

The Water Charges Must be Scrapped!

Peter Hain's announcement that the deadline for the introduction of additional Water Charges has been deferred for a second time is a major victory for the Coalition Against Water Charges (CAWC). The Connolly Youth Movement, who work with the CAWC, recognise that a major factor in the Government's retreat was the Irish Congress of Trade Union's call for people not to pay the Water Charges.

Peter Hain has only delayed their imposition until the 8th May deadline for the restoration of the Assembly and the Executive. The decision to implement, delay or scrap Water Charges will then be in the hands of our directly elected MLA's. If Power Sharing is not restored at Stormont, Peter Hain will impose this new double tax on us.

In an attempt to get the people to accept additional Water Charges without resistance the Government are not introducing the full charges immediately. In the first year the average household water bills will be around £100. Over the next two years this average will treble to at least £334. But these figures are only for the first 3 years and do not reflect the real bills we will be faced with in future.

Part of the new Water Charges are based on the market value of your home. The average figures quoted above are based on house prices over two years ago and do not reflect current house values. After the first three years your water bills will rocket in line with the increased market value of your home. No household will be exempt from Water Charges.

The 'Affordability Tariff' which limits the water bills for those on benefits to no more than 3% of their income will be gone in 2 years. Even if it had been permanent, a 3% cut in income for the 23% of people here who depend on benefits will only push them further into poverty. Installing meters will not make a real difference to water bills as the overall bill will still contain a charge based on the value of your home. The CYM believes that metering is an even more regressive tax as the poorest household will be paying as much if not more than the richest.

Connolly Youth actively oppose the attempts to introduce additional Water Charges as people are already paying for water and sewerage services through the Regional Rates. Water charges were incorporated into the Regional Rate in the 1970's and currently make up 37% of our Rates. In the 1990's we contributed around £1 billion for water but the Government misused this money. After years of the Government failing to invest our money in the water infrastructure they now have the cheek to say that we must pay again to fix their mess.

The Government now claim that they need £3 billion over 20 years to bring our water service up to date. But they refuse to provide any analysis, rationale or evidence to justify this expenditure. This figure is erroneous and does not stand up to scrutiny. Even if it did, at our current level of contributions for water through the Regional Rate, combined with current contributions for water from the non-domestic sector, over 20 years the revenue lifted would be in the region of £7.4 billion.

Privatisation

The real purpose of the additional Water Charges is to provide a revenue stream for a privatised Water and Sewerage system. That is the British Governments real objective. Without a separate water charging system privatisation of Northern Ireland Water Limited will not work. Huge parts of the Water and Sewerage system are already being transferred to the private sector. Privatisation will not "increase consumer choice." There is a natural monopoly with Northern Ireland Water Limited as each household has only one set of pipes.

Water Charges can be beaten by a mass campaign of non-payment built in the communities through the Coalition Against Water Charges.

However given the recent political developments the power to scrap the Water Charges will lie with our elected MLA's in the restored Assembly. Therefore we call on people to demand that their MLA's:-

- **Restore the Assembly and Executive and scrap Water Charges.**
- **Halt privatisation of the Water and Sewerage Services.**

For further information and advice on the non-payment campaign visit:

www.waterchargesnonpayment.com

Calling Dublin!

Dublin is now infamous around the world for being a major call-centre for financial institutions. Haughey paved the way for this 'modern economy' and so-called development by FF commitment to foreign capital and foreign direct investment. Ireland's model economy and progress has been almost solely dependant upon this short sighted form of development, one that has led to wasted talent and mass frustration among young graduates and workers.

These call-centers, or customer service help desks as some like to misleadingly call them, are varied. They employ in a narrow definition of a call center around 20,000, but with a more realistic understanding it is closer to 50,000. It is estimated that 60% of new workers leave within 6 months, this massive turn over in staff creates huge problems in trying to consolidate conditions and advance the cause of workers rights. 75% of these workers are reported to be under 30 and while 80% employed are women the gender division in management is no where near 50:50.

Some of these call-centers are for our own banks while others are for massive foreign banking institutions like Barclay card, or airlines like Lufthansa and Korean Air. Some ring you trying to sell you things or make you switch servers, others you ring to complain about being ripped off by this that and the other. But one thing is common to them all. There are lines of frustrated workers sitting in assembly line conditions answering on average 100-150 frustrating and stressful calls a day with a supervisor or manager peering over your shoulder waiting for you to slip up.

The cause of immediate stress and frustration is obvious. People don't ring up to congratulate you on good service. At the receiving side of calls you get complaint after complaint. On the other side calling out, not many people enjoy those calls between half 5 and 6 in the evening trying to sell you product or service. But there is more to the frustration than this.

The chord from headset to phone is like a modern ball and chain. You are tied to your desk for your set hours with very little room for maneuver. To move around is closely monitored by supervisors, human and electronic, with each minute away from the phone clocked up and calculated. There is also the pressure then added to your co-workers when one less person is on the phone and this naturally causes divisions that management can easily exploit.

On top of this however is a much more serious and detrimental stress and that is of wasted talent. Sitting on the end of that line is a smart, creative, professional, hard working individual, many with diploma's, degrees, masters, or the ability to achieve far better things. The hopelessness of building an economy so dependent and so uni-focused is sorely felt by these workers. Very quickly you master your job, often so repetitive its soul destroying, but equally quickly you realize the lack of opportunity and lack of alternative to answering the phone or dialing that number.

Research recently done in Britain recommends workers are only to do this job for about a year as psychological and physical damage can be done if working in this environment for too long.

Typically this industry has not been penetrated by unions, or where they have, unions are very conservative and lack any fighting spirit or capacity. But the contradiction lies in that unions could, if they tried, mop up in recruitment as the levels of frustration with management and companies is massive.

The Irish Banking Officials Association has been most successful with representation in the large banks of Allied Irish Bank, Bank of Ireland, Ulster Bank and National Irish Bank. Amicus, recently merged with the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union, is also growing with the spread of Hibernian and the Aviva group. The Communication Workers Union also has some penetration. These unions however, restricted by the largely conservative outlook of their members and their desire to recruit, tend to avoid political (class) questions at all costs and meekly stick to wage agreements.

While the Irish and British banking side of call-centre business has some union penetration it is the larger American companies and global banks that are actively and often viciously anti-union. It is also in these companies where the conditions are most stressful. It is true in some companies, like NBNA, call centers are used to monitor other call centers. That is if you log off your phone for say more than 5 minutes without logging the reason a person on a line somewhere else around the country rings you and whips you back to work. It begs the question who monitors the monitoring call centre? The constant turn over in staff mentioned above also causes big problems for union recruitment and the struggle to win better conditions and increase workers unity.

This dominance of the call-centre industry in Ireland is not just the logical development of a modern economy, so often quoted by IBEC, media pundits and right-wing politicians. This economy of dependence and waist is a deliberate sale of Irelands resources, people, to multinationals and has disastrous consequences across the economy and society. Successive governments, through the lowest corporate and toll-tax in the EU, have encouraged the development of a uni-direction economy. We are here to serve the whims of multinationals and as workers are subject to their conditions.

This does not have to be though. Ireland has the potential to build an alternative economy. However, this economy needs working class leadership and state. We can use our renewable natural resources, wind, wave and solar for energy and build domestic industry around this. We can build our education and health system both to teach and employ. We can use our numerous qualified graduates to build a research industry to focus on human development and capacity. We must concentrate on a varied manufacturing industry and support our fishing and agricultural sector.

This is not about retreating inward or denying 'globalisation' it is about building a more democratic, responsive, controlled and independent economy in a global world. One that above all else must be led by and for working people.

Why Communism?

In the past few months the CYM have produced a pamphlet entitled 'Why Communism?' The pamphlet explains the basics of communism and combats the ancient arguments against it like 'its foreign to Ireland' or 'it's a great theory but it will never work in practice'. Part of the pamphlet is reproduced here but you can pick up the full text at Connolly Books or any CYM stall.

Communism is a great theory, but will it ever work in practice?

The goal of achieving communism is not based on a moral utopian argument that we should all be nice people. It is based on the reality of the self-interest of the working class. It is in working people's interest to unite to achieve better conditions. It is in working people's interest to promote their own culture and history. It is in working people's interest to control their own lives as far as is possible. This can only be done when working people participate in and control their own state. The self-interest of ordinary people through their own institutions will prevent the scale of corruption and abuse we see around us today. Communism is the expression of working-class self-interest.

Isn't communism Russian, and didn't it fail there?

In almost every capitalist country it is argued that communism is foreign. In England it is Continental, on the Continent it is English. In Ireland it is Russian, in the Middle East it is Western. The truth is that it belongs to no country but to one class of people across the globe: ordinary working people like you and me. Communism is international.

Every country has a communist movement, because every country has working people. Every country also has differences in their communist movements, because we all have our unique histories and cultures.

The Irish communist movement is a development out of the struggle of ordinary people for their rights and duties throughout our history. It is a legacy of the United Irishmen's struggle for unity, democracy, and independence. It is a consequence of the Irish Citizen Army and the trade union movement.

Wherever you have working people you will have communists because communism belongs to ordinary people.

Oliver Stone fined for filming in Cuba

BY PEDRO DE LA HOZ – Granma daily staff writer

THE U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control has just fined well-known filmmaker Oliver Stone for violating the laws of what they euphemistically refer to as an embargo, actually nothing more than a barbaric, brutal, systematic blockade, universally recognized as such and condemned by an overwhelming majority in the United Nations.

Stone and the production company Ixtlan were accused of having traveled to Cuba in 2002 and 2003 to shoot footage for two films on the leader of the Cuban Revolution. The newspaper El Nuevo Herald, voice of the anti-Cuban mafia in south Florida, carried the news in its December 12 edition.

In medieval times, such edicts were published as an admonition. The modern-day Inquisition is taking up that ancient practice: the message, obviously, is directed against those who try to exercise their right to creativity and expression, or to objectively reflect the realities of Cuba, even someone like Oliver Stone, whom nobody in their right minds could call anti-American after watching – as hundreds of Havana spectators have done during the 28th Havana Film Festival – his movie, *World Trade Center*, about the atrocious terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers.

Everyone is very familiar with Stone's vicissitudes in making his films on Fidel. The first, *Comandante*, which he made for the HBO cable TV network, could not be screened when it was supposed to be because of pressures from the Miami-based anti-Cuban lobby and its right-wing sponsors.

Stone had to cede to demands to go back and film again, this time including interviews with employees of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, whose capacity for histrionics, in the service of demonizing the Cuban Revolution, was demolished in the new production, *Looking for Fidel*.

It is very likely that the OFAC officials noted Stone's statements during the launching of *Looking for Fidel* in the San Sebastián Film Festival, Spain: "Castro is a great host," he said. "He looks you straight in the eye. He gave me the impression that he trusted me, and I like that (...) I was able to ask all of my questions about internal conflicts in the country, the future of Cuba after Castro, and the international pressure that is placed on Cuba, especially by the president of the United States, George W. Bush. (...) Castro is one of the wisest men there are; he is a survivor and a Quixote. I admire his Revolution, his faith in himself and his honesty."

For the current U.S. authorities, a price must be paid for a free and unprejudiced opinion like the one above. Hence, cracks and contrivances must be found, despite the fact that Stone's producers complied with the cumbersome license process, to punish and impede people from thinking for themselves.

It doesn't matter that they make even more obvious something that is already known: the victimization of the U.S. people themselves, prevented from traveling freely to the island, by those who impose the criminal blockade on Cuba.

Mairtin O'Direain

Mairtin O'Direain (1910-1988) was one of Ireland's leading Irish language poets. Like the author (and sometime CPI member) Liam O'Flaherty, he was born in the Aran Islands, although left as young man to work in Galway and later Dublin. While the majority of his poems are idealistic eulogies about life on Aran, a considerable number are caustic political commentaries on the Irish elite, their subsequent abandonment of the lofty principles of Easter 1916 and the growing subservience to what he saw as a sterile Anglo-American consumer culture. Some, notably *The Strike*, *James*

Connolly and *Because of Usury* are all striking evidence of his solidarity with labour and the cause of socialism. Below, an early poem, *James Connolly*.

James Connolly

*On a bright day's dawning in the year of sixteen
Wearied and weakened by the loss of your blood
You were tightly bound to your chair of pain
And your soul was blasted to the presence of Jesus.*

*If someone had said to you on that morning
That there would be people now throughout this land
Poor and naked, expecting nothing
But misery and want and living by beggary*

*You'd have told him yourself his vision was calumny
The every Gael would have enough and to spare,
That joy and content were in store for each one of them
Won by the blood offered by you and your comrades.*

*But sad to relate that's they way it turned out
Twenty-five years since you bravely fell;
Big sturdy men with their backs to the wall
And women and children hungry and cold.*

*The rich and the wealthy are firmly established;
Steeped and drowned in worldly pleasure;
Snug and sheltered in well-warmed houses;
Their conscience numbed and charity unknown to them.*

*Young children whom God promised life to,
Promised a birthright, joy and prosperity,
Are secured for T.B. before they grow up
By being packed to suffocation in cramped narrow rooms.*

*Fine strong men are leaving the country
And fine handsome women are going along with them
Though they are desperately needed here in an Ireland
Whose population is already diminished.
From now on the Gael must always
Smash and shatter the accursed system
That first plundered and then left us weakened
And bring a new order to triumph in Ireland.*

*When that day comes, great-hearted comrade,
You'll be rightly honoured and all you others
Who fell unyielding and died unflinching
On a bright day's dawning by the Liffey side.*

John Geraghty (Maynooth Advocate) meets the Cuban Ambassador Noel Carillio

One of the most contentious cases in the US courts at the moment is that of the so-called 'Cuban five', who have been arrested on a host of charges, including conspiracy to commit murder. This case has been going on since 1998, though it has garnered little or no media attention. The five were in the USA in order to infiltrate a terrorist organisation known as 'brothers to the rescue'. This aims of this organisation were to disrupt tourism to Cuba, and thus weakening Fidel Castro's government, by committing acts of terrorism at popular tourist spots and aboard airliners. The Cuban ambassador to Ireland Noel Carillio makes the point that the Cuban Government were never in a position to share their information with the US government due to the hostile relations between the two countries and the embargo of Cuba by the US, "They do not consider us as an equal counterpart".

Examples of the attacks perpetrated against Cuba by these anti-Castro groups in Miami, some hangovers from the Batista regime, are long standing. Attacks upon Cuban harbours and hotels were and are a frequent occurrence. Attacks such as these gave the Cuban Government the justification for operating within the United States in order to expose terrorist groups such as 'brothers to the rescue'.

Eventually the Cuban Government passed information concerning these groups to the authorities in the US. Instead of attempting to apprehend the group planning the bombing of airliners and committing acts of sabotage, the US seized upon this release of information as an opportunity to find out who the Cuban operatives within the group were and then arrest them.

The trial of the five was conducted in Miami, a very hostile environment to any Castro supporter, as demonstrated by recent street celebrations at the news of his health difficulties. It is in contravention of US law for a trial to be held in a hostile environment, though a petition filed by the defence was rejected. "It was a very embarrassing situation for the US" says ambassador Carillio. Four of the five are condemned to life sentences and the other to fifteen years. Appeals by the five have been denied due to the fact that 2,000 US government files relating to the case have been classified as a matter of national security. It is believed by the ambassador and other officials and humanitarian organisations that these files are being withheld because they would exonerate the five.

All five are kept in solitary confinement. One of the five was kept in 'the hole', a solitary cell where sleep is deprived, food is rationed and no light is allowed in, for seven months, which is in contravention of US law. The wives of the five are not allowed to visit them due to the fact that the US government views them as security risks.

Speculation has been made whether the Central Intelligence Agency either trained or were in some way involved in the terrorist organisation operating out of Miami. Ambassador Carillio shares in this suspicion. There is a long history of CIA involvement with the anti-Castro exiles in Florida. Many were trained by the CIA in the run up to the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. Following this failed attempt, the CIA continued to train Cuban exiles under an operation titles 'Operation Mongoose', which instructed participants to commit acts of terrorism on Cuban soil. It is very telling that several of the Watergate burglars were anti-Castro exiles trained by the CIA. Two such exiles trained by the CIA were Luis Posada Carilles and Orlando Bosch. The two were responsible for the bombing of a Cuban airliner in the 1970's. Luis Posada Carilles was released from prison on an unrelated charge by presidential pardon from George H.W. Bush. Bush is a former director of the CIA and is known to have been heavily involved with such exile groups. Such was his involvement, a photo exists of Bush with a good friend, Felix Rodriguez, the man credited with the murder of Che Guevara. Posada is now applying for sanctuary in the US. Orlando Bosch currently resides in the US. Both are wanted by the Cuban and Venezuelan Governments for acts of terrorism. The current attacks on Cuba come from those trained alongside Carilles and Bosch and also from a new breed of trainees.

Ambassador Carillio remarks that the response from Irish politicians has been very positive, with 52 signatures of a petition by members of the Dáil from all political spectrums. Progress is being made in the case, though not from a public relations or media point of view. Despite its gravity, the story has received little news media attention. It has been buried by the major broadcasters because of the embarrassment it could cause to the US government.

Further information can be found at

www.freethefive.org and

Www.freethemiami5youth.org , an Irish organisation.

Caleb McCarry To Hell!

Ireland recently had the pleasure of a visit from the Bush regimes proposed next 'Governor General' of Cuba. This known director of terrorism responsible for countless deaths across Latin America should have been arrested on stepping foot on this island. Instead, and in line with this states support for US terrorism, welcomed him, met with him and ultimately escorted him from our shores. On a meeting tour of Europe to coordinate a unified imperialist approach to 'the Cuban problem' McCarry was invited by the Politics Dept. in UCD to speak. On finding this out comrades from the CYM, CPI, Eirigi, Lab Youth and more in no uncertain terms told McCarry where to go, and that was not to Cuba!! McCarry was escorted away by members of the honorable Garda Siochana.

FC St. Pauli – The Rebels Choice

To a fan of FC ST. Pauli, it is more than just a football club. Regardless of their ironic Brown and white football shirt, St. Pauli is bold statement against racism in Germany. The club is based the northern German city of Hamburg in the seedy St. Pauli district well known for its Red-light district and vibrant Gay and Lesbian scene. It's also the place where The Beatles began their career and recorded their first single.

Officially the club was founded in 1910 but can trace there origins back to its forerunner ST. Pauli Turin-Vererin way back in 1862, which puts it among the oldest football clubs in the world. The club would not make an appearance in top-flight football until 1934 just one year after Hitler and the Nazi Party swept to power.

Naturally football was suspended in the wars years but St. Pauli returned to the playing field in the Oberliga Nord (Northern Regional League) in 1947 finishing in second place at the end of that season. But as the years progressed St. Pauli would be over shadowed by their arch rivals Hamburg SV.

The club would be plagued with financial troubles and vacillated between the lower regional divisions while Hamburg SV were secure in professional league which was founded back in 1963. However the after years of underachievement St. Pauli would attain cult status by the time the mid-eighties rolled around. In spite of the clubs mediocrity on the pitch, St. Pauli began gaining a following from local Anarchists from the infamous "Hafenstraße" squat. The fans would later adopt the Jolly Roger flag as their symbol because it was always flown on top of the squat on match days. Volker Ippig, the clubs goalkeeper at the time was among the Anarchist squatters adding to the clubs radical image. St. Pauli became the first Club in Germany to ban racists fans and nationalist symbols in the football stadium. This alternative crowd began getting bigger and bigger. Their reputation would spread throughout Germany and they would be increasingly popular amongst Punks, anti-Racist Skinheads as well as socialists and anti-fascists. Naturally St. Pauli is popular with our comrades in the Hamburg branches of the SDAJ (Socialist German Workers Youth), the CYM's fraternal organisation.

Punk rockers Attila the Stockbroker, Bad Religion, Angelic Upstarts and popular German band Die Ärzte (The Doctors) all claim to be fans of the Club.

Today St. Pauli is playing in the Regionalliga Nord (Northern Section of the German 3rd division) place normally somewhere around mid table. A poor performance on the pitch doesn't seem to phase St. Pauli's loyal and passionate fan base.

Every home game is a sell out and away matches are also well attended. It's the Fans that make St. Pauli so special. St. Pauli fans and players have made solidarity projects with Cuba, the Basque Country and Ireland. Ché Guevara's image is used by the St. Pauli Ultras Fan Club. It is St. Pauli's solidarity with Palestine which is incredibly brave because the anti-fascists in Germany normally avoid criticism of Israel which is understandable in light of the country's history.

Last year St. Pauli hosted the first "FIFA Wild Cup Championship", a Football tournament of unrecognised nations. The club competed as the Republic of St. Pauli.

St. Pauli has the largest section of women fans in Germany and also has a large Gay and Lesbian following. The club recently removed an advertising for Maxim men's magazine because fans complained it was sexist. The Club has an anti-Racist, anti-Sexist and anti-Homophobia policy written into its constitution. Violations of these rules are punished with a life long stadium ban.

Controversially St. Pauli fans once displayed a banner, which criticised American foreign policy during a three-minute silence for the victims of the 9/11 attacks.

The left wing reputation has earned the club bitter rivalry from other clubs. The Anti-Fascist hooligans from St. Pauli regularly clash with right wing troublemakers. Their have even been reports of rival fans chanting "UVF! UDA!" Supposedly because of St. Pauli's friendship with Glasgow Celtic and their solidarity with the Republican cause in Ireland.

St. Pauli don't look like setting the world alight with fancy skills on the football field anytime soon but they have an ambitious Stadium redevelopment in the pipe line and will forever remain a firm favourite with anti-fascists throughout Europe.

No Pasarán!

UN report on global warming

In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing their way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam mill, society with the industrial capitalist. – K. Marx, 1847.

It is time to change our 'mode of production'. No longer can the world's environment, our environment, sustain the current drive for profits at all costs, profits above all else. On top of the obvious poverty, inequality and war created by capitalism it has been for centuries destroying the ozone layer allowing dangerous rays in and increasing the global temperature bit by bit. When taken in isolation the temperature increase may seem miniscule and we, in the colder climates, might even joke about it but let readers be assured there is nothing funny nor miniscule about the repercussions of even slight temperature changes.

The UN, and more precisely the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has released a report recently on global climate change, a 'scientific' study of its causes and effects. However, sadly, the most striking finding of this study you will not find contained in its numerous pages. That is, a number of scientists and experts complained of interference by bureaucrats, politicians, and western industrial lobby groups in preventing some of the top findings being published as they threaten the elite positions and the 'method of production' behind all this devastation, capitalism. Despite this major shortcoming the report still had some serious conclusions and can help silence once and for all those industrialists, militarists and politicians who deny the devastating effects the current economic structures are having on the environment.

By looking through the 'liberal' non-confrontational language and concentrating on the actual scientific conclusions it is clear to see we are confronting head on the question Rosa Luxemburg posed of socialism or barbarism. We have two paths, one that leads to further equality the other to an end of humankind as we know it.

This latest report, one of a series, concentrated on climate change and particular on temperature increase and the results. The report condemned the industrialized 'west' as the biggest polluters, the biggest emitters of toxic gasses like carbon dioxide that pollute not just our air but our water too with devastating effects. As per usual those effected worst are of course the poorest of the poor, like what we saw just 3 years ago in South East Asia. However the report is also quickly to point out that it will not just be the poor of the south that will suffer it will also be the poorest in the north, again like we saw in Louisiana last year.

The immediate damage will of course be flooding from the melting polar ice caps causing raised sea levels and tidal waves. But the ongoing effects are even more devastating. Diseases will spread, food production will suffer, tourism as an industry will disappear for many affected regions and drinkable water will become a shortage. The ongoing increases in carbon dioxide levels will kill off species of sea life altering unpredictably and unnaturally the evolution of our aquatic eco system.

It is in proposing solutions and in critiquing political and economic systems that the latest reports, like the UN in most everything, fail. To be green today is trendy but implies no actual commitment to the economic and social change, to the change in the method and manner of production that is absolutely essential to saving our environment. To be green today is to recycle, its to eat well and healthy, its to buy local produce. Of course while all this is good it does not address the real cause of climate change and environmental destruction, that of the capitalist method of producing forsaking all else to greedy and rampant search for profits with no care or concept of long term thinking.

The number one polluters are big industry. Individual actions of recycling and good conscience will not change this. Monopoly Capitalism cannot apply rationally science nor can it cater for or promote the objective scientific research that we require.

We must change the manner in which we create and distribute food, technology and consumer goods. We must use our resources in an efficient and modeled way best suited to our environmental needs, produce food locally, use renewable energy sources. This is what is needed to avoid the barbarism that is becoming increasingly evident and to steer ourselves on the path to socialism, the path that can and must save us.

The Global War on Water

It is not just in Ireland that our right to water is under attack. Water is very quickly replacing oil as the most precious and desired natural resource. In going after water Capitalism is crying out for new profits and for new areas to exploit. It is a true sign of a system dieing that it is so barbaric it will deny people water to make more profits.

The war on water is in some places obvious. In the Lebanon, Israel has for years been illegally tapping and stealing water from the southern Lebanese supplies. They have sabotaged any attempts by the Lebanon stop this and in June of last year used the kidnapping events as an excuse to secure their dominance and access to this precious resource that they lack. The 'west' has denied aid or support to the Lebanon to build up the infrastructure around its valuable resource in an attempt to prevent Lebanon growing into a regional power to rival Israel. Water is also the key reason for Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights.

Across many seas to Latin America, water there too is becoming the property of imperialist robbers in the form of Coca-Cola and other corporations. In realities reminiscent of the East Indian Trading Company modern corporations are heavily involved in support for armies and paramilitaries that crush trade unions, indigenous movements and rob people of their resources and their right to water. In Mexico, or more specifically in the Chiapas region of Mexico largely inhabited by the indigenous peoples, Coca-Cola backed by the full force of the state and by the crippling North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, has led the privatization of large lakes forcing people to buy bottled water they once had for free. In Bolivia, too, similar processes have been underway however it remains to be seen what the Morales led government can do to prevent the rape of a precious resource.

But arguably more worrying than the above extreme cases is the subtle and ideological incorporation of privatization as a method of 'development' into the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization across global water projects. These straight jacket 'developmental' models are not chosen by southern states they are forced upon them by imperialist powers. Senegalese economist Samir Amin writes:

“Although imposed on the societies of the South with extreme brutality, the new model had to be clothed in a discourse that gives it the appearance of legitimacy. It was necessary to reintroduce the word 'development' but empty it of all meaning.”

The fact is to meet the very humble Millennium Development Goals in access to water 440,000 new people every day must be connected over the next 10 years. The result of 15 years of private control has connected an extra 3 million people. However, the number of people disconnected for non-payment, something public companies would have trouble legally doing, is hard to calculate but some put it in the millions thus negating the 'good work done' while making millions of profit for individuals. This, readers, we are to believe is development.

What a load of Bankers!

A recent survey conducted by the Irish Bank Officials Association, IBOA, The Finance Union, stated and confirmed what most people already knew. Banks rip you off!!!! But, what is noteworthy of this report is that it got the inside line by surveying bank workers - those who know the true extent of the 'profiteering' carried out by banks at our expense.

The report found 90% of staff surveyed felt profit is the motive behind management decisions, while more importantly 56% felt customers were forgotten and neglected in the drive for profits. Linked to this single-mindedness is the astonishing levels of bullying discovered, 25% said they themselves have suffered while 43% said they had witnessed it. 46% of workers also felt it was strongly advisable not to speak out against management decisions. It is clear from these stats that further union penetration and activity it's vitally needed in this industry.

It is impossible to avoid using a bank so we must demand a public bank. A nationalised bank owned and controlled by its member and users can provide the solution to 'rip off' banking and the mass frustration that is now commonplace.

The Clash and the punk revolution

"There's a million reasons why the hippies failed," Joe Strummer would lament. A comment that would pretty much sum up the feelings of England's disenfranchised youth in the early days of punk.

Despite popular belief the punk movement did not begin in England with the Sex Pistols but in the USA with an 'New Wave' of underground groups like MC5, Iggy and the Stooges and a bit later New York bands like the New York Dolls, Dictators and the Ramones. Collectively these groups had become known as "Punk Rockers". Punk literally means scum but is used in American slang to mean a waster.

Back in London these group's records would find their way on to the turntables of a hand full of teenagers who had rejected the static and bland music scene of the mid-seventies. Thus becoming a sort of sound track to a pop culture rebellion.

A group of such teenagers inspired by the American "New Wave" scene formed 'London SS'. This band did live long enough to even play a live concert let alone get anything down on vinyl. But from its ashes two members would become the founding members of the punk movement's most successful and arguably most influential group.

Around the same time four other young Londoners also inspired by the "New Wave" would form their own group under the guidance (or rather misguidance) of megalomaniac manager Malcolm McLaren. The group featured a shy London Irish teenager named John Lydon (later known as Johnny Rotten) who went on to call themselves the Sex Pistols.

It was the Sex Pistols short bursts of glorious 3-minute trashy guitars; bizarre clothing style and provocative stage act would provide the vital spark that ignited the punk movement.

Ex- London SS members Paul Simonon and Mick Jones went along to see this new group who were supporting the 101ers, London's rising stars of the pub rock circuit. The 101er's then lead singer Woody Mellor would later remark "Three seconds in to their [Sex Pistols] set I knew we [101ers] were yesterdays papers."

Woody became increasingly disillusioned with pub rock and his seemingly obsolete group the 101ers. Not surprising then that Woody left his group after Paul and Mick approached him to sing in their new group. Woody would change his name to Joe Strummer and together with Simonon and Jones they became The Clash.

For all the Sex Pistol's anti-monarchy sentiments and talk of "Anarchy in the UK", they saw "No Future". The Clash on the other hand were less pessimistic. In film maker Don Letts's documentary on the group 'West way to the World', Strummer explained The Clash "were groping at a socialist future."

It would seem Strummer was deeply influenced by the so-called 'New Left', George Orwell, the Neo-Marxists like the Frankfurt School and the Student rebellion of 1968. "It was a great time to come of age" said Strummer "Paris, Vietnam, Governor Square*, it was all happening".

Simonon had also a socialist background. His father had served in the British army in Kenya. On his return from Kenya shocked by the horrors of British imperialism he joined the Communist Party of Great Britain (known as the

Communist Party of Britain today) and Paul would deliver Party leaflets around the working class council estates and tower blocks of London.

In early interview with 'The Clash' Simonon flippantly remarked that he "didn't even know who the prime-minister was" would never the less remain a leftist influence along side Strummer within the Clash. Simonon travelled to the Soviet Union with his then girlfriend Caroline Coon albeit returning somewhat disappointed that he had not found the workers paradise he had come to expect.

In 1977 the Clash had been playing together for almost a year. The group went on a nation wide tour of Britain with Sex Pistols, The Damned and Johnny Thunders and the Heartbreakers.

That year also saw their new self-titled LP was released. At time the album perhaps over shadowed by the Pistols controversial "Never Mind The Bollox" LP. However The Clash debut was arguably a far superior work featuring a thoughtful lyrical style and a blend of pop influences ranging from Reggae to Rockabilly all delivered with an authentic punk snarl.

Their debut single "White Riot" was misinterpreted as a kind of racist battle cry. The song was in truth about the Notting Hill Carnival Riots in which London's black community fought off police in riot gear. Strummer and Simonon who had just gone to join in the Carnival somehow got caught up in the riot. Impressed with what they saw as the Black community having their say they penned the song with Jones later that day.

Following year saw the release of the bands second LP 'Give 'Em Enough Rope'. This was to be the group's first release in the US. The Album thematically continued its Leftist leanings but more cautious than the first. The Sleeve of "The English Civil War" first single released off the album featured a still from the 1950's 'Animal Farm' cartoon. This was one of many subtle nods to Strummer's literary hero George Orwell.

But it was the "London Calling" double album release just a year later that would forever be hailed as a masterpiece by music critics and album collectors alike. 'Roller Stone' declared it album of the 80's. Although Strummer pointed out to the magazine that the album was actually released in '79.

Having become the only Punk group to crack America, The Clash released their forth album this time a triple LP which they called "Sandinista!" in tribute to the socialist government ruling Nicaragua at the time (And recently been returned to power). This was not their best work but features some outstanding tracks and excellent Dub reggae production by Jamaican legend Mickey Dread.

The Clash would release two more albums before the finally called quits in 1986. The first these albums was "Combat Rock" which featured the singles "Should I Say Or Should I Go" and "Rock the Casbah" which remain pop classics of the era. It also features "Know Your Rights" a sort of punk rock anti-authority anthem.

Their final album "Cut the Crap" was released and was lambasted by the music press. In the absence of the guitarist Mick Jones and drummer Topper Headon both of whom had been kick out for drug abuse, the group lost its way. The only remaining original members of band Strummer and Simonon later disowned the album.

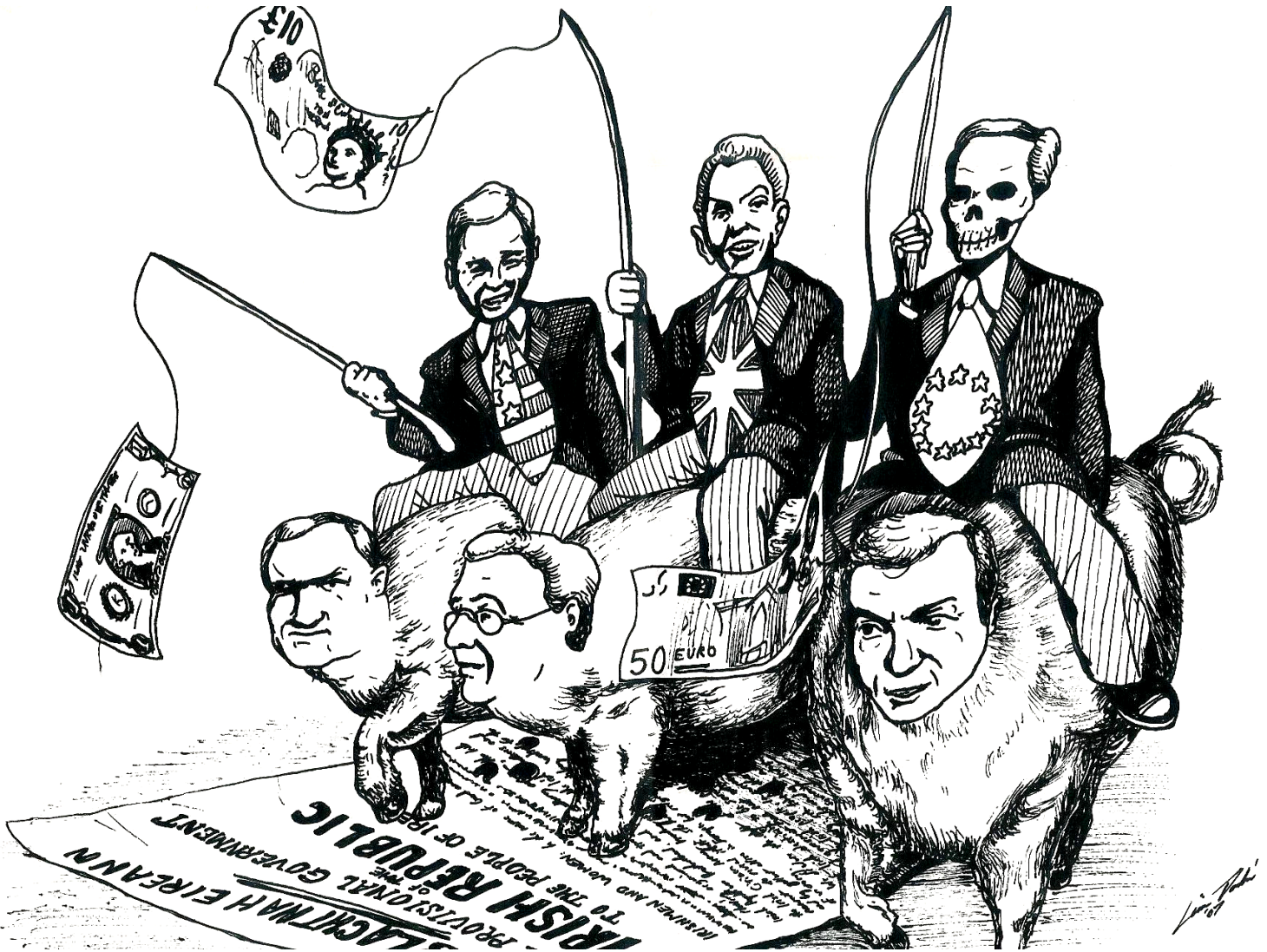
In the aftermath of the break-up the Clash's influence is immense. Although American group MC5 pre-date the Clash in mixing punk and socialist ideas it is the Clash who remain the mother of all political punk groups there after. Every one from the Redskins, Manic Street Preachers, Specials, Billy Bragg, Attila the Stockbroker, Angelic Upstarts, Public Enemy and countless other groups site the Clash as a major political and musical influence.

Strummer remained involved in political causes right up until the end of his life. He played benefit gigs in aid of striking Fire fighters and a number of organisations such as Rock against Racism, Anti-Nazi League and a London based Anarchist group "Class War".

The Clash were not a political party, they were after all a rock n' roll band. The band had always been accused to being left wing posers. Other simply disliked the band either for being left wing or for being political in general. Some

detractors point to Strummers middle class family background. In his defence he had been a manual labour worker for a number of years before the Clash at started and the rest of the band had all come from working family grounds. The political message was confused at times and the CYM would be at odds with much of it. The Clash were a great band who turned at lot of people on to socialist politics for that we can only be grateful. Cheers lads we owe you one!

*Governor Square is the street where the American Embassy in London is located where an infamous anti-Vietnam war riot took place in 1968.



If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organization of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain.

England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and blood of our martyrs.

Nationalism without Socialism – without a reorganization of society on the basis of a broader and more developed form of that common property which underlay the social structure of Ancient Erin – is only national recreancy.

James Connolly, 1897.

