth when it is placed in front of them. Considering these obstacles, the achievements of the Rosspport people thus far are all the more astonishing.

Shell's disgraceful track record and their exploitation of local communities are firmly on the public agenda, with countless solidarity actions being staged around the world in support of the campaign.

However, while the progress of the Shell to Sea campaign is emblematic of the strength that can be found in community struggle, the resistance they have encountered along the way is similarly symptomatic of the extent to which this government has forgotten that their responsibilities are to the people of Ireland, and not to the shareholders of Royal Dutch Shell.

General Election '07: Labour's Candidates

With a general election just a few months away, Labour is standing up to 50 candidates in every one of the 43 constituencies around the country - the first time we have contested every constituency since 1969. When it comes to Irish politics, the cliché is that there isn't one national election, there are 43 local ones. Organised by each European area, Dermot Looney investigates each constituency and asks if Labour can improve on its existing tally of 21 TD's. In this issue, Labour's candidates in the Ireland North West and Dublin Euro election regions are profiled. The next issue of Left Tribune will focus on Labour's hopes in Ireland South and East.

Ireland North-West (Co Clare, all of Connacht and the three Ulster counties in the Republic)

Undoubtedly Labour's least fruitful area, only one TD - Michael D Higgins - currently represents this electoral area, which encompasses 9 constituencies. Labour will run one-candidate strategies in all nine constituencies, with a number of young candidates such as Colm Keaveney, Hugh Baxter and Harry Barrett seeking to add to Labour's western contingent in Leinster House.

Donegal South West

No of seats: 3 - Currently 2 FF, 1 FG, No current Labour TD. Candidate: Seamus Rodgers
Seamus Rodgers, who was first elected to Donegal County Council in 1960, is a retired trade union official and a former Chairperson of Donegal County Board. He first stood for the Dail in 1961 and has always garnered a highly respectable vote for the left through Official Sinn Fein, the Workers' Party, Democratic Left and now the Labour Party in what is generally considered a conservative stronghold.

Donegal North East

No of seats: 3 - Currently 2 FF, 1 "Independent Fianna Fail" No current Labour TD. Candidate: Siobhan McLaughlin
Siobhan McLaughlin, a highly respected Travellers' rights activist, will stand for the first time in this FF-dominated constituency, seeking Labour's first victory in Donegal since 1927.

Cavan-Monaghan

No of seats: 5 - Currently 2 FF, 1 FG, 1 SF, 1 Ceann Comhairle No current Labour TD. Candidate: Cllr Des Cullen
Cavan Town Councillor Des Cullen, a 37 year old teacher is Labour's standard bearer in a constituency which will only elect 4 TD's due to the sitting Ceann Comhairle Rory O'Hanlon being automatically re-elected. A former Labour Youth National Chair (1993), Des is the current Deputy Mayor of Cavan Town and is heavily involved with the ASTI.

Sligo - North Leitrim

New constituency, formerly Sligo-Leitrim (South Leitrim is now with Roscommon) No of seats in old constituency: 4 - 2 FF, 1 FG, 1 IND. Reduced to 3 seats for 2007. No current Labour TD. Candidate: Cllr Jim McGarry
Cllr Jim McGarry is the Labour Party candidate in this constituency. A former Fine Gael local rep, he is based in Sligo town and is one of 3 Labour reps on Sligo County Council. Labour last won a seat here in 1992 through current Cllr Declan Bree.

Mayo

No of seats: 5 - Currently 2 FF, 2 FG, 1 IND No current Labour TD. Candidate: Harry Barrett
Labour currently hold just one seat on Mayo Co Co and it has been 80 years since Labour won a seat in Mayo with the then party leader, Thomas J O'Connell. However, the recent revival in membership in Mayo will rally around first-time candidate Harry Barrett, a 39-year old teacher originally from Erris, and a vocal supporter of the Rossport 5.

Galway West

No of seats: 5 - Currently 1 LAB, 2 FF, 1 FG, 1 PD Current TD and candidate: Michael D Higgins TD
Labour Party President and Foreign Affairs spokesperson Michael D, one of the great stalwarts of the Irish left, is seeking re-election. Labour's only TD west of the Shannon, he has held a seat here since 1987, having first won a seat in 1981 and first stood in 1969.



Clare

No of seats: 4 - Currently 2 FF, 1 FG, 1 IND No current Labour TD. Candidate: Cllr Pascal Fitzgerald
Pascal Fitzgerald is a Councillor on Clare County Council for the Killaloe election, standing and winning for the first time in the 2004 locals. Labour last won a seat here in 1992 with Moosajee Bhamjee, a historic feat Pascal will look to emulate.

Galway East

No of seats: 4 - Currently 2 FF, 1 FG, 1 IND No current Labour TD. Candidate: Cllr Colm Keaveney
Colm Keaveney, a former President of the Union of Students in Ireland and a SIPTU official, is a Labour councillor on Galway County Council. Based in Tuam, Colm stood in the 1997 General Election, achieving a respectable 8%, but will need to improve on this to be elected this time round.

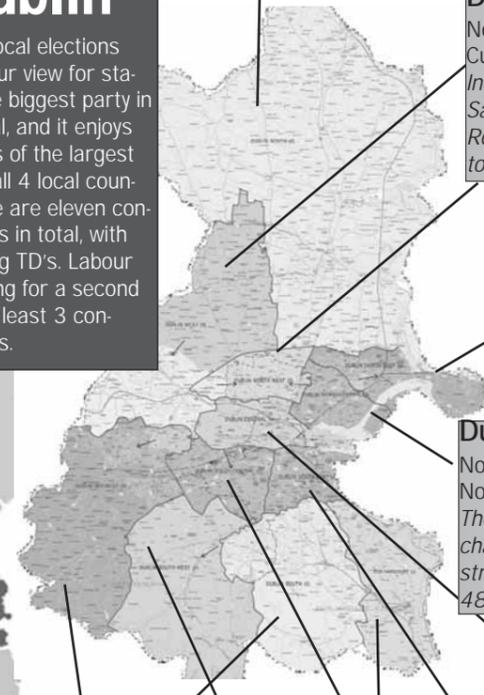


Dublin North

No of seats: 4 - Currently 1 LAB, 2 FF, 1 GP Current TD: Sean Ryan TD (retiring). Candidate: Brendan Ryan
Sean Ryan's retirement as a TD sees his brother Brendan represent Labour's hopes in a constituency which has been hit hard by the privatisation of Aer Lingus. Based in Skerries, Brendan will hope to keep the family in the Dail and has hit the ground running with a strong campaign.

Dublin

The last local elections saw Labour view for status as the biggest party in the capital, and it enjoys the status of the largest party on all 4 local councils. There are eleven constituencies in total, with nine sitting TD's. Labour will be vying for a second seat in at least 3 constituencies.



Dublin West

No of seats: 3 - Currently 1 LAB, 1 FF, 1 SP Current TD and candidate: Joan Burton TD
With just 3 seats on offer Dublin West is one of the most competitive constituencies in the country. Labour Finance spokesperson Joan Burton will hope to repeat her success of 2002 in retaining her seat in this strongly working-class constituency which has a burgeoning influx of new residents.

Dublin North West

No of seats: 3 - Currently 1 LAB, 2 FF Current TD and candidate: Roisin Shortall TD
Including major urban areas such as Finglas, Ballymun, Santry and Whitehall, Dublin NW is another tough 3-seater. Roisin Shortall, Labour's Transport spokesperson, will seek to retain the seat she first won in 1992.



Dublin North East

No of seats: 3 - Currently 1 LAB, 2 FF Ccandidate: Tommy Broughan TD
Labour's spokesperson on Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Tommy Broughan is respected as a hard constituency worker as well as a national campaigner on issues such as fisheries, communications and Shell to Sea. He will work to see off a strong challenge from FG and SF to retain his seat in another competitive race.

Dublin North Central

No of seats: 3 - Reduced from 4 - currently 2 FF, 1 FG, 1 IND No current Labour TD. Candidate: Senator Derek McDowell
The reduction of Dublin NC from 4 seats to 3 seats makes for an even harder challenge for current Senator and former TD Derek McDowell. The former stronghold of Charles Haughey continues to have a strong FF presence but the 48-year old Labour candidate born and bred in Donnycarney will fight hard.

Dublin Central

No of seats: 4 - Currently 1 LAB, 2 FF, 1 IND Candidate: Joe Costello TD
Viewed as the most competitive constituency in the country, Dublin Central will see Labour's Defence spokesperson Joe Costello seek to retain his seat against other political heavyweights such as Bertie Ahern, Tony Gregory, Mary Lou McDonald & Patricia McKenna. Joe has built a base here for many years and was elected in 1992 & 2002.

Dublin Mid West

No of seats: Currently 3 - 1 FF, 1 PD, 1 GP. Increased to 4 seats for 2007. No current Labour TD. Candidate: Senator Joanna Tuffy
Senator Joanna Tuffy, a former Labour Youth activist, won her selection convention on the drawing of lots but is in a strong place to gain a Labour seat in this relatively new constituency.



Dublin South East

No of seats: 4 - Currently 1 LAB, 1 FF, 1 PD, 1 GP Candidate: Ruairi Quinn TD
Ruairi was the leader of the Labour Party from 1997-2002 and has built a base in this area since he first stood for election here in 1973. He is currently Labour's spokesperson on Trade, Enterprise and Employment and a former Finance Minister.

Dublin South Central

No of seats: 5 - Currently 1 LAB, 2 FF, 1 FG, 1 SF Current TD and candidate: Mary Upton TD. Also, Cllr Eric Byrne
Labour came desperately close to 2 seats here in 2002 but former Democratic Left TD Eric Byrne lost out - just. Mary Upton, Labour spokesperson on Agriculture & Food, is seeking re-election here in a seat formerly held by her brother, Pat. A second seat is a real possibility here.

Dublin South

No of seats: 5 - Currently 2 FF, 1 FG, 1 PD, 1 GP No current Labour TD. Candidates: Cllr Aidan Culhane, Cllr Alex White
In a seat formerly held by John Horgan and Eithne Fitzgerald, Labour surprisingly lost out last time around. This time Dundrum-based Councillor Aidan Culhane and Rathfarnham-based Cllr Alex White will be vying to regain the Labour seat here - and maybe even add a second.

Dun Laoghaire

No of seats: 5 - Currently 1 LAB, 2 FF, 1 PD, 1 GP Current TD and candidate: Eamon Gilmore TD. Also, Cllr Oisín Quinn
Labour will be hoping to add a second Dail seat in Dun Laoghaire with the addition of Dublin City Councillor Oisín Quinn, a nephew of Ruairi, to the ticket. Eamon Gilmore, Labour's Environment and Local Government spokesperson, is one of the most respected TD's in the Dail and a former candidate for Party Leader.



Dublin South West

No of seats: 4 - Currently 1 LAB, 2 FF, 1 SF Current TD and candidate: Pat Rabbitte TD
Traditionally a stronghold for the left, Dublin SW elected 2 Labour TDs & a Democratic Left candidate in 1992, the latter the current Labour Leader, Pat Rabbitte. This time Pat is the sole Labour candidate and hopes to top the poll.

Re-Aligning Politics in Rural Ireland

Paul Dillon on how Labour can look to the Shell to Sea campaign and the inspirational Michael Davitt (right) in reclaiming the ground it has lost outside the major cities.

With an eye on the upcoming general election, the Irish *Farmers Journal* recently undertook a survey of 406 farmers at 12 locations across the country during late June and early July of this year, asking them which party they intended to vote for.

41.6% of those surveyed indicated they would vote Fine Gael, while 34.7% said they would support Fianna Fail. 2.2% intend voting for the PDs, 0.7% pledged support for Independents, and Sinn Fein garnered 0.2%. Finally, 0% of the voting farmers surveyed plan on ticking the Labour box.

For those of us coming from a small farming background, it comes as no surprise that big farmers would support the conservative consensus from which they benefit. Similarly, small farmers traditionally pledge support to the conservatives, with Fianna Fáil consistently emerging as the main benefactor. Even with this in mind, Labour's dismal showing comes as a surprise. In the early days of the party, farm labourers and their families had formed the backbone of the Labour vote, while numerous TDs have also traditionally represented farmers in the past. Dan Spring (father of Dick) was always very strongly supported by farmers in North Kerry.

While we must take into account that the methodology of any poll has a big impact on the outcome, these results are nevertheless very bad news for the Labour Party. The poor poll performance of Labour outside of Dublin and the other major urban centers indicates worryingly low levels of support from ordinary people working in the agricultural sector.

The question thus arises - what is to be done about the relationship between Labour and rural communities? The alliance between the large farming class and the 'Podge & Rodge' of Irish politics - Fianna Fáil & Fine Gael - is likely to be maintained into the future.

Questions of class are rarely raised when farming is discussed in Irish politics, but the

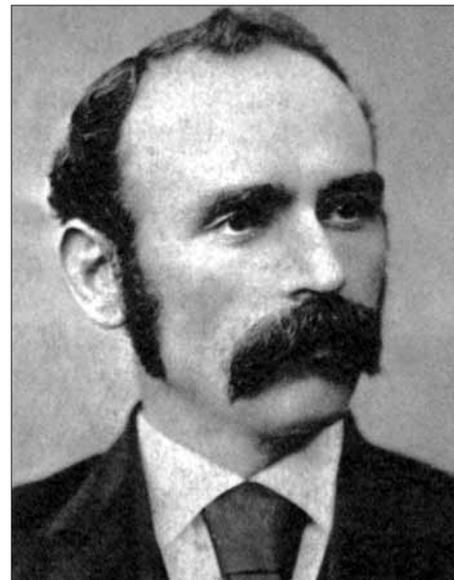
truth is that the large farming class is thriving economically. The alliance is working well for the major farming interests, and extends beyond landowners and into what is called the "agribusiness sector". Anyone who studied the outcome of the Beef Tribunal will recall the extent to which the political establishment in general - and Fianna Fáil in particular - are in thrall to the dominant business interests in Irish agriculture.

However, there still remains the potential for a re-alignment of Irish politics in rural communities. Small farmers and ordinary workers in agriculture do not share the same interests as the large farmers or the dominant business interests in the sector.

Two examples immediately spring to mind - the extent to which large farmers benefit from EU grants, and the increasing pressure on wages and conditions for workers in both the red & white meat sectors. Why should large farmers benefit disproportionately in the distribution of EU grants, as is now the case? Such grants should be cut off once farm income reaches a certain level and re-distributed to boost incomes for smaller farmers.

A similarly radical programme is required if there is to be a genuinely supportive relationship between Labour and those working in the agricultural sector. A specific Labour inspectorate should be set up to counter the exploitation of workers on farms and in other areas of the food sector. This would be an appropriate response to a number of instances of severe exploitation that have emerged recently, both in private farms and in other areas of the food sector such as the mushroom farms.

Trade unions have exposed examples of widespread exploitation in both red and white meat factories. In a similar way to the retail sector, the meat industry is increasingly dominated by a handful of large interests, where massive profits are matched by some



of the lowest wages being paid out to workers.

Legislation on profit sharing, similar to that which was flagged before sinking without trace during the recent partnership negotiations, would boost wages in the meat sector that have dropped comparatively in recent years. The repeal of anti-union laws and new rights to take part in trade union activity would also boost the position of workers in the sector. The pamphlet "Bertie's Bill" (Workers Party, 1990), produced by Pat Rabbitte and Eamon Gilmore, provides a useful template in this regard.

Perhaps above all others, the campaign by the rural Rosspoint community against Shell's dangerous plans for their community offers an opportunity for the left to expose the corrupt relationship between big business and the civil war parties that continue to dominate Irish politics. The Shell to Sea campaign deserves our full support. It offers scope not only to defeat Shells unsafe and environmentally unsound plans, but also to point to an alternative vision for rural Ireland that puts the welfare of the general community over private profit for a few.

Such a vision, incorporating a programme to benefit small farmers and engage with ordinary workers in the agricultural sector, would require bravery and courage to be articulated. But what better time than now, the year when the work of land agitator and champion of ordinary rural workers, Michael Davitt, is being celebrated?

The monumental work of Davitt with regard to Irish tenant farmers and farm labourers in the late 19th century should inspire us today, as we face up to the task of building up support for ideas that collide with the interests of the powerful and the wealthy.



IN THEORY: Does Globalisation Mean an End to the Welfare State?

In the first of a series linking the theoretical questions of modern socialism with practical issues, Labour Youth Chair Patrick Nulty examines the debate around globalisation and its impact on state services.

One of the central questions within contemporary political debate at present is the impact of globalisation on our society. Globalisation is both conceptually and empirically understood in different ways. However in recent years the impact of globalisation on the welfare state has been used as a justification for welfare retrenchment across Europe.

In countries where Labour or socialist movements have gained hard won social security, health, education or housing provision, globalisation is now being employed in the debate around acquiescence to market forces. In fact, globalisation is in its very essence an ideological justification for neo-liberal economics.

Contemporary debate on the future of the welfare state is often based around critiques from neoliberalism regarding the nature & sustainability of State Welfare. The origins of neoliberal critiques of the welfare state are found in the work of economists Milton Friedman & Friedrich Hayek, whose book *The Road to Serfdom* argues that the Welfare State leads to totalitarianism.

This perspective grew following the oil crisis of 1973, the abolition of fixed exchange rates and the subsequent economic recession. This led to an end of an economic order based on 'embedded liberalism' and the emergence of monetarist economic policies. Neo-liberal governments in the form of Thatcher and Reagan were elected in the UK and USA with an agenda of privatisation, welfare retrenchment and low taxation.

The characteristics of neo-liberal policies are unilateral opening of a country to foreign trade, privatisation of State enterprises, deregulation of labour markets and cuts in government social spending with an emphasis on fiscal rectitude. While neo-liberal governments have not dismantled the Welfare State entirely due to opposition from the public, Trade Unions and community groups almost all Welfare States now have greater selectivity, lower replacement rates and there has been large-scale privatisation of public companies.

This perspective has had a substantial impact on the politics of the welfare state and has been adopted into the programmes of Social Democrats advocating a 'third way'

model such as the governments of Tony Blair (UK) and Gerhard Schroder (Germany).

One of the central ideas of those who argue that the State is no longer in a position to provide social services is the contention that financial capital and transnational corporations (TNCs) are able to transfer capital and wealth across the globe with relative impunity. However the validity of this assertion is questionable. The reality is that far from being in opposition States and corporations co-operate and the expansion and investment of multinationals is a consequence of State directed policy based on liberal economic models.

This is in contrast to the claims of those who believe that the State is passive or helpless in controlling corporations. Central to the neo-liberal thesis is that taxation on capital or corporate profits will lead to even greater redirection of investment by corporations into developing economies. This is simply untrue. In practice, cost reduction is not the key focus for corporate investment strategies; the availability of workforce with relevant skills and infrastructure is the key.

It is clear that the investment strategies of corporations are strongly in line with the agenda of neo-liberal governments. Contrary to the claims of neo-liberal economists and politicians many European companies are both unable and unwilling to expropriate large scale investments from their country of origin.

In reality, the claim that greater investment in the Welfare State funded through the taxation of private firms would lead to a flight of

capital from the economy is grossly overstated and does not recognise that government support is more not less important to corporations within the contemporary economic order.

By challenging the economic dogma of neo-liberals who argue that the Welfare State cannot be sustained due to the process of globalisation. It has been shown that economic globalisation including the removal of trade barriers, privatisation and a reduction in funding for the Welfare State is due to the activities and policies of neo-liberal governments or governments who have accepted neo-liberal orthodoxies. The claim that global capital and investment can shift across the globe with ease is not supported by the evidence which shows that corporations maintain strong links with their country of origin.

Furthermore, while the decisions of supranational bodies are often blamed for the deregulation of global trade these organisations are controlled by nation states and implement policies in line with the interests of the large western economies. This clearly demonstrates that globalisation is not an abstract phenomena but is a consequence of sustained political and academic project aimed at increasing corporate profits and destroying our public services.

The Welfare State is under attack not from globalisation but from neo-liberal ideologues committed to undermining the social protection and rights of working people. Such an attack is based on misinformation and inaccuracies and must be resisted and ultimately defeated.



The impact of Globalisation is often blamed for a decrease in working standards and wages. Labour Youth is active in the Living Wage Campaign to ensure all workers earn a minimum of €10 an hour. The campaign was launched by (from left) Neil Ward (Labour Youth Vice-Chair), Mick O'Reilly (ATGWU), Joanne Delaney (MANDATE), Labour Party Cllr Eric Byrne, Jack O'Connor (SIPTU) and Labour Party Leader Pat Rabbitte TD.

Britain's Great Left Hope



*This summer's announcement by left-wing MP John McDonnell that he would stand for the leadership of British Labour caused a minor stir in a popular media besotted with the personalities of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. But, as **Dermot Looney** writes, McDonnell's campaign is part of a historic narrative in which left and right battle it out for the hearts and minds of Britain and its troubled Labour Party.*

A casual observer might not think a politician who lists "generally fermenting the overthrow of capitalism" among his interests in Who's Who fits in well to a Labour Party dominated by Blairism for more than a decade. But John McDonnell's bid to become the next British Labour Leader is far from an anachronism. Rather, it is a legitimate and vital campaign to reclaim the values, principles, policies and politics of the left for the party. And those scoffing how a socialist campaign is expected to thrive fall into the mythical trap of believing that Labour equals Blairism.

Left-wing activists who remain 'in the pavilion' of Labour politics have been battered, bruised and cast aside - but they are not yet defeated. An estimated 200,000 members have left the party in the last decade - some 25 times the entire membership of the Irish Labour Party. But Londoner McDonnell, who has significant Irish roots, is adamant that his campaign should be the trigger for many of them to rejoin and for new members, particularly amongst Britain's disenfranchised youth, to take up membership and activism. His campaign is undoubtedly one seeking to "reclaim" the party for what he views as its natural place on the left.

Far from the personality disputes of Brown and Blair - co-architects of the New Labour project - and the host of minor acolytes lining up to "renew" New Labour, McDonnell stands in the traditions of Nye Bevan and Tony Benn; popular, radical and caring politics rooted in the great dichotomy of left and right.

THE EARLY BATTLES BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT

Perhaps more than any other left-wing party in the world, the importance of political and class culture has dominated the British Labour Party since its formation as the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 by Keir Hardie. The cultural ethos of the labour movement, built from the early years of the 20th century, focused on the transformation of society itself by the combined efforts of working-class people represented in their workplaces by trade unions and in parliament by Labour.

While he is recognised as a hero to many on the left nowadays, Keir Hardie's chairman-

ship of the party was in sharp opposition to Marxists in the Social Democratic Federation, an important component in the early Labour Party. Mass membership and mass support for the party came within a few years but this did not necessarily imply radicalism. Indeed, the first ever Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, rejected the socialism and pacifism of his early days in Parliament when he became leader of a minority government in 1924.

Any chances of re-election to Government were halted by the infamous Zinoviev letter, a forged document purporting to come from the USSR and calling for Soviet-style Communism in Britain. The forgery was printed in the Daily Mail - now, and then, a reactionary Tory paper with a particular distaste for any form of socialism (and, coincidentally, the Irish). Ramsay MacDonald was opposed

"200,000 members have left the party in the last decade - some 25 times the entire membership of the Irish Labour Party."

by many on the left throughout his leadership, particularly given his opposition to the 1926 General Strike. He was eventually expelled from the Labour Party and formed a national government in coalition with the Tories and Liberals.

The Zinoviev letter and the subsequent controversy highlighted two parallel tendencies which have always restricted the left in British politics - the power of an unsympathetic media, and 'red scare' tactics by the Tories. The degree of 'redness' in the party is a ubiquitous source of controversy; so much so that the history of British Labour since its foundation might best be understood as a conflict between left and right.

POST WAR POLITICS AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CONSENSUS

A number of other key left-right arguments in the party have taken place over the past 60 years. The landslide post-War election of 1945 gave Labour a huge majority in Parliament, allowing the foundation of the Welfare State and the National Health Service, an institution that continues despite more than a quarter century of attacks by neoliberalism under Thatcher and Blair.

A remarkable feature of this government, led by Clem Attlee, was the attachment felt by ordinary people to Labour; the party had approximately half a million members when they took office in 1945, and over a million when they left six years later.

It is perhaps during Attlee's leadership that the radical left of the party reached its zenith. Nevertheless, Attlee himself was a moderate and his foreign policy - in particular his commitments to massive spending on arms and intervention in the Korean War in 1950 were staunchly opposed by a left wing who increasingly turned to Welsh radical Nye Bevan as its best hope.

Bevan, the archetypal miner-cum-trade union leader, overcame great odds in establishing the NHS in 1948, a feat which remains Labour's proudest ever achievement in government. But he was forced out of the Cabinet after opposing the war in Korea and subsequent challenges to Attlee's successor, the centrist Hugh Gaitskell, bore little fruit. The clashes between Bevanites and Gaitskellites were substantial but the moderates maintained the upper hand while the Tories under an aged Churchill and Anthony Eden retained power.

The next time Labour came to power was 1964, in a slim majority led by another moderate, Harold Wilson. This majority was greater in the 1966 snap election and Labour were in government until 1970. Although many social-democratic social policies were implemented, such as increasing universalism in social welfare payments and legislation on race relations, homosexuality and abortion, the left of the party were largely undermined. By the late 1960's there was enough optimism, however, that the common consensus among ordinary Labour activists was that the "seventies would be socialist." Their hopes were not to be achieved.

FROM BENN TO BLAIR AND BEYOND

Wilson's successor, Jim Callaghan, was another centrist, and opposed a left that by now included ministers Barbara Castle and Tony Benn. In 1976 Callaghan's government received an IMF loan that was "badly needed" - the loan required the typical privatisation and free-market reforms attached to IMF

interventions. The left of the party increasingly rallied around Benn and Michael Foot, a previous editor of the left-wing Tribune newspaper.

The so-called "Winter of Discontent" in 1979 led to the Labour government being well-beaten by the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher was to dominate British politics for more than a decade - indeed, some would say that her ideology and style, if not necessarily her party, continue to dominate today.

Tony Benn and others were massively supported by the Labour grassroots membership and pushed through democratic reforms, giving more power to the party conference and arguing for radical reform across the board. Michael Foot's election as party leader in 1980 was a significant victory for the left and, while Benn was narrowly defeated in a significant election for Deputy Leader in 1981, Labour's high standing in polls continued to hold until the beginning of the Falklands War in 1982. Thatcher's star then began to rise, supported by a jingoistic media and a significant split in Labour led by a right-wing opposed to democratic party reforms and left-wing policies.

The "Gang of Four" who initiated the split went on to form the Social Democratic Party, which later merged with a diminished Liberal Party to form today's Liberal Democrats. The SDP were somewhat successful in taking Labour seats in the 1983 election in which hysteria about Labour's manifesto contributed to a significant Tory victory. The manifesto, written by Benn and others on the left, argued for withdrawal from the EEC, nuclear disarmament, abolition of the aristocratic House of Lords and nationalisation of a number of strategic industries.

It was seized upon by the press as an excuse for Labour to "nationalise the corner shops" and, combined with Foot's unpopularity and hugely successful negative campaigning tactics and costly media campaigns by the Tories, led to a landslide defeat. Labour's own right-wingers famously termed the 50,000 word manifesto as "the longest suicide note in history."

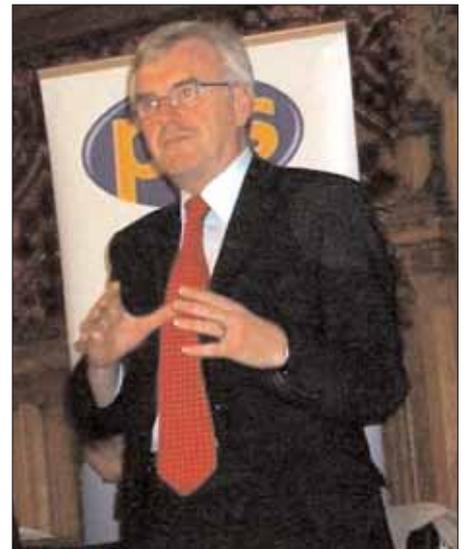
While the Bennite left continued to argue for radical reforms, the extreme individualism, far-right social policies and the advent of neoliberal economics under Thatcher were the backdrop for the rest of the eighties. Where Labour was successful - in a number of radical left local government authorities, including the Greater London Council (GLC) - Thatcher's government simply abolished the councils. Two people affected by the abolition of the GLC were its leader, "Red" Ken Livingstone (now London Mayor) and his deputy, John McDonnell.

From the 1983 defeat on the party initiated series after series of reforms which were intended to "modernise" - in practice, image building, the centralisation of power, and overall a movement further and further towards the capitalist consensus. Under the leadership of Neil Kinnock, a former left winger who controversially abstained rather than support Benn's election for Deputy Leader, the party expelled the "Militant Tendency," a Trotskyite entrist group who had a number of MP's and control of Liverpool City Council. The media heralded it as a defeat for the left, even though the Bennites, now formed as the Socialist Campaign Group, were not aligned to Militant.

Kinnock's leadership should have culminated in election victory in 1992, but the party were narrowly defeated. The party swung further to the centre under Kinnock's successor, John Smith, and to the right under Tony Blair, who was elected leader in 1994.

The New Labour project was originally intended to defeat the remaining vestiges of the left by coalescing with the Lib Dems but, given the huge unpopularity of John Major's Tory government, instead won a landslide election in 1997. Since then, Blair's centralised leadership, neoliberal economics and neoconservative foreign policies have dominated and the left of the party, confined to the backbenches in parliament, have suffered with the loss of membership and the "spin" against them from 10 Downing Street and party HQ.

McDonnell's leadership campaign takes place in the context of continued New Labour domination and has, to date, received rela-



tively little attention from a media besotted with the Blair/Brown soap opera. But it has attracted support from across trade unions, the Labour Representation Committee, the Socialist Campaign Group and hosts of public meetings. His candidature is in the historical mould of Bevan and Benn but reflects up-to-date concerns about privatisation, the war in Iraq, the massive military spend and top-up fees for third-level students amongst other issues.

Left and right are complex, changing words, often used to mislead or overly-simplify. But they are far from 'dead', as the pseudo-post-modernists in New Labour would have us believe. John McDonnell's campaign for leadership reasserts the importance of the very basics of socialism - equality, solidarity and democracy - that the right have forgotten or chose to ignore. Only the history of the future will tell us if he and those on the left will be successful in their endeavours.

ABOUT JOHN McDONNELL MP

Born: September 8 1951 in Liverpool, son of a docker & shopworker with Irish connections.
MP for: Hayes and Harlington (London)

Positions held: Former Deputy leader of the Greater London Council. Chair of the Labour Representation Committee of ordinary members and trade unionists. Chair of the Socialist Campaign Group of 24 Labour MPs. Chair of the "Public Services Not Private Profit" campaign opposing privatisation. Leader of a number of all-party groups in parliament on trade union issues, the Irish and Punjabi community in Britain and endometriosis.

Has rebelled against the Blair Government on: the Iraq War, support for Israel, foundation hospitals, top-up fees, trust schools, civil liberties clampdowns and "anti-terror" laws, high military spending, nuclear weapons.

Controversy: Once claimed that the "deaths of innocent civilians in IRA attacks is a real tragedy, but it was as a result of British occupation in Ireland. Because of the bravery of the IRA and people like Bobby Sands we now have a peace process."

Quote: "New Labour has systematically alienated section after section of our supporters - teachers, health workers, students, pensioners, public service workers, trade unionists and people committed to the environment, civil liberties and peace. Spin and allegations of sleaze are causing decent people to lose trust in our party. This is reflected in lost votes, lost elections, lost members and a Labour Prime Minister having to rely upon Conservative votes in Parliament to force through legislation."

Campaign Website: <http://john4leader.org.uk>

International Sex Trade Must Stop

Rebecca Moynihan

As the world marked International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25th, thousands of women were trafficked in European Union for the purposes of prostitution.

Sex sells, as the saying goes. In modern Europe the sex industry has gone mainstream. In every European capital, you will find neon lights advertising lap dancers, strippers, and topless dancing. However, a much darker side to the sex industry lies beneath these bright lights.

The trafficking of women from poorer EU nations into western Europe is big business for organised gangs. Unlike drugs or arms, women are commodities, which can be reused and resold.

Unscrupulous traffickers trick many women into leaving home with seductive stories of a better life in another EU country. The promises of a good job, accommodation and the opportunity to earn enough money to provide for the family they have left behind are often too alluring to resist.

The reality when they arrive in their host

country is a much grimmer. Women are locked up against their will, allowed no contact with the outside world, beaten, raped, and treated as little more than a sex slaves. Most of the women trafficked are young women and some are children. Isolation and a lack of language skills mean that they are



trapped by a dependency on the men who are exploiting them.

Ireland is alone in the EU in having no legislation governing the trafficking of human beings. While prostitution is illegal and the women can be jailed, there is no mechanism for targeting the traffickers. Promised legis-

lation in this area is not forthcoming.

The EU has a leading role to play in the fight against trafficking within the union and worldwide. However, as is usually the case with issues that concern women and vulnerable groups, the political will to tackle the problem does not exist.

European Justice Ministers and European police forces must agree a comprehensive strategy to tackle trafficking between member states. The organised criminals involved must be ruthlessly targeted. In addition to this, we need to raise awareness of the trafficking problem in member states and put in place, adequately funded support structures, for victims of trafficking.

Finally, if we are to ever really eliminate trafficking we must target the demand for prostitution. The users of trafficked women are our partners, co-workers, friends and family. If we are ever to see true equality, women cannot continue to be seen as commodities for the titillation of men. The procurement of sex, in any form, must become socially unacceptable. It is not an argument about or against liberalism, but an argument about respect for all human beings.

End the Cuban Blockade

Paul Mulville

Labour Youth passed its first policy motion on Cuba in recent memory at November's Youth Conference, calling for the immediate lifting of the 44-year old US-imposed blockade on the Caribbean island.

In recent times, the embargo has been strengthened by George W Bush, following the shameful passing of the Helms-Burton Act by the Clinton administration. The US bases the embargo on the claim that Cuba has systematically denied the human, economic, labour & political rights of its people.

Ironically however, as a direct result of the American embargo, working people in Cuba undergo needless suffering, and the social development of the people and the nation has been cruelly hampered. Perhaps one of the most poignant examples of this is the ensuing shortage of many basic medical supplies, vital procedures such as the treatment of breast cancer, HIV and leukaemia have been hindered. In addition, the embargo contradicts the principle of the promotion and protection of human rights and freedom, which US citizens want for themselves and which the US claims to want for the rest of

the world. The measure that has drawn criticism from all corners of the world since its introduction, and continues to do so today.

The embargo has been widely attacked, and was originally opposed by Pope John Paul II as far back as 1978 during a visit to Mexico. More recently, the former called for the end of the embargo during his historical visit to Cuba in January 1998, saying "Nowadays, no nation can live in isolation. Therefore, the Cuban people cannot be deprived of their ties with other people, ties which are necessary for economic, social and cultural development, particularly when imposed isolation indiscriminately affects the people, worsening difficulties for the weakest in basic aspects, such as food, health and education. Everyone can and should take specific steps to bring about change in this regard."

Most recently, in November this year, the UN General Assembly approved another resolution denouncing the US embargo against Cuba. This is the 15th time it has done so. A record 183 nations supported the resolution, with 4 against and 1 abstention. The four against were the US, Israel, Palau and the Marshall Islands. Another Coalition of the Willing!



Closer to home, Labour Party President and Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs Michael D. Higgins has come out strongly against the embargo on several occasions. Speaking in February 2005 he said "there is an illegal blockade of Cuba; there is an attempt to dislodge the Cuban economy and to, I believe, infiltrate Cuban society. The question of the dislodging of a neighbouring country; interference in its judicial system; its economy, its society is a matter for international politics & several international conventions."

Labour Youth must build on the motion passed at conference this year condemning the blockade and continue to stand firmly in solidarity with the people of Cuba. *Stop Al Bloqueo! Viva Cuba libre!*

JOIN US!



Think Labour? Why not join Labour?

Joining Labour Youth is as simple as filling in the form below and posting to Labour Youth, 17 Ely Place, Dublin 2 - or emailing the details to youth@labour.ie

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

College: _____

Get Involved!

Have you been inspired by any of the topics covered in this issue? If so make sure to get in contact with the relevant organisations:

Shell to Sea:
www.corribsos.com

John McDonnell:
www.john4leader.org.uk

Stop Violence Against Women:
<http://web.amnesty.org/actforwomen/index-eng>

Other websites of note:
Labour Youth Homepage:
www.labouryouth.ie
Labour Youth Bebo:
<http://labouryouth.bebo.com>

ECOSY - Young European Socialists:
www.ecosy.org

IUSY - International Union of Socialist Youth:
www.iusy.org

Anti-War Ireland:
www.antiwarireland.org

Residents Against Racism
www.residentsagainstracism.org

Indymedia:
www.indymedia.ie



Obituary: Peter Fitzgerald

Patrick Nulty

Peter was a member of the Labour Youth National Council from 1997-2000 in which time he ran Labour Youth's first two national recruitment campaigns. He also established Labour Youth college which was a series of training seminars and policy discussions run by and for Labour Youth members. Peter was a principled left wing student activist and served as President of Trinity College Students' Union 1993-94.

Within the Labour Party nationally he served as Secretary of the Dublin South-East Constituency between 1997 and 2001. He was also a successful Director of elections for Cllr. Kevin Humphreys in the local elections of 1999 and 2004. Elected to the National Executive of the Labour Party in 2003 and subsequently re-elected in 2005 Peter was a staunch advocate of party democracy and the rights of rank and file Labour members.

On a personal note, Peter was one of the first people I encountered when I joined the Labour Party in 2002. He was always very supportive of young members and consistently offered sensible and practical advice in how best to achieve progressive social change. He was someone who personified the very best qualities of our party. Proud to be left. Proud to be Labour.

May he rest in peace.



Labour **says...**

War **is** an election issue

These 3 men are war criminals



The man on the left illegally invaded Iraq.

The man in the middle was his lapdog.

The man on the right continues to give them vital logistical support in Ireland.

People in Ireland can make sure at least one of them is booted out of office in the next few months. A vote for Labour is a vote for a humane and autonomous foreign policy, starting by kicking the US military out of Shannon.

US Military - Out of Shannon

Labour has called for the immediate end to the use of Shannon Airport as a staging point for US troops on their way to Iraq.

It is both the policy and intention of the party to remove the US troops from Shannon within weeks of entering any government. The Shannon stopover has been a key strategic resource for the US in their invasion, which by now has resulted in something approaching 600,000 deaths.

The continued use of Shannon has been permitted by the PD-FF government despite unprecedented protests and activism across Ireland in opposition to the war on Iraq. Chillingly, the Taoiseach and Foreign Affairs Minister Dermot Ahern have continued to insist on the use of Shannon despite revelations of its use as a conduit for grossly illegal torture flights.

In 2005 approximately 330,000 US troops travelled through Shannon on the way to Iraq. It has been estimated that in total more than half a million US military personnel have been through Shannon. They are likely to have been accompanied by weapons, includ-

ing depleted uranium shells and torture victims, but the PD-FF govt and the Gardai refuse even to investigate the mounting evidence of their illegal transit through Irish airspace and Irish airports.

Along with tens of thousands of others on the left, Labour have led the charge against this most heinous breach of international law and humanity. Labour Youth have been to the forefront, helping to organise the broad movement against the war, engaging in protest and direct action in Shannon and elsewhere, and offering support to groups such as the Pitstop Ploughshares & Raytheon 9 who been charged by the courts due to their actions for peace.

In the Dail and the press, Labour Party President Michael D Higgins TD, along with other TD's such as Tommy Broughan, Jan O'Sullivan and Joe Costello, have been particularly vocal in putting forward Labour's policy of removing the use of Shannon for US troops and war machines.

The last Labour Party national conference unanimously passed motion 119 from

Labour Youth, making the immediate withdrawal of US military from Shannon Airport an essential part of any programme for government in which Labour would be involved.

Deputy Tommy Broughan recently commented; "In early November the American people voted decisively to bring their young men and women home from the tragic Iraqi morass. Minister Dermot Ahern must now respond by opting to end the Shannon stopover."

A vote for Labour in the upcoming elections will send a powerful message to the world that Ireland does not stand as part of Bush's "coalition of the willing." In the meantime, Labour Youth will continue its involvement in the broad anti-war campaign and the organisation of actions against the invasion of Iraq. We will also continue to campaign against the continuing nightmare waged on Palestine by Israel and the complicity of the US in these outrageous breaches of human rights and international law.

For more information on getting involved, please see inside.

Dermot Looney